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2012

Multidisciplinarity in Audiovisual Translation

Multidisciplinarietat en traducció audiovisual

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& Elena di Giovanni (eds.)

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MONTI

ROSA AGOST, PILAR ORERO & ELENA DI GIOVANNI (EDS.)

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ÍNDICE

MULTIDISCIPLINARITY IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

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The practice of boundary-crossing in research, although regarded with suspicion up until a few decades ago, is now widely accepted and increasingly more common in many domains. In an era dominated by globalized, instant communication, nothing can be seen as monolithic anymore, and this new situation demands a multifarious outlook on the part of the researcher. In the wake of this new trend, as Willy Østreng puts it (2010: 95), scientific disciplines are nowadays subject to vertical as well as horizontal restructuring:

> The traditional monodisciplinary organization of research is gradually fading away, and a new structure, based on two distinct pillars is emerging. The first pillar is the fragmentation and hybridization resulting in units of topical specialization and sub-disciplines, and the second is extended monodisciplinarity, where research is moved by "imperialistic expansion" into the territory of other disciplines, either by breaking or bridging across boundaries.

The two pillars around which the breaking up of monodisciplinarity is reorganized, in Østreng's words, can be said to apply to, and portray, the evolution of Translation Studies (TS) and Audiovisual Translation Studies (AVTS).

The hybridization and fragmentation of the "parent discipline" (TS), as a consequence of its very expansion and contamination, has in turn resulted in the emergence of sub-disciplines. AVTS, as a derivative research field, has soon achieved the "status" of a full-fledged discipline, attracting numerous researchers and leading to the organization of countless conferences, seminars, university courses and publications.

Subsequently, the coming of age of AVTS in the last decade or so has coincided with a more decisive move into the territory of other disciplines, without any imperialistic ambition but rather in search of more solid instruments for the analysis of ever-changing scenarios, techniques and activities. Looking at the plethora of publications and conferences devoted to AVT and its study over the past two or three years, one cannot but notice a major thrust towards multidisciplinarity: even though it was probably never *mono-*, by asserting its own identity as a truly *multi*-disciplinary research field, AVTS has signed its own evolution.

But is multidisciplinarity really the way forward in research, especially AVT research? In the introduction to *Conceptual Foundations for Multidisciplinary Thinking*, Stephen J. Kline (1995: 3-4) sums up three basic reasons why multidisciplinarity is a necessity today. First of all, there is an increased awareness of the impossibility of perceiving human knowledge as a whole, as a single meaningful pattern: hyper-specialization in professional practices and in research makes it very difficult to comprehend increasingly complex, multisemiotic entities and phenomena, if it is not from a multidisciplinary perspective. Hyper-specialized domains themselves are very often characterized by sub-units which are not equally known to their experts. In audiovisual translation studies, for instance, specialists of the more traditional interlingual practices like subtitling often have very little knowledge of what is known as media accessibility (audio description, respeaking, etc.).

Secondly, in Kline's terms, every such complex entity or phenomenon displays what he calls "emergent properties" (*ibid*.), which stem out of the interaction of different parts or sub-systems. In audiovisual translation, new or "merging modalities"[1] frequently arise out of established practices. See, for instance, the surge of audiosubtitling as a mixture of voice over and subtitling and as a complement to audio description.

Finally, in Kline's words, there is a pragmatic reason why multidisciplinarity is indeed a winning approach: the joining of specialized competences and

1. "Merging modalities" was the title of one of the main panels at the 2011 *Advanced Research Seminar on Audio Description* held in Barcelona in March, 2011.

the acknowledgement of emergent properties is (and *has* to be) supported by a true will to work interdependently, to make such interdependence work. As Kline puts it, "It is not enough to assemble a multidisciplinary group: the individual people must themselves be multidisciplinary or willing to become so" (*ibid.*)

Collaboration among AVT scholars has always been the norm, within what has developed as a friendly research environment from its very onset. Due, in all likelihood, to the vibrant nature of audiovisual translation itself, the research community which has gathered around it has enhanced the development of a solid but also extremely dynamic domain. In the wake of the discipline's internal drift, AVT scholars have always looked across and beyond: multidisciplinarity has been sought at various degrees, and this has led to innovative research paths, viewpoints and practices.

But is multidisciplinarity the best possible way forward for AVTS? And most importantly, does it really have to be *multi-* rather than *inter-*, or perhaps *trans*disciplinary (Brown *et al.* 2010)? Although often used interchangeably, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity have been distinguished by a number of scholars, in terms of the degree of integration among disciplines and methods. In other words, it seems that multidisciplinarity implies the parallel recourse to different approaches, whereas interdisciplinarity stands for their true blending. This attitude has often led to a negative connotation being attached to *multi-* as opposed to *inter-*; as Lattuca reports (2011: 11), for instance,

> Rossini and Porter (1984) likened interdisciplinary work to a seamless woven garment that stands in contrast to the patchwork quilt of multidisciplinary work – in true interdisciplinary projects, a concatenation of disciplinary perspectives is replaced by integration of those perspectives.

On the other hand, supporters of transdisciplinarity generally unite *multi-* and *inter-* approaches under the umbrella of the coming-together-of-disciplines, in contrast to a seemingly more fruitful "overarching synthesis that transcends disciplinary worldviews [and should be] the ultimate goal of disciplinary cooperation" (*ibid.*). On yet another different note, Lawrence and Després (2004) compare interdisciplinary approaches to a mixing of disciplines, while transdisciplinarity would have more to do with a fusion of those disciplines (thus attaching to *trans-* and *inter-* the distinction more frequently made between *multi-* and *inter-*). Many scholars have then moved forward in the elaboration of concepts and terms related to the coming close or coming together of research approaches: interdisciplinarity has been further distinguished as auxiliary, linear or methodological, or as instrumental and conceptual (cf. Lattuca 2001: 11).

All of these distinctions have been briefly reported to show that even the definition of the coming together of research approaches is, in itself, dynamic and open to question, just like the disciplines themselves.

With reference to AVTS, in virtue of its being a young and undoubtedly multifarious domain, the editors of this volume have deliberately opted for a *multi*disciplinary perspective, with a view to stressing precisely that multifarious nature, where different elements, viewpoints, techniques and practices can be observed together. Moreover, the choice of *multi-* over *inter-* advocates for the integration of approaches but not their systematic or perpetual fusion: integration rather than fusion can lead to discoveries, redefinition and recombination in a never-ending, always-growing process.

This volume bears witness to the multidisciplinary essence of today's audiovisual translation studies and to the prolific nature of this discipline, which are reflected in the ever-growing number of monographs and collections that have appeared in the past few years (see below the selected bibliography of books since the year 2000). Monographs have so far largely focused on one AVT technique, thus filling a bibliographical and theoretical void, and the collections of essays have been, and still are, a privileged ground for highlighting the growing multidisciplinary attitude of AVTS scholars and professionals. The volume here presented is perhaps the first to spell out the multidisciplinarity of this domain, in an attempt to highlight and further enhance this attitude.

Looking back at the first article on bibliometrics in AVT (Franco & Orero 2005: 83), the prediction seems to have materialized: "While it is still early to draw any solid conclusions about the beginning of the 21st century, it seems clear that there is a rising tendency and dynamism in the field of AVT which should consolidate it in a non-distant future". Franco & Orero analysed publications by decades, but finished in 2000. Writing at the end of 2011 offers us the opportunity to update the trends of the last decade, and also forecast the future.

Regarding research topics, this first decade of the new millennium continues mainly with descriptive studies. Articles focusing on a particular film director or film seem to still capture academic interest. Not much progress has been made in building a general theoretical background for this discipline, and perhaps given the multidisciplinary and multisectorial nature of the field, with the many (and still growing) approaches to research methodology, it is a chimera to think that a theory encompassing all disciplines will ever be achieved.

Regarding translation modalities, previous research had been bipolar, in the sense that dubbing or subtitling were the two translation modalities under the microscope –subtitling enjoying the lion's share. This hegemony continued in the new decade with monographs such as Lorenzo & Pereira 2001, Díaz Cintas 2001 & 2003, Bogucki 2004, Sanderson 2005, Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007, Downey 2008, Bannon 2009, McLoughlin, Biscio & Mhainnín 2011, and Pedersen 2011. Dubbing has also been gathering attention (Chaves 2000, Lorenzo & Pereira 2000, O'Connell 2003, Paolinelli & Di Fortunato 2005, Perego 2005, Pavesi 2006) or both these mainstream techniques (Petillo 2008, Ranzato 2011). Interestingly the field has recently opened up to other practices, such as voice-over (Franco, Matamala & Orero 2010), respeaking (Romero Fresco 2011), and audio description (Perego 2012). A look at the immediate future tells us that more monographs are to come, the aim being to expand the knowledge of mainstream AVT techniques and most of all to explore ever-growing activities and areas of interest. By the end of 2012, several volumes on audio description and video game translation will have been published (O'Hagan & Mangiron forthcoming), thus also bearing witness to the latest trends and the avenues that are being developed within AVT research. The controversy of where AVT ends as a field is a hobbyhorse for those who still believe in self-contained areas of knowledge. We could have also listed volumes on the translation of theatre, opera, music, comics, songs, web localisation, etc. and the present volume is a witness of the permeability of the studies, which will no longer be widespread when technology and imagination in new communication formats ceases to be the context of today society.

A quick look at some collections of essays which have been published to date tells us that the juxtaposition of viewpoints, practices and research attitudes has always been common within AVTS. In 2001, Henrik Gottlieb and Yves Gambier edited a volume for John Benjamins whose very title was revealing of the *multi-* essence of AVT: (*Multi*)*Media Translation: Concepts, Practices, and Research* spelled out the complex and extremely dynamic nature of the practice and study of AVT and paved the way for a host of other volumes. In 1999, one of the first international conferences on AVT was held at the Universitat Jaume I (Spain). As a result, Agost & Chaume (2001) edited a volume devoted to a wide range of subjects from a theoretical and professional standpoint: different modalities, languages, and methodologies. In their introduction, the editors point out the importance of the new avenues and trends on AVT research, particularly as this was, at that time, new academic aspects of Audiovisual Translation:

> Es innecesario insistir en el papel que ha adquirido la comunicación audio-visual en estos últimos años. Las plataformas digitales, las televisiones vía satélite, la televisión por cable, el auge del cine, del vídeo y de la televisión, la irrupción de los productos multimedia en los hogares, el futuro, ya inme-diato, de las nuevas tecnologías aplicadas a los medios audiovisuales, como el DVD, la elección de la lengua en el visionado de un filme, la subtitulación para sordos, la narración para ciegos *[sic]*, entre otras, se disponen a inaugu-rar un milenio caracterizado por la comunicación audiovisual. (Chaume & Agost 2001: 9-10)

Pilar Orero's *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* (2004), also published by John Benjamins, highlighted the main issues at stake in the study of AVT at the beginning of the new millennium, as well as introducing new topics and re-search attitudes. A few years later, the titles of collective volumes started to bring to the fore newly emerged areas of investigation (Catalina Jiménez's 2007 volume *Traducción y accesibilidad. Subtitulación para Sordos y audiode-scripción para ciegos: nuevas modalidades de Traducción Audiovisual* and the first volume of Media for All published in the same year by Díaz Cintas, Orero & Remael on *Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description and Sign Language*), in addition to the very need to explore AVT from broader perspectives (Neves & Remael's 2007 volume *A Tool for Social Integration? Audiovisual Transla-tion from Different Angles*). A year later, a collection of essays proposed the first systematic reflection on the training of audiovisual translators for such diverse and dynamic practices (Díaz Cintas's 2008 volume *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*). On the whole, that same year seems to have marked the acknowledgement of the unexpected expansion of AVTS, with scholars looking for order (cf. Chiaro, Heiss & Bucaria) and once again spelling out the need for a complex, pluridisciplinary approach to the study of certain ac-tivities (Lavour & Serban's 2008 volume *Le sous-titrage des films – approches pluridisciplinaires*). Dozens of other collective volumes have been published within the past three years, highlighting to varying degrees the growing inter-est in AVT practices and research, their ever-changing faces and, more or less overtly, the need for truly multidisciplinary reflections.

Most articles within AVTS are still signed by one or two authors who are very often from the same university. This trend may be due to the fact that in the Humanities more than two authors still appears to be a crowd and publi-cation impact is diminished when used for benchmarking. Be it as it may, one important change in the field will be the acceptance from evaluating bodies of a larger number of authors for one article, thus breaking the alphabetical signing order (Rovira-Esteva & Orero 2011, and forthcoming).

Looking at the present and the immediate future, AVTS continues with the trend of publication in either collective works (see the bibliography below) or special issues of journals. Not many articles are published outside of these two formats, and paper still holds the weight of quality, though it is hoped that online publications soon come of age and are rated by their content, and not merely their format. The shift from paper to online is not only a long-term demand, but a prerequisite when studying multimedia. Long paragraph describing examples studied in an article could easily be replaced with excerpts from films or other multimedia texts, although this obviously raises questions regarding copyright. Away from the dilemma of the most natural format for audiovisual publications, we find the current trend of students relying almost exclusively on bibliography which can be found instantly online. Perhaps the battle against paper will come to an end soon, when publication impact indexes reveal the unrelenting trend towards quoting and referring to online resources rather than traditional publications. However, considering the extremely vibrant nature of AVTS as well as the practices and texts it is concerned with, it is difficult to make any sound forecasts.

It is, however, possible to envisage some of the major trends which are currently animating AVTS by taking a closer look at the papers which appear in this volume. The following essays reveal a multidisciplinary approach. Drawing from pragmatics and cognitive studies, relying on the principles of acoustic or eye-tracking research, these essays are representative of a wide range of new trends on audiovisual translation research.

The multilingual cinema analysis is considered with regard to the cultural and linguistic variety, richness and nuances of the filmic texts and the target audience receptiveness. Aspects that are not well covered until now, for example the importance of luminance and their relevance to the translation process and reception, are included in this volume. From the standpoint of modalities, this monograph deals with subtitling, dubbing, video game localization and accessibility (subtitling for deaf and heard-of-hearing, audio description, interpreting, audio guides, etc.). This situation reflects the desire to offer a panoramic vision about all the ways the target audience receives the audiovisual products today.

According to the methodologies used, descriptive analysis of dubbing and subtitling, or audio description analysis carried out from a narratological point of view, coexist with more empirical analysis. Experiments with eye-tracking technology or reception studies based on sociological inquiries are the crux of the presented works.

Regarding the codes used, we have articles focused on light, sound in general, and music in particular. With regards to image, there are works that deal with the visual features that should be transferred to the audiodescription.

To finish, the editors of this volume would insist on the continuation of the work dedicated to push barriers that still exist in the field of Audio Visual Translation Studies. We need researchers working in different fields; applied research taking account of two or more disciplines; and, finally, we need an identification of problems that are not centred on one specific subject. We must continue our efforts to connect individual and collective interests.

Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Prizewinner of Chemistry, says that there is nothing so complex that cannot be organized. If that statement is true for Physics, then we believe it can be applied to translation. It is our hope that we can continue to better organize AVT in the new context. We suggest there are three domains we should consider: the democratisation of the knowledge on the internet, the transparent ethics with a wider circulation of the new methodologies, and finally, the construction of relationships within the society. The future of the audiovisual translation research should be for all, or it will not be.

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BIONOTES / NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Elena di Giovanni

Elena Di Giovanni is Lecturer in Translation at the University of Macerata (Italy), where she is also Director of the Language Centre. She holds a degree in specialized translation and a PhD in English and audiovisual translation. She has taught audiovisual translation theory and practice at the MA in screen translation of the University of Bologna and the University of Parma (Italy). For three years she has also been lecturing at the MA in audiovisual translation of Roehampton University, London, UK. In September, 2011, she organized the first Italian training course in audio description at the University of Macerata.

Her research focuses on audiovisual translation, in particular subtitling and audio description. She has also published extensively on translating for children and translation as intercultural communication. Her recent publications include: *Between Text and Receiver: Translation and Accessibility* (Peter Lang), *Oltre l'Occidente. Traduzione e Alterità Culturale* (Bompiani), *Translation, Cultures and the Media* (Routledge). She has been in the audiovisual translation industry for more than 15 years.

Elena Di Giovanni es profesora de traducción en la Universidad de Macerata (Italia), donde también ostenta el cargo de directora del Centro de Lenguas. Es licenciada en traducción especializada y doctora en anglística y traducción audiovisual. Ha enseñado teoría y práctica de traducción audiovisual en el máster en traducción audiovisual de la Universidad de Bolonia y de la Universidad de Parma (Italia). Desde hace tres años también imparte clases de traducción audiovisual en la Universidad de Roehampton (Londres). En septiembre de 2011, organizó el primer curso italiano de audiodescripción, que se celebró en la Universidad de Macerata.

Su principal campo de investigación es la traducción audiovisual, especialmente el subtitulado y la audiodescripción. También ha realizado numerosas publicaciones sobre traducción infantil y traducción como comunicación intercultural. Entre sus últimas publicaciones cabe destacar: *Between Text and Receiver: Translation and Accessibility* (Peter Lang), *Oltre l'Occidente. Traduzione e Alterità Culturale* (Bompiani), *Translation, Cultures and the Media* (Routledge). Lleva más de 15 años implicada en la industria de la traducción audiovisual.

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MULTIDISCIPLINARIETAT EN TRADUCCIÓ AUDIOVISUAL

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La recerca que traspassa els límits d'un únic àmbit d'investigació té una acceptació generalitzada a la majoria de les disciplines actualment, tot i que, fins fa unes dècades, aquesta pràctica era objecte de moltes reticències. En una era dominada per la comunicació globalitzada i immediata, no hi ha res que es puga considerar monolític; aquesta nova situació exigeix una mirada molt variada per part de l'investigador. En aquest sentit, com assenyala Østreng (2010: 95), les disciplines científiques estan subjectes a una reestructuració vertical i horitzontal:

> The traditional monodisciplinary organization of research is gradually fading away, and a new structure, based on two distinct pillars is emerging. The first pillar is the fragmentation and hybridization resulting in units of topical specialization and sub-disciplines, and the second is extended monodisciplinarity, where research is moved by "imperialistic expansion" into the territory of other disciplines, either by breaking or bridging across boundaries.

Els dos pilars al voltant dels quals es reorganitza aquest trencament de la monodisciplinaritat, en termes d'Østreng's, poden aplicar-se i, al mateix temps,

serveixen per a il·lustrar l'evolució dels Estudis de traducció i els Estudis de traducció audiovisual. La hibridació i la fragmentació de la "disciplina bàsica" (els Estudis de traducció), conseqüència de l'expansió i contaminació, ha tingut com a resultat el naixement de subdisciplines. Els Estudis de traducció audiovisual, com a àmbit d'investigació derivat, han assolit en poc de temps l'estatus de disciplina *per se*, han atret l'atenció de nombrosos investigadors i són el tema central d'una munió de congressos, seminaris, cursos universitaris i publicacions.

Aquesta majoria d'edat dels Estudis de traducció audiovisual, aconseguida durant l'última dècada, ha coincidit amb una certa incursió en territori d'altres disciplines, no amb una visió imperialista sinó més aviat amb la idea de la recerca d'instruments més sòlids per a l'anàlisi d'escenaris, tècniques i activitats en contínua transformació. Si ens fixem en l'abundància de publicacions i congressos dedicats a la TAV dels últims dos o tres anys, l'impuls cap a la multidisciplinarietat és una obvietat: tot i que, segurament, els Estudis de traducció audiovisual mai no han estat multidisciplinaris, en adquirir una identitat pròpia i mostrar-se com a àmbit de recerca multidisciplinari, s'han obligat a mantenir-se en constant evolució.

De sobte, la pregunta que ens plantegem és si la multidisciplinarietat és el camí per avançar en la investigació, concretament en la TAV. En la introducció a *Conceptual Foundations for Multidisciplinary Thinking*, Kline (1995: 3-4) resumeix les tres raons bàsiques sobre la necessitat actual de defensar la multidisciplinarietat. En primer lloc, hi ha una consciència cada vegada més gran sobre la impossibilitat d'abastar el coneixement humà en la seua compleció, com un model de significat únic. L'especialització excessiva dins del món professional i investigador dificulta la comprensió d'entitats i fenòmens cada vegada més complexos i multisemiòtics, tret que adoptem una perspectiva multidisciplinària. Els camps d'especialització es troben, ells mateixos, dividits en subespecialitats que, molt sovint, són desconegudes parcialment pels experts que se n'encarreguen. En el estudis de traducció audiovisual, per exemple, especialistes de les modalitats interlingüístiques més tradicionals, com la subtitulació, tenen un coneixement escàs sobre l'accessibilitat als mitjans de comunicació (audiodescripció, reparla, etc.).

En segon lloc, tot seguint la terminologia de Kline, cada entitat o fenomen complex posa de manifest el que ell considera "propietats emergents" (*ibid.*), que sorgeixen de la interacció de parts diferenciades o subsistemes. En

traducció audiovisual, aquestes "modalitats emergents"[1] sovint tenen el seu origen en pràctiques establertes. Així, tenim el cas de l'audiosubtitulació, una simbiosi de veus superposades amb subtitulació, i que constitueix un complement de l'audiodescripció.

Finalment, també amb paraules de Kline, hi ha un motiu pragmàtic sobre per què la multidisciplinarietat és un enfocament que té futur: la unió de competències especialitzades i el reconeixement de propietats emergents està (i *ha* d'estar) basat en el veritable desig de treballar interdependentment perquè el treball siga interdependent. Com assenyala Kline, "no hi ha prou amb reunir un grup multidisciplinari: els individus han de ser multidisciplinars o tenir voluntat de ser-ho)" (*ibid.*). La col·laboració ha estat sempre la norma en TAV, i s'ha desenvolupat en un clima de recerca agradable des dels seus inicis. Probablement, a causa de la naturalesa activa de la mateixa traducció audiovisual, la comunitat investigadora que s'ha reunit al seu voltant ha afavorit el desenvolupament d'un àmbit sòlid però extremadament dinàmic. Tot seguint l'estel de les tendències internes de la disciplina, els investigadors en TAV sempre han mirat "a través de" i "més enllà de": la multidisciplinarietat s'ha exigit en nivells ben diversos i la seua presència ha suposat trobar vies de recerca, enfocaments i pràctiques innovadores.

Ara, una altra pregunta seria si la multidisciplinarietat és el millor camí per avançar en els Estudis de traducció audiovisual; i, el que és més important, ha de ser *multi-* en lloc d'*inter-*, o potser *trans*disciplinària (Brown *et al.* 2010)? Tot i que, sovint, aquests termes s'utilitzen de forma intercanviable, hi ha un sector d'investigadors que distingeixen entre la multidisciplinarietat i la interdisciplinarietat, en funció del grau d'integració entre disciplines i mètodes. Dit d'una altra forma, sembla que la multidisciplinarietat implica el recurs paral·lel a enfocaments diferents, mentre que la interdisciplinarietat representa una veritable unió. Aquesta actitud ha suposat, en moltes ocasions, una connotació negativa associada als conceptes *multi-*, en oposició als *inter-*. Així ho explica Lattuca (2011: 11) en el següent fragment:

> Rossini and Porter (1984) likened interdisciplinary work to a seamless woven garment that stands in contrast to the patchwork quilt of multidisciplinary work – in true interdisciplinary projects, a concatenation of disciplinary perspectives is replaced by integration of those perspectives.

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1. "Merging modalities" va ser el títol d'un dels panells centrals de l'*Advanced Research Seminar on Audio Description*, que va tenir lloc a Barcelona durant el mes de març de 2011.

D'altra banda, els defensors de la transdisciplinarietat, uneixen, generalment, els enfocaments *multi-* i *inter-* sota el paraigua de les "disciplines que caminen juntes", en contrast amb l'aparentment més fructífera "overarching synthesis that transcends disciplinary worldviews [and should be] the ultimate goal of disciplinary cooperation" (*ibid.*). Per a referir-se a un altre tema, Lawrence i Després (2004) comparen els enfocaments interdisciplinaris amb una barreja de disciplines, mentre que la transdisciplinarietat tindria més a veure amb la fusió d'aquestes disciplines; d'aquesta manera, associen a *trans-* i a *inter-* la distinció més freqüent que ja existeix entre *multi-* i *inter-*. Un grup d'investigadors ha avançat en l'elaboració de conceptes i termes relacionats amb aquest "caminar a prop de" o "caminar junts" dels enfocaments de la recerca; així, la interdisciplinarietat s'ha anat diferenciant com a auxiliar, lineal o metodològica, o com a instrumental i conceptual (cf. Lattuca 2001: 11). Hem tingut en consideració totes aquestes distincions per a mostrar que, fins i tot la definició dels enfocaments investigadors "que caminen junts" és, per si mateixa, dinàmica i subjecta a debat, igual que les disciplines a les quals fem referència.

Pel que fa als estudis sobre TAV, en virtut del seu àmbit nou i absolutament variat, les editores d'aquest volum han optat deliberadament per la perspectiva multidisciplinària, amb la intenció de destacar justament aquesta naturalesa tan plural, i que permet una observació conjunta d'elements, enfocaments, tècniques i pràctiques molt diverses. A més a més, l'elecció de *multi-* en comptes d'*inter-* dóna preferència a la integració dels enfocaments, en lloc d'afavorir una fusió sistemàtica o contínua. Així, la integració pot dur a descobriments, noves definicions i combinacions diverses en un procés que no s'atura mai i que va en augment.

Aquest volum és testimoni de l'essència multidisciplinària dels estudis actuals de TAV i de la naturalesa prolífica d'aquesta disciplina, que es reflecteix en el nombre creixent de monografies i edicions que s'han publicat en aquests últims anys (cf. la selecció bibliogràfica de llibres apareguts des de l'any 2000). Les monografies s'han centrat fins ara, de forma majoritària, en una única modalitat de TAV, la qual cosa ha significat la superació d'un buit bibliogràfic i teòric; les edicions d'articles d'autors diversos han estat, i són encara, un terreny privilegiat per a posar en relleu l'actitud cada vegada més multidisciplinària dels investigadors i professionals de la traducció audiovisual. El volum que presentem és, potser, el primer que incideix explícitament en la multidisciplinarietat d'aquest àmbit, en un intent de subratllar i enfortir encara més aquesta actitud.

Si ens fixem en el primer article sobre bibliometria en TAV (Franco & Orero 2005: 83), sembla que s'han acomplert les previsions: "While it is still

early to draw any solid conclusions about the beginning of the 21st century, it seems clear that there is a rising tendency and dynamism in the field of AVT which should consolidate it in a non-distant future". Franco i Orero van fer una anàlisi de les publicacions de diverses dècades fins a l'any 2000. El fet d'escriure aquest treball a les darreries de 2011 ens ofereix l'oportunitat d'actualitzar les tendències de l'última dècada i també d'intentar preveure el futur.

Pel que fa a les línies d'investigació, en aquesta primera dècada del nou mil·leni continua el predomini dels estudis descriptius. Els articles centrats en un director de cinema concret o en una pel·lícula determinada són objecte preferent de l'interès acadèmic. La construcció d'unes bases teòriques de la disciplina tampoc ha experimentat cap avanç notable; potser, tenint en compte la naturalesa multidisciplinària i multisectorial de l'àmbit de la traducció audiovisual, amb nous i diversos enfocaments metodològics, és una quimera el fet de pensar que aconseguirem tenir una teoria que puga donar compte de totes les disciplines.

En relació a les modalitats de traducció, al principi de la dècada hi havia una certa bipolaritat, en el sentit que el doblatge i la subtitulació eren les dues modalitats sotmeses a observació, amb la subtitulació com a cavall guanyador. Aquesta hegemonia ha continuat, amb monografies com les de Lorenzo i Pereira 2001, Díaz Cintas 2001 i 2003, Bogucki 2004, Sanderson 2005, Díaz Cintas i Remael 2007, Downey 2008, Bannon 2009, McLoughlin, Biscio i Mhainnín 2011 o Pedersen 2011. El doblatge també ha estat objecte d'estudi (Chaves 2000, Lorenzo i Pereira 2000, O'Connell 2003, Paolinelli i Di Fortunato 2005, Perego 2005, Pavesi 2006). Al mateix temps, es poden trobar una sèrie de treballs que abasten totes dues modalitats (Petillo 2008, Ranzato 2011). És molt interessant comprovar que, recentment, els estudis de TAV han incorporat altres modalitats, com les veus superposades (Franco, Matamala i Orero 2010), la reparla (Romero Fresco 2011) i l'audiodescripció (Perego 2012). Si observem el futur més immediat, hi ha un seguit de monografies i edicions en fase de publicació, amb l'objectiu de difondre el coneixement de les modalitats bàsiques de la TAV i d'analitzar les activitats i àrees d'interès que s'hi incorporen. A finals de 2012, s'hauran publicat diversos volums sobre audiodescripció i traducció de videojocs (O´Hagan i Mangiron, en premsa) i seran testimoni de les últimes línies d'investigació que s'han incorporat a la TAV. La controvèrsia sobre si la TAV constitueix una disciplina amb autonomia pròpia és el cavall de batalla per a aquells que encara creuen en les àrees de coneixement tancades. Podríem haver presentat tota una llista de volums sobre la traducció de teatre, música, còmics, cançons, localització, etc.; en qualsevol cas, aquest volum és una mostra de la permeabilitat dels estudis que

únicament deixarà de tenir repercussió quan la tecnologia i la imaginació de nous formats de comunicació ja no siga el context de la societat actual.

