Szarkowska, Agnieszka & Anna Jankowska (2025). *Introducing Audiovisual Translation.* **New York: Routledge, pp. 224. ISBN: 9780367481254 (hardback), €160.00.   ISBN: 9780367481230 (paperback), €34.49., ISBN: 9781003038122 (eBook), €34.49.**

The continuous evolution of digital technologies has greatly extended the reach and influence of audiovisual media among global audiences. Enormous amounts of video content are made available to viewers every day (Bolaños García-Escribano, Díaz Cintas & Massidda 2021), while the proliferation of streaming platforms, mobile technologies, and social media has transformed content production, distribution, and consumption (Lopes da Costa et al. 2022). These developments continue to generate a growing demand for localised and accessible media experiences, intensifying the need for high-quality audiovisual translation (AVT) and media accessibility services.

It is within this rapidly expanding landscape that *Introducing Audiovisual Translation* emerges as a timely and highly relevant volume. Offering a comprehensive exploration of audiovisual translation and media localisation, the book guides readers through the foundations of AVT and the evolution of its practices. Covering everything from interlingual subtitling and dubbing to voice-over, live subtitling, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, and audio description, it blends robust theoretical frameworks with vivid real-world examples that showcase the richness and diversity of AVT today. Ideal for anyone seeking to engage with the latest developments in the field, this volume stands as an essential reference for readers committed to understanding the complexities of contemporary audiovisual translation.

As expressed by the authors in the introduction, the book aims to serve as an "[…] initial go-to resource on AVT" (1) that attempts "[…] to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and the practical skills necessary to navigate the diverse areas of AVT" (1). Structured in seven chapters, the authors succeed in fulfilling this ambition, guiding readers through the essentials of AVT and media accessibility so that they can build a solid conceptual foundation and confidently approach the field's diverse practices. Drawing on recent research and industry developments, it provides a clear overview of the main AVT modalities and has outstanding potential to serve as one of the core resources for AVT and media accessibility courses.

Opening with the chapter entitled "Audiovisual translation," the book provides readers with a rigorous introduction to the field of AVT and its various modes. It outlines the multimodal nature of audiovisual content, its key communication channels, conventions, and codes that underpin audiovisual translation, establishing a foundation for understanding how meaning is conveyed across media. Looking back at historical developments, it offers a diachronic perspective on the evolution of audiovisual translation against the backdrop of technological innovation, changing viewing habits, and expectations of viewers across the globe. The authors further examine the impact of new media technologies on audience engagement, particularly among younger viewers, and consider the implications for audiovisual media content localisation and accessibility. Concluding with an examination of AVT's development as an academic discipline, the chapter situates the field within the broader research

and professional contexts, providing readers with a comprehensive framework to approach the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2, on "Pre-recorded subtitling," offers an in-depth exploration of interlingual subtitling, one of the most widely used modalities of audiovisual translation. The chapter begins by presenting a comprehensive typology, categorising subtitles according to factors such as type of translation, time of preparation, display, linguistic composition and level of professional involvement, which highlights the diversity of subtitling practices across different media contexts. It then examines the defining characteristics of subtitling, its inherent spatial and temporal constraints and the translation strategies most commonly employed to address these limitations. The authors also provide a practical overview of subtitling tools, expounding on the use of templates and translating cultural references, and emphasising the importance of synchronisation in maintaining semiotic coherence between audio and visual elements. Procedures such as spotting, aligning subtitles with shot changes and adjusting reading speed are discussed in detail, offering readers insight into not only technical but also cognitive considerations that subtitlers must manage. In the context of recent developments in AVT and media practice, the chapter touches upon the growing role of automated subtitling technologies. It offers a concise evaluation of their potential advantages and limitations, and reflects on how automation may be transforming professional subtitling workflows for pre-recorded audiovisual content.

The next two chapters turns attention to revoicing practices (Chaume 2020) within audiovisual translation, examining how dubbing and voice-over operate as distinct yet related methods of replacing or supplementing original speech. Chapter 3 focuses on "Dubbing" as a fully immersive technique, outlining its defining features, its differing levels of adoption across regions, and the practical and linguistic challenges involved in creating convincing dubbed performances. It also considers workflow organisation, quality expectations, trends in English (as a target)-language and the influence of emerging technologies on current dubbing practices. Chapter 4, "Voice-over," introduces said modality as a form of revoicing that coexists with elements of the original soundtrack. The chapter clarifies the terminology associated with voice-over, differentiates among its primary types, and situates them within established media traditions. Attention is given to synchronisation conventions, translation approaches, and script-preparation techniques that shape effective voice-over production. Together, both chapters thoroughly present the key revoicing modes and show how linguistic, technical, and technological factors intersect to enable multilingual audiovisual communication. The discussion further extends to the most up-to-date developments, highlighting how automated systems, AI and large language models may influence the traditional workflows and processes applied within both.