Una mirada ràpida sobre alguns dels volums col·lectius publicats fins ara ens mostra la juxtaposició d'enfocaments, pràctiques i actituds investigadores que han estat habituals en els estudis de TAV. El 2001, Henrik Gottlieb i Yves Gambier van editar un volum per a John Benjamins el títol del qual posava de manifest la *multi*-essència de la TAV: (*Multi)Media Translation: Concepts, Practices, and Research*, explicitava molt clarament la naturalesa extremadament dinàmica i complexa de la pràctica i l'estudi de la TAV i suposava una guia per a tots els volums que vindrien després. El 1999, es va celebrar a la Universitat Jaume I de Castelló un dels primers congressos internacionals sobre TAV. Com a resultat, Agost i Chaume (2001) van publicar un volum dedicat a una gran varietat de temes, tant des del punt de vista teòric com professional, i amb un tractament de modalitats, llengües i metodologies diverses. A la introducció, els editors assenyalaven la importància de noves línies d'investigació en TAV i que, en aquell moment, eren aspectes molt poc tractats:

> Es innecesario insistir en el papel que ha adquirido la comunicación audiovisual en estos últimos años. Las plataformas digitales, las televisiones vía satélite, la televisión por cable, el auge del cine, del vídeo y de la televisión, la irrupción de los productos multimedia en los hogares, el futuro, ya inmediato, de las nuevas tecnologías aplicadas a los medios audiovisuales, como el DVD, la elección de la lengua en el visionado de un filme, la subtitulación para sordos, la narración para ciegos (*sic*), entre otras, se disponen a inaugurar un milenio caracterizado por la comunicación audiovisual. (Chaume & Agost 2001: 9-10)

Pilar Orero, en el volum *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* (2004), també publicat per John Benjamins, posava l'èmfasi en alguns dels temes més destacats en la recerca sobre TAV a principis del nou mil·lenni i, al mateix temps, introduïa nous temes i actituds. Uns anys després, els volums col·lectius insisteixen en àrees d'investigació emergents (Catalina Jiménez 2007: *Traducción y accesibilidad. Subtitulación para Sordos y audiodescripción para ciegos: nuevas modalidades de Traducción Audiovisual*; el primer volum de Media for All, publicat el mateix any per Díaz Cintas, Orero i Remael: *Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description and Sign Language*). Cal destacar també altres treballs amb una voluntat d'investigar des de perspectives diferents (Neves i Remael 2007: *A Tool for Social Integration? Audiovisual Translation from Different Angles*). Un any després, es publicava una col·lecció de treballs que representava la primera reflexió sistemàtica sobre la didàctica de la traducció audiovisual per a pràctiques diverses i dinàmiques (Díaz Cintas 2008: *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*). En general, aquell 2008 sembla haver marcat una fita pel que fa

al reconeixement d'una expansió inesperada dels Estudis de traducció audiovisual. Alguns investigadors intentaven trobar un ordre (cf. Chiaro, Heiss i Bucaria) i, una vegada més, es posava de manifest la necessitat d'un enfocament pluridisciplinari a l'hora de tractar determinades modalitats (Lavour i Serban 2008: *Le sous-titrage des films – approches pluridisciplinaires*). Durant els últims tres anys, s'han publicat una gran quantitat de volums col·lectius, a través dels quals s'ha incidit, amb intensitat variada, en diferents modalitats i línies d'investigació, en l'evolució que experimenten de forma constant i, d'una forma més o menys palesa, en la necessitat d'una reflexió veritablement multidisciplinària.

La majoria dels articles sobre investigació en TAV són responsabilitat d'un o dos autors que, sovint, pertanyen a la mateixa universitat. Aquesta tendència pot explicar-se pel fet que, en l'àmbit de les humanitats, la signatura de més de dos autors es considera excessiva i l'impacte de la publicació disminueix quan se sotmet als índexs de qualitat. Siga com siga, l'acceptació per part dels avaluadors d'una autoria múltiple per a un article podria representar un canvi significatiu en aquest àmbit, així com també la ruptura d'una certa obligatorietat de l'ordre alfabètic (Rovira-Esteva i Orero 2011; Rovira-Esteva i Orero, en premsa). Si fem una ullada al present i al futur immediat, els Estudis de traducció audiovisual segueixen la tendència de publicar a través de volums col·lectius o en edicions especials de revistes especialitzades (vegeu la selecció bibliogràfica proposada). Fora d'aquests dos formats hi trobarem molts pocs treballs i el paper encara conserva el privilegi de la qualitat, tot i que esperem que, en breu, les publicacions en línia aconseguiran la majoria d'edat i seran avaluades pel seu contingut i no pel format. El canvi del treball en paper al treball en línia no és únicament una demanda a llarg termini, sinó un requisit previ si parlem dels estudis sobre mitjans de comunicació. Els paràgrafs interminables que descriuen els exemples objecte d'estudi podrien substituir-se per fragments de pel·lícules o d'altres texts multimèdia, tot i que això afecta, òbviament, el drets dels originals. Si ens allunyem de la polèmica sobre el format més natural per a les publicacions sobre temes audiovisuals, ens trobem amb la tendència dels estudiants a treballar, quasi de forma exclusiva, amb la bibliografia que es pot trobar en línia. Potser la batalla contra el paper tindrà un final molt pròxim, quan els índexs d'impacte de les publicacions revelen la inexorable tendència cap a la citació de les fonts en línia en comptes de les fonts tradicionals. Això no obstant, si tenim en compte el gran dinamisme dels Estudis sobre traducció audiovisual, així com les modalitats i texts sobre els quals investiga, resulta molt difícil fer pronòstics amb un mínim de fiabilitat.

Malgrat això, si ens fixem en els treballs que apareixen en aquest volum, sí que és possible endevinar alguns dels temes que més interès desperten actualment en el nostre àmbit. Des de la pragmàtica o els estudis cognitius, tot passant pels principis de l'acústica o la investigació amb la tecnologia *eye-tracking*, aquestes investigacions representen una part substancial de les línies d'investigació actuals en traducció audiovisual.

L'anàlisi del cinema multilingüe és tractat des d'un punt de vista de la diversitat lingüística i cultural, de la riquesa i matisos del text fílmic i de la necessitat de traslladar al receptor sensacions anàlogues a les que experimenten els receptors dels originals. Aspectes poc tractats fins ara, com la importància dels elements lumínics –la llum és un llenguatge ple de significat–, i la rellevància en la traducció i la recepció, són també presents en aquest volum.

Des del punt de vista de les modalitats, la present monografia abasta la subtitulació i el doblatge, la localització de videojocs i l'accessibilitat (subtitulació per a sords, audiodescripció, interpretació, audioguies, etc.). Aquesta situació reflecteix la voluntat de donar una visió tan completa com siga possible de les distintes formes que els destinataris tenen de consumir els productes audiovisuals actualment.

Pel que fa a les metodologies utilitzades, les anàlisis descriptives del doblatge o la subtitulació, o l'anàlisi de l'audiodescripció des de la narratologia conviuen amb d'altres anàlisis més empíriques en què els experiments amb la tecnologia *eye-tracking* o els estudis de recepció basats en enquestes sociològiques són l'eix fonamentat de les investigacions presentades.

Si ens centrem en els codis, al costat d'estudis que focalitzen la seua atenció en la llum, tenim un segon grup de treballs dedicats al so en general o a la música, en particular; i hi podem trobar un tercer bloc que té, com a objecte d'investigació, el codi visual i que insisteix en quins són els aspectes icònics que s'han de transmetre en una audiodescripció.

Per a finalitzar, les editores d'aquest volum voldríem incidir en la necessitat de treballar amb més dedicació per superar els límits que encara hi ha dins l'àmbit dels Estudis de Traducció Audiovisual: necessitem investigadors que treballen en camps diversos, uns estudis aplicats que tinguen en compte dues o més disciplines i una identificació de problemes que no es restringeixen a un objecte. I hem de continuar fent l'esforç de connectar l'interès individual amb el col·lectiu.

Ilya Prigogine, Premi Nobel de Química el 1977, deia que no hi ha res de tan complex que no puga ser organitzat. Si això funciona per a la física, segurament també es pot aplicar a la traducció. Podem continuar fent camí per a organitzar la TAV en el nou context en què ens trobem; i podem fer-ho

a través de la democratització del coneixement a través de la xarxa, de l'ètica transparent a través de la difusió de noves metodologies i, per últim, mitjançant la construcció de relacions amb tota la societat. El futur de la traducció audiovisual, o és per a tots, o no serà.

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Elena di Giovanni

Elena Di Giovanni is Lecturer in Translation at the University of Macerata (Italy), where she is also Director of the Language Centre. She holds a degree in specialized translation and a PhD in English and audiovisual translation. She has taught audiovisual translation theory and practice at the MA in screen translation of the University of Bologna and the University of Parma (Italy). For three years she has also been lecturing at the MA in audiovisual translation of Roehampton University, London, UK. In September, 2011, she organized the first Italian training course in audio description at the University of Macerata.

Her research focuses on audiovisual translation, in particular subtitling and audio description. She has also published extensively on translating for children and translation as intercultural communication. Her recent

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Elena Di Giovanni es profesora de traducción en la Universidad de Macerata (Italia), donde también ostenta el cargo de directora del Centro de Lenguas. Es licenciada en traducción especializada y doctora en anglística y traducción audiovisual. Ha enseñado teoría y práctica de traducción audiovisual en el máster en traducción audiovisual de la Universidad de Bolonia y de la Universidad de Parma (Italia). Desde hace tres años también imparte clases de traducción audiovisual en la Universidad de Roehampton (Londres). En septiembre de 2011, organizó el primer curso italiano de audiodescripción, que se celebró en la Universidad de Macerata.

Su principal campo de investigación es la traducción audiovisual, especialmente el subtitulado y la audiodescripción. También ha realizado numerosas publicaciones sobre traducción infantil y traducción como comunicación intercultural. Entre sus últimas publicaciones cabe destacar: *Between Text and Receiver: Translation and Accessibility* (Peter Lang), *Oltre l'Occidente. Traduzione e Alterità Culturale* (Bompiani), *Translation, Cultures and the Media* (Routledge). Lleva más de 15 años implicada en la industria de la traducción audiovisual.

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Rosa Agost

Rosa Agost holds an MA in Translation and Interpreting (1994) and a PhD in Translation Studies, with a dissertation on audiovisual translation, focusing on dubbing (1996). She is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Translation and Communication at the Universitat Jaume I (Spain), and she collaborates with several Masters in Audiovisual Translation and Translation Studies. She also works as a freelance translator (audiovisual texts for broadcasting, and popular science books). Her main research lines are: Audiovisual Translation (Dubbing and Accessibility); Translation Theory and Methodology; Mother Tongues and Translation (Spanish-Catalan). She is the author of *Traducción y doblaje: palabras, voces e imágenes* (1999), *Teoria i pràctica de la traducció. Espanyol-català* (2001, with E. Monzó); she is the editor of *La traducción en los medios audiovisuales* (2001, with F. Chaume) and the guest editor of *Screens We Live By: An Updated Insight into Audiovisual Translation Research* (2011).

Rosa Agost posee un Máster en Traducción e Interpretación (1994) y un doctorado en Estudios de Traducción, con una tesis sobre la traducción audiovisual, concretamente sobre doblaje (1996). Es profesora titular del Departamento de Traducción y Comunicación de la Universitat Jaume I de Castelló y colabora con diversos másteres de Traducción y de Traducción Audiovisual. También trabaja como traductora (textos audiovisuales para la televisión y libros de divulgación científica). Sus líneas de investigación preferentes son la traducción audiovisual, con especial referencia al doblaje y a la accesibilidad; la teoría y metodología de la traducción y la traducción entre lenguas

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TRANSLATION AS ALCHEMY:
THE AESTHETICS OF MULTILINGUALISM IN FILM

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the aesthetics of multilingualism in film. We start with a discussion of translation strategy in several films and continue with two case studies based on *Azur et Asmar* (2006) by Michel Ocelot, on the one hand, and *Nostalghia* (1983) and *Offret* (1986) by Andrei Tarkovsky, on the other. Our analysis does not involve a comparison between the original dialogues or monologues and their translations into one or several languages, but, rather, it focuses on the role of translation in film making, considering it independently from any pre-existing oral or written texts. This will lead us to a number of reflections about the possibility and the limits of communication, about poetry and cinematography, and the role of language(s) and silence in film.

Résumé

Cet article se donne pour tâche d'examiner l'esthétique du multilinguisme au cinéma. Dans un premier temps, nous allons nous pencher sur des exemples de stratégie de traduction dans plusieurs films, pour ensuite analyser *Azur et Asmar* (2006) de Michel Ocelot et *Nostalghia* (1983) et *Offret* (1986) d'Andreï Tarkovski. Ce n'est pas notre but de comparer les dialogues ou monologues sources avec leurs traductions vers une ou plusieurs langues, mais, plutôt, de cerner le rôle de la traduction dans la création cinématographique, en l'envisageant sans la ramener toujours à un texte préalable, oral ou écrit. Ainsi, nous serons amenés à nous poser des questions sur la possibilité et les limites de la communication, sur la poésie et la photographie, et la place des langues et du silence au cinéma.

1. Introduction

The doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*, the interpenetration, interdependence and unification of opposites, has long been a characteristic of mystical thought. Whereas Western philosophers have maintained a system of binary oppositions and the principle of non-contradiction, mystics have often held that their experience can only be described in a way that violates this principle and goes beyond what appear to be mutually exclusive terms. In fact, according to the 1922 Nobel Prize winner for Physics, the Danish Niels Bohr, there are superficial truths, the opposites of which are obviously false, and profound truths, whose opposites may equally be right.

Translation and alchemy are two arts of transformation which endeavour to join together entities that are, or look, distinct, and to create a substance described as possessing unusual properties. Indeed, the outcome of the translation act stands in a relationship at the same time of difference and of identity with something other than itself. In other words, a translation is the same as, and at the same time different from, that which it is a translation, a transmutation of. But how many entities are to be joined and transformed? Transformed how, and into what?

The idea for this paper originated several years ago, when I first became aware of a fact I had undoubtedly encountered numerous times before, without paying attention to it or considering its implications: films can be in more than one language, and often are. The trigger for this realization came in the form of a scene from the visually stunning *Andrei Rubliov* (1966), by Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky. A teenage boy who has cast a church bell for the prince (we are in the 15th century) must now make it toll in front of his master and courtiers, as well as of a large crowd of people who have gathered for the occasion. The prince is accompanied by foreign ambassadors. It is in fact likely that there is only one ambassador, the other man being his interpreter. We are not told explicitly where the ambassadors are from, but they speak Italian. And it is through their private conversation that we learn extremely important things such as, for instance, that should the bell not toll, the boy will be put to death, together with everyone who worked with him. The interpreter

Illustration 1: The young bell maker and his companions.

seems to know much more about local customs, people and events than the other Italian.

As a result of discovering multilingualism in *Andrei Rubliov,* I started drafting a list of all the films I knew in which two or several languages are in contact: *Manhunt* (Fritz Lang, 1941), *Roma città aperta* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945), *Le Mépris* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963), *The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965), *The Godfather* I and II (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972 and 1974), *Les Aventures de rabbi Jacob* (Gérard Oury, 1973), *French Connection* II (John Frankenheimer, 1975), *Nostalghia* and *Offret* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1983 and 1986), *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984), *A Passage to India* (David Lean, 1984), *The Mission* (Roland Joffé, 1986), *Dances with Wolves* (Kevin Costner, 1990), *Green Card* (Peter Weir, 1990), *The Last of the Mohicans* (Michael Mann, 1992), *Indochine* (Régis Wargnier, 1992), *Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992), *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993), *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993), *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Mike Newell, 1994), *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995), *Le Hussard sur le toit* (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, 1995), *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996), *Kavkazskiy plennik* (Sergei Bodrov, 1996), *Karakter* (Mike van Diem, 1997), *La vita è bella* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), *Elizabeth* (Shekhar Kapur, 1998), *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998), *Fail Safe* (Stephen Frears, 2000), *The Whole Nine Yards* (Jonathan Lynn, 2000), *Ničija zemlja* (Danis Tanovi, 2001), *Lagaan* (Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001), *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson, 2001, 2002 and 2003), *Monsoon Wedding* and *The Namesake* (Mira Nair, 2001 and 2006), *L'Auberge espagnole* and *Les Poupées russes* (Cédric Klapisch, 2002 and 2005), *La Repentie* (Laetitia Masson, 2002), *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002), *Politiki kouzina* (Tassos

Boulmetis, 2003), *Les Invasions barbares* (Denys Arcand, 2003), *Lost in Translation* (Sofia Coppola, 2003), *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004), *Mar adentro* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2004), *Everything Is Illuminated* (Liev Schreiber, 2005), *Tsotsi* (Gavin Hood, 2005), *The Interpreter* (Sydney Pollack, 2005), *Azur et Asmar* (Michel Ocelot, 2006), *Efter brylluppet* (Susanne Bier, 2006), *The Painted Veil* (John Curran, 2006), *Ostrov* (Pavel Lungin, 2006), *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006), *Youth Without Youth* (Francis Ford Coppola, 2007), *Once* (John Carney, 2007), *Eastern Promises* (David Cronenberg, 2007), *Restul e tăcere* (Nae Caranfil, 2007), *Gran Torino* (Clint Eastwood, 2008), *Le Concert* (Radu Mihăileanu, 2009), *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009), *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009), *Des hommes et des dieux* (Xavier Beauvois, 2010), *Hævnen* (Susanne Bier, 2010) and *The Way Back* (Peter Weir, 2010).

This is only a very short list of films in which two or more languages are spoken, and far from reflects how widespread the phenomenon of multilingualism really is in national cinemas across the world (for a list of multilingual Hollywood films belonging to a variety of genres which include, among others, historical dramas, action thrillers and romantic comedies, please see Bleichenbacher 2008; for multilingual film productions in German-speaking countries, see Heiss 2004). In two of the films listed above, *The Piano* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, sign language is present.

All these films and many others point to the fact that translation is required not only when a film travels abroad and will be seen by an audience other than that of its country of origin, although this remains the classic situation in which some form of language transfer on screen is most often needed. But beyond this, translation (or lack thereof), as a consequence of multilingualism, can be a deliberate artistic choice made by the director of the film, who, sometimes, has to fight to impose it (see, for instance, Viviani 2008, for a discussion of Francis Ford Coppola's risk-taking when he decided to have subtitled Italian in *The Godfather*). From what we have been able to observe, the two forms of translation which are most likely to be used in such cases are subtitling and interpreting. What we mean by interpreting is that there is a character in the film who translates for the others, sometimes in a professional capacity, but often not. Many films fall under this category: *Andrei Rubliov, Nostalghia, The Mission, Dances with Wolves, The Last of the Mohicans, The Piano, Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Fail Safe*, *Lost in Translation, Everything Is Illuminated* and *The Interpreter*, to name a few.

The aim of this paper is, then, to explore the aesthetics of multilingualism in film. We start with a few general considerations and discuss translation

strategy in several different films. This is followed by two case studies based on *Azur et Asmar* (*Azur and Asmar: The Princes' Quest*) by Michel Ocelot, on the one hand, and *Nostalghia* (*Nostalgia*) and *Offret* (*The Sacrifice*) by Andrei Tarkovsky, on the other. Separated by time, country of origin, language(s), and genre (animation film versus feature films), all of them have at least two things in common: a preoccupation with language, migration and some form of exile, and an elegant simplicity which is the ultimate sophistication. Our analyses will not involve a comparison between the original dialogues or monologues and their translations into one or several languages, but, rather, focus on the role of translation in film making, considering it independently from any pre-existing oral or written texts. This will lead us to a number of reflections about the possibility and the limits of communication, as well as about poetry and cinematography, and the role of language(s) and silence in films.

2. Multilingualism in film: interpreting and translation

There are several reasons for multilingualism in film, mainly linked to the realistic depiction of situations which involve travelling, migration, studying abroad, work or personal relations in an international environment, or families whose members are of different national or ethnic origin. Multilingual interactions represented in film include code switching and code mixing, but multilingualism can also come in the form of intertextuality, for example songs or quotations, such as, for instance, Alexander's declamation in English of a line from act 2, scene 2 of *Hamlet*, in the Swedish language film *Offret*. But, as Heiss (2004), among others, pointed out, not only can there be more than one national language in an audiovisual programme; there will, most of the time, also be intralinguistic variations (archaic language, dialects, sociolects, idiolects, as opposed to standard language) which convey important information about the characters (see Bakhtin, the founding theorist of heteroglossia and multivoicedness in the novel, 1981 for the English translation). Thus, films such as *Trainspotting* (1996) or *Snatch* (2000), which are in English, are extremely difficult to understand without some form of intralinguistic translation; an interesting discussion of the issues surrounding the translation into Italian of two films shot in southern Italian dialect can be found in Longo (2009). Sometimes languages are invented, as is the case with *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *Avatar*.

The spectrum of degrees of multilingualism is very wide, ranging from a few occasional words or sentences in a language other than the main language of the film, to productions such as *Monsoon Wedding, Les Poupées russes* or

Azur et Asmar, where two or more languages coexist from the beginning to the end and the presence of all of them is substantial.

Multilingualism does not always appear where one might expect it. In Romanian historical films, foreigners always speak Romanian: this is what Bleichenbacher (2008) calls "the replacement strategy". The viewers have to suspend disbelief and accept that people of diverse origin, such as Turks, Tartars, Poles, Italians, Austrians, the Pope in Rome and the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, all express themselves in fluent Romanian.

2.1 Interpreters in films

The role of interpreters is extremely interesting. They have a mediating role between the other characters on screen, while at the same time translating for the audience of the film. Indeed, "characters on screen address each other as if they were real persons while, in reality, a scriptwriter is, like a novelist, constructing discourse for the sake of the effect it will have on its receivers" (Hatim & Mason 2000: 433-434). All this interaction has to be carefully scripted and staged so it works seamlessly.

Our first example of a rather reluctant, at least in the beginning, interpreter comes from *Dances with Wolves* (1990), by Kevin Costner. According to Viviani (2008), one of the major achievements of this beautifully scenic film, well served by music composed by John Barry, is to overcome negative portrayals of Indians. While this is not the first attempt to do that, as is sometimes believed, it is crucial that the Indians are given a voice, albeit the one attributed to them by a white film-maker. There are long dialogues in Sioux in the absence of outsiders, and this is important because it means the Indians are portrayed by themselves, not just in their dealings with white people (though, once again, the film is about the interaction between a white person and the Indians). The dialogues in Sioux are subtitled for the audience of the film, and this removes some of the threat. We often fear what we cannot understand, and some negative portrayals engendered by, and generating, fear may spring from the impossibility or difficulty of communication. Through the subtitles, spectators find out that the Indians mean no harm; rather, they are intrigued by the presence of the lonely soldier at the fort, and worried about their own survival as they keep being pushed west by the whites until, finally, there may be nowhere left to go (see Viviani 2008).

The white woman adopted by the Indians in her childhood and known as Stands with a Fist (actress Mary McDonnell) is recruited by Kicking Bird, the wise man of the tribe and her benefactor, to act as interpreter, which she strongly refuses, at first. Translation is not, for her, an indifferent task. By

exposing her to the language of her parents and by forcing her into the company of a white man, it brings back traumatic memories from the past as well as an unresolved identity issue. In the scenes where she interprets, mainly between Kicking Bird and John Dunbar (Kevin Costner), there is no need for subtitles to assist the audience. John Dunbar, who progressively takes on an Indian identity himself, to the point that he is given an Indian name and becomes Dances with Wolves, starts learning Sioux. The interpreter becomes language teacher, giving the people she serves the tools to manage on their own. This means that, at a later stage, she will no longer be needed for her purely linguistic skills, though she retains her role as cultural mediator between Dances with Wolves and his new friends.

The dialogues in Sioux were probably originally scripted in English and then translated into Sioux. The present researcher does not speak that language and is not in possession of a gloss which she could compare with the English subtitles in the original version of the film. It is obvious that these subtitles are not in fluent English (e.g. "I cannot make the white man language" or "It has been a long time since I made the talk", in the scene where Kicking Bird tries to make Stand with a Fist accept to act as interpreter). Given the respectful approach to Indians of the film, we can only assume that deliberate foreignization is at work here, to allow a better insight into their language. In the French dubbed version of *Dances with Wolves* the English in the soundtrack is replaced by French, the Sioux is left unchanged, and the English subtitles are translated. As for the French subtitled version of the film, we notice a tendency towards domestication, normalisation and fluency in the dialogues translated into French from Sioux, via English. And since there are now subtitles in the entire film, not only in selected scenes, multilingualism becomes less salient because it is no longer visually marked. An attentive and informed spectator will, of course, be able to discern that two different languages are spoken in the soundtrack. We would like to mention at this point that, according to Cornu (2011), there is no guarantee in France that the quality subtitles usually available for the cinema release of a film will be found on the DVD.

In *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), by Michael Mann, three languages are present, as well as a variety of accents, and there are subtitles in the original version. English remains, though, the main language of the film. The intensely dramatic scene in which the Great Sachem decides the fate of Cora, Alice and Major Duncan Heyward, who are Magua's hostages, while Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis) arrives to rescue them, is extremely rich in terms of multilingual interaction, in a context where a lot is at stake: the hostages' freedom and

even their lives, and, beyond that, the fate of the Indians caught up between the British and the French.

Huron, French and English are spoken in this scene. Major Heyward acts as interpreter between Hawkeye, who does not speak French, and the Great Sachem, who does not speak English. He is chained up from the beginning to the end, and literally interprets for his life and that of Cora and Alice. Magua speaks the three languages, although not fluently. From what we can judge based on his behaviour in the film, the major is not familiar with the intricacies of the cross-cultural and political situation involving the British and the French armies, the colonists, and the various Indian tribes. He is just a loyal soldier, and someone who happens to speak French.

An old Huron woman shouts something at Hawkeye as he enters the village, and this is not subtitled into English. It would be interesting to know whether she is aggressive towards him, or whether she is trying to chase away the Huron warriors who attack Hawkeye as soon as they see him, even though the latter is not armed and does not fight back.

Naming strategies are very interesting here, and are always associated with points of view. Depending on who is speaking, Daniel Day-Lewis's character is called "Hawkeye, adopted son of Chingachgook", "Nathaniel of the Yengeese" or "la Longue Carabine"; references to the French and the English also suffer various transformations.

The audience is informed, via English subtitles, of the decisions the Great Sachem has made, even as he is uttering them in Huron. The spectators consequently know more than Hawkeye, Cora, Major Heyward and Alice, who are told nothing in a language they can understand. When Hawkeye realizes what is happening, he offers to be put to death in Cora's place, and asks Major Heyward to translate that into French. The major immediately conforms, or at least that is what the others believe. He does indeed translate, but unfaithfully. He appropriates Hawkeye's idea and asks to be put to death himself. When Hawkeye and the two women see that he deliberately mistranslated, it is too late to change anything.

In the French subtitled DVD version of the film, Magua's awkward French is not transcribed literally. There is reformulation and normalization, which also extends to everything the Great Sachem says in French, in the original. In the French dubbed version, everything is in French, including the dialogues in Huron. The tension created by the simultaneous use of several languages which not everyone involved can understand disappears from the scene, which is extensively rewritten. Major Heyward no longer acts as interpreter, and his heroic gesture is diminished. The linguistic dimension, which

plays such an important role in portraying the complex relationships between individuals and between nations in a troubled moment in the history of what is now Canada, is levelled down.

It is not only in *The Last of the Mohicans* that an interpreter intervenes in a very tense situation. In *The Mission* (1986), by Roland Joffé, the Jesuit priest Gabriel (a young Jeremy Irons) translates between the Guarani Indians and the envoy of the Pope. We are in the 18th century. The outcome of the discussion will decide the fate of the San Carlos mission and all the other missions in South America. A professional interpreter is required by the American president in Cold War drama *Fail Safe* (2000), as he is about to negotiate by phone in a crisis situation where nuclear catastrophe is imminent. The president asks the young man to do more than just translate the Russian. He wants his interpreter to translate what the person at the other end of the line thinks. Symbolically, while many people are involved in managing the crisis, the president is alone in a room with the interpreter at his side. All the situations described above would make wonderful subjects of discussion in an ethics-based approach to the translator's responsibility and involvement, as envisaged by Pym (1997).

On a lighter note, though far from melancholy free, in Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003) interpreting between Japanese and English appears as one of the many metaphors of alienation. Bob Harris, a rather washed-up American film star who travels to Tokyo to shoot a commercial, is lost in Japan, where everything is so different, and where he does not understand the language. But he is also lost in his own life, and estranged from his family.

The scene of the shooting of the commercial is a wonderfully clever *mise en abyme*, with many resemblances to the film viewing experience of a monolingual spectator who needs to rely on the subtitler to explain what is being said. Everyone on the set, except for Bob, speaks in Japanese. Bob notices that the length of the English translations is significantly shorter than that of the Japanese, and asks "That's all he said?" and "Is that everything? I mean, it seemed like he said quite a bit more than that" (the usual comments on subtitles when people do not realize there has to be text compression). Should Bob Harris trust the interpreter, or is he right to assume that he is missing on something? Or, possibly, both at the same time? Unlike the Great Sachem scene in *The Last of the Mohicans*, in which the audience of the film is given, through the subtitles in English, information which is not accessible to some of the characters, here the non-Japanese speaking spectator is only told as much as Bob. Interestingly, after two attempts to question whether the interpreter provided a full and accurate translation of the director's instructions,

Bob stops asking questions. He smiles and nods in agreement, and does whatever he assumes may be expected of him.

The Japanese interpreter does not speak fluent English, and this is reproduced via non-fluent French in the DVD subtitled version. This is another of the amazing possibilities engendered by/in translation: someone can speak broken English… in French. Will the French (and other non-Japanese speaking) spectators transfer what they see in the film to their own viewing situation, which is also translator-mediated?

Sometimes the interpreter is a child, as is the case in *The Piano* (1993), and sometimes a grown-up child. Alexander 'Alex' Perchov in *Everything Is Illuminated* (2005) does not really speak the same English as his American Jewish client who has travelled to Ukraine, the home country of his ancestors, to unravel the past. Not only is he far from linguistically fluent, but he also lacks sensitivity to cultural and religious difference, and piles up blunder after blunder. This incompetent but cheerful and well-meaning interpreter is assisted by his ostentatiously anti-Semitic grandfather, who claims he is blind although he is perfectly able to drive the taxi, and the grandfather's inseparable "deranged" dog. It is one of Alex's memorable quotes that gives the title to the novel *Everything Is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer (2002) and its adaptation to the screen by Liev Schreiber: "I have reflected many times upon our rigid search. It has shown me that everything is illuminated in the light of the past. It is always along the side of us, on the inside, looking out".

2.2 Subtitles as artistic choice

Subtitling as an artistic choice envisaged by the director of the film and his creative team is present, to a smaller or larger extent, in most of the films listed in section 1 of this paper, including in some scenes from films in which there is an interpreter. *Dances with Wolves* is an example of this.

What are the subtitles, then? Often referred to as an afterthought, cumbersome, a necessary evil, an addition to the finished work, we are here in a situation where they actually are part of the film – as the director wanted it. And with the advent of 3D, subtitles become one of the objects on screen whose position has to be determined in space (one member of the team who translated *Avatar* into French had to travel to the US to work with an engineer at the film studio; for a discussion of the 3D subtitling of *Avatar*, see Baldo & Vallée, in press). But even in 2D, many creative solutions can be envisaged, as shown in Vallée (in press). In the examples Vallée chooses for her case studies, the subtitles are special effects reflecting and enhancing the mood of the film.

Subtitles are, undoubtedly, an aid to understanding. But they are also a voice in the film, incarnated in a graphic presence on screen. They help tell the story, advance the plot, and as such they have a narrative function as well as a character portrayal role.

Audiences are not always monolingual. In particular, spectators of a film in English could be non-native speakers from around the world. And there are all kinds of interesting viewing situations: the "other" language in a film could be the mother tongue of some of the spectators.

When a multilingual film which includes subtitles in the original travels abroad, the main language of the film as well as the subtitles are translated. If this is done via subtitling, the several languages in the film end up merging into one, i.e., the target language, while continuing to be present in the soundtrack. Italics can be used to indicate that another language is being spoken, and foreignizing translation techniques may be implemented to signal difference.

According to Viviani (2008: 19), in recent years subtitles have started being almost systematically inserted for dialogue which the director of a multilingual film left untranslated in the original, though it is logical to assume that their absence was a deliberate option. The words which come to mind are normalization and standardization, also noticed by Kaufmann (2004) with respect to the translation strategies used in a documentary film she analyzes.

"Every film is a foreign film, foreign to some audience somewhere – and not simply in terms of language", say Canadian director Atom Egoyan and academic Ian Balfour in the introduction to their co-edited volume *Subtitles: on the foreignness of film* (2004: 21). In fact, every film is a foreign film to most audiences, including the one at home, in as much as spectators do not have direct access to the director's mind and experiences, and can only look through the window provided by the images, music, and the spoken or written word. Watching a film in one's mother tongue is experiencing the alterity of the person, or team, who created it. And so, mediation may be required. According to Steiner (1975), every instance of human communicative interaction is translation.

Meet the other? Receive the other? Berman (1985) notices that most translators tend to reduce the tension between the several languages which may co-exist in a text. How is it possible to keep the voices different, when translation is usually conceptualized as the "*full* transposition of *one* (monolingual) source code into *another* (monolingual) target code for the benefit of a *monolingual* target public" (Meylaerts 2006: 5)? As Meylaerts pointed out, it

may be necessary to stretch the boundaries and find creative solutions to the conundrum of the multiplicity of languages in texts.

3. *Azur et Asmar*: two countries, two languages and two religions

Azur et Asmar (2006) is, first and foremost, beautiful cinema. It is a vibrantly coloured animation film which took six years in the making.

> Right from the start, I considered the obstacle of languages, because I wanted to show the condition of the immigrant for whom the language barrier is a major difficulty. So, in certain passages, I do not try to make people understand, so that they feel a little lost. But most of the time, I alternate between the two languages in the dialogues, and a reply provides unequivocal information about the question. I also find this absence of subtitles rather elegant... It is also a gift I am giving to children, the possibility of hearing several languages. I think it is an appealing event in sound.

This is what says Michel Ocelot, *Azur et Asmar*'s creator, in an interview with Nigel Andrews (Press Images 2006). Ocelot is a French animator best known for *Kirikou et la sorcière* (1998), *Princes et Princesses* (2000), *Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages* (2005), *Dragons et Princesses* (2010) and *Les Contes de la nuit* (2011), the latter also available in 3D. There is a sequel to *Kirikou* in preparation at the moment, entitled *Kirikou et les hommes et les femmes*.

The two languages in the film are French and Arabic, with no subtitles at all. There is also a bit of lion language – roaring! – in the scene where Azur meets the Scarlet Lion with blue claws (Ocelot's invention; the Saimourh Bird with rainbow wings, on the other hand, is a mythical creature from Persian tales) and, by means of a magic pill judiciously given to him by princess Chamsous-Sabah, is able to converse with animals. No interpretation is provided.

Azur does not have a mother and Asmar does not have a father. They are brought up together by Jenane, Asmar's mother, who is a maidservant in Azur's father's manor. The boys always want the same things and dream the same dream, inspired by Jenane's fairy tales from across the sea. Jenane, who is bilingual, does not make a difference between the two of them, gives them equal shares of everything, and speaks to them in both Arabic and French.

The harmony between them is somewhat disrupted by the boys' growing up and starting to compete with each other, and is completely destroyed by the intervention of Azur's father. He sends his son to study with a teacher in town without allowing him to say good-bye, and banishes Jenane and Asmar.

When Azur and Jenane are reunited many years later, she tells him that, through her experience of two countries, of two languages and of two

Illustration 2: Jenane and the boys.

religions, she knows twice as much as other people who are prisoners of their ignorance and superstitions, and that is how she was able to overcome hardship and succeed in life (she has become the richest merchant in her town in the North of Africa). Brought up bilingual, Azur is not bicultural also, as he has had no experience of Jenane's country and its people. Upon arriving as a poor immigrant who has lost everything at sea, he quickly becomes
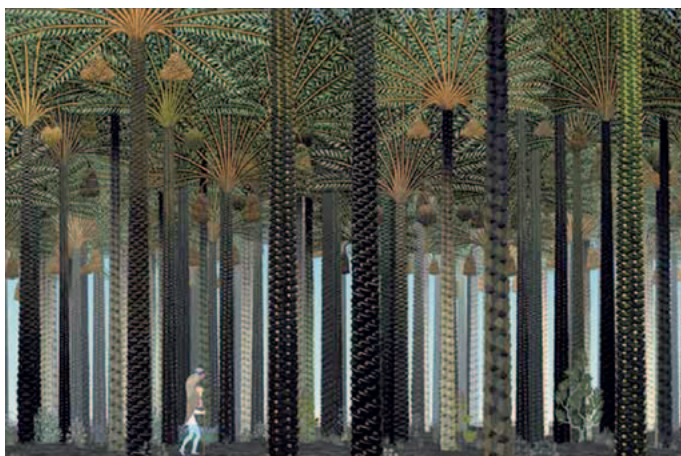
Illustration 3: Azur and Crapoux in the palm forest.

Illustration 4: Azur and Crapoux near the medina.

discouraged by the hostile attitude of the locals, who consider that his blue eyes bring misfortune, and decides that the world is ugly and that he will never open his eyes again. He will be blind. As a consequence, he needs someone to guide him. This person is Crapoux, a compatriot who has spent twenty years in the country, while remaining a foreigner.

In illustration 3, Crapoux, perched on Azur's shoulders as he pretends he has a lot of difficulty walking, is telling Azur that the palm forest they are crossing is ugly, like everything else in that land. He complains that there are no fir trees.

As they approach the medina, the town, Azur wants to know what it is they are hearing. At nearly every step he asks "What's that?". It is almost as though he is asking for a translation; only, it is not the names of things that he wants. What he needs is a description, because he continues to keep his eyes closed. Crapoux describes the places and the people, always adding a disparaging comment which reinforces Azur's determination to remain blind. He also speaks for Azur, since the latter cannot remember very well the language of his nanny, which he has not heard since his childhood. So, it is not only his capacity to see the world for himself that Azur gives up temporarily, but also his voice. He only opens his eyes again when he is sure he has found Jenane. She is beautiful and welcomes him as a son. From that moment onwards, Azur accepts to see the beauty of the land across the sea, in no way inferior to that of his home country, only different.

Illustration 5: Azur and Asmar's childhood in France.

Illustration 6: Jenane's garden.

According to Jenane, Crapoux can only have lied to Azur and told him nasty things about the country, so Azur also lives a miserable life of failure like himself. On the other hand, it is revealed that Crapoux has blue eyes, which he hides behind thick eyeglasses because of the superstition of the locals. He will continue to hide his eyes because life in the streets is not the same as

the sheltered life Azur will lead from now on in rich Jenane's house. Michel Ocelot confesses having drawn, to an extent, his own portrait when he was 15 years old. Having moved with his parents from Guinea, in Africa, to Angers, in the north-west of France, he complained for ten years instead of making the most of his new situation, and trying to be happy.

An international team of people from 25 countries besides France was involved in the making of the film, in Paris. Hiam Abbass, who gives her rich and warm voice to Jenane's character, is a Palestinian with an Israeli and French passport. Gabriel Yared, who composed the music, is of Lebanese origin.

Azur et Asmar has been translated into many languages. At least two different dubbed versions exist in English: a British translation and an American one. George Roubicek, the British dialogue director, who worked together with Ocelot, talks about the translation being an adaptation. Among the reasons for this, he mentions the different sense of humour of his target audience by comparison with that of the original film, and that cultural references which are obvious to one audience may not be so to the other.

"Fairy tales are my natural language", says Ocelot, "all fairy tales from around the planet" (Reuters UK, 13 February 2011). He feels at ease in them like a fish in water.

3. Andrei Tarkovsky: silence as language

Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) feels at ease in silence.

> When the images in a film need a lot of dialogue, when the dialogue has an important function, then I feel it is no longer cinema. It is something else. I want a film with few words and with images which are significant.

These are the words of Antonio Guerra, Tarkovsky's scriptwriter for *Nostalghia*, in a 1983 interview with Cesare Biarese. Guerra, who worked with celebrated film directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Theodoros Angelopoulos, Francesco Rossi, Giuseppe de Santis and Vittorio de Sica, had been a poet before he became a scriptwriter, and never stopped writing poetry. That the visual dimension of film should be of primary importance is something that makes a lot of sense, given the nature of the medium, but is sometimes forgotten. According to Guerra (same interview with Biarese), the most banal of objects, a bottle, for instance, can become poetry if it is lit and photographed in a particular way.

Tarkovsky made seven feature films during his career: *Ivanovo Detstvo* (1962), *Andrei Rubliov* (1966), *Solaris* (1972), *Zerkalo* (1975), *Stalker* (1979), *Nostalghia* (1983) and *Offret* (1986). His last two films were made in exile,

Illustration 7: Detail from a Tarkovsky film.

Nostalghia in Italy and *Offret* in Sweden. If Bird (2004) was right to claim, with respect to *Andrei Rubliov*, that the entire film is about what cannot be shown, the same statement can probably be made about poetry, and about all of Tarkovsky's work.

It may be interesting to mention at this point that the sets of *Nostalghia* and *Offret* were a real tower of Babel. Tarkovsky spoke some Italian and, when he made *Nostalghia*, he was able to communicate, to an extent, in that language, with his crew and actors. A Russian interpreter was, however, often needed, also because actor Oleg Yankovsky did not speak Italian at all. An English interpreter was needed for Erland Josephson, who is a Swedish actor. In *Offret*, Tarkovsky worked with respected cinematographer Sven Nykvist, who had been involved in many Ingmar Bergman films. The two men could only communicate through an interpreter, who had to be present on set all the time, to translate between Tarkovsky and his Swedish crew. Yet everyone who worked with him claims that language was never a barrier, that excellent communication was established because of Tarkovsky's sincerity or, as Erland Josephson put it, sophisticated innocence.

Illustration 8: Words, words, words.

Multilingualism is present right from the start in Andrei Tarkovsky's last film. Two titles, *Offret* and *Sacrificatio*, are displayed simultaneously on Leonardo Da Vinci's "Adoration of the Magi", on the background of music by Johann Sebastian Bach. But mistrust of human language is also expressed very early in the film, in the form of a quotation from *Hamlet*: "Words, words, words". Hamlet gives this reply to Polonius, who wanted to know what the prince was reading. In *Offret*, whose English title is *The Sacrifice*, it is Alexander (Erland Josephson) who says this, in one of his monologues, as he wanders around accompanied by his mute son. Alexander speaks a lot, and the child listens.

The word can only be heard in silence. Many important characters in Tarkovsky's films hardly ever speak. In fact, very few of his characters speak at all. The icon painter in *Andrei Rubliov* makes a vow of silence. In *Nostalghia*, Domenico (also played by Erland Josephson) is a hermit – or a lunatic. Little Man, Alexander's son in *Offret*, is mute throughout the film, except at the very end, when he says something of an importance beyond everything everyone else has spoken, put together. He recovers his voice just as his father has made a vow of silence and set fire to all his posessions.

Silence is space and time. Tarkovsky often uses long takes, even up to ten minutes, to follow a character deep into his world. This also creates a measured rhythm of the film.

Illustration 9: Leaving everything behind.

Nostalghia is about exile, and was made in exile. A Russian poet, Gorcha-kov (Oleg Yankovsky), travels through Italy, accompanied by his guide and translator Eugenia, researching the life of an 18th century Russian composer. They arrive in a small spa town, said to have been a favourite place of saint Catherine of Sienna, and go to the hotel.

Illustration 10: The ending shot of *Nostalghia*.

Illustration 11: Gorchakov and Eugenia, talking.

As they wait to be shown their rooms, they have one of their rare conversations, which, like all the others, leads nowhere except to frustration. Yet it would have seemed logical that the foreigner, the outsider, the exile, should find an interlocutor in the only person who speaks his language. Eugenia is reading Russian poems in Italian translation, and this infuriates Gorchakov, who thinks that poetry is untranslatable. He does not claim that all translation is impossible, but probably is not far from believing it (a more detailed discussion of this scene is in Şerban, in press). There are only two people Gorchakov is able to communicate with, and he does not need an interpreter for that: Domenico and a little girl whom he tells, in broken Italian, complicated things about his life, and to whom he recites poems in Russian. At all other times, he is silent.

Languages, in the plural, and silence, the two forms of language in Tarkovsky's films, lead to the grand finale in *Offret*, at the same time a statement and a question are left unanswered. Alone under the barren tree he helped his father plant near the sea, and which he will water until it blossoms and bears fruit, Little Man speaks for the first time.

"In the beginning was the Word. Why is that, Papa?". The beginning of the Gospel According to John, and this question, are the last words ever uttered in a Tarkovsky film.

Illustration 12: Alexander and Little Man planting the barren tree.

5. Concluding remarks

Multilingualism makes communication and mediation issues more visible, testing their limits and stretching their boundaries. When it appears in films, it creates a *mise en abyme* which encourages the audience to reflect on their experience of being in a world in which we need interpreters and translators.

Languages and silence in film, and the paradox of how to alchemically transform something into something else that will be different, while remaining the same, reminds us of the only decoration in Domenico's hose, in *Nostalghia*. High on one of the walls, there is a big inscription which says "1 + 1 = 1". No explanation is provided for how that might be possible – the visitor will have to believe that it is, or not.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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CASTING THE LIGHT ON CINEMA – HOW LUMINANCE AND CONTRAST PATTERNS CREATE MEANING[1]

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Abstract

The question of meaning creation has always been at the core of cross-disciplinary scholarly research. Considered from the cinematographic perspective, it inevitably evokes correlations with plot and dialogue. However, the conveyance of significance in films does not rely solely on the verbal channel, but also manifests itself in the visual layer, ranging from facial expressions, setting and locations, to directorial editing choices. Elevating the role of *the how* of film making, this article focuses on the influence of light and contrast patterns on the reading of cinema. In order to highlight their position in film text vocabulary and recognize their relevance in film translations and adaptations, this paper discusses the role of luminance patterns in active perception within motion pictures, explores their potential contribution to plot completion, and investigates the processes of filmic content hierarchization supported by light and contrast.

Resumen

La cuestión de la creación del sentido siempre ha sido recurrente en la investigación académica. Considerada desde la perspectiva cinematográfica, nos lleva automáticamente a pensar en la trama y los diálogos. Sin embargo, la transmisión del sentido de

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las películas no se basa únicamente en su canal verbal, sino que también se manifiesta en su capa visual, comprendida en las expresiones faciales, la composición, la localización y la edición. Centrándose en el *cómo*, el artículo presta especial atención a la influencia de los patrones de luz y contraste en la lectura del cine. Con la intención de resaltar su rol en el lenguaje cinematográfico y su relevancia en traducciones y adaptaciones, la autora reflexionará sobre el papel de los patrones de luminiscencia en la percepción activa de filmes, su potencial contribución a la comprensión de la trama y los procesos de jerarquización contenidos en la luz y el contraste.

1. Introduction

According to Bordwell and Thompson (1990: 40), the essential features which contribute towards the enjoyment of a film are the emotional responses of the audience towards the image they are confronted with, their subjective evaluation of its aesthetic characteristics, and their recognition of the meaning that the relevant film carries. The latter is however still popularly considered to be limited to the cues revealed solely in dialogues, gestures, and plot sequences, whereas the successful and correct reading of all motion pictures strongly relies on the constant interplay of both *the what* and *the how*. The significance of any movie also lies in the unique and carefully structured camera movements, editing and soundtrack choices, and staging parameters. Whilst these components seem to have already received substantial attention within academia, light and contrast patterns, which will constitute the main focus of this paper, are given substantially less attention in the field of academic research and are still regarded by most as mere object illumination and shape revelation tools. According to Geuens, (2000: 151) the cinematographic irrelevance of light and contrast is often justified by their regular presence in our everyday lives, and their purposeful employment in films is frequently rationalized and consequently downplayed. However, it has been widely acknowledged that luminance patterns shape our perspective and influence our perception of the world and, indeed, of art. Even though, as Malkiewicz (1986: 1) puts it, physical objects and people do not normally undergo considerable changes as days or weeks go by, the mere sources of light and the environmental circumstances prevalent at a given moment in time do naturally modify the visual characteristics of the subject in question. Solso (1994: 45) claims that in this respect, the viewer's experience of any artwork does begin with the sensorial reception of the range of light signals that the relevant object reflects, but it then concludes with their composition into a meaningful and logical entity, which is finally interpreted accordingly by the viewer's mind. In this way, we create what the author likes to call "the final perception". Moreover, Bordwell and Thompson (1990: 133) argue that light has the unique ability to lead the eyes of the viewer on the screen and thus reveal to them the following

sequences of the image, at the same time obscuring the irrelevant and elevat-
ing the critical.[2] Monaco (2009: 218-19) adds to the debate by stating that
luminance patterns help to "modify the meanings of form, line, and colour,
and their intrinsic interests". Continuing along this line of thought, Millerson
(1991: 10) invests this directorial tool with the ability to convince the audi-
ence, keep them engrossed in what is happening on the screen, and contrib-
ute to the impression of "depth, solidity, texture, <and> form" of the visual
channel. This argument is also found in the discourse led by Geuens (2000:
164). He claims that lighting brings together the fictional characters and the
viewer, thus functioning as a subtle (though powerful) link and leveller.

As can be inferred from the aforementioned studies, light and contrast
assume a leading role in the meaning formation of a film narrative. This is
why the successful understanding and proper appreciation of these elements
will result in immediate positive outcomes both in terms of comprehensive
film reading and also in many translation activities such as subtitling, dub-
bing, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing or audio description. In this
respect, this paper also aims to elevate the role of luminance patterns in bridg-
ing the gap between directorial intentions and the viewer's final response. The
article's main objective is to attempt to categorize the whole range of explicit
and implicit meanings that viewers normally discern from the implemented
luminance solutions, and to localize their position in the process of film read-
ing. In order to amplify the concept of film meaning and interpretation, this
article will carry out a thorough investigation of the existing lighting modali-
ties and measure their potential in fulfilling the cinematographic purpose.

2. Film meaning: composition, acquisition and organization

With the exception of some hermetic and stylistically sophisticated movies,
most films can be successfully understood by the average audience. However,
owing to the social pressure that assumes the existence of a single interpre-
tation of the director's message, as well as because of the lack of a universal
tradition of extensive imagery consumption, the range of reading dimensions
of a motion picture still seems to be limited. Ostaszewski (1999: 63) and Staf-
ford (2007: 78 & 81) claim that in this respect, any discussion concerning
cinematic reality should begin by saying that films, much like words, have
no meaning in themselves and therefore function as mere representations
of relevant concepts. It is only in specific cultural and social contexts that

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2. A claim supported by Nelmes (2003: 70) and Mital *et al.* (2011).

they reveal their (intended) significance and are consequently brought to life. However, in the case of motion pictures, there is never only one interpretation. Every viewer, depending on their background, reads the relevant image differently, so it cannot be assumed that all members of the audience will report the same artistic experiences and understand the message of the film in the same way. One may neither anticipate nor faithfully predict each viewer's exact response. Nevertheless, it is through the audience's acquired ability to attribute significance to films, and their interaction with the visual stimuli, that the range of possible cinematic interpretations can experience constant and creative growth. As Solso (1994: 147) puts it, art is not only to be visually perceived, but first and foremost to be mentally processed, localized and positioned. Monaco (2009: 189) repeats this claim by considering cinema "an art and a medium of extensions and indexes", with a large proportion of the ultimate meaning coming from the constant interplay of, and the alternating between, the seen and unseen. This argument coincides with Stafford's (2007: 83) deliberations on film intertextuality – some motion pictures allude to meanings already seen in other productions which, when combined, give the full image of what the current material is about. Discarding therefore the concept of one correct film reading and adding to the processes of cinematographic artwork consumption the figure of an 'active viewer', this assumption gives way to the successful perception of motion pictures' metonymical and metaphorical dimensions. (Ostaszewski 1999: 63) In addition to what Bordwell and Thompson (1990: 40) refer to as "explicit meanings" (i.e. obvious conclusions to be drawn from the relevant image), the range of film reading modalities identified by said authors extends to:

– Referential cues – concepts based upon a viewer's background knowledge and their ability to recognize the relationships between respective film subjects, which manifest themselves vividly in von Trier´s productions. Think for instance of *Antichrist* (2009), where a consciousness of the director´s personal disposition (i.e. thinking outside the fictional frame) is vital for the viewer to be able to follow and understand the plot.
– Implicit meanings – at times ambiguous, vague messages to be read on the basis of inferential activities and deeper reflection. For instance, in the film *Equilibrium* (2002, Wimmer) the metaphor of human cynicism, hypocrisy, and moral destruction is carried between the lines, subtly suggested to the viewer in the guise of a fictional city called Libra.

– Symptomatic meanings – figures by which the director intends to call on audience's set of moral values, thus creating a story with implications about the world and the times we live in. For example, the consequences of excessive perfectionism and preoccupation with appearances may lead to irreversible decay and psychological disturbances, as depicted in *Black Swan* (2010, Aronofsky).

The different categories of meaning mentioned above correspond to denotative and connotative planes identified by Orero (2012): on the one hand, an image is only what one perceives with one's own eyes and there is nothing more to it. On the other hand, apart from being simply a physical reflection of existing objects and shapes, some visual stimuli allude to or refer to more complex, contextually embedded and metaphorical issues, which, in order to be successfully recognized by the audience, require proper background knowledge and schema activation. (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 19) According to Ostaszewski, this in turn is immediately reflected in the processes of film understanding and interpretation. While with the former there is a significant risk of reading a given piece of cinematographic art literally and thus discarding it as incoherent and illogical, the latter works on the assumption that the viewer will go beyond the obvious, operate on a more global scale, and put seemingly irrelevant pieces of information together so as to arrive at a meaningful conclusion. Since both activities are known to be mutually complementary, it is virtually impossible to tell them apart. As a matter of fact, in order to understand a given image, he asserts that one has to interpret it and vice versa. Since the composition of motion pictures is a logical process combining various interactive and mutually dependent codes, understanding and deciphering the cues of any film requires both active thinking and attentive form reading. Finally, he claims that the more elaborate the cognitive effort, the more visible the stylistic distinctiveness and specificity of the piece of art in question (1999: 73-74 and 102, 168). As Solso observes (1994: 96), the above mentioned argument has been broadly supported by gestalt psychologists, and was ultimately reflected in the notion of *Prägnanz,* as these scientists discovered a tendency for the human brain to look for carefully and regularly structured patterns and revealed a far-reaching though not easily definable discomfort with disturbed forms and shapes. This accounts for the way that many film directors resort to "bad" figures in order to allow their audience to develop their own, creative ideas and conclusions, and enjoy the whole spectrum of possible scene significances. However, as Ostaszewski (1999: 77) claims, this 'abstract thinking' can only be put into practice voluntarily.

Obviously, not only will every viewer have different expectations as to what a given film represents, but they will also vary in their level of personal engagement and, consequently, in the spectrum of meaning they infer. On the other hand, advanced processing activities and broader visual competence guarantee the discovery of all possible contexts and levels of significance, since the missing links needed for successful form reading are often to be found in the language of such ambiguous tools as cinematographic conventions.

3. Cinematographic conventions as a mode of conveying meaning

The aspect of *the how* of shooting a film has long been elevated in literature discussing film studies. Its importance in the construction of film meaning was noted as early as 1975, when Chafe carried out his experiment broadly known as *Pear Stories* (Orero 2008). A group of American students were asked to provide a summary of a short film designed specifically for the purposes of the research in question. It turned out that instead of following a narrative approach and engaging in the plot, their initial commentaries related to the camera set-up, colours, and other visual techniques used in the clip, a conclusion of tremendous importance in terms of both media accessibility and the context of audiovisual translation. It shows that one cannot discard some aspects of film production as irrelevant or assume that the meaning to be conveyed must always be examined in isolation from the cinematographic conventions employed. Furthermore, this supports the idea that motion pictures are preliminarily perceived as collages of technological solutions to which viewers add their own logical interpretations, and activate more elaborate reasoning. This is not to say that the form is superior to the content, indeed quite the opposite; both form and content need to be seen as harmonious and mutually dependent dimensions aimed at the disclosure of all possible shades of significance and clues (Ostaszewski 1999: 64). Any technique employed by a particular artist potentially enriches the reception of the relevant material, providing it with a certain spirit and character. As Monaco (2009: 189) puts it, the ultimate power of cinema lies more in the way relevant images are presented than in what they actually show, and according to Bordwell and Thompson (1990: 41), "it is the form of the film that gives the familiar saying an unfamiliar weight". It is therefore only in a specifically determined context that the techniques employed acquire a deeper meaning and cease to be plain use of technology. However, following Fix and Morgner's claim (2005: 131), while watching a film we do not individually analyze every single cinematic technique, but instead automatically embrace the overall effect, possibly without even being aware of their purposeful interplay. Many directors of

photography stress this paradox when talking about their work, at times employing elaborate solutions in order to support the final feeling of the movie, even though the audience remains indifferent. They often downplay these effects, claiming that they did not contribute in any relevant way to the development of the plot (Geuens 2000: 151). This is partly because directors use a whole battery of specific tools and techniques which subtly lead the viewer's eyes on the screen with the intention of revealing meaning to us. Mital *et al.* (2011) claim that such intentional capturing of the attention of the viewer ensues by means of external (exogenous) stimuli, such as luminance and color.