Chapter 5, "Audio description," shifts focus to sensory accessibility, regarding audio description (AD) as a principal means of making audiovisual works intelligible to audiences with limited access to meanings presented in the visual layer of an audiovisual work. It outlines the evolution of AD as a media-access practice, explaining how it emerged, who it is intended to serve, and the different forms it can take across diverse production contexts. The authors concentrate mainly on pre-recorded descriptions created for narrative screen content such as films and television series, examining principles that guide effective AD. They look at the decision-making processes involved in selecting what to verbalise, stylistic conventions, and the

technical demands in AD creation, voicing and the production process. Attention is given to workflow considerations, including the preparation of scripts, the use of dedicated software, and coordination with other production elements. The chapter also expands its scope to address the creation of AD in multilingual environments, where issues such as template use and adaptation strategies come to the fore. Additional access-related features such as audio introductions, audio subtitling, and extended audio description are presented as complementary tools that can further support inclusive viewing experiences.

Chapter 6, "Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing" (SDH), addresses sensory accessibility in the auditory domain. The chapter presents SDH as a specialised form of media access that goes beyond conventional subtitling to address the diverse needs of hearing-impaired audiences or audiences with limited access to the sounds of the audiovisual work. After exploration of the spectrum of hearing loss, authors showcase how SDH differs from standard subtitling in both purpose and design. They introduce essential features of effective SDH related to the identification of speakers, describing music and sounds, and the integration of non-verbal sound cues that provide context and emotional nuance. Challenges such as representing accents, ensuring clarity for young viewers, and maintaining high-quality standards are also examined, highlighting the necessary balance between accuracy, readability, and accessibility. Practical considerations are addressed, including best practices for creating SDH scripts, timing, and formatting, as well as emerging technological solutions that may streamline production or introduce partial automation.

The last chapter, "Live subtitling," introduces this dynamic practice, highlighting its role in providing real-time access to spoken content for audiences with hearing impairments. The chapter begins by introducing the main methods of producing live subtitles, including traditional stenography, respeaking, and modern automatic speech recognition (ASR) technologies. Each approach is examined in terms of its operational mechanics, strengths, and limitations, giving readers a clear picture of how live text is generated in real time. Key challenges in live subtitling, such as maintaining accuracy under fast-paced speech, managing delays, and ensuring readability for viewers are addressed, and via practical examples the authors showcase how they can be dealt with. The chapter places emphasis on the quality of live subtitling and outlines widely recognised quality assessment frameworks. The authors discuss specific competencies and skills required of live subtitlers, from linguistic precision to rapid cognitive processing. It also considers practical workflows for monitoring, revising, and optimising captions during broadcasts or live events, as well as strategies to reduce latency between spoken words and their textual representation. This chapter specifically touches upon the evolving landscape of live subtitling, highlighting technological innovations and the potential of hybrid human–machine systems. In doing so, it offers a forward-looking perspective on the future of real-time captioning and underscores its increasing significance in making audiovisual media accessible.

Each chapter follows a clear and logical structure: it begins with essential theoretical foundations, introduces and explains the key concepts and practices of the modality under discussion, and illustrates these ideas with concrete, relevant examples. To further support learning and exploration, chapters are complemented by recommended readings and additional resources, as well as with suggested topics for further thought and discussion, enabling readers to deepen their understanding and

critically engage with the material. Together, the chapters provide a comprehensive overview of both revoicing and subtitling practices — from dubbing and voice-over to audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, and live subtitling — demonstrating how linguistic, procedural, and technological factors intersect to create accessible and inclusive audiovisual experiences. By combining theoretical frameworks with practical guidance and thoughtful reflection on emerging technologies, this work represents an essential reference for educators, students, and professionals seeking to advance their knowledge and practice in AVT and inclusive media.

References

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Emília Perez
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
E-mail: eperez@ukf.sk