4. Light and contrast techniques – meaningful language without words

When analyzing the role of luminance patterns in cinema, one must depart from the very basic assumption that it is light that brings all objects to life by making them visible to human eye and providing them with a certain shape, tangibility, and temperature. Whilst, as Revault acknowledges (2003: 9), this process occurs more or less arbitrarily and reveals a significant lack of hierarchical structure, the employment of luminance patterns in cinema is subject to a strict and logical strategy, specifically aimed at conveying certain meaning and significance. This argument is reflected in the words of one of the greatest directors in the history of cinema, Fellini, who once acknowledged that:

> Light is the very substance of a film. In film […] light is ideology, feeling, color, tone, profundity, atmosphere, storytelling. Light is what adds, cancels out, reduces, exalts, enriches, creates nuances, underlines, alludes to; it makes the fantastic and the dream believable and acceptable or, on the other hand, makes reality fantasy and turns everyday drabness into mirage; it adds transparency, suggests tensions and vibrations. Light […] creates expression where none exists, endows dullness with intelligence, makes the insipid seductive. Light outlines the elegance of the body, glorifies a countryside which may be nothing by itself, gives a background magic. […] Whatever is made on film lives by means of light. […] Films are written in light, their style expressed by means of light. (Fellini & Grazzini 1988: 154-157)

Over the course of time, patterns of light and contrast have begun to enjoy increased importance within the cinematographic environment, with the heaviest burden of meaning continuously being shifted from mere setting illumination to emotion and plot expression (Gutiérrez San Miguel 2002: 101). The catalogue of further possible interpretations of luminance language, albeit far from complete, is as follows:

a) Editing tools: content classification and hierarchy

– According to Anderson *et al.* (2005: 154-155), lighting patterns influence the distribution, frequency, and intensity of eye fixations in the viewer. In a relatively unanimous setting, the objects highlighted by means of a purposeful play on light and shadow will naturally attract more attention than the rest of the elements present on the screen. Therefore, even if only subconsciously, the viewer will instantly refocus and place the feature in question on the fovea, simultaneously creating certain hierarchical structure of film content (Solso 1994: 136). Consider for instance the following screenshot from the movie *The Dark* (2005, Fawcett) (figure 1. Full-colour illustration available in appendix, page XXX):

The window selectively illuminated against the background of a gloomy, dark house calls for the attention of the audience and allows them to make assumptions about what will happen next, and where. This non-verbal label therefore serves as a mental shortcut to realizing the directorial priorities and purposes – highlighting the important and obscuring the irrelevant helps the viewer focus on what the director wants to say and, as Geuens states, "ends up regulating our access to the field. It tells us where to look" (2000: 162).

The same mechanism for capturing an audience's focus can be observed with objects shot using backlight, which, according to Musburger and Kindem
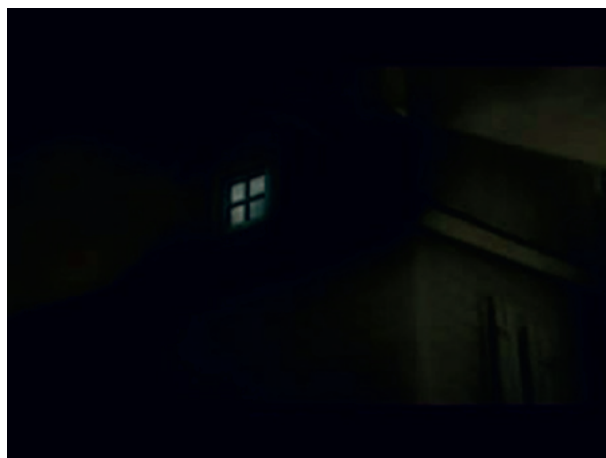
Figure 1: selectively highlighted objects as attention control in the viewer

(2009: 243), also creates the additional effect of halo, separating physical shapes from the static background.

b) Scene punctuation marks, i.e. luminance patterns as film and scene
   writing tools with the potential to introduce new spatio-temporal
   circumstances (Ostaszewski 1999: 127)

   – According to Arijon (2010: 540), lighting set-ups function as markers
     for the passing of time, symbolizing the end of one relevant *cinemato-
     graphic sentence* and the beginning of another (e.g. by means of colors
     fading into black, white screen at the end of a given shot, etc.). At
     this point it is crucial to make a distinction between what Campbell
     calls 'snap-outs' and 'slow fades' (2004: 83). While the former is used
     to support the fast pace of the action and provide the viewers "with
     an after-image impressed on their retinas", the latter is considered

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figures 2-6: Images showing the use of light as a scene punctuation mark

to allow the audience the necessary time to deal with the emotions triggered by the relevant image and let the experience sink in to their consciousness. Recall, for instance, the scene from *The Hangover* (2009, Phillips), where the characters wake up in the morning and find themselves totally perplexed. The leap between the previous scene, which is shot on the roof of the hotel at night, and the second, which is presented in plain morning light (see figures 2 and 6), could therefore be seen as a *cinematographic full stop*. The changing of the scenes, shot in fast lane with the city lights rapidly merging from dusk into dawn and the screen finally fading into white further supports the notion of a crazy night life and subsequent mental blackout which the characters are known to have experienced (see figures 3 to 5):

c) Story-telling tools

– Following the assertion made by Rockett (1988: 100), careful choice of appropriate lighting set-ups can contribute to, and indeed intensify, the general viewing experience and thus create an additional, non-verbal story line (e.g. using a gradual shift of the characters from the shadows into the light as a means of revealing them becoming clever and independent).[3] The visual representation of the mood of the setting and its expressiveness constitute an integral part of a film's reception and perception. These are widely known to help introduce the viewer to the fictional world with which he is being confronted, bridge the gap between the physically unreachable reality lived by the characters on the screen and its mental representation developed individually by the audience, and also conceive a background for what is going to happen next (Geuens 2000: 164). The implemented luminance solutions can therefore successfully act as a substitute for dialogue and present the viewer with the unique opportunity to make his own (albeit cognitively advanced) inferences about the plot's development, a critical issue in the field of audio description and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing. Consider for instance the following screenshots (figures 7 – 11) from *Black Swan* (2010, Aronofsky):

3. A concept embraced for instance in *The milk of sorrow* (2009, Llosa). See Oppenheimer (2010: 33).

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9
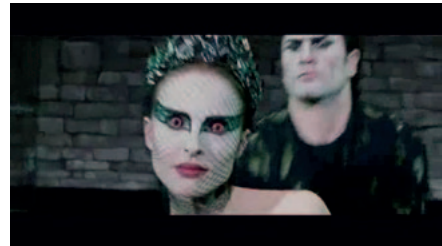
Figure 10

Figure 11

Figures 7-11: Images showing the use of light as a complementary story line

The sequence of these figures is not arbitrary. The images portray the gradual change of the main character, Nina, who from being a disturbed girl becomes a self-conscious, determined, albeit ultimately trapped woman. The luminance patterns employed support the story line and add to the narrative: Nina's room and the scenes when she is talking to her mother are shot using pale, grayish colors. Later in the movie, as she starts to gain confidence, she visits the disco, where the strobe lights symbolize the sharp contrast with her domestic life and mark the beginning of a tremendous change she is about to experience. The very last sequences of the movie, when Nina performs her dream ballet, are full of acute, cold lighting, which acts as a metaphor for cruel perfectionism and a deadly obsession with appearance. The play on

light, contrast, and color saturation throughout the film thus corroborates the objective concept of Nina's dreadful transformation, at the same time fulfilling the role of the silent commentator of the cinematographic events (Sipos 2010: 140).

d) Tools triggering emotion and shaping perception

As previously claimed, the function of light in cinema extends far beyond mere pragmatics, i.e. making objects visible to the human eye. Furthermore, it is considered an active figurant in the cinematographic event, capable of establishing a harmonious interaction with the viewer's memory and his sense of aesthetics. Therefore, it serves as a vehicle for both knowledge and cognition: through combining light and shadow patterns, the director of photography can evoke certain emotional and mental states in the audience and thus position the relevant image within their personal experience and memory frames (Geuens 2000: 159). Naturally, there will be no two identical interpretations of the same visual input. Despite the objectively structured physical context in which it is being shown (i.e. color, shape, texture, etc.), every piece of art will be perceived from the perspective of the personal history and background of each viewer (Solso 1994: 101). According to Brown (1996: 12), the manifestation of these mechanisms ensues through:

–   The cultural dimension of the implemented luminance pattern: i.e. an audience's ability to connote the inherent characteristics of lighting patterns employed with their emotional load and socially approved significance, e.g. *dark* = 'evil, unknown' *vs. light* = 'good, familiar'. These contrasting qualities have been widely used by horror movie makers: while night settings and characters shot in shadows create a tremendous sense of terror, foreboding, and lack of space, scenes lit with and objects positioned in daylight introduce a sensation of safety and strip the atmosphere of mystery (Rockett 1988: 100,102). Consider for instance these juxtaposing screenshots from *The Lovely Bones* (2009, Jackson):

The sharp contrast between the first three images (figures 12 to 14) and the last three (figures 15 to 17) allows the viewer to make clear assumptions about the disposition of the characters. Note for instance the difference in color and shadow distribution. Figures 12, 13 and 14 (i.e. those depicting Susie, the girl who falls victim to an atrocious murder) are radiant, vibrant, full of light and show blissful harmony. By contrast, figures 15, 16 and 17 (which

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14
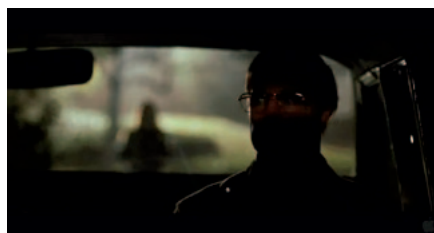
Figure 15

Figure 16
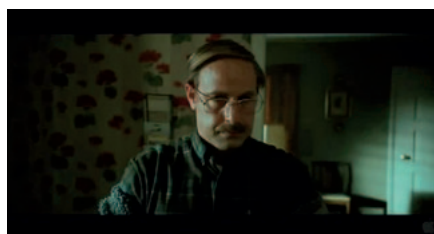
Figure 17

Figures 12-17: Images showing the different uses of light and shadow effects as the character's disposition is revealed

illustrate the murderer) make excessive use of shadows, dim light and grayish interiors. This observation also corresponds to the argument put forward by Dyer (1997: 61-64) who claims that it has already become a common practice to reserve bright colors (especially pale skin, blond hair and vivid settings) for good characters, and to present bad characters in twilight or cold dusk, and with obviously darker physical characteristics.[4]

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4. With the exception of the concept of subverted canons: i.e. revealing new meaning by presenting a conventional form in an unconventional context (see Solso 1994: 244).

Another way of communicating drama or mystery is the purposeful use of underlight and sidelight. Monaco (2009: 219) sees these techniques as successful vehicles for threat revelation, which, according to De Fez (2007: 146), work together with sharp contrasts, exaggerated characterization and rich décor, to make up the aesthetic whole of the cinematographic image.

–   The psychological potential of lighting set-ups is supported by the viewer's ability to recognize the correlation between the employed color saturation and its metaphorical significance, e.g. *red/orange* = 'hot, dreamy', *blue/silver* = 'cold, real'. The juxtaposition of acutely shot interiors and warm surfaces has been widely used by cinematographers to influence and shape the audience's perception of a given scene: following Malkiewicz's assertion (1986: 9), greens and blues

Figure 18

Figure 19
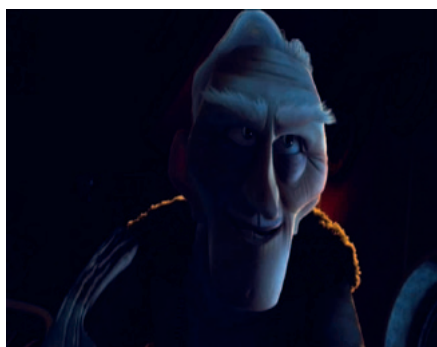
Figure 20

Figure 21

Figures 18-21: Images illustrating the use of light a tool to trigger a psychological response

function in cinema as visual metaphors of night and twilight, whereas oranges, reds and yellows tend to heighten the emotional response of the viewer's nervous system and subsequently increase the spectator's heartbeat (a concept to be further investigated with respect to movies adaptations for the blind). Sharp cuts between such scenes make the viewers recognize the changes in the characters' disposition and help them adjust their attitude to the relevant plot development. Look at the screenshots from Pixar's *Up* (2009, Docter and Peterson) (figures 18 to 21):

Following the commentary provided by the director of cinematography on the supplementary DVD track, this abrupt change of color shades within the one scene was meant to complement the drama that was about to take place. The romantic, reddish ambient light used during the dinner is replaced by a wintery, piercing blue which reveals the real intentions of Muntz and his true, heartless character. The cozy illusion of a miraculous meeting with the childhood hero changes into a difficult and dangerous fight against the evil exploiter of wild-life, a concept evidently supported by sharper contrast and alternating color temperature.

Apart from the interpretation mentioned above, red and blue (depending on context), are also attributed (though not limited to) the following, juxtaposed characteristics (as outlined in Brill 2006: 174-175):

– predation vs. victimization;
– danger vs. resistance;
– alarm vs. safety;

However, the question of the incorporation of colors into the cinematographic image should be approached both cautiously and meticulously, for, as Bordwell and Thompson put it, "films can also use color to enhance the functions of their settings" (1990: 130). It is therefore critical for the cinematographer to carefully observe the relationships between light and the subconscious, and memorize them as a repetitive pattern and then use them appropriately when working on a scene with a similar feeling (Malkiewicz 1986: 1).

– Providers of kinetic energy, with their ability to add to the atmosphere of suspension of a given scene and to engender a general sensation of fear and curiosity in the audience (Sipos 2010: 170): it is a constant theme repeated in the literature surrounding visual perception that that which cannot be easily seen (i.e. the obscured) encourages and propels the imagination, thus at the same time contributing to the

general viewing experience in the same way as the visible (Malkie-wicz 1986: 2). Reduced control over what is occurring on the screen makes the lurking danger even more evident, which in turn directly translates into the emotional response of the viewer to the relevant image: irregular, sporadic, even piercing flashing lights cast against the background of deep night perfectly transmit the suspense, thus making the spectator anxious to see what will happen next. Recall one of the scenes from *Irreversible* (2002, Noé) (illustrated below in figures 22 – 26), where the main character is obsessively looking for the rapist in a night club:

The prevailing darkness of the club is only lit by an orange bulb hanging loo-sely from the ceiling. The camera moves rapidly and carelessly, at times even turned upside down, and one can barely recognize the shapes encountered by the character on the way. The obscure and narrow hallways create the

Figure 22
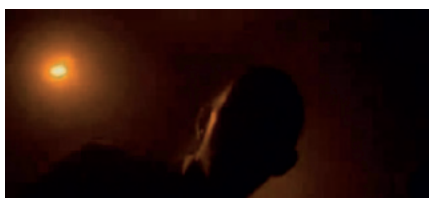
Figure 23
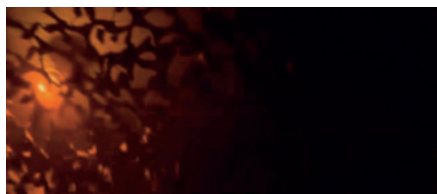
Figure 24
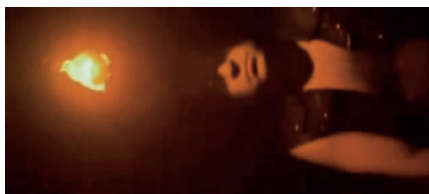
Figure 25
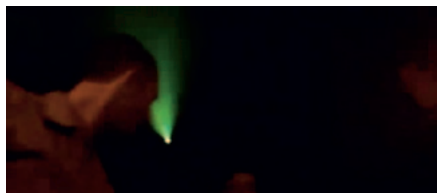
Figure 26

Figures 22-26: Images illustrating the use of flashing light as a provider of kinetic energy

atmosphere of a dangerous and dubious underground. The aggressive, though infrequent light of the strobe also contributes to the experience of unease, of a hectic situation, and of emotional vertigo. One cannot be sure what will happen; the ambience of the scene could easily be characterized as accidental as everything is illuminated for only a split second. The image seems to be alive, with every flash of light revealing another piece of scarring reality. However, attempts to localize the source of the light are bound to fail: When will it shine again? From which perspective will it illuminate the characters? What will it reveal next time? And if it makes the interiors more visible, does the viewer really want to see the result? These are the questions the director of photography leaves largely unanswered, making the audience feel uneasy or uncertain as to the original intention of the image designer.

Concluding remarks

The meaning one extracts from any relevant piece of cinematographic art is the sum of myriad complementary planes individually interpreted by every viewer. Even though it may seem impossible to maintain the required highly advanced processing and perceptive activities at all existing levels of significance, it is claimed in the surrounding literature that broad visual literacy and extensive knowledge of filmic language guarantee better understanding of the film itself, and of its distinctive features. Focusing specifically on light and contrast patterns may indeed seem difficult, since both of these modalities correspond to the natural rhythm of day and night, and as such tend to be treated as cinematographically irrelevant. However, within the scope of the present article it has been shown that luminance patterns have the unique ability to create complementary realities as an additional storytelling tool to the scene itself, and so help support the viewing experience. They serve not only to direct the audience's attention, but also to create the mood of the filmic sequence, and thus evoke certain emotional responses which would all tie in with the initial idea of the director. The background created by lighting set-ups greatly contributes to the saturation of the audiences' imaginations, complementing and carrying on the plot, reflecting the characters' points of view and, at the same time, filling in the gaps between dialogues. Light has therefore been considered a meaningful and powerful language, which, even though operating without words, continues to speak to the mind of the viewer. Its functional scope has been slowly but surely to augment and reach out to the perceptual, psychological, and referential dimensions of the viewer.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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PERCEPCIÓN VISUAL Y TRADUCCIÓN AUDIOVISUAL: LA MIRADA DIRIGIDA

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Resumen

En este trabajo, partimos de la premisa de que las destrezas perceptuales innatas necesarias para entender una obra audiovisual son idénticas a las de la percepción visual natural (Grodal 1999: 76). La percepción es una forma inconsciente y natural de interpretar nuestro entorno gracias a la experiencia previa y al aprendizaje. Sostenemos, en contra de la creencia profundamente arraigada en Occidente de que la imagen es universal y verdadera, que la percepción visual es un proceso cognitivo determinado por la experiencia previa, el ambiente, el contexto, los valores culturales y la motivación. En este trabajo vamos a estudiar la aplicación de las investigaciones cognitivas sobre percepción visual en las estrategias narrativas audiovisuales, así como sus implicaciones en el estudio del proceso de traducción audiovisual y en el de su recepción.

Abstract

"Visual perception and audiovisual translation: directed vision"

This paper is based on the premise that "some of the basic skills needed to understand film and television are identical to those necessary for natural visual perception" (Grodal 1999: 76). Perception is an unconscious and natural way of interpreting our environment based on prior experience and learning. In contrast to the deeply rooted Western belief that image is universal and true, our argument is that visual perception is a cognitive process determined by prior experience, environment, context, cultural values and motivation. This paper analyzes the application of cognitive research on visual perception in audiovisual narrative strategies and its implications for the study of the audiovisual translation process and of its reception.

1. Introducción

Tema de muchos tratados filosóficos desde Aristóteles, y objeto de un gran volumen de experimentación en psicología, la percepción visual sigue siendo una gran desconocida fuera de los ámbitos especializados. Por ello, y a pesar de las numerosas evidencias contrarias, algunas, como las ilusiones ópticas, muy conocidas por el gran público (recordemos la famosa copa de Rubin utilizada por la Gestalt), perduran dos creencias sobre la percepción visual: todos vemos lo mismo; la imagen es, pues, universal. Lo que vemos es la realidad, por lo tanto la imagen no miente. Estas creencias están tan profundamente arraigadas en nuestra manera de pensar que creemos más lo que vemos que lo que oímos. En nuestra opinión, también ha incidido en los enfoques analíticos de la traducción audiovisual al considerarla una traducción subordinada.

La percepción es un proceso cognitivo básico y complejo que permite interpretar y comprender la información recibida a través de los sentidos. Es una forma innata y natural de interpretar el entorno, esencial para nuestra supervivencia. Para seguir y entender una obra audiovisual utilizamos destrezas perceptuales innatas idénticas a las de la percepción visual natural (Grodal 1999: 76); pero, a diferencia de la natural, la percepción de la obra audiovisual la conduce un narrador que se apoya en los mecanismos de la percepción natural con la intención de dirigir la atención del espectador mediante estrategias narrativas perceptuales, que son el resultado de una simbiosis entre los distintos elementos narrativos, visuales y auditivos (imagen, música, sonido ambiente, voz).

Tal como señalaba Bravo (2003), las investigaciones sobre traducción audiovisual no han abordado en profundidad ni el estudio del lenguaje fílmico y sus estrategias narrativas, ni la subordinación de la traducción a la imagen y los problemas que esta plantea. Incluso podríamos añadir que resulta llamativa la cantidad de trabajos de investigación que analizan diálogos doblados o subtítulos sin ofrecer un análisis de los elementos narrativos de la imagen o, ni siquiera, una simple descripción de la imagen. Es muy posible que una de las razones sea la falta de un marco teórico consistente para el análisis de la imagen.

El cine solamente tiene un siglo de antigüedad, y otros medios audiovisuales, menos de 50 años, lo que es poco tiempo en términos de investigación. Sin embargo, en los últimos años las aportaciones en este campo han evolucionado rápidamente gracias a los grandes avances técnicos que han propiciado, por una parte, el desarrollo vertiginoso de los soportes audiovisuales y, por otra, los grandes avances en neurociencia gracias a la imagen por resonancia magnética funcional.

En este trabajo, en primer lugar repasaremos los principios de la psicología cognitiva sobre la percepción. En segundo lugar, ofreceremos una propuesta para analizar las estrategias narrativas fílmicas mediante la aplicación de los principios de la percepción y sus estrategias perceptivas. Por último, como creemos que las investigaciones en traducción audiovisual deberían dejar de considerar la imagen como una secundaria de lujo y abordar la creación de una metodología de análisis específica de la traducción audiovisual que incluya la percepción visual, señalaremos algunas posibles aplicaciones de nuestra propuesta a la traducción audiovisual.

2. Percepción

La percepción es un proceso cognitivo primario anterior al lenguaje y que ha formado parte de nuestra evolución. Los avances en neurociencia en los últimos tiempos facilitan la comprensión de este proceso cognitivo, a la vez extremadamente complejo y primario.

Según Fuster (2010), las memorias y objetos mentales de conocimiento están constituidos por amplias redes de neuronas, llamadas cógnitos, que se van asociando entre sí con la experiencia ambiental y educativa del individuo para, de este modo, formar redes más amplias. Es un proceso acumulativo constante en el que cógnitos nuevos modifican o sustituyen a los viejos. Los estímulos externos coincidentes no solo se asocian entre sí, sino que también lo hacen con redes preexistentes que contienen elementos semejantes. Esta capacidad combinatoria es prácticamente infinita e idiosincrásica (Fuster 2007: 61).

Un cógnito es una unidad de conocimiento o de memoria en la corteza cerebral, que contiene asociados entre sí todos los elementos de la percepción o acción relacionados con un hecho, un objeto, un acontecimiento vivido o una experiencia (Fuster 2010: S4).

Las redes se estructuran en dos jerarquías con base sensorial y motora. La jerarquía perceptual representa cógnitos definidos por parámetros sensoriales primarios y cógnitos perceptivos individuales. Como base de partida de todas las memorias, tanto perceptuales como ejecutivas, está la memoria filética,

que es parte de la memoria genética adquirida en el curso de la evolución como medio de adaptación al medioambiente. Esta memoria innata se reactiva con actos perceptivos o motores. Mucha de esta activación es inconsciente como la percepción de eventos ordinarios salvo que ocurra algo inesperado (Fuster 2010: S6-7).

2.1. Acto de ver

Dentro de los estudios de la psicología cognitiva dedicados a los procesos cognitivos de la percepción, encontramos dos teorías: la ecologista y la constructivista. Descartamos la primera por arbitraria y contraria a las evidencias de la neurociencia, ya que postula que la percepción es un proceso directo sin construcción y que almacenamos la información tal como la percibimos. Para la segunda el proceso de ver es activo, y nuestra visión del mundo se construye con información del entorno y con información almacenada; la percepción no es una copia de la realidad, sino una representación de la realidad que debe ser interpretada. Esta propuesta supuso un giro respecto al enfoque tradicional del estudio de la percepción visual, ya que hasta entonces el modelo predominante partía del supuesto de que los mecanismos cognitivos de la percepción son pasivos y que vemos lo que nuestros ojos ven.

Ilustramos este cambio de perspectiva con una representación didáctica del sistema visual muy difundida en los libros de texto de los años 70. Se trataba de una imagen muy similar a la de la ilustración 1. Según esta, el estímulo visual (A) se transforma en la imagen invertida de una silueta de mujer (B) en el propio ojo, y el cerebro se limita a invertirla.

Gracias a los grandes avances tecnológicos de las últimas décadas, las investigaciones en neurología y neurobiología han demostrado que no son los ojos los que ven, sino el cerebro: la corteza visual, para ser precisos. El
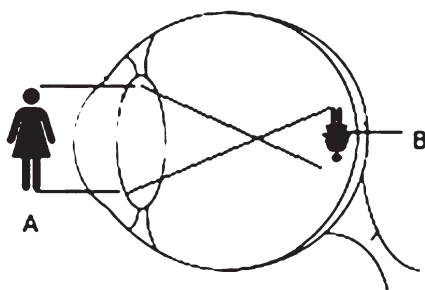
Ilustración 1
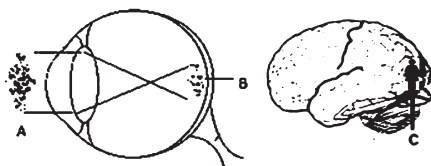
Ilustración 2

ojo recibe el brillo de la luz, sus células fotorreceptoras responden al estimu-
lo luminoso mediante un impulso nervioso que, a su vez, sale del ojo por el
nervio óptico y llega a la corteza visual, donde se interpretan estos impulsos y
se produce la visión. En la ilustración 2 hemos esquematizado de forma rudi-
mentaria ese proceso. A y B representan el brillo de la luz captada por el ojo, y
C es el resultado de la interpretación visual, la imagen de una silueta de mujer.

Como se puede apreciar, la percepción visual no es pasiva, sino que está
motivada, tiene intención, es un acto, el acto de ver; dicho de otro modo,
vemos lo que queremos ver. Pero no somos conscientes de este proceso, salvo
que ocurra algo inesperado, ya que es un acto automático y reflejo (Fuster
2010: S7).

2.2. Esquemas perceptuales

La percepción es una actividad esencial para la adaptación del organismo a
un entorno específico, y, dado que ese entorno es cambiante, la actividad per-
ceptual debe adaptarse a esos cambios. Percibir es, pues, una construcción
del sujeto que deriva de la relación establecida entre presente y pasado, y
que depende de la habilidad y experiencia del perceptor (Neisser 1976). La
percepción depende de estructuras preexistentes, denominadas esquemas, las
cuales dirigen la actividad perceptual y se modifican en su transcurso. El es-
quema integra la información que llega a los sentidos y se transforma a causa
de esa información; ese mismo esquema dirige los movimientos y las activi-
dades exploratorias para tener acceso a una información posterior que acaba
modificando el esquema (Neisser 1981: 67).

Al constituir un esquema anticipatorio, el perceptor se centra en un acto
que compromete tanto a la información del ambiente como a sus propios
mecanismos cognitivos. Es transformado por la información que adquiere.
La transformación no es una cuestión de crear una réplica interna donde an-
teriormente no existía nada, sino más bien de alterar el esquema perceptivo
de tal modo que el siguiente acto siga un curso distinto (Neisser 1981: 70).

El esquema perceptual es una estructura activa de búsqueda de información mediante la detección y análisis de la información relevante de nuestro entorno para anticipar efectos, que, a su vez, modifican el esquema en un proceso circular, denominado ciclo percepción-acción (Neisser 1981), ciclo que no necesita de la consciencia (Fuster 2010: S7).

2.3. Percepción del color

Aunque aún estemos lejos de saber a ciencia cierta cómo funciona nuestro cerebro, la neurobiología nos ha aportado pruebas muy valiosas sobre la percepción del color, la cual nos sirve para ilustrar lo que acabamos de plantear.

Tal como apuntaba Goethe cuando dijo que "los colores son acciones y tormentos de la luz" (Aparici y García 2009: 82), sabemos que la luz es la fuente de los colores y que su reflexión en los objetos iluminados determina la percepción del color de una superficie. Pero también sabemos que la cantidad de luz reflejada en una superficie cambia continuamente, lo que plantea inquietantes interrogantes: ¿por qué no percibimos esos cambios en la coloración de una superficie?, ¿por qué nuestro jersey rojo favorito sigue siendo rojo bajo la luz del sol y bajo la luz de un fluorescente, y, en el mejor de los casos, solo percibimos un ligero cambio en la tonalidad? Cierto es que, como apunta sensatamente el neurobiólogo Zeki (2000: 4), "el mundo se volvería un lugar muy extraño si el color de una superficie se alterara con cada cambio en la composición de la luz".

Gracias a las técnicas de imágenes diagnósticas de los procesos cerebrales, se ha localizado el centro neurálgico donde se produce la operación que permite percibir el color o construirlo: el complejo *V4*. El hecho de que el complejo *V4* resulta fundamental para la construcción del color se hace patente en los casos clínicos descritos sobre pacientes con lesiones en esa zona y con aparato visual de retina normal, pacientes que solo pueden percibir tonalidades de grises. El color no es en sí mismo una propiedad de los objetos, sino la interpretación que el cerebro hace de esa propiedad y un eficiente mecanismo de señalización biológica (Zeki 2000). Así, la percepción del color tiene una función, es un acto de ver motivado por la necesidad de conocer las propiedades de las cosas de manera instantánea y muy eficiente. Por ejemplo, existe la teoría de que la mayor facilidad de la que gozan las mujeres para percibir colores tiene su origen en la época neolítica, cuando una de las tareas femeninas principales era la recolección, por lo que necesitaban localizar rápidamente las frutas entre la vegetación y distinguir su punto de maduración (Gegenfurtner y Rieger 2000).

Si el color no es una propiedad de los objetos sino una interpretación de nuestra mente, podemos deducir que nuestra percepción del color dependerá de factores evolutivos y ambientales, o, dicho de otra manera, de factores de origen genético, social o cultural.

Esto último no sorprenderá a los lingüistas, ya que la lingüística antropológica ha dedicado muchos estudios a las diferencias de categorización léxica del color entre distintas lenguas, hecho bien conocido por los traductores y que plantea que el lenguaje determina nuestra percepción del color. Aunque aceptamos que la lengua pueda determinar en alguna medida algunos de nuestros procesos cognitivos, no podemos suscribir esa teoría, entre otras razones porque sería tanto como decir que antes de la aparición del lenguaje no podíamos percibir los colores. Ello contradice el papel esencial que ha desempeñado la percepción en la supervivencia de la especie, y en particular el de la percepción visual del color en el éxito evolutivo de la especie humana.

Por todo ello, sostenemos que la percepción del color, y, por ende, de unos colores determinados y no otros, es intencionada y responde a su utilidad para desenvolvernos en nuestro entorno natural o en la sociedad. La percepción puede estar determinada genéticamente y puede aprenderse socialmente.

3. Percepción y comunicación audiovisual

Tal como dijimos en la introducción, consideramos que las destrezas perceptuales necesarias para entender una obra audiovisual son idénticas a las de la percepción natural, por lo que la comunicación audiovisual se rige por los mecanismos de la percepción natural. Al contrario del lenguaje, forma de comunicación consciente mediante una construcción arbitraria (la lengua), la comunicación audiovisual se basa en un proceso innato e inconsciente. Por ello, el esfuerzo cognitivo necesario para el aprendizaje de la lengua escrita es mayor que el de la oral, que aplica en mayor grado estrategias de percepción.

Si bien la comunicación audiovisual se basa en la percepción natural, a diferencia de la natural el espectador no selecciona la información más relevante ni busca la información. Uno de los logros de este tipo de comunicación es conseguir, mediante unas estrategias narrativas perceptivas visuales y sonoras, que el espectador tenga la ilusión de percibir de forma natural. A lo largo de los años, los directores han desarrollado un gran número de técnicas cinematográficas para dirigir la mente del espectador durante el visionado (Hasson *et al.* 2008: 1), arsenal que algunos de ellos aplican con gran maestría. Tanto es así, que grandes películas tienen grandes errores o fallos que pasan desapercibidos por completo para la inmensa mayoría de los espectadores, salvo que

intencionadamente los busquen. Por ejemplo, la película *Apocalypse Now*, de Francis Ford Coppola, tiene un total de 391 errores.

Planteamos la hipótesis de que la comunicación audiovisual utiliza dos tipos de estrategias narrativas audiovisuales para dirigir la percepción del espectador, unas que simulan los procesos perceptivos naturales y se basan en esquemas preexistentes (cf. apartado 2.1) y otras propias que crean nuevos esquemas perceptuales (cf. apartado 2.2).

3.1. Simulación de la percepción natural

Ocurre cuando el narrador es más invisible, cuando la cámara se convierte en los ojos del espectador. Se trata de presentar una imagen icónica y dejar que el espectador extraiga información relevante sobre situación geográfica, temporalidad, personajes. Es muy efectiva en la narración fílmica porque, en unos segundos, se puede situar una acción y localizarla en el tiempo. Por ejemplo, tomemos la primera secuencia de la película *Potiche*, dirigida por François Ozon (2010):

Una mujer de unos sesenta años haciendo jogging pasa delante de una fábrica y entra en una mansión. Delante de la mansión al lado de unos setos muy bien recortados vemos dos coches, uno negro y otro con el techo blanco y rojo estilo años 70.

En un solo plano hemos situado la época, los años 1970 y sabemos que la protagonista es una persona acomodada, seguramente de clase media alta. Asimismo, esta estrategia puede utilizarse con fines mucho más dramáticos en la narración fílmica. Cuando percibimos una imagen no pensamos que representa algo más, y, si el narrador cinematográfico nos presenta una imagen icónica, nos limitamos a aplicar esquemas perceptuales adecuados para analizar las señales ambientales que nos transmite la imagen sin doble intención. Si en la siguiente imagen o plano el narrador rompe esta representación, conseguirá sorprendernos y emocionarnos.

3.1.1. Esquemas filéticos

En este caso, esta estrategia recurre a nuestra memoria genética mediante la activación de un esquema filético. Por ejemplo, con el uso de la iluminación, en concreto de las sombras y los claroscuros, se activa un esquema filético de peligro, incertidumbre que incluso se ha reforzado en la actualidad por el hecho de que disfrutamos de un entorno muy iluminado.

3.1.2. Esquemas de percepción antropomórfica

Otra estrategia consiste en utilizar nuestros esquemas de percepción antropo-mórfica (Grodal 1999: 90), esquemas que aplicamos inconscientemente al ver una película, por esa razón identificamos el campo de la imagen con nuestro campo visual, y "nos hace creer que este espacio no se detiene en los bordes del marco, sino que se prolonga indefinidamente" (Aumont 1992: 232). Una estrategia antropomórfica muy expresiva es la que sitúa un elemento fuera de campo, detrás de la cámara, es decir, a nuestras espaldas. Otros ejemplo son el ángulo en picado, que permite una visión desde lo alto, que minimiza un personaje o banaliza una situación, y, al contrario, el contrapicado, que en-grandece el personaje o magnifica cualquier otro elemento.

3.1.3. Esquemas culturales y sociales

La imagen icónica que se menciona en el primer ejemplo de este apartado activa un esquema cultural, una estrategia muy frecuente no solo para situar geográficamente un suceso, sino también para situar socialmente a los per-sonajes. Puede ser un recurso sutil, como la imagen de la metamorfosis del paisaje a causa del paso de las estaciones, la del cambio en el vestuario o los accesorios —normalmente coches— para mostrar el ascenso social, o eviden-te, como la imagen de un reloj para marcar el tiempo.

Otra estrategia narrativa muy expresiva que activa esquemas culturales es el primer plano, con el que el espectador percibe el estado emocional de los personajes y que resulta más efectiva aún cuando las expresiones o gestos contradicen las palabras. Porque tanto los cineastas como los guionistas cono-cen y aplican el sentido de primacía de la percepción visual del espectador, es decir que este cree más lo que ve que lo que oye (Rodríguez 2009: 68).

Otra de las estrategias narrativas que se basan en esquemas culturales es el uso del color que transmite estados emocionales según su situación en la escala tonal superior o inferior.

3.1.4. Esquemas anticipatorios

Tal como vimos en el apartado dedicado a la percepción, la búsqueda de infor-mación para anticipar sucesos es el motivo principal del acto de ver. Por ello, es natural que muchas estrategias narrativas se fundamenten en esquemas anticipatorios, que, a su vez, pueden basarse en esquemas genéticos, cultu-rales, sociales o, como veremos más adelante, específicamente audiovisuales. Aunque pueden valerse solo de una imagen, la mayoría de las estrategias an-ticipatorias combinan sonido e imagen. Es el caso de la música, que advierte

al espectador de que algo malo va a ocurrir, o el sonido de una sirena, que anticipa la afluencia de personas. Otra estrategia aún más efectiva y dramática consiste en romper ese esquema anticipatorio: no hay nada más aterrador que el sonido de esa sirena acompañado de la imagen de unas calles desiertas.

3.2. *Percepción audiovisual adquirida*

"El cine reconstruye sistemas visuales que se corresponden con las reglas de la percepción, pero también a la inversa elabora una serie de convenciones a las que nos vamos adaptando hasta naturalizarlas" (Benet 2004: 201). Dentro de ese proceso circular que es el ciclo perceptivo, los esquemas, al no ser una representación estática de la realidad, poseen una alta capacidad de adaptación. No hacemos comparaciones, sino que somos capaces de reconocer nuevos estímulos e integrarlos en esquemas modificados que en el ámbito de la percepción audiovisual podríamos denominar esquemas fílmicos, esquemas televisivos, esquemas interactivos, etc.

Dicho de otra manera, hemos aprendido a ver películas, anuncios, documentales y videojuegos. Nuestra percepción audiovisual está en constante evolución, y algunos esquemas fílmicos y videográficos se transformarán en procesos perceptivos inconscientes. El primer plano, el gran primer plano y el plano detalle son ejemplos muy claros de estrategias narrativas visuales propias. A principios del siglo pasado "los primeros planos que encuadraban el busto, o incluso la cabeza, produjeron durante bastante tiempo una reacción de rechazo" (Aumont 1992: 149). Cine de ficción, documentales, series, programas televisivos y videojuegos comparten convenciones, pero también han creado sus propias convenciones, incluso cada género cinematográfico ha creado las suyas, por lo que se puede considerar la existencia de esquemas perceptivos fílmicos de terror, musicales, de animación, etc.

4. Mirada dirigida y traducción

Tal como planteamos en el apartado 2, las estrategias narrativas visuales se fundamentan en los esquemas perceptuales de los receptores de la obra audiovisual. Estos esquemas no son universales, sino que dependen de factores genéticos, culturales e individuales, entre ellos la propia experiencia audiovisual del espectador. Pero, aunque la percepción sea individual, genéticamente y físicamente nuestras diferencias son mínimas, casi irrelevantes. Esta similitud de los procesos perceptivos y su plasticidad producen una falsa sensación de simplicidad de estos procesos, lo que redunda en la sensación de que cualquiera es capaz de comprender una obra audiovisual sin conocer los

mecanismos de la comunicación audiovisual. En esta falacia caen tanto los traductores y adaptadores como los espectadores de una obra doblada o subtitulada. Estos últimos siempre atribuirán una mala comprensión de la obra a una mala traducción y nunca se plantearán si se debe a una falta de destrezas perceptivas.

Por su parte, el traductor, al desconocer o ignorar las estrategias narrativas visuales debido a ese concepto de traducción audiovisual centrado en los elementos paraverbales —concepto que implícitamente conlleva la idea de que la traducción se limita a las palabras, que las imágenes simplemente complican más la tarea o incluso la hacen imposible y que, en última instancia, el traductor se debe al guión (Zabalbeascoa 2008: 33)—, no podrá considerar en qué medida estas estrategias afectarán a la recepción de su traducción, ni de qué modo influyen en su proceso de traducción, ya que él también es un espectador de la obra audiovisual.

Ahora bien, somos conscientes de que la sensación de que la imagen encorseta o complica la traducción procede del hecho de que nos faltan herramientas que nos permitan analizar las imágenes y detectar las diferencias perceptivas del espectador original y el de la traducción.

4.1. Proceso de traducción audiovisual

El traductor, como espectador de la obra audiovisual, verá su mirada dirigida mediante estrategias narrativas visuales salvo que sea capaz de detectarlas y analizarlas. Al ser la percepción visual un proceso inconsciente, si no localiza estas estrategias narrativas visuales se convierte en un receptor pasivo de la obra, con una visión parcial de la misma. En este caso, esa percepción inconsciente puede afectar a su toma de decisiones. Sokoli (2005) compara los subtítulos de la versión española y griega de cuatro fragmentos de la película *El paciente inglés,* comparación en la que encontramos un ejemplo interesante de connotación reproducida por la imagen que ha afectado al subtitulado.

> En el primer ejemplo, el protagonista dice "I've got this much lung", haciendo un gesto con la mano que significa poco y esto se traduce por [...] (medio pulmón). Es decir, el traductor griego opta por explicar la información visual, aunque dicha información no se encuentra en el elemento acústico-verbal. (Sokoli 2005: 18)

Partimos de la premisa de que ese gesto forma parte de los esquemas perceptuales griegos, porque, en caso contrario, la autora lo hubiera señalado, por lo que planteamos la posibilidad de que el traductor no haya optado conscientemente por la explicitación de la imagen, sino que ha traducido directamente el mensaje que ha percibido, sin distinguir la fuente, visual o acústica.

Por lo tanto, es importante que el traductor se convierta en receptor experto activo y que sea capaz de analizar la percepción de la obra audiovisual del mismo modo que el traductor de un texto escrito realiza un análisis textual del texto original. Al mismo tiempo que visiona la obra para comprobar si su copia del guión concuerda con la producción final de la obra, puede identificar los elementos constitutivos de la imagen que la dotan de sentido. Más adelante, podrá tener en cuenta estos elementos para tomar decisiones y solucionar problemas de traducción. La identificación de los esquemas culturales perceptivos que se activen al visionar la secuencia permitirá al traductor comparar los esquemas del espectador original con los del espectador de la traducción, con lo que podrá optar, en el mejor de los casos, por una solución que no desvíe la mirada del espectador y, cuando la desviación sea inevitable, reducirla al máximo.

Por ejemplo, en una serie rodada en un país nórdico, como *Varg Veum*, serie de televisión dirigida por Morten Tyldum (2008), la luz solar o su ausencia, que nos sitúan visualmente en un momento determinado del día o de la noche, activan esquemas filéticos que en un principio consideramos universales; sin embargo, puede producir un efecto perturbador para un espectador español por la presencia de elementos verbales y visuales incongruentes. Este efecto es inevitable, pero el traductor, al detectarlo, puede valorar su impacto en la narración y, en función del género —de ficción o documental—, de la escena y del valor narrativo de la imagen en relación con el guión, optar por la solución más apropiada y menos perturbadora.

Quisiéramos recordar que, por desgracia, en el proceso de traducción audiovisual el traductor no suele ser el responsable del producto final, salvo quizá en el caso del subtitulado, donde el ajustador suele limitarse a arreglos técnicos. En el proceso de traducción para doblaje, en el que los estudios encargan una traducción literal al traductor, es el adaptador el que toma las decisiones últimas de traducción. Aun en el supuesto en que el adaptador sea un receptor experto en lenguaje fílmico, es complejo llegar a adquirir las competencias suficientes en la cultura original para reconocer los esquemas perceptivos culturales y sociales de los receptores originales, y tampoco creemos que sea necesario que las tenga: sería suficiente poder contar con traductores audiovisuales competentes y trabajar en un entorno cooperativo.

4.2. Recepción de la traducción audiovisual

Pensamos que el análisis de los mecanismos de la percepción visual mediante los esquemas perceptuales podría ser de mucha utilidad en los estudios sobre la recepción de la traducción audiovisual, ya que puede evitar que el peso del análisis recaiga en la traducción del guión y que se pueda contemplar la

relación entre la recepción del mensaje visual y auditivo. Un análisis sistemático de un corpus de obras originales y sus respectivas traducciones podría llegar a determinar, entre otros aspectos, si los posibles fallos en la recepción se deben a que la traducción haya desviado la atención del espectador de la dirección original, o bien si se deben a discrepancias insalvables entre los esquemas perceptivos de los receptores originales y los de los receptores de la traducción.

4.3. Competencias audiovisuales del traductor

Hemos puesto de manifiesto a lo largo de este trabajo que, en la percepción de la imagen intervienen factores genéticos, ambientales, culturales, sociales e individuales, y por ello la percepción de una misma imagen puede diferir de un espectador a otro. Por otro lado, hemos señalado que la percepción de una obra audiovisual está dirigida por un autor, que como cualquier otro autor piensa en un tipo de espectador concreto. Por lo tanto, nos parece fundamental integrar los elementos visuales en el proceso de traducción audiovisual. Al igual que al traductor de obras escritas se le exige un alto nivel de competencias lingüísticas en ambas lenguas, al traductor audiovisual se le deben exigir amplios conocimientos en lenguaje y análisis fílmico, lo que además redundaría en un mayor reconocimiento de la labor del traductor audiovisual.

Al hilo de esta cuestión, nos parece revelador el hecho de que, al contrario de lo que ocurre en la traducción literaria, donde es habitual que un traductor se especialice en un autor, en el caso de la traducción cinematográfica esa especialización es una excepción. Podemos mencionar el caso particular de Vicente Molina Foix, elegido por el cineasta Stanley Kubrick, muy conocido por su perfeccionismo y que daba tal valor al doblaje de sus películas que intervenía personalmente en el proceso, seleccionando personalmente a los directores de doblaje, actores y traductores.

5. Conclusiones

En esta primera aproximación hemos demostrado que el estudio de los esquemas perceptivos audiovisuales y su aplicación a la traducción audiovisual puede abrir nuevas vías en la investigación de la traducción audiovisual. En primer lugar, nos permitirá desarrollar en el futuro nuevas herramientas de análisis de la percepción de una obra audiovisual mediante la identificación de las estrategias narrativas que activan unos determinados esquemas perceptivos. Estas herramientas, a su vez, facilitarán el proceso y el estudio de la traducción audiovisual y podremos cambiar el concepto de traducción subordinada por el de traducción simbiótica. En segundo lugar, podremos aplicar

los resultados de esta investigación para crear una metodología de análisis específica de la traducción audiovisual.

Además, creemos que su utilidad no se limita a la traducción como producto final, sino que podrá aplicarse a los estudios sobre la recepción de la audiodescripción y de la subtitulación para sordos, ya que, cuantas más diferencias haya entre los esquemas perceptivos de los espectadores, mayor será la importancia de estas estrategias narrativas.

Para terminar, queremos señalar que las perspectivas futuras de esta línea investigación son muy alentadoras gracias al auge de los estudios sobre percepción en distintas disciplinas, como neurología, neurobiología, neuroestética, psicología cognitiva, mercadotecnia y publicidad.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Christina Lachat Leal

Christina Lachat Leal, PhD, teaches translation at the University of Granada since 1999. She has published several works related to cognitive translatology, problem solving, learning and expert knowledge in the context of the research team Petra (Expertise and environment in translation) including the book *Identificación, representación y resolución de problemas de traducción* (Identifying, representing and solving translation problems: an empirical study of the behavior of experts and novices). After her involvement in the research project TRACCE (Evaluation and management of accessibility resources for sensory disabled people through audiovisual translation), her research has incorporated visual perception and audiovisual translation.

La doctora Christina Lachat Leal, profesora del Departamento de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Granada desde el año 1999, ha publicado varios trabajos relacionados con la traductología cognitiva, la resolución de problemas, el aprendizaje y el conocimiento experto, en el marco del grupo de investigación Petra: Pericia y entorno de traducción, entre los cuales cabe destacar el libro *Identificación, representación y resolución de problemas de traducción: estudio empírico del comportamiento de expertos y principiantes*. Tras su participación en el proyecto TRACCE (Evaluación y gestión de los recursos de accesibilidad para discapacitados a través de la traducción audiovisual), sus líneas de investigación incluyen percepción visual y traducción audiovisual.

LOS PARÁMETROS QUE IDENTIFICAN EL SUBTITULADO PARA SORDOS. ANÁLISIS Y CLASIFICACIÓN

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Resumen

En los últimos años ha aumentado la presión social a favor de la accesibilidad audiovisual, lo que ha venido acompañado de un incremento en el número de productos subtitulados para sordos disponibles en el mercado. El significativo crecimiento en el número de estudios ha cuestionado la aplicación sistemática de los parámetros generales del subtitulado a la práctica del Subtitulado para Sordos (SPS). Partiendo de una propuesta de Bartoll (2008) para el estudio de los parámetros del subtitulado, el presente artículo plantea la adaptación de la taxonomía al estudio del SPS. Analizando los parámetros de naturaleza general aplicables al SPS, incorporando aquellos parámetros exclusivos de esta modalidad (la representación de la información extralingüística), y considerando las interconexiones que se establecen entre todos ellos, la nueva taxonomía busca servir en el estudio integral y detallado de cada uno de los aspectos que configuran la práctica del SPS.

Abstract

"A taxonomy on the parameters of subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. Analysis and classification"

Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard-of-Hearing (SDH) was long considered a "simple" variant of *standard* subtitling. Only recently, uprising social demands together with a growing presence of SDH materials in different international audiovisual environments, have promoted the proliferation of research initiatives on SDH practices. As a result, the systematic application to SDH of some of the parameters originally adopted for standard subtitling has proven to be controversial. This paper presents a proposal for the specific analysis of SDH parameters. Based on a taxonomy developed

by Bartoll (2008), the new taxonomy describes the restricted application of *standard* parameters to this accessibility modality. The new proposal focuses on the parameters that are specific to SDH –the representation of extralinguistic information– and sheds light into the tight connection established among all the agents involved. The new taxonomy tries to provide researchers and SDH professionals with a tool to evaluate SDH practices and analyze the implications of potential modifications on parameters.

Palabras clave: Subtitulado para Sordos (SPS). Taxonomía. Parámetros. Análisis. Información extralingüística.

Keywords: Subtitling for the Deaf (SDH). Taxonomy. Parameters. Analysis. Extralinguistic information.

1. Introducción

A lo largo de la última década se ha producido un significativo incremento en la presencia del Subtitulado para Sordos (SPS) en el contexto audiovisual internacional. La creciente presión social, unida a una mayor flexibilidad de medios y soportes, ha incentivado la producción y distribución de esta herramienta de accesibilidad. Es precisamente la mayor visibilidad de la práctica y su creciente profesionalización la que ha dado origen en los últimos años a un cada vez mayor número de estudios sobre la cuestión, surgidos desde los más diversos ámbitos de especialidad, desde la Ingeniería (cf. Martín *et al.* 2007 y 2008), a la Psicología (cf. Cambra *et al.* 2008), pasando por los Estudios de la Sordera (cf. Jensema *et al.* 2000) o el Derecho (cf. Pérez-Ugena *et al.* 2010). En este sentido, resultan de especial interés los promovidos desde los Estudios de Traducción, por su visión transversal y el carácter interdisciplinar del que suelen estar dotados.

Si bien es cierto que el SPS es, a menudo, considerado una de las muchas disciplinas que integran la práctica del subtitulado ordinario, son precisamente sus características diferenciales las que invitan a una clasificación específica. Como recoge De Linde (1996: 182):

> Le sous-titrage intralinguistique souligne de fait les interrelations subtiles entre parole, écrit et visuel, en tentant de reproduire l'information sonore par d'autres éléments qu'auditifs tout en cherchant à garder un certain équilibre spatio-temporel avec les images.

El contenido sonoro adicional de la obra audiovisual que es preciso representar mediante el SPS, como señala De Linde, hace necesario incorporar parámetros de estudio exclusivos o de especial interés dentro de esta modalidad. Centrándose principalmente en elementos lingüísticos, pero abordando también cuestiones formales o técnicas, diversos autores se han adentrado en el estudio del SPS desde el ámbito traductológico (cf. De Linde 1996; De Linde y Kay 1999; Neves 2005; Pereira 2005, entre otros). Sin embargo, el elevado número de elementos que configuran el desarrollo de esta especialidad de subtitulado sigue haciendo necesaria una clasificación que permita describir cada uno de los aspectos que dan forma al producto final.

2. Taxonomía del subtitulado de Bartoll (2008)

A pesar de que, hasta la fecha, no se ha llevado a cabo en el ámbito del SPS ninguna propuesta de análisis taxonómico, sí que existen iniciativas surgidas para el estudio del subtitulado ordinario. Basándose en estudios previos de Gottlieb (1997), Ivarsson y Carroll (1998) y Karamitroglou (1998), Bartoll (2008) ha elaborado una propuesta con el objeto de establecer un modelo de análisis y clasificación de los parámetros del subtitulado que permita determinar los diferentes tipos de subtitulado que se desarrollan en el mercado. El autor identifica hasta 15 parámetros, organizados en torno a tres perfiles, como aspectos configuradores del producto subtitulado:

– Parámetros lingüísticos: entre los que recoge los parámetros "Lengua" y "Densidad".
– Parámetros pragmáticos: con aspectos como "Destinatarios", "Intención", "Tiempos de Elaboración" y "Autoría".
– Parámetros técnicos: recoge elementos como "Opcionalidad", "Difusión", "Color", "Incorporación", "Posicionamiento", "Emplazamiento", "Archivado", "Tipografía" y "Formato".

El detallado conjunto de parámetros que el autor logra recopilar, y la relación de interdependencia que refleja entre ellos, resultan pioneros a la hora de representar la compleja estructura que tiene lugar en el proceso de elaboración de subtítulos. Como desvela el autor, la elección de una determinada variable en uno de los parámetros supone la alteración de la variable en otro diferente, produciendo un efecto en cadena que quedará reflejado en el aspecto final del subtítulo.

Si bien en su detallada propuesta estaría incluido el SPS, el mismo autor recoge la posible revisión de su modelo en función de las nuevas aportaciones que surjan en materia de accesibilidad a los medios (*ibid*: 4). Por este motivo, en el intento de aplicación de su modelo al análisis del SPS, se plantea la necesidad de ampliar su propuesta.

El análisis de estudios específicos sobre la práctica del SPS, como el de Neves (2005), y de algunas de las normativas públicas de SPS disponibles (cf. AENOR 2003; BBC 2009; BCI 2005; CAB 2008; DFA 2004; DCMP 2011; ITC 1999) desvelan la existencia de una serie de elementos específicos del SPS, condicionados fundamentalmente por la representación de la información sonora adicional, que no aparecen representados en el trabajo de Bartoll. Su incorporación, y efecto sobre otros parámetros, dan origen a la nueva propuesta que aquí se recoge.

3. Taxonomía del SPS

Prestando especial atención a los elementos específicos del SPS, como es el caso de los elementos sonoros externos al diálogo, y a aquellos elementos que desempeñan una función significativa en el desarrollo de los productos subtitulados para sordos, tales como la velocidad de los subtítulos y la tipografía, con este trabajo proponemos la generación de una nueva taxonomía. El nuevo modelo recoge dos de las categorías ya propuestas por Bartoll ("Parámetros lingüísticos" y "Parámetros pragmáticos") y modifica la tercera categoría, "Parámetros técnicos", al considerar que los elementos que la integran pueden agruparse en tres categorías diferenciadas: "Parámetros estéticos", "Parámetros técnicos" y "Parámetros estético-técnicos". Estos últimos hacen referencia a un grupo de parámetros cuyo resultado estético no depende de la elección del subtitulador, sino que viene impuesto por el proceso de producción (cf. apartado 2.6.). Pero la principal aportación a esta nueva taxonomía es, posiblemente, la incorporación de una sexta categoría, "Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros", diseñada para el análisis específico de los elementos sonoros recogidos de forma exclusiva en SPS.

A las nuevas aportaciones clasificatorias hay que añadirle la incorporación de nuevos parámetros en algunas de las categorías, como son "Justificación", "Método de elaboración" y "Velocidad", así como la inclusión de nuevas variables en algunos de los parámetros ya existentes (cf. anexo I).

3.1. Parámetros lingüísticos

Los "Parámetros lingüísticos" planteados por Bartoll, "Lengua" y "Densidad", mantienen su vigencia en el estudio del SPS, aunque con un enfoque específico. A pesar de que autores como De Linde (1996) o De Linde y Kay (1999) equiparaban la subtitulación intralingüística al SPS, Díaz-Cintas recogió otras cuatro modalidades diferentes de subtitulación intralingüística, al margen de esta: para personas con déficit auditivo, para el aprendizaje de idiomas, efecto karaoke, variantes del mismo idioma y noticias y publicidad (2003: 38). Cabe destacar aquí que la consideración lingüística (parámetro "Lengua") del SPS no depende únicamente de las lenguas origen y meta inherentes a la traducción, sino que viene marcada por la tradición audiovisual del contexto de llegada. Mientras en países dobladores, como España, el SPS representa una actividad de naturaleza mayoritariamente intralingüística, en países de tradición subtituladora la presencia original de subtítulos dificultó en sus comienzos el desarrollo de una modalidad específica para sordos por considerarla innecesaria (cf. De Linde y Kay 1999: 8). Afortunadamente, la

eclosión de los nuevos soportes y de la conciencia social ha justificado el desarrollo de esta modalidad, al margen de la lengua y de la tradición audiovisual (cf. Neves 2005: 241; Neves 2009: 152). Por este motivo, fruto de este contexto audiovisual heterogéneo, salvo en contadas excepciones, no resulta habitual encontrar referencia alguna al parámetro "Lengua" en el estudio del SPS, ni en ninguna de las normativas publicadas que regulan su producción. Arnáiz-Uzquiza (2007) señala que el ejercicio del SPS se basa en una serie de normativas cuya difusión suele estar limitada al contexto privado. Son escasos los ejemplos públicos disponibles, en su mayoría procedentes de instituciones públicas o privadas de países de lengua inglesa (cf. apartado 2).

El parámetro "Densidad", que recoge la relación entre la cantidad de información textual presentada en el subtítulo y la información verbal procedente de la pista sonora, está sujeto a otro tipo de enfoque. Además de estar supeditado a las características del producto audiovisual y a las restricciones espacio-temporales propias del subtitulado, pueden ser varios los condicionantes impuestos que limiten, y se vean limitados por este parámetro, como es el caso del número de caracteres por línea, el número de líneas, o la velocidad de lectura, entre otros. Las restricciones espacio-temporales que se aplican al subtitulado ordinario ya revelan la imposibilidad (actual) de llevar a cabo una transcripción literal del subtítulo y, dependiendo de las lenguas de trabajo, apuntan a unas tasas de reducción que pueden oscilar entre el 22% y el 75% del texto original (cf. Lonheim 1995: 203; Lorenzo 2001: 15; Díaz-Cintas 2003: 202; Gottlieb 2005: 20). No obstante, en lo que al SPS se refiere, resulta habitual la demanda por parte del público con deficiencia auditiva de una transcripción literal de los diálogos (cf. Ofcom 2005: 16; Romero-Fresco, en prensa). Estas exigencias, cuya justificación radicaría no solo en el desconocimiento de la técnica, sino también en el deseo de disponer de toda la información ofrecida en el original, aparecen reflejadas en la apuesta por la literalidad de los textos normativos consultados. A pesar de que la evolución médica y sociocultural en el seno de la comunidad con problemas de audición hace que sea posible hablar de una mejora en los niveles de alfabetización, y con ello, de una mejora en las capacidades lectoras de los usuarios de SPS con respecto a generaciones anteriores, la heterogeneidad de la comunidad sorda revela que las capacidades lectoras de parte de este grupo de usuarios no aconsejan la transcripción literal si lo que se pretende es garantizar la accesibilidad al contenido. Los estudios desarrollados por Cambra *et al.* (2008), Lorenzo (2010a), Pereira (2010), Romero-Fresco (en prensa) o Zárate (2010) en fechas recientes muestran los problemas de algunos usuarios con deficiencia auditiva para comprender el SPS actual, especialmente en el caso de

aquellos usuarios cuya primera lengua es la Lengua de Señas (LS). Al mismo tiempo hay que tener en cuenta que el SPS se caracteriza, entre otros rasgos, por incorporar información extralingüística al subtitulado ordinario, lo que supone un incremento en el número total de caracteres que el espectador debe leer. Conscientes de esta situación, algunos textos normativos recogen la posibilidad de desarrollar otras modalidades de subtitulado –editado, o reducido simplificado– para públicos específicos, como el público infantil (cf. BBC 2009: 30), los niños con sordera prelocutiva (cf. ITC 1999: 19; BCI 2005: 10) o el público con problemas de lectoescritura. A este respecto, la norma española no determina el perfil del público con problemas de lectoescritura (cf. AENOR 2003: 12).

No obstante, determinados usuarios se muestran reticentes ante la reformulación del subtítulo con el fin de dotarlo de características lingüísticas más idóneas para los espectadores signantes (cf. Lorenzo 2010a: 121; Pereira 2010: 100). Para ellos, el colectivo de usuarios signantes únicamente tendría sus necesidades comunicativas cubiertas con la ayuda de intérpretes de LS y no mediante el SPS, como recogen De Linde y Kay (1999: 10), siguiendo los estudios de Woll (1991).

3.2. Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros

Siguiendo la clasificación de Neves (2005: 220-258), los parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros constituyen el principal punto identificativo del SPS y suponen la principal incorporación a la propuesta de Bartoll (2008). Aunque este grupo de parámetros supone uno de los aspectos recogidos con más frecuencia por las normativas sobre SPS, su presencia aparece reflejada de forma desigual en la mayoría de los casos.

Esta categoría hace referencia a la representación de toda la información sonora de índole no verbal que forma parte del documento audiovisual. La naturaleza no verbal de esta información hace que, ante la ausencia de un referente visual de acompañamiento, sea preciso representarla por escrito para que el espectador con problemas de audición pueda alcanzar unos niveles de comprensión equiparables a los del público normo-oyente. La diversidad de las fuentes y tipos de información sonora hace que resulte compleja la elección de un único término para la definición de este grupo de parámetros. El *DRAE* (2011) recoge que el término "extralingüístico" hace referencia a "todo elemento externo a la lengua que ayuda a la desambiguación de palabras y frases". De este modo se podría definir determinados elementos acústicos que acompañan al componente verbal en la obra audiovisual y que sirven para contextualizarlo, como son los efectos sonoros y la música. Sin embargo,

existen otros dos elementos, la información paralingüística y la identificación de personajes, que, sin ser totalmente externos a la lengua, también pueden cumplir funciones de desambiguación basándose en su componente acústico, por lo que se ha considerado pertinente su incorporación dentro de esta categoría de "Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros".

El primero de los parámetros de este grupo, "Información paralingüística", aporta carga propia en el proceso de lectura y comprensión, ya que su función es la de ampliar y esclarecer los parlamentos de los personajes. Es habitual su consideración en la gran mayoría de las normativas de SPS en conjunto con el parámetro "Efectos sonoros", como parte de un único parámetro que hace referencia a la representación de la información sonora. Sin embargo, el tipo de información al que ambos parámetros hacen referencia, como sugieren Neves (2005: 220) y Pereira y Lorenzo (2005: 24), aconseja una clasificación independiente de ambos componentes. Esta información paralingüística, que ambas autoras recogen como "rasgos paralingüísticos" y "didascalias" respectivamente, se correspondería con la "Información paralingüística" aquí propuesta y representaría aquellos matices de la interpretación de los personajes que, por no contar con un referente visual, únicamente dependen de su naturaleza acústica, como son los aspectos calificadores o diferenciadores de la voz (cf. Poyatos 1994b). Su representación práctica mediante la descripción suele ser generalizada, si bien es habitual su uso combinado con otras modalidades, como son el empleo de emoticonos para la información de naturaleza emocional (cf. AENOR 2003: 15); la representación cromática de los parlamentos (cf. Bouzinac 2008: 5); o la representación ortotipográfica (cf. AENOR 2003: 14; BBC 2009: 26), siendo esta última la de uso más extendido.

El segundo de los "Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros" incorporados en esta categoría, "Identificación de personajes", es uno de los elementos más representativos del SPS debido a su visibilidad y peso específico en los textos académicos y prácticos sobre SPS. A pesar de que no se suele profundizar en su componente acústico, según Poyatos la identificación de un personaje tiene lugar a través del desciframiento de las cualidades primarias de la voz (Poyatos 1994b: 25-80). Recogida por Neves (2005: 236) como una forma de "localización, descripción y ubicación de la voz humana", el parámetro "Identificación de personajes" aporta información que permite al espectador asociar los diálogos escritos a cada uno de los personajes en pantalla, visibles o no. A pesar de que, por su análisis de las cualidades de la voz, este aspecto podría formar parte del paralenguaje, por lo que sería posible encuadrarlo dentro del parámetro anterior, el tipo y relevancia específica de la información que representa invita a su análisis como un parámetro independiente, dejando

el parámetro "Información paralingüística" para la descripción de reacciones fisiológicas y emocionales.

Son varias las técnicas que se pueden emplear para la "Identificación de personajes" (cf. De Linde y Kay 1999: 15), y que, a menudo, condicionan la elección de variables entre los parámetros estéticos del subtítulo. Una de las técnicas más extendidas, al ser una de las que menos condicionan la configuración estética, pues añade únicamente rasgos cromáticos al texto, es la asignación de colores a cada uno de los personajes. A pesar de ser una de las técnicas que menor esfuerzo cognitivo requiere por parte del espectador (cf. King *et al.* 1994: 332), cabe destacar los conflictos que pueden plantearse en la representación de un elevado número de personajes (cf. Pereira y Lorenzo 2005: 11) y la limitada oferta cromática, marcada por las restricciones tecnológicas de los sistemas de emisión (cf. King *et al.* 1994: 333; AENOR 2003: 5)[1]. La segunda técnica de identificación de uso más extendido es el desplazamiento lateral o vertical del texto para situarlo cerca del personaje, empleada principalmente en Estados Unidos y Canadá (cf. DCMP 2001: 19; CAB 2008: 18). Aunque en la mayoría de los países se opta por aplicar la identificación cromática o el desplazamiento de forma exclusiva, en algunas ocasiones se plantea el uso de estas opciones de forma simultánea (cf. Neves 2005: 242).

Otras técnicas de identificación de uso generalizado son el empleo de etiquetas, a modo de acotaciones, precediendo al subtítulo cuando no es posible identificar la intervención del personaje en pantalla (cf. AENOR 2003: 16; CAB 2008: 18; DCMP 2011: 19) o el uso de puntuación distintiva, como guiones o comillas latinas (cf. BBC 2009: 15-16). Las nuevas posibilidades tecnológicas en el mercado y los perfiles de los usuarios finales (cf. Romero-Fresco, en prensa) hacen que en los últimos años se estén planteando nuevas alternativas, como la incorporación de avatares para la identificación de personajes (cf. Quoc y Fels 2009) o el uso combinado de color y etiquetas como acompañamiento al texto monocromo (cf. Quoc y Fels 2010). Sin embargo, se sigue analizando la aceptación por parte del usuario final de cada una de estas opciones.

El tercero de los "Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros", "Efectos sonoros", recoge toda la información kinésica sonora (cf. Poyatos 1994a) de naturaleza no paralingüística ni musical que tiene lugar dentro de la obra audiovisual y que afecta al desarrollo de la misma. Este tipo de información,

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1. A pesar de que el teletexto analógico ha sido reemplazado, o se encuentra en proceso de reemplazamiento, por su versión digital en la mayoría de los países europeos, los aspectos cromáticos se siguen manteniendo debido a cuestiones de legibilidad (cf. BBC 2009: 38; AENOR, en prensa).

que habitualmente no se representa en el subtitulado ordinario, debe reco-
gerse en el SPS para que el espectador con problemas de audición alcance
la máxima comprensión del producto audiovisual. De todos los "Parámetros
extralingüísticos sonoros", son precisamente "Efectos sonoros" e "Identifi-
cación de personajes" los parámetros más demandados por parte del público
con discapacidad auditiva (cf. Romero-Fresco, en prensa), de modo que no
sólo aparecen recogidos en todos los estudios surgidos desde el ámbito acadé-
mico (cf. Neves 2005: 243; Lorenzo 2010a: 126; Lorenzo 2010b: 137; Civera
y Orero 2010: 152; Pereira 2010: 89), sino también en las guías de estilo y en
las normativas surgidas desde el entorno profesional (cf. BCI 2005: 6; BBC
2009: 17) o los entes asesores y reguladores (cf. ITC 1999: 13; AENOR 2003:
6; DFA 2004: 5; CAB 2008: 18; DCMP 2011: 17). Aunque la representación de
la información recogida por "Efectos sonoros" suele producirse en la práctica
totalidad de los casos por medio de una descripción, los parámetros estéticos
aplicados en su representación (posicionamiento y, especialmente, tipografía)
difieren sensiblemente de unos países a otros (cf. Neves 2005: 243; Romero-
Fresco, en prensa). Del mismo modo, las pautas de redacción del componente
lingüístico de esta información no suelen tener reflejo en las diferentes nor-
mativas, por lo que es frecuente la falta de consistencia en este sentido (cf.
Arnáiz-Uzquiza 2007). Siguiendo la estela de la representación icónica de la
información paralingüística, en los últimos tiempos han surgido iniciativas
que plantearían la representación icónica de los efectos sonoros (cf. Civera y
Orero 2010: 152). No obstante, la desigual acogida por parte de los usuarios
arroja resultados contradictorios en función de su edad y grado de exposición
a otros medios audiovisuales, por lo que, tal y como sucede con la identifica-
ción de personajes, esta, y otras opciones, continúan siendo objeto de estudio
(cf. Romero-Fresco, en prensa).

El último de los parámetros que configuran este grupo es "Música". Aun-
que también en este caso suele ser habitual su catalogación dentro del pará-
metro "Efectos sonoros", el papel que desempeña en la obra audiovisual va
mucho más allá. A pesar de que son pocos los autores que han abordado su
estudio (cf. Neves 2005: 252; Pereira 2005: 24; Weber 2010: 31), su compleja
naturaleza, diegética, como parte visual integrante de la obra musical, o extra-
diegética, que sin estar presente en la trama sirve para configurar la realidad
audiovisual, hace que resulte determinante su análisis como un parámetro in-
dependiente. Muchas normativas, como es el caso de la UNE-153010, abordan

este parámetro de forma meramente tangencial[2] ya sea desde el punto de vista estético, lingüístico o extralingüístico. Sin embargo, en las guías de estilo más recientes se le presta una atención especial, llegando a indicar determinados aspectos lingüísticos (cf. CAB 2008: 7), o incluso pautas detalladas sobre la forma de subtitular estos elementos atendiendo a su relevancia en la escena, carácter, etc. (cf. BBC 2009: 31).

3.3. Parámetros pragmáticos

Los "Parámetros pragmáticos" definidos por Bartoll son una de las categorías que experimentan menos modificaciones en la adaptación de la taxonomía al análisis del SPS, al no contar con ninguna nueva incorporación. Desde el punto de vista práctico, son escasas las referencias a este grupo de parámetros en estudios y textos normativos; sin embargo, la presencia de los "Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros" condicionaría, y se vería condicionada, por las variables pragmáticas aplicables al margen de los rasgos específicos del SPS.

Mientras aspectos como "Autoría" siguen haciendo referencia al 'agente', humano o no, que desarrolla el SPS, el "Momento de elaboración", que también en SPS se limita a las variables "Anteriores" y "Simultáneos", condiciona la posibilidad de incluir información extralingüística dada la dificultad para recoger esta información de forma sincronizada (cf. Romero-Fresco 2011: 38). Por este motivo en los últimos cinco años, con la necesidad de proveer de accesibilidad audiovisual a eventos en directo, se ha incluido en la redacción de algunas normativas breves referencias a este parámetro (cf. BCI 2005: 11; CAB 2008: 22; DCMP 2011: 4; DFA 2004: 4).

Algo similar sucedería con el parámetro "Intención", que aborda el objetivo que se persigue con los subtítulos. Una vez más, y sin ser exclusivo del SPS, resulta importante la incorporación de una nueva variable en este parámetro, como son los "Subtítulos Terapéuticos", desarrollados para abordar problemas específicos de aprendizaje, y que, dependen, en gran medida, de uno de los parámetros esenciales en esta categoría: "Destinatarios".

El último de los parámetros de esta clasificación, "Destinatarios", aparece recogido por Bartoll para abordar la diferente naturaleza de dos grandes grupos de usuarios, sordos y oyentes. Sin embargo, son otros muchos los aspectos que es preciso tener en consideración a la hora de definir el perfil del usuario. Aspectos como la edad, relevantes para el desarrollo de todo tipo

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2. La norma UNE-153010 (AENOR 2003: 14) únicamente recoge en su texto: "Se debe subtitular las canciones, en cuyo caso debe realizarse sobre fondo amarillo con carácter azul".

de subtítulos, interactúan con cuestiones específicas de los usuarios de SPS, como son el perfil lingüístico (signante / oralista), el tipo, grado y momento de aparición de la sordera, o las necesidades terapéuticas de los usuarios (cf. Llombart 2007). Todas estas diferencias marcarían, por ejemplo, la capacidad del espectador para acceder a la información del componente sonoro, una mayor o menor velocidad de lectura o la familiaridad con el lenguaje escrito. No obstante, a pesar de que todas las normativas escritas consultadas se elaboran para personas con problemas de audición, teniendo en cuenta la diferente etiología de los grupos de usuarios, cabe destacar que en contadas ocasiones se hace referencia en los textos al perfil específico del usuario final. Por el contrario, las variables adoptadas en todos los casos van encaminadas a un perfil de usuario determinado: usuarios oralistas con índices de alfabetización medios-altos y destrezas lectoras elevadas.

3.4. Parámetros estéticos

Bartoll (2008: 260) define un único grupo de parámetros, "Parámetros técnicos", para hacer referencia a todos los aspectos relacionados con la parte visual y técnica del proceso de elaboración del subtítulo. Dada la variedad de los aspectos incorporados en esta categoría, sería posible identificar hasta tres grupos diferentes de parámetros en esta categoría: "Parámetros estéticos", "Parámetros estético-técnicos" y "Parámetros técnicos".

El primero de todos, "Parámetros estéticos", agruparía todos los elementos planteados por Bartoll que marcarían el aspecto más visual del subtítulo, y cuya elección puede variar por elección del subtitulador, tales como "Emplazamiento", "Color", "Tipografía" y "Posición". Cabe destacar la incorporación de un nuevo parámetro, "Justificación", que, al margen del parámetro "Posición", recoge la disposición de subtítulo con respecto a un margen establecido.

La alternancia en los métodos de elaboración de SPS, desde los primeros teclados de máquinas de escribir, hasta los modernos sistemas de reconocimiento de habla que han modificado los parámetros estéticos del subtitulado, son, en la mayoría de los casos, producto de la tradición práctica adoptada del subtitulado ordinario (cf. Ivarsson y Carroll 1998: 49).

Estrechamente vinculados entre sí[3], los parámetros "Tipografía" y "Color" han sido fuente recurrente de numerosos estudios en el seno del SPS, desde la traducción (cf. Neves 2005; Martínez-Tejerina 2008) a la comunicación

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3. Cuando la aplicación cromática no afecta al conjunto del subtítulo, el empleo del color forma parte del parámetro "Tipografía".

audiovisual (cf. Carrero y Souto 2008; Utray *et al.* 2010), pasando por la ingeniería (cf. Kirkland 1999; Martín *et al.* 2007; Martín *et al.* 2008). La focalización temática, unida a la desactualización de algunas de las normativas que todavía continúan fundamentándose en la tecnología del teletexto analógico en vías de extinción (cf. AENOR 2003: 3; BCI 2005: 2; ITC 1999: 6), hace que muchos de los parámetros estéticos no se lleguen a abordar de forma explícita en los textos normativos. De este modo, por ejemplo, el sistema analógico europeo justificaba la imposición de un tipo de fuente (teletexto), de unos colores determinados, la utilización de una caja sobre la que se representaban los subtítulos, el espaciado e interlineado de los mismos, etc. (cf. AENOR 2033: 5; BCI 2005: 2); mientras, en los Estados Unidos, el sistema Línea 21 forzaba el uso de mayúsculas y la imposibilidad de emplear combinaciones cromáticas para el SPS (cf. King *et al.* 1994). No obstante, al margen de la evolución o las limitaciones técnicas y tecnológicas que han perfilado las diferencias estéticas, también es posible encontrar usos diferenciados en otros países, como es el caso de Francia, en el que las combinaciones cromáticas de cajas y subtítulos adoptan una interpretación única a la hora de representar la información extralingüística (cf. Bouzinac 2008: 5).

Para poder entender la gran complejidad que entraña el parámetro "Tipografía" y su relevancia en el SPS, en la tabla que se recoge a continuación

	Fuente	Estilo	Tamaño	Color	Borde	Sombra	Espaciado	Interlineado	Caja	Ortotipografía	(Nº Carac.)	(Nº Líneas)
Fuente		X	X		X	X	X			X	X	
Estilo	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
Tamaño	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X
Color					X	X			X			
Borde	X	X	X	X		X			X			
Sombra	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			
Espaciado	X	X	X			X				X	X	
Interlineado		X	X									
Caja				X	X	X						
Ortotipografía	X	X					X				X	
(Nº carac.)	X	X	X				X			X	X	X
(Nº líneas)			X								X	X

Figura 1

se representa la interdependencia que se establece entre los sub-parámetros que la integran. Las "X" muestran aquellos sub-parámetros que se verían modificados por otros en función de las variables seleccionadas para cada caso. Así, por ejemplo, la elección de un determinado tipo de fuente podría limitar las opciones de estilo, borde o sombra que se le podrían aplicar a la misma, su tamaño final, el espaciado entre caracteres, la idoneidad de los rasgos ortotipográficos implícitos en ella y el número de caracteres que sería posible representar con la fuente seleccionada en un subtítulo determinado y así sucesivamente.

Pese a todo, de todos los "Parámetros estéticos", es posible que el parámetro "Tipografía" resulte el menos específico del SPS. Sin embargo, teniendo en cuenta la relevancia que tiene la visibilidad y legibilidad del subtítulo para los usuarios con deficiencias auditivas, dado que un alto porcentaje de este grupo de usuarios presenta problemas de discriminación cromática (cf. BBC 2009: 18; Romero-Fresco 2010: 183), resulta de especial importancia su estudio detallado.

Otro de los parámetros no específicos del SPS es el parámetro "Posición", al que, como ya se ha avanzado, se le ha añadido una nueva categoría técnica, la "Justificación", integrada como una variable de posicionamiento (cf. Bartoll 2008: 264). Teniendo en cuenta el tratamiento que se le da en las diferentes normativas, y la práctica generalizada, se ha creído necesario analizar la posición en base a dos desplazamientos del subtítulo en pantalla: vertical (posición) y horizontal (justificación). Como ya se ha planteado al abordar los parámetros extralingüísticos, la modificación del parámetro "Posición" es uno de los elementos más extendidos en SPS. Pese a que la práctica generalizada recoge la representación del subtítulo en una posición inferior centrada (cf. Neves 2005: 201), es habitual que esta práctica se modifique en el caso del SPS para dar cabida a la información extralingüística, debido a la necesidad de identificar a los personajes o de representar efectos sonoros o música (cf. Bartoll y Martínez-Tejerina 2010: 69).

El último de los parámetros de este grupo, el "Emplazamiento", que hace referencia a la ubicación del subtítulo sobre la pantalla de la obra audiovisual, o fuera de ella, no suele ser mencionado en las diferentes normativas disponibles. Estas, que tratan de armonizar el ejercicio del SPS se centran, de manera casi exclusiva, en la televisión, por lo que únicamente abordan la elaboración de subtítulos internos. Su desarrollo dependerá, sin embargo, del tipo de obra audiovisual a la que se vaya a aplicar al SPS. La subtitulación de actos en directo, en la que se suele emplear el subtitulado en emplazamiento externo, es, a menudo, considerada una modalidad de SPS. No obstante, criterios

pragmáticos (momento de elaboración), técnicos (elaboración) y estético-técnicos (incorporación), limitarían la presencia de parámetros extralingüísticos y estéticos (tipografía y posición) específicos de esta modalidad.

3.5. Parámetros técnicos

Los "Parámetros técnicos" planteados en la presente propuesta taxonómica, a diferencia de los recogidos por Bartoll, harían referencia de manera exclusiva a aquellos aspectos de la producción de SPS menos visibles para el espectador. Como sucede con los pragmáticos, los parámetros técnicos apenas plantean diferencias específicas en el caso del SPS. La restringida visibilidad de este grupo de parámetros hace que no resulte extraño que la naturaleza técnica del SPS no suela estar representada de manera explícita en las normativas escritas, ni en los estudios académicos.

Tres son los parámetros definidos en la propuesta original: "Difusión", "Archivado" y "Formato". De todos ellos el "Archivado", que hace referencia a la vinculación física de subtítulo e imagen, y el "Sistema de difusión", que representa la forma de proyección de los subtítulos desde un punto de vista técnico, no plantean diferencias significativas entre las distintas modalidades de subtitulado. Sin embargo, no sucede lo mismo con el "Formato", o código de almacenamiento de los subtítulos, dependiente en gran medida de las características estéticas del SPS. Mientras muchos de los formatos empleados almacenan exclusivamente aspectos lingüísticos y temporales del subtítulo, el SPS precisa en igual medida del almacenamiento de rasgos cromáticos y posicionales esenciales en esta modalidad, algo que solo se consigue con determinados formatos, entre los que actualmente destacan Substation Alpha, Advanced Substation Alpha o Viplay Subtitle File (cf. Bartoll 2008: 268). Dentro de los parámetros técnicos, este es uno de los aspectos de mayor estudio y crecimiento, impulsados por las innovaciones tecnológicas y el surgimiento de nuevos medios.

Sin embargo, es posible añadir dos nuevos parámetros a esta categoría: "Método de elaboración" y "Medio", que hacen referencia al sistema de transcripción de los subtítulos y al soporte al que se incorporan los subtítulos respectivamente. Ambas aportaciones, igualmente aplicables al subtitulado general, condicionan en gran medida las características de cualquier tipo de subtítulo.

De todos los parámetros técnicos, el "Medio" es el más relevante para cualquier modalidad de subtitulado, y en el caso del SPS, requiere una especial consideración si se tiene en cuenta las diferencias estéticas y técnicas que lleva implícitas (cf. Arnáiz-Uzquiza 2007: 37; Romero-Fresco 2011: 38).

Las diferentes características y posibilidades de cada uno de los soportes audiovisuales (televisión, DVD, Internet, videojuegos, actos en directo, etc.), que apenas han llegado a ser objeto de estudio por parte de los académicos, obligan al subtitulador a valorar este parámetro antes de abordar cualquier otro aspecto, ya sea lingüístico, extralingüístico, pragmático, estético, técnico o estético-técnico.

Por lo que respecta al "Método de elaboración", si bien en la mayoría de los casos estos subtítulos se elaboran utilizando el método de teclado ordinario, para la producción de subtítulos en directo (simultáneos) suele utilizarse otro tipo de teclados (máquinas de estenotipia, velotipia, palantipia) y sistemas que permiten una transcripción más rápida, como es el caso del reconocimiento de habla (cf. Romero-Fresco 2011: 35). Como ya se ha apuntado para el parámetro "Emplazamiento", el tipo de productos audiovisuales para los que se emplean estos métodos no permite hablar de una forma de subtitulación exclusiva para sordos, pues suelen ser materiales en los que no es habitual la presencia de información extralingüística (cf. Vela 2007: 7). Por lo tanto, todavía a día de hoy su demanda funcional suele estar cubierta por modalidades de subtitulado ordinario.

3.6. Parámetros estético-técnicos

El último de los grupos de parámetros que se incorporarían a la propuesta de Bartoll estaría a medio camino entre los "Parámetros estéticos" y los "Parámetros técnicos", ya que, aunque el espectador percibe el resultado visual de la manipulación de las variables, no se trata de una elección estética del subtitulador, sino de una consecuencia del proceso de producción y de configuración del material final.

Mientras el parámetro "Incorporación", que hace referencia a la forma en la que el texto escrito aparece en pantalla, está estrechamente ligado al "Método de elaboración" técnico o la "Intención" pragmática, el parámetro "Opcionalidad" (visibilidad obligatoria, o no, de los subtítulos) suele estar marcado por los parámetros "Destinatarios" y "Medio de difusión" (figura 2). Esta focalización en el grupo de usuarios hace que, sin resultar ninguno de los dos aspectos estético-técnicos exclusivos del SPS, sea posible decir que el parámetro "Opcionalidad" está más estrechamente vinculado a esta disciplina audiovisual. Desde que en 1972 aparecieran los primeros ejemplos no opcionales de SPS (cf. DCMP 2010: 7) y urgiese la necesidad de diseñar sistemas para su difusión reduciendo su visibilidad, la opcionalidad ha sido la elección habitual del SPS. Reducida su presencia de forma casi exclusiva a las páginas del teletexto o a los menús de idiomas del DVD, únicamente el desarrollo de

nuevas tecnologías de distribución, como es el caso de Internet y sus múltiples plataformas, está permitiendo facilitar el acceso a esta herramienta de accesibilidad audiovisual.

Pero al margen de estos dos parámetros, ya identificados en la taxonomía anterior, la incorporación del parámetro "Velocidad" supone la principal aportación dentro de esta categoría a la propuesta de Bartoll. Suele analizarse de manera conjunta con otro parámetro lingüístico importante en esta modalidad, la "Densidad" (a menor densidad, mayor velocidad) y es uno de los elementos de principal importancia en el seno del SPS. Sin embargo, mientras que con el parámetro lingüístico los usuarios reclaman la transcripción literal del texto (cf. OFCOM 2005: 16; Romero-Fresco, en prensa), no son habituales las referencias al parámetro "Velocidad". No obstante, su modificación supondría, por ejemplo, elevar el número de caracteres por segundo y línea y una reducción en los tiempos de exposición, lo que alteraría considerablemente el patrón de lectura (figura 2). Sin resultar exclusivo del SPS, pero esencial para su óptimo desarrollo, es uno de los parámetros que ha concentrado un mayor número de estudios en el seno de esta disciplina en los últimos años (cf. Cambra *et al*. 2008; Romero-Fresco 2010; Romero-Fresco, en prensa). Las velocidades del SPS propuestas por algunas normativas recogen cifras que suelen ser similares entre sí y se establecen en torno a las 180 palabras por minuto (ppm) como máximo: 140-180 ppm (cf. BBC 2009: 7); 160-180 ppm (cf. BCI 2005: 5); 180 ppm (cf. DFA 2004: 6); 200 ppm (cf. CAB 2008: 21). En España, por ejemplo, donde la UNE-153010 actual (2003) plantea una cifra de 19 caracteres por segundo, o 150 ppm, la velocidad es considerablemente superior a los 12 caracteres por segundo propuestos para el subtitulado ordinario en español (cf. Díaz-Cintas 2003: 118). De igual manera, no es posible equiparar totalmente las velocidades de lectura en inglés y español, expresadas en "palabras por minuto", si no se tiene en cuenta que la longitud media de una palabra inglesa es de 4,5 caracteres, mientras en español es de 4,9 (cf. Pierce 1980: 75; Morelli 2010). Ambos planteamientos, unidos a la necesidad de ajustar las velocidades en función de los públicos y sistemas de incorporación de subtítulos (cf. Romero-Fresco, en prensa), hacen que en la actualidad se esté revisando este parámetro en la redacción de la nueva normativa que regule el ejercicio del SPS.

4. Conexiones entre parámetros

Como se ha podido comprobar al analizar la tipografía de los subtítulos (figura 1), son muchos los parámetros y sub-parámetros que entran en juego en el desarrollo del SPS y la estrecha relación que se establece entre ellos hace que

sea preciso tener en cuenta cualquier mínima variación (figura 2). Los 23 pa-
rámetros que dan forma a la presente taxonomía y sirven para describir el SPS
establecen una compleja serie de relaciones que dan cuenta de la dependencia
que se establece entre ellos. De este modo, por ejemplo, la elección de una de-
terminada opción de identificación de personajes tendría implicaciones desde
el punto de vista lingüístico (en la densidad, si se adopta la identificación
mediante etiquetas), pragmático (en la autoría, en cualquier caso), estético
(si se opta por el desplazamiento) o técnico (por restricciones de formato).

La siguiente tabla representa las relaciones de interdependencia que se
establecen entre todos los parámetros identificados. Las "X" marcan aquellos
parámetros en los cuales la elección de una determinada variable condiciona-
ría la elección de variables en otros parámetros.

Como se puede comprobar, los "Parámetros pragmáticos" y, en especial,
el parámetro "Destinatarios", son los que más peso tienen en su conjunto
por ser los que justifican el objetivo final del subtítulo. Este será el punto
de partida para determinar, en el caso concreto del SPS, que un subtítulo se
desarrolla específicamente para públicos con deficiencia auditiva. Pero no es
el único parámetro determinante en este sentido. También desde el punto de
vista técnico es posible marcar la dependencia. Al igual que en el parámetro
"Destinatarios", el parámetro "Medio" condiciona la totalidad de las variables
que se aplican al SPS, e incluso aspectos en apariencia no vinculados, como
la elección lingüística, resultarían relevantes en determinados contextos (cf.
apartado 1.1).

Pero al margen de estos, cabría analizar la especial relevancia de otros
grupos de parámetros, como es el caso de los "Parámetros extralingüísticos
sonoros". Si se analiza la tabla en detalle, es posible comprobar que aquellos
parámetros con mayor peso en el desarrollo del SPS, por el efecto que puede
tener su modificación en otros (como sucede con los parámetros pragmáticos
y técnicos), no son aquellos exclusivamente representativos de esta modali-
dad. Sin embargo, la presencia de los parámetros específicos del SPS adquiere
especial relevancia al condicionar a todos los demás grupos de parámetros.
La incorporación de información extralingüística altera los componentes lin-
güísticos ("Densidad"), estéticos ("Color", "Tipografía" y "Posición"), técni-
cos ("Formato") y estético-técnicos ("Velocidad", "Opcionalidad"), dotando
al subtítulo de características muy marcadas. No obstante, su representación
también se ve modificada por aspectos pragmáticos ("Momento de elabora-
ción") y técnicos ("Método de elaboración" y "Medio").

Figura 2

5. Conclusiones

Dada la escasa disponibilidad de otras modalidades de accesibilidad audiovisual para las personas con discapacidad auditiva, y la gran heterogeneidad que caracteriza a este colectivo de usuarios, es preciso conocer todos los factores que condicionan el ejercicio del SPS en cada una de sus etapas y su resultado final. Partiendo de la taxonomía desarrollada por Bartoll para el subtitulado ordinario, hemos planteado el desarrollo de una clasificación específica para el estudio del proceso de elaboración del SPS en su totalidad. La necesidad de incorporar elementos específicos de esta modalidad, así como otros elementos y parámetros no exclusivos de la misma, pero de especial relevancia para su desarrollo, justificaría esta iniciativa. De esta forma, la nueva taxonomía estaría integrada por los grupos de parámetros: "Lingüísticos", "Extralingüísticos", "Pragmáticos", "Estéticos", "Técnicos" y "Estético-técnicos".

Desde el punto de vista lingüístico, al margen de la dualidad marcada por la tradición audiovisual de países dobladores y subtituladores, el parámetro "Densidad" es el más relevante. Son muchos los estudios que ya se han llevado a cabo y que han dejado constancia de las diferentes capacidades lectoras de los grupos de usuarios, así como de sus demandas en lo que a literalidad se refiere. Teniendo en cuenta que, en la actualidad, los espectadores con problemas de audición únicamente disponen de una modalidad de SPS, las necesidades del colectivo quedan cubiertas de forma dispar en lo que a aspectos lingüísticos se refiere.

La información extralingüística, exclusiva de esta modalidad de subtitulado, es la principal incorporación a la taxonomía original. Los aspectos extralingüísticos representan toda la información no verbal que resulta preciso recoger para ofrecer toda la información que compone la obra audiovisual al público sordo. Dada la naturaleza variada de este tipo de información, es posible definir hasta cuatro parámetros en este grupo ("Identificación de personajes", "Información paralingüística", "Efectos sonoros" y "Música"), cuya representación altera la composición del subtítulo tradicional. Las variables adoptadas para la representación de cada uno de los parámetros suelen tener su origen en la tradición, por lo que varían de unos países a otros. Esta variabilidad suele ir acompañada de una modificación de otros grupos de parámetros, como son los lingüísticos y los estéticos, dando origen a una sucesión de variaciones en otra serie de parámetros.

A pesar de haber sido objeto de un número menor de estudios académicos dentro del SPS y de estar apenas representados en las normativas publicadas, los parámetros pragmáticos son el conjunto con mayor peso específico en la taxonomía, al tener la capacidad de modificar la gran mayoría de los

parámetros de la misma. Estos parámetros marcan la intencionalidad y funcionalidad de los subtítulos, por lo que gran parte de la efectividad de los mismos radicaría aquí. La aplicación efectiva de los parámetros pragmáticos ha de servir para desarrollar materiales totalmente adaptados a las necesidades de cada grupo de usuarios y, entre ellos, los usuarios con problemas de audición.

Los "Parámetros estéticos" representan los aspectos visuales del subtítulo, y constituyen el grupo de parámetros de mayor relevancia en términos de legibilidad, directamente relacionado con la percepción y la comprensión. Son muchos los parámetros integrados en este grupo. A pesar de no resultar exclusivos del SPS, la representación de la información extralingüística hace que determinados aspectos ("Color", "Tipografía" o "Posición") se vean modificados de forma más o menos directa.

Los "Parámetros técnicos", por el contrario, se centran en la elaboración y diseminación del SPS. En lugar de verse condicionados, este grupo de parámetros suele condicionar la inclusión de información extralingüística. El "Método de elaboración" empleado o el "Formato", permitirán o no la inclusión de esta información exclusiva del SPS, siendo el "Medio" el parámetro más trascendental en este sentido.

A medio camino entre los dos grupos de parámetros anteriores, los "Parámetros estético-técnicos" recogen los aspectos cuya producción tiene un reflejo visual. El más representativo de este grupo, el parámetro "Velocidad", se ha convertido en el aspecto más analizado en los últimos tiempos desde esta disciplina, por la aparición de nuevos "Métodos de elaboración" que ayudarían a incrementar la literalidad demandada por los espectadores.

La suma de las 6 categorías que agrupan los 23 parámetros de la nueva taxonomía dibuja un panorama detallado del proceso de producción del SPS. La identificación de un grupo de parámetros específico de esta modalidad de subtitulado ("Parámetros extralingüísticos sonoros"), y las consecuencias que su incorporación conlleva, no logran imponerse, sin embargo, al peso de otros parámetros considerados generales ("Parámetros pragmáticos" y "Parámetros técnicos"). Los estudios que en los últimos años han surgido impulsados por el creciente avance del SPS en el mercado han tratado de abordar el análisis de aspectos especialmente representativos para su desarrollo, como es el caso de la densidad, la posición o la tipografía entre otros. Sin embargo, el hecho de tratarse de iniciativas centradas en parámetros aislados hace que, en la mayoría de las ocasiones, no se tenga en cuenta la interdependencia entre parámetros y las consecuencias que cualquier cambio implicaría para otras variables.

Esta taxonomía pretende ser no solo una herramienta para el análisis integral del proceso de subtitulado para sordos, sino también un instrumento

de reflexión sobre las consecuencias del estudio aislado de cada uno de los parámetros que configuran la práctica del SPS.

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Anexo I

[LINGÜÍSTICO]
 	
LENGUAJE
 	
• Interlingüísticos
• Intralingüísticos
	[LINGÜÍSTICO]
	
	DENSIDAD [*]
	
	• Íntegros (literales)
	• Reducidos
	  - Sub. ordinarios
	  - Sub. simplificados
		[EXTRALINGÜÍSTICO] *
		
		IDENTIFICACIÓN DE PERSONAJES
		
		• Posición
		• Etiquetas
		• Colores
		• Puntuación
		• Combinados
		  - Posición y colores
		  - Posición y puntuación
		  - Colores y puntuación
		• Sin representación
		• Nuevas propuestas +

[EXTRALINGÜÍSTICO] *
 	
RASGOS PARALINGÜÍSTICOS
 	
• Descripción
• Onomatopeyas
• Emoticonos
• Sin representación
• Nuevas propuestas +
	[EXTRALINGÜÍSTICO] *
	
	EFECTOS SONOROS
	
	• Descripción
	• Onomatopeyas
	• Iconos
	• Sin representación
	• Nuevas propuestas +
		[EXTRALINGÜÍSTICO] *
		
		MÚSICA
		
		• Diegética
		  - Título
		  - Letra
		  - Descripción
		  - Combinados
		    - Título y letra
		    - Descripción y letra
		  - Sin representación
		  - Nuevas propuestas +
		• Extradiegética
		  - Título
		  - Letra
		  - Descripción
		  - Combinados
		    - Título y letra
		    - Descripción y letra
		  - Sin representación
		  - Nuevas propuestas +

[PRAGMÁTICO]
 	
DESTINATARIOS [*]
• Por audición
• Por edad
• Por necesidades lingüísticas
• Por necesidades terapéuticas
	[PRAGMÁTICO]
	
	INTENCIÓN [*]
	• Instrumentales
	• Didácticos
	• Terapéuticos
	• Karaoke
	• Documentales
		[PRAGMÁTICO]
		
		AUTORÍA
		• Subtítulos humanos
		  - Profesionales
		  - Aficionados (*fansubs*)
		• Subtítulos mecánicos

[PRAGMÁTICO] MOMENTO DE ELABORACIÓN • Anteriores • Simultáneos	[ESTÉTICO] EMPLAZAMIENTO • Subtítulos internos • Subtítulos externos	[ESTÉTICO] COLOR • Subtítulos monocromos • Subtítulos policromos

[ESTÉTICO]
TIPOGRAFÍA [*]
• Fuente
• Estilo
• Tamaño
• Color
• Borde
• Sombra
• Espaciado
• Interlineado
• Caja
• Ortotipografía
• (Nº de caracteres / línea)
• (Nº de líneas / sub.)
• Nuevos aspectos +
	[ESTÉTICO]
	
	POSICIÓN [*]
	• Uniforme
	  - Subtítulos
	  - Sobretítulos
	  - Laterotítulos
	• No uniforme
	  - (Desplazados)
	  - Posición combinada
		[ESTÉTICO] *
		
		JUSTIFICACIÓN
		• Izquierda
		• Centro
		• Derecha

[TÉCNICO]
 	
FORMATO
 	
• *.txt
• *.ssa
• *.sub
• *.vsf
• *.srt
• *.stl
• Nuevos formatos +
	[TÉCNICO] *
	
	MEDIO
	
	• Cine
	• DVD
	• Televisión
	  - Abiertos
	  - Teletexto
	  - DVB
	• Internet
	• Videojuegos
	• Teléfono
	• Eventos
	• Nuevos soportes +
		[ESTÉTICO / TÉCNICO]
		
		VELOCIDAD *
		
		• Nº caracteres / línea
		• Nº caracteres / segundo
		• Tiempo de exposición

[ESTÉTICO / TÉCNICO]
 	
INCORPORACIÓN [*]
 	
• Sub. dinámicos
  - Letra a letra
  - Palabra a palabra
  - Línea a línea
  - Frase a frase
  - Desplazamiento lateral
  - Rodillo
    - Ascendente
    - Descendente
  - Tipos mixtos
• Sub. estáticos
	[ESTÉTICO / TÉCNICO]
	
	OPCIONALIDAD
	
	• Opcionales
	• No opcionales	

*   Parámetros nuevos incorporados a la taxonomía de Bartoll.
[*] Parámetros modificados con respecto a la taxonomía de Bartoll: nuevas variables incorporadas.
+   Categoría abierta a la incorporación de nuevas variables surgidas de la evolución tecnológica: avatares ("Identificación de personajes"); dinamismo ("Música"); profundidad ("Tipografía"); etc.

TOWARDS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN CREATIVE SUBTITLING

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Abstract

Standard subtitling practices have long been influenced, if not governed, by norms and conventions such as the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998). Yet recent research into film subtitling has begun to take a creative turn: a trend that is matched by increasing numbers of fansubs and professionally produced creative subtitles. This paper seeks to demonstrate the need for a multidisciplinary approach to creative subtitling and, by drawing upon principles from film studies, suggests some key features for the development of a creative subtitling practice.

Resumen

Hace mucho tiempo que las normas y convenciones del subtitulado, como las del *Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998), influyen y regulan la práctica estándar del subtitulado. No obstante, las investigaciones recientes sobre el subtitulado cinematográfico han empezado a tratar el tema del subtitulado creativo: una tendencia que se corresponde con el número cada vez mayor de *fansubs* y también con el empleo de subtítulos creativos en varias películas profesionales. En este trabajo se pretende demostrar la necesidad de desarrollar un enfoque multidisciplinario del subtitulado creativo y, mediante varias aportaciones de los estudios cinematográficos, sugiere algunas características clave para el desarrollo de una práctica de subtitulado creativo.

Keywords: Creative subtitling. Aesthetics. Multidisciplinarity. Film studies. Audiovisual translation.

Palabras clave: Subtitulado creativo. Estética. Multidisciplinariedad. Estudios cinematográficos. Traducción audiovisual.

1. Introduction

Standard subtitling practices have long been governed by the constraints of the field and the norms designed to respond to these constraints. Indeed, the initial label of "constrained translation" (Titford 1982; Mayoral et al. 1998) applied to the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) highlights academics' preoccupation with these constraints. As a response to the constraints of subtitling, and in search of a set of rules to govern the quality of subtitle production, norms and conventions such as the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998) and Karamitroglou's *A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe* (1998), among others, were developed, and these remain the founding statements for the didactics of subtitling. Despite the fact that television channels and subtitling companies have adapted these norms for their own requirements and in spite of the increased awareness of the need to develop subtitling practices along with new technologies, subtitling practitioners continue to have their hands tied by the constraints of the field and the norms of the profession. By remaining focused on these norms, subtitlers have largely failed to acknowledge the insights that could be gained by referring to audiovisual translation's parallel discipline: film studies. While translators of poetry become poets, and translators of plays become playwrights, by failing to acknowledge the importance of film studies, film translators have largely been reduced to mere norm-obeying machines. This trend may, however, be set to change with the new interest that has been given to creative or aesthetic subtitling practices.

In this article, I will examine the origins and implications of this new creative turn in subtitling, before considering the need for a multidisciplinary, film studies-based approach. I will then suggest several specific elements of film studies that can be applied to a creative subtitling practice, before reflecting upon the effects of such an approach, both on the communicative functions of subtitles and on the specific role of the subtitler.

2. From Past to Present in Creative Subtitling

In contrast with the restrictions imposed by subtitling norms, recent research has returned to the possibility of creativity in subtitling. To say "returned" here is to consider the origins of current subtitling practices. Nornes (2007: 103), for example, has drawn attention to the artistry involved in the design of intertitles during cinema's silent era. The designers of these intertitles adopted an approach similar to that of a graphic designer, using curved lines of text, decorative borders and simple animations. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century there was certain optimism for what could be achieved through intertitles:

> At first they were pleasingly decorative; later they aided in interpreting the mood of the play. The text of the subtitles not only advanced the story, but when conversation was used, helped the characterization; and the skilful word pictures aided and completed the scene. (Harris 1916; quoted in Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 1985: 187)

While the creation of intertitles at that moment in history was of huge significance for the development of cinematic narrative, Harris' approval of the "skilful word pictures" demonstrates an early appreciation of the potential creative function of intertitles. It also highlights the capacity of creative subtitles to advance characterisation and "[complete] the scene". This early optimism, however, was to be short lived as the increasing commercialisation of the film industry meant that reproducing creative intertitles in different languages became too expensive. By the early twenties, then, the translation of films was already on the road to becoming the normalised, cost-conscious process that is in place today.

While Nornes (1999: 25-28) makes reference to the use of creative linguistic and graphic subtitling styles in Japan from the thirties to the present day, subtitling styles in the Western world have changed little over the past eighty years. Without wishing to digress into a discussion of the merits or shortcomings of current subtitling norms, it suffices to say that these conventions, which form the basis for quality control and the didactics of subtitling, have now become a powerhouse that is difficult to escape. Yet an indication of the insufficiency of these norms can be found in the increasing number of amateur fansubs and the adoption of some fansubbing techniques by commercial DVD distributors [for example, Caffrey (2009) has drawn attention to the use of 'abusive' subtitling strategies on the DVD release of *Paniponi Dash! Lethal Lesson* (Onuma, 2007), distributed by ADV films]. Fansubs, which were initially produced by anime fans and are now developed for a wide range of audiovisual media, can be seen as a response to the failure of anime distributors to

fulfil the specific demands of that fan community. Faced with the plain styles and domesticating translations of standard subtitling practices, fansubbers have developed an approach that uses various fonts, colours and positions along with notes and glosses in the translation (Ferrer Simó 2005: 29-30). The rapid growth in popularity of fansubbing practices has since forced the hand of anime distributors, leading them to adapt their subtitling styles and include additional features such as pop-up glosses. Indeed, as Díaz Cintas (2005) has pointed out, the greater flexibility afforded by new technologies (and in particular the home entertainment market) has given rise to a shift in subtitling styles. These changes relate to dialogue techniques, the number of lines per subtitle, the use of colours, cumulative subtitles and metatextual information (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, these small changes to standard subtitling practices do not truly represent a paradigm shift in the subtitling process. Indeed, they are still arguably less creative than the first intertitles produced almost a century ago.

This frustration is evidenced in Nornes' (1999) tirade on "corrupt" subtitling practices. Nornes disavows standard subtitling practices because of their misjudged insistence on invisibility, their domesticating translation strategies and the violence they exert on the source text. This fraudulent approach, he argues, pretends to move the target audience closer to the foreign, while in fact imposing the target culture upon the source culture. The alternative, then, is to adopt an "abusive" subtitling strategy by performing an abuse on the target culture (*ibid.*: 28). This may take the form of a linguistic or graphic abuse: for example, the use of "[untranslatable French pun]" where there is no adequate translation, or subtitles growing in size to graphically represent the shouted dialogue of a character (*ibid.*: 25).

More recently, Nornes' concepts have been used as the basis for a 'new' form of creative or "aesthetic" subtitling (Foerster 2010: 85). In Foerster's recent case study of the creative subtitles used in the cinematic release of the Russian film *Night Watch* (Berkmambetov 2004), Foerster upholds Nornes' observation of the impossibility of invisibility in subtitling, and analyses the style and efficacy of the innovative subtitles, making particular reference to the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (1998). These subtitles occasionally appear in different positions or with different fonts and colours; at times characters can step in front of them, and at other times they become distorted along with the *mise en scène*. Foerster proposes the need for greater innovations in subtitling and, in particular, creative subtitling, and stresses the need for subtitles to become tailored to individual films. However, she ultimately concludes that, despite many positive qualities, the subtitles do not "meet

all the criteria necessary to be regarded as satisfactory by experts" (Foerster 2010: 95). Yet perhaps no other conclusion can be reached if creative subtitles are only judged against the standardised norms of the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice*. These are the conventions that have, ultimately, formed the basis for standard "corrupt" subtitling practices. How, then, can aesthetic subtitles that have been produced according to the terms of the *Code* ever be truly creative or "abusive"? Regardless of how timely, beneficial or aesthetically pleasing a creative subtitling strategy may be, referring only to ideas from within translation studies and audiovisual translation will fail to produce a new form of subtitling that is truly innovative. It is for this reason that AVT academics and practitioners must develop a multidisciplinary approach, reaching out to other disciplines as in the first days of intertitles, to form a subtitling strategy based on principles from film studies, graphic design and beyond.

3. Multidisciplinarity in Creative Subtitling

Further recent research in AVT has begun to turn towards a multidisciplinary approach. Chaume (2004), in particular, has proposed a film studies-based approach for the analysis of audiovisual texts. By identifying ten "signifying codes of cinematic language" (*ibid.*: 16) relating to the cinema's acoustic and visual channels, he has drawn attention to the large number of semiotic codes in the film text. Indeed, only one of his ten codes relates to linguistic issues, and even within this code, Chaume is quick to point out that translational difficulties, such as wordplay and culture-specific objects, are not unique to audiovisual texts (*ibid.*:17). It is, in fact, the shift from written script to 'prefabricated orality' that poses the greatest linguistic difficulties for the film translator. This emphasis on the multiple acoustic and visual "signifying codes" that make up each and every audiovisual text could, then, be seen as a convincing argument for the implementation of a creative subtitling practice. By focusing for so long on the linguistic code, AVT scholars have failed to address the requirements posed by the numerous other layers of meaning in film texts. Therefore, by developing a truly multidisciplinary approach to audiovisual translation, a creative subtitling strategy can fully respond to the communicative needs of each and every film text.

In developing a responsive, creative subtitling strategy, it may prove fruitful to draw upon other areas of translation where such an approach has already been adopted. The recent practical turn in theatre translation is one such example. Theatre translators have now come to realise that performability must be tailored to and contingent upon the specific aesthetic qualities of the individual play that is being translated. This dawning realisation is

strongly linked to a clear awareness of the importance of multidisciplinarity in theatre translation:

> At the most general level, how we consider and think about translation for performance has more to do with theatre practice than it has with translation theory *strictu sensu*. That is not to deny the clear and potentially very fruitful relationship between theory and practice, but to subordinate performance-led practice to a hierarchy of theory [...] effectively serves to decontextualise practice from the imperatives that drive it. (Johnston 2010: 15)

Multidisciplinarity, then, and in particular cross-disciplinary collaboration, is at the heart of this practical turn. Johnston goes on to note that this collaboration between theatre translators, directors and actors may, at its best, create a "meaningful" experience in the mind of the spectator. Translation, he argues, is:

> [...] a process that [...] engineers two-way movement – a traffic between the narratives, concepts and structures of life embodied in foreign texts, and the affective and cognitive environment of the spectator. (*ibid*.: 21)

Does this not resonate with Nornes' suggestion that "abusive" subtitles should provide the spectator with an "experience of translation" (1999: 18)? The term "abusive", however, is perhaps somewhat misplaced, implying a one-way traffic from the source text to the target audience. Creative subtitling is a more appropriate and much less charged term, yet it must be used with some caution: not simply to describe a subtitling practice that differs from the norm, but to denote an approach that looks outward from its own discipline as well as its own culture. In short, film translation, like theatre translation, must become a creative practice. Standard subtitling conventions, by restricting subtitlers to a generic set of norms, convert the translator into a mere rule-obeying machine rather than the creative collaborator that can be found in the figure of the theatre translator. The creative subtitler, therefore, must keep a trilateral gaze: backwards to the source culture *and* the aesthetic qualities and semiotic codes of the source text; sideways to the influences to be gained from related disciplines; and forwards to the target culture *and* the aesthetic qualities and semiotic codes of the subtitles.

It therefore follows that subtitles should respond to each specific film as other forms of translation respond to their respective specific text types – and not simply in terms of constraints. Standard subtitling practice, as it is now and as it has been for the largest part of its history, is often defined negatively by its constraints. In contrast, the creative subtitling practice allows a more positive view of the qualities (not constraints) of this form of translation. Rather than adhering to a restrictive set of norms, the creative subtitling

practice responds to the specific qualities of the individual film text, giving the creative subtitler more freedom to create an aesthetic that matches that of the source text, instead of being bound by standard font types, sizes and positions. Creative subtitles may be subtle or striking, bright or neutral, wild or restrained, but they will always respond to the individual film text, or even to specific moments within that film text. This change in convention means that creative subtitles will never be "invisible" (if, indeed, subtitles have ever been "invisible"). Yet the aim of creative subtitles is not to "invisibly" reproduce the same effect on the target audience as that of the source audience. For who is to say what that experience is? Who is to say that that experience can be defined as one single unifying experience? Creative subtitles, then, aim to achieve difference rather than sameness. Just as other texts are completed in translation, given new meaning as they move across cultures, so too will creative subtitles allow the film text to gain new meanings in translation.

As we have seen, it is the multidisciplinary nature of creative subtitles that allows them to become truly creative. While Chaume (2004) has gone some way towards multidisciplinarity by analysing the signifying codes of the audiovisual text, further research must be carried out in order to develop a multidisciplinary subtitling practice. In the next section, we will examine key principles from film studies in a bid to develop this creative subtitling practice.

4. New Insights from Film Studies and Beyond

As a starting point, it may be useful to observe previous instances of graphically creative subtitles. We have already seen that creative subtitles are, in themselves, no new idea. The use of graphic design methods by intertitle writers (including Hitchcock himself) during the silent era and the adoption of innovative graphic methods by Japanese subtitlers in the thirties is testament to this very fact. While such creative subtitling methods have remained largely unused in the West over the past number of decades, more and more filmmakers are utilising new advances in digital film editing software to produce more innovative results in subtitling. These subtitles (which, it must be pointed out, are the products of the imagination of film directors and editors rather than subtitlers) are often used to produce a certain narrative or comedic effect, or to interact with the film's soundscape and *mise en scène*. A first example of this type of subtitle usage can be found in Jay Roach's popular Hollywood genre film *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002). In this case, the subtitles are used for comedic effect (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Subtitles for comedic effect in *Austin Powers in Goldmember.*

This subtitling technique is used several times in a scene between Austin Powers, his colleague Foxxy Cleopatra and a Japanese businessman, Mr Roboto. On each occasion, both Powers and Cleopatra are able to read the subtitles along with the viewers: a technique that is rather fitting for this film, since Powers often breaks the illusion of the reality of film by speaking directly to the audience. The subtitles, in fact, become part of the *mise en scène* itself, with actual objects sitting in front of them, obscuring their view from the characters as well as the audience.

Another example of film editing techniques used for subtitle production can be found in the Argentinean art film, *La antena* (Sapir, 2007). This black and white film harks back to films of the silent era, with neo-noir and expressionist styles. The film is set in an imagined city in the year XX, the inhabitants of which have lost their voices. Motion typography is therefore used to represent the characters' dialogue (see Figure 2).

Rather than being used for comedic effect as in the first example, these 'subtitles' perform both a narrative and an artistic function. Once again and, indeed, to an even greater extent, these 'subtitles' are fully integrated into the *mise en scène*, providing a vehicle for understanding for both the characters and the audience. Clearly the film was always intended to be read with subtitles, even by its native audience, and was therefore filmed and edited in such

Figure 2: Motion typography in *La antena*

a way that the subtitles could be integrated into the *mise en scène* without very great difficulty. Interlingual subtitlers, of course, do not usually have this luxury. Nevertheless, the motion typography used in *La antena* shows the levels of artistic merit that can be achieved through subtitles that fully blend with and respond to their backdrop.

As a final example of recent creative uses of subtitling, we will examine Danny Boyle's multi Academy Award winning film, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). Subtitles are provided for a third of the film's dialogue, and, in particular, for the flashbacks to the protagonist's childhood (see Figure 3).

The primary function of these subtitles, unlike those used in the previous examples, is translation. Yet their linguistic function has not impinged totally upon their graphic style. The subtitles are always set against a semi-transparent
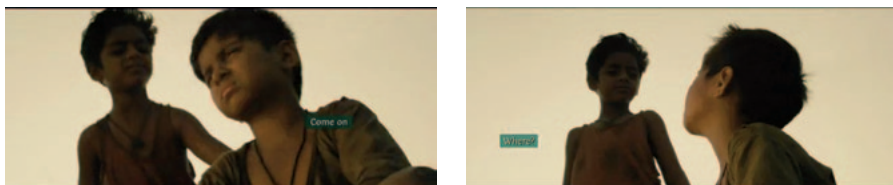
Figure 3: Creative subtitles in *Slumdog Millionaire*.

box to ensure their visibility, but, contrary to standard subtitling conventions, the colour of the transparent box changes according to the colour scheme of the *mise en scène*. What is even more striking, however, is the change in position of the subtitles. Rather than remaining at the bottom of the screen, as is standard subtitling practice, the subtitles have been raised to a more prominent position within the action of the film. They also jump from one side of the screen to the other, seemingly attempting to follow the flow of dialogue between characters. Indeed, the positioning of the subtitles, on the whole, works to keep the audience engaged with the plight of the two young boys. By commissioning this style of subtitles, Boyle has put faith in his viewers and refused to underestimate them. Although there are legibility issues with some of the subtitles, the point of the subtitles in this film seems to be that the audience gains an overall understanding of the situation and dialogue, rather than a word by word comprehension of each subtitle. This is further evidenced through the sparse use of subtitles: repeated utterances, for example, are not given a second subtitle, nor are subtitles provided for emphatic words or unessential background dialogue. Boyle has therefore achieved a set of subtitles that fulfil their linguistic, translational function, while also fulfilling an equally important aesthetic function through their colour and an affective function through their positioning in the heart of the on-screen action.

Rather significantly, as previously mentioned, these creative subtitles, with all their comedic, narrative and artistic functions, stem from the creative mind of the filmmaker; not the linguistic mind of the translator. Indeed, professional subtitlers and AVT academics have freely admitted the creative limitations of their 'art': "For many cinema professionals and film buffs subtitles are a blemish on the film screen and we do not really wish to contradict them" (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 82). Yet the above examples (which are just a few of a wider range of examples of creative subtitles and motion typography) prove that it is possible for subtitles to become more than just a "blemish on the film screen". Perhaps, then, it is time for AVT academics to take a leaf out of the filmmaker's book, rather than lay back and accept the shortcomings of their practice. It is for this reason that this article has stressed the importance of a multidisciplinary creative subtitling practice and, now that we have observed the potential of such an approach, we may begin to introduce film studies principles to the suggested creative subtitling practice.

Firstly, it is worth considering the way in which film titles are used to convey meaning. The advances in motion graphics software in recent years have led to increased interest in both the theory and practice of title design. Yet, as in the case of intertitles, the creative design of main titles, which usually

include the film's title and opening credits, is no new idea. Dick (2005: 23) has detailed several examples of such credits, including those used in Preston Sturges's *The Lady Eve* (1941), which features the film title slithering across the screen in the form of a snake, and those used in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Dick (2005: 23) describes how the credits used in *Psycho* "intersect, coming onto the screen horizontally and vertically as the actors' first and last names split apart". These credits are used, therefore, not just as an aesthetic tool, but as a means of preparing the audience for the themes and plotlines they are about to witness (in the case of *Psycho*, themes of split personalities and slashing). If opening credits can become representative of a film text, it then stands to reason that subtitles, when designed creatively, can also become representative of the narrative and the *mise en scène* in each specific film, and even in each specific scene.

We have already seen the ways in which creative subtitles may interact with the *mise en scène* through their use of different positions, styles and colours. Yet the *mise en scène* is just one of the ways in which films construct meaning. What about the development of characters and the relationships between characters? While the subtitles in *Slumdog Millionaire* are positioned to show the flow of dialogue between characters, the position of subtitles could also be used to highlight the relationships between characters, for example, between two lovers, or behind the back of a character who is hiding a secret. The choice of font could be used to become denotative of that particular character, with different font types being used for different characters. Even colours, where appropriate, could be used to represent a specific character. Likewise, subtle effects could be added to indicate the emotional or physical state of a particular character: for example, text with low opacity for a character who is weak or tired. In a creative subtitling strategy, all sorts of techniques can be applied to expand upon the subtitles' communicative functions. Yet perhaps some more specific 'rules' can be applied if we consider the norms that surround the art of filmmaking and, in particular, the rules of film editing. The Functionalists argued that editing was the one technique unique to filmmaking that could position it as an art form. Perhaps the rules of film editing can therefore develop our subtitling practices in the same way.

Multi Academy Award winning film editor and sound designer Walter Murch, whose projects include *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), *The Godfather: Part III* (Coppola, 1990) and *The English Patient* (Minghella, 1996), has recommended six criteria to be considered in the film editing process. In his book, *In the Blink of an Eye: a Perspective on Film Editing* (2001), Murch puts forward a "Rule of Six" which prioritises emotion (51%), story (23%), rhythm

(10%), eye-trace (7%), planarity (5%) and the three-dimensional space of action (4%) (*ibid*: 18). Murch is quick to point out that this is not a binding set of rules and is also aware that it may be impossible to fulfil all of these criteria. It is for this reason that he allocates each criterion a percentage of importance: a ranking that is very telling about what is considered important in the cinema. The two lowest ranking criteria, for instance, are arguably the most technically based criteria, yet they amount to only nine percent of the total. Murch explains "planarity" as "the grammar of three dimensions transposed by photography to two (the dimensions of stage-line, etc)" and describes the "three-dimensional continuity of the actual space" as "where people are in the room and in relation to one another" (*ibid*.). These two criteria are usually seen as the key to continuity editing, as they create a 'real' three-dimensional space out of two-dimensional images, thus providing the viewer's sense of perspective and orientation. Interestingly, Murch suggests that the viewer's emotional response to a film is of much greater importance than their sense of perspective, or the technical constraints of the filmic medium. Emotion, it would seem, is even much more important than comprehension, at least on a visual level. Indeed, its allocated importance of fifty-one percent shows just how important it is for the film editor to "recreate the emotion of the moment" (*ibid*.). Not to be overlooked, the second criterion of story, while only half as important as emotion, represents an important factor in carrying the viewer along with the film's narrative. Finally, the third and fourth criteria of rhythm and eye-trace (the way in which the viewer's eye follows the on-screen action), although surprisingly low down on this recommended list, are still seen to be of greater significance than the often hailed technical rules such as the 180-degree rule and the 30-degree rule.

Having examined these six criteria, how can we now relate them to the development of a creative subtitling practice? Firstly, as in the film editing process, we may say that creative subtitles should respond to the emotion of the moment (implying that they may change throughout the film, depending on events, characters and settings). Engaging with the emotion of the moment in subtitles can take both linguistic and graphic forms. Linguistically, the subtitler's translation strategy may vary according to the character who is speaking (for example, with different registers, vocabulary and colloquialisms), according to the relationship between characters and according to the situation in which they find themselves. Graphically, creative subtitles may mirror the emotion of the moment by integrating into the *mise en scène* in terms of the colours, styles or special effects used. With regard to advancing the story, subtitles obviously play an important role through their translation

of dialogue, on-screen signs and other written materials, and even the trans-lation of songs. Their legibility is therefore of a certain significance to the film's narrative, and care must be taken to ensure their (linguistic and visual) readability and their on-screen duration. Rhythmically, it would seem impor-tant that subtitles follow the rhythm of the film text, mirroring the rushed, unstable effect of fast shot changes or the measured, relaxed effect of slow shot changes. A careful balance must be drawn between film rhythm and the duration of subtitles, which is not easy to achieve. Following this ranked system, however, it would follow that the story or narrative, and therefore legibility, is of greater importance than rhythm and therefore takes priority. Murch's criterion of "eye-trace" is also significant when considering a creative subtitling practice, as it seems to pose an argument for subtitles being raised into the heart of the on-screen action. In so doing, the viewer would argu-ably remain engaged with the on-screen action, although this theory would need to be corroborated by further research. We are now left with the final two criteria, which relate to the technical rules normally imposed on film editing. When considering the development of a creative subtitling practice, this then leaves us with the rules normally imposed on standard subtitling practice. These conventions, while they must be considered, are perhaps not as steadfast as they may seem and, when considered alongside other criteria, fall short of singlehandedly producing an adequate emotional engagement or narrative function.

This discussion has largely developed a creative subtitling strategy as a response to the visual elements of the film text. Yet the film text is not just a visual text; it is an audiovisual text, and therefore its acoustic channel can-not be ignored. Once, again, when considering a creative approach to subtitle production, we may turn to the early design of intertitles and their render-ing of the acoustic track. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985: 188) have described some of the early methods used by silent era directors and inter-title writers to graphically represent the characters' spoken dialogue. These include the use of different sizes of typeface to designate the volume of the character's voice (with small letters for whispers and large letters for shouts), and the use of words with letters out of line to represent the dialogue of a drunken man. In particular, Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson cite Emmett Campbell Hall, the director of *Road o' Strife* (1915), who attempted to prevent his intertitles from interrupting the onscreen action:

> Some dissolve in and out, others appear abruptly and slowly fade, still others merely flash on and instantly disappear, as a sharp, explosive "No!" seems to do. We have undertaken to visually approximate sound effects. (Hall 1915; quoted in Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 1985: 188)

These techniques, although almost a century old, seem to have been lost in the commoditisation of film production and the standardisation of subtitling norms. Yet they propose interesting methods for dealing with film sound. Yet further techniques for responding to music, and in particular songs, in film can be seen in the original release of *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (Stuart, 1971) (see Figure 4). In two songs sung by the Oompa Loompas, some of the words appear onscreen as they are sung, synchronised with the music's rhythm. In the first instance, the words appear alongside a split screen in different colours depending on the singer, while in the second example key lyrics appear on a computer screen, thereby integrating with the *mise en scène*.

The examples provided here are indicative of just some of the techniques at the creative subtitler's disposal for the creative rendering of a film's audio track. Other techniques may be developed if we consider the various uses of sound in the audiovisual text, including natural sound, sound perspective, voice-over narration and music. Natural sound is a term that covers all sound emanating from a visible onscreen source, including dialogue. In order to graphically represent the aural characteristics of the spoken dialogue, the

Figure 4: Titled songs in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.

creative subtitler may use capital letters or larger text for shouted words, and smaller or slightly transparent text for whispers. If a character is weak or tired and this is represented through their voice, the text may appear transparent, wispy or appear to float. The positioning of the subtitles may also vary according to the onscreen position of the speaker: in this way, the text may appear to come from its corresponding aural source. Similarly, subtitle text may vary with the aural perspective, that is, the impression of distance that is created through sound. Just as the subtitle position may vary along with the position of the speaker, the text may appear larger or smaller depending on how close the character is to the camera (if, that is, the volume of their voice also changes). Currently, voice-over narration is usually subtitled with italic text. Yet perhaps, in a creative subtitling practice, this form of narration could be attributed a specific colour, typeface or position (according to the requirements of the individual film) to set it apart from the natural dialogue of the characters. These are, of course, just some possible suggestions for creatively responding to sound in film texts. Further research into the theory and practice of film sound must still be carried out in order to fully respond to the cinema's varying soundscapes. Furthermore, while this work has come some way to developing a multidisciplinary approach to creative subtitling, yet more research remains to be carried out into the insights to be gained from the disciplines of graphic design and, in particular, motion graphics.

5. The Evolving Role of the Creative Subtitler

While it may be argued that these recommendations are overly vague and nonspecific, I would argue that, to achieve a truly creative subtitling practice, it is useless to attempt to build yet another lengthy set of overly restrictive, specific norms. It has been stated that a creative subtitling practice must evolve and adapt according to the film to be subtitled. How, then, could an overly prescriptive set of subtitling norms ever create a fully flexible, creative approach? The aim of this research, therefore, is not simply to impose a new uniform theory of subtitling, but to propose subtitling as contingent upon the film text: as a creative response to individual qualities within and between films. It has also been argued that a truly creative subtitling practice must adopt a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon concepts from film studies, and perhaps even from graphic design, to facilitate the subtitler's understanding of the semiotic codes used within the film text and the design techniques that these require. The need for this multidisciplinary understanding has been demonstrated in the four existing examples of creative subtitles included in this paper, which have originated with the filmmakers rather than

film subtitlers. This multidisciplinary approach requires, in turn, that the creative subtitler has a very specialised skill set, thus evolving the subtitler's current role. This expanded skill set means that the subtitler must possess, not only the skills of a translator (with all the linguistic capabilities and cultural awareness that this entails), but also the skills of a cineliterate film viewer, capable of reading the film text, its characters and their relationships, and the various filmic devices used to convey meaning.

In addition to this expanded skill set, a creative subtitling practice may require the use of film editing software rather than industry standard subtitling software in order to gain further control over the colours, styles, positions and effects that may be achieved. These two new requirements together imply a great change in the role of the subtitler. As opposed to their current role as translator, the creative subtitler becomes something of a translator-title designer, capable of producing subtitles that are linguistically and aesthetically pleasing. It therefore follows that the translator-title designer, rather than remaining outside of the filmmaking process, should become part of the postproduction team, working alongside the film editors and title designers. This would enable the translator-title designer to gain closer working access to the film's production team, including the director, and consequently achieve greater insights into the film's style and the director's intentions. In turn, this would facilitate a creative subtitling that truly responds to the film and, moreover, becomes an aesthetic extension of the film itself.

Is this evolved role of the subtitler idealistic? Perhaps. Is it too much to ask for subtitling to become part of the filmmaking process? Perhaps. Yet it would seem that certain filmmakers are already moving in this direction. The box office success and critical acclaim achieved by *Slumdog Millionaire* demonstrate that creative subtitles can prove very successful when used in multilingual sequences in films. The film's success among the public certainly suggests that creative subtitles are of greater appeal to a more mainstream audience. Clearly, however, the cost of producing such subtitles is a factor that cannot be ignored in the filmmaking business. Each specific, tailored decision regarding the colour or position of a single subtitle will cost more than the automatic styling provided by standard subtitling software. This difference in cost is, perhaps, the reason why even existing films that have used creative subtitling have not used it throughout the whole film. The creative subtitling used in *Night Watch*, for example, is far from consistent, with many subtitles returning to standard format. Furthermore, in its home entertainment release, this creative subtitling track is only included as a special feature on the special edition DVD release, thereby saving costs by ensuring that the

standard release is easy to translate into different languages. Nevertheless, the increasing number of creatively subtitled films and their relative success among the public may prove reason enough for some filmmakers, who have both the budget and the creative vision to experiment further with such creative subtitling techniques.

In spite of these issues of time and cost, it is clear that new digital technologies are advancing and evolving the way in which films are made. Subtitling practices, conversely, have remained relatively unchanged throughout their history. The recent turn towards creative subtitling, not to mention the rise in fansubbing practices, proves that subtitling must begin to advance along with these new digital technologies. Subtitling can no longer afford to remain the same practice it was fifty years ago, nor can professional subtitlers and academics in audiovisual translation continue to settle for the inadequacy of their field. Subtitles can be more than simply a "blemish" on the screen. Indeed, in addition to their visually aesthetic qualities, they can add greater levels of linguistic, pragmatic and cultural understanding that may enhance the viewer's film experience and also lead them to an "experience of translation" (Nornes 1999: 18).

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to highlight the need for a multidisciplinary approach within audiovisual translation and, in particular, within the creative subtitling practice. We have examined the historic origins and aesthetic precedents for the present turn towards creative subtitling along with the recent practical turn in theatre translation, which has recognised the need for a practical, collaborative approach between translators, theatre directors and actors. Following Johnston's argument, it would seem that film translation also has more to do with film practice than translation theory, which leads us to the need for multidisciplinary research between film studies and audiovisual translation. Initial examples of such work have already been carried out by academics such as Nornes (1999, 2007) and Chaume (2004). On the basis of this existing research, I have attempted to put forward a multidisciplinary approach to the practice of creative subtitling. This approach draws upon the aesthetic qualities of existing creative subtitles in film texts along with principles from film studies, including the composition of the *mise en scène*, characterisation and film editing principles. On the basis of these theories, it has been possible to develop recommendations (not norms, rules or conventions) for the development of a creative subtitling practice, including the use of varying colours, typefaces, styles, special effects and positions. Finally, I have

explained how this creative practice may alter the role of the translator within the filmmaking and postproduction processes, along with the problems that may face the creative subtitling practice in terms of its related production times and costs.

This paper has strived to develop the graphic qualities of a creative subtitling practice and therefore less attention has been paid to the linguistic aspects of such a practice. Further research may look with greater detail into Nornes' recommendations for linguistically "abusive" subtitling practices (1999, 2004) and the more general ethical and philosophical arguments within translation theory, including Lewis' theory of "abusive fidelity" (1985), Pound's notion of experimentalism (1929) and Bhabha's concept of the "third space" (1994). As stated earlier in this paper, a truly multidisciplinary approach to creative subtitling requires further research into other related disciplines including graphic design and, in particular, motion graphics and the design of film titles. Furthermore, having developed the practice of creative subtitling, it will soon prove necessary to test the reception of such subtitles, through methods such as questionnaires and eye-tracking software, in order to learn the ways in which they are viewed and the cognitive and affective responses that can be achieved. The large amount of research that remains to be carried out in response to the creative subtitling practice demonstrates that this is a topic that has far to go within the field of audiovisual translation. Furthermore, the increasing number of films using creative subtitling techniques indicates that this is a practice that will continue to grow with new digital technologies and increased public approval. The creative subtitling practice therefore poses exciting new directions for the multidisciplinary theory and practice of audiovisual translation.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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Rebecca McClarty is currently undertaking a PhD at Queen's University Belfast. Her practice-based thesis, entitled *Film and Translation: the Art of Subtitling*, draws on concepts from both Translation and Film Studies to suggest a new turn in film subtitling towards a stylised, creative form of translation that responds to the particular characteristics of a given film text. Rebecca has a BA in French and Spanish (QUB 2008) and an MA in Translation (QUB 2009).

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LA INTERACCIÓN DE LOS CÓDIGOS EN DOBLAJE: JUEGOS DE PALABRAS Y RESTRICCIONES VISUALES[1]

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Resumen

El siguiente artículo profundiza en la complejidad del trasvase del humor, basándose en un problema recurrente en el doblaje de comedias: los juegos de palabras transmitidos parcialmente a través de la imagen. El estudio analiza los factores que inciden en su traducción e ilustra las distintas técnicas de traducción con escenas de la filmografía de los Hermanos Marx. Finalmente, muestra las conclusiones obtenidas a partir del análisis del doblaje de 74 juegos de palabras con restricción visual y su comparación con 116 casos en los que no hay dicha restricción.

Abstract

"The interaction of codes in dubbing: wordplay and visual restrictions."

The following paper delves into the complex transfer of humour, focusing on a recurring problem that appears when dubbing comedies: wordplay partially conveyed by image. It analyses the factors that have a bearing on translation and illustrates the various translation techniques with scenes from the Marx Brothers' filmography. Finally, it details the conclusions obtained from the analysis of the dubbing of 74 puns with visual restriction and its comparison with 116 cases where there is no such restriction.

1. Introducción

Una de las características que diferencia al texto audiovisual de otro tipo de textos es que el mensaje se transmite a través de distintos canales, a saber, el auditivo y el visual. El espectador recibe estímulos a través de dos fuentes de información que, por lo general, se complementan en la creación de significados. La mayoría de las veces la imagen ayuda en el proceso de traducción, tanto a la hora de comprender los elementos de la versión original como a la hora de trasvasarlos, ya que parte de la información aparece en la imagen y, por tanto, no es necesario explicitarla en la traducción. Sin embargo, en ocasiones, esta conjunción de códigos genera problemas, como en el caso de los juegos de palabras combinados con humor visual, en donde se explota precisamente esa diversidad de canales de información para transmitir cargas semánticas dispares y lograr así un contraste entre lo que se oye y lo que se ve. Teniendo en cuenta que el traductor sólo modifica uno de esos canales, el que no se puede alterar, es decir, la imagen, será el que se imponga y limite su margen de maniobra. ¿A qué técnicas[2] recurre el traductor cuando su prioridad es trasvasar el efecto humorístico pero éste se basa en la manipulación lingüística y la explotación simultánea de los canales auditivo y visual?

El presente artículo intenta responder a esta pregunta y para ello analiza 74 ejemplos, seleccionados de los 240 estudiados en un estudio anterior de carácter más general (Martínez-Tejerina 2008), en los que aparecen juegos de palabras con restricciones visuales. El análisis compara la versión original en inglés con la versión doblada en castellano de las trece películas que conforman la filmografía completa de los Hermanos Marx (Groucho, Chico y Harpo). Evidentemente, aunque las conclusiones harán referencia a los 74 casos, debido a la extensión limitada del presente artículo, sólo se muestran 6 ejemplos a modo de ilustración.

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2. La noción de "técnica de traducción" queda reservada en palabras de Hurtado Albir (2001: 256-257) "para referirnos al procedimiento verbal concreto, visible en el resultado de la traducción, para conseguir equivalencias traductoras."

2. Humor y juegos de palabras basados en polisemia

Los juegos de palabras basados en polisemia explotan la similitud formal de estructuras lingüísticas que difieren en el plano semántico. Esta combinación de palabras que se asemejan formalmente pero cuyos significados son ajenos rompe las expectativas del espectador, lo que causa sorpresa y le hace oscilar entre dos interpretaciones:

> All humour, and much intelligence, entails an ability to think on two plans at once. […] In the pun, there are always two or more levels, manifest and latent, in some kind of coexistence, sequence, alternation or tension. […] The key movement of the pun is pivotal […] This pivotal wordplay enables the story to bifurcate […] it generally involves a shift of emphasis. (Redfern 1984: 26-27)

Según las teorías de la incongruencia (cf. Raskin 1985; Attardo & Raskin 1991), el elemento sorpresa es primordial en la creación del chiste, el humor surge de un conflicto entre lo que se espera y lo que ocurre, la incongruencia se desarrolla entre dos ideas, conceptos o situaciones dispares y relacionados de forma sorprendente o imprevista. Así, en los juegos de palabras, una ambigüedad deliberada en la fonología, grafología, morfología, léxico o sintaxis (denominada *trigger* o detonante) induce a error y despista a la audiencia hasta que el *punchline* (frase clave, clímax o remate del chiste) resuelve el conflicto. La oposición puede desarrollarse en diferentes ámbitos: real-irreal, verdadero-falso, normal-anormal, posible-imposible, bueno-malo, vida-muerte, sexo-no sexo, etc.

Al mismo tiempo, son necesarios otros elementos para que el juego de palabras cumpla su función con éxito. En primer lugar, la adaptación y verosimilitud al contexto. En segundo lugar, lo que Freud (1905: 45) denomina el "desplazamiento del acento psíquico". En otras palabras, la desviación del proceso mental hacia un tema distinto del iniciado, hacia un círculo de representación lejano. Además, Freud (1905: 106) añade que el placer producido por el juego de palabras aumentará cuanto mayor sea el desplazamiento, es decir, cuanto más extraños sean entre sí los dos círculos de representación enlazados por la palabra y, por tanto, cuanto mayor sea el ahorro de camino mental procurado por el chiste.

En conclusión, cuanta mayor verosimilitud y naturalidad presenten ambas lecturas en un contexto determinado y cuanto más lejanas sean a su vez dichas realidades, mayor será el efecto lúdico.

3. La semiótica del texto audiovisual: la interacción de los códigos y las restricciones visuales

Como decíamos anteriormente, el texto audiovisual se caracteriza fundamentalmente por la transmisión simultánea del mensaje a través de distintos canales y códigos. Precisamente, una de sus características más notoria y específica es "el significado extra" (Chaume 2004: 26) o "la valeur ajoutée" (Chion 1990: 205) que se produce mediante la interacción de los diferentes códigos en cada momento. Es decir, cada código expresa significado y la interacción de los mismos provoca un significado añadido. Todos estos códigos tienen importancia en el conjunto e influyen en la interpretación del texto audiovisual; es más, Chaume (2004: 26) subraya que "el código lingüístico, pese a su papel preponderante, es sólo un código más en juego en la construcción y posterior trasvase de los textos audiovisuales".

La diversidad de códigos que compone el texto audiovisual tiene dos resultados opuestos. En algunas ocasiones, puede favorecer la comprensión del espectador meta (y del traductor) gracias a la gran aportación semiótica que ofrecen los diversos códigos emitidos de forma simultánea (Martínez Sierra 2008). En otras ocasiones, puede limitar y entorpecer la labor traductora debido a las dificultades que surgen en el trasvase interlingüístico de un producto que abarca diferentes códigos portadores de información y de los que sólo se puede modificar uno. Por lo tanto, es la imagen, al no poder ser modificada, la que impone las restricciones temporales, espaciales y, en el caso que nos ocupa, semánticas. Esta presencia física de elementos de la versión original en la traducción es denominada "total or partial co-ocurrence of the original" (Gottlieb 2005: 88). Ante este fenómeno, se produce un acuerdo tácito en el que el espectador acepta lo inverosímil (*suspension of disbelief*); por ejemplo, que un actor extranjero hable un perfecto español.

Evidentemente, todos los diálogos de un texto audiovisual están vinculados en mayor o menor grado a lo que sucede en pantalla, pero distinguimos como restricciones visuales aquellas imágenes que supeditan al texto. Aplicado a los juegos de palabras, esto supone una diferenciación clara entre aquellos relativamente independientes de los elementos visuales en pantalla y aquellos vinculados inextricablemente al código visual. Estos últimos consisten en la reiteración de una palabra (o del componente de imagen de una unidad fraseológica) con su referente icónico y viceversa, esto es, parte del mensaje se expresa a través de la palabra y parte del mensaje, a través de la imagen. Chaume (2004: 238-243) denomina a este fenómeno recurrencia o reiteración de tipo intersemiótico y comenta:

> La recurrencia semiótica se produce cuando dos códigos aportan la misma información simultáneamente. Los problemas surgirán cuando la traducción de las palabras (su equivalente acuñado en lengua meta) no haga ninguna referencia a la información transmitida por otros códigos. [...] En un estadio más complicado, la recurrencia puede incluso aparecer junto a juegos de palabras. En estos casos, el código lingüístico puede hacer referencia a uno de los significados del juego de palabras y el código iconográfico al otro significado de la figura estilística.

En los giros contextuales provocados por la imagen, una de las acepciones del término se evoca a través de la escena, ya sea por medio de actos o de objetos. De este modo, aparecen en pantalla dos lecturas diferentes de la misma palabra o unidad fraseológica, creando una contradicción entre el código lingüístico y el iconográfico. La imagen muestra la carga semántica inesperada, lo que genera el efecto humorístico. Huelga decir que la restricción será mayor cuanto más visible sea la carga semántica expresada por la imagen. Esta observación aparentemente obvia insiste en la necesidad de comprender y valorar la semiótica fílmica, pues en este caso la planificación se erige como un factor primordial para el trasvase del código lingüístico. Por ejemplo, en la filmografía de los Marx encontramos secuencias en las que el objeto se muestra en un primer plano y otras en las que un plano medio impide que el objeto se vea con claridad. El primer caso se observa en una secuencia de *Plumas de caballo* (*Horse Feathers*, 1932) en la que Groucho advierte a Harpo: "Young man, as you grow older you'll find that you can't burn the candle at both ends" y Harpo, a modo de respuesta, muestra en primer plano una vela encendida por ambos extremos. El segundo caso se desarrolla en una escena de *Los Hermanos Marx en el Oeste* (*Go West*, 1940) en la que un hombre de negocios, cansado de intentar llegar a un trato con una persona tan absurda como Groucho, exclama: "I wash my hands on this whole deal!"; a lo que Groucho replica lanzándole una pastilla de jabón: "Try this soap. We are having a special on it." No obstante, el plano entero impide una visión clara de la pastilla por lo que, en caso de que no hubiera habido paralelismo etimológico y el traductor hubiese querido trasvasar la carga humorística, podría haber basado su juego de palabras en cualquier objeto similar al que se ve en pantalla, sin necesidad de que se mencionara obligatoriamente el jabón.

Otra curiosidad de la relación que se establece entre planificación y juegos de palabras en el texto audiovisual es la posibilidad de utilizar un plano medio para incluir en la misma imagen tanto el contexto primario, como el clímax fruto del giro contextual. Es muy probable que esta decisión no fuera intencionada en la filmografía de los Marx y que se debiera más bien a las convenciones de la época y a las reminiscencias teatrales. En cualquier caso, el

uso de este tipo de planos por un lado invita a la comedia de enredo y de situación y, por otro, fomenta la aparición en pantalla de las dos cargas semánticas del juego de palabras. Esta característica se puede observar en una hilarante secuencia de *Plumas de caballo* (*Horse Feathers*, 1932) en la que Groucho y Chico intentan firmar un acuerdo, pero no encuentran lo que necesitan para legalizarlo, por lo que exclaman insistentemente: "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. This isn't legal. There's no seal on it. Where's the seal?" Harpo trae una foca. En esta escena, el uso de un plano medio permite incluir en la misma imagen tanto el contexto de una de las cargas semánticas (un despacho de abogados), como la representación de la carga inesperada (el animal).

Como mencionábamos anteriormente, estas restricciones visuales —el hecho de que la imagen refuerce, niegue, complemente o matice el mensaje expresado por el código oral— pueden suponer un obstáculo para el trasvase traductor. Chaume (2004: 27) comenta que el traductor tiende a expresar el sentido que irrumpe como fruto de la interacción de los códigos, pero que a veces queda atado por el sema que transmite la imagen de tal manera que se limita a evitar que lo que se dice contradiga a lo que se ve.

Por otro lado, el traductor intenta superar todos estos obstáculos sin que su labor quede explícita en la versión doblada, pues ésta se valora con frecuencia por el grado de invisibilidad del mismo. Autores como Agost (1999: 52), Castro (2001: 42) o Brehm (2005: 190) coinciden en que la traducción debe pasar inadvertida; en otras palabras, el trasvase habrá tenido éxito si el espectador no se da cuenta de que está viendo un doblaje.

4. Humor y doblaje

En la traducción audiovisual (TAV) del humor inciden numerosos factores. En este apartado comentamos primero factores más generales –como pueden ser las barreras y coincidencias entre culturas, la capacidad comunicativa del medio audiovisual o la naturaleza de la industria cinematográfica– para después analizar características lingüísticas que afectan al trasvase del humor.

4.1. El doblaje de las comedias

El doblaje de comedias de situación se desarrolla a diario y, en general, de modo satisfactorio. Este éxito de las comedias extranjeras se debe, entre otros factores, a las coincidencias humorísticas entre culturas, a los aciertos de las traducciones y a la capacidad comunicativa del medio audiovisual.

En primer lugar, la audiencia meta ríe debido a rasgos humorísticos comunes a las culturas en juego: ya sean recursos cómicos universales como las

caídas o las batallas de tartas, coincidencias culturales (las diferencias no son tan abismales como podría augurarse, especialmente si las sociedades son la estadounidense y la española) o la alusión a costumbres o referentes culturales conocidos (por ejemplo, personajes célebres como Obama o instituciones como la Casa Blanca). Por fortuna para el traductor, la globalización y la predominancia actual de los Estados Unidos en todos los campos –entre ellos, el cinematográfico– facilita considerablemente el reconocimiento de signos y símbolos de la cultura de origen.

En segundo lugar, huelga decir que una traducción eficaz es capaz de salvar la mayoría de las dificultades que surgen en la traducción del humor o, por lo menos, de compensarlas. Además, no hay que olvidar que España destaca precisamente por la calidad de sus doblajes.

En tercer lugar, la capacidad comunicativa del medio audiovisual llega a restar importancia al proceso traductor. Comentando las posibilidades de trasvase de las comedias, Rabadán (1991) afirma que la literatura cómica no viaja, mientras que Díaz-Cintas (2003: 254) asegura que las películas sí lo hacen:

> [...] las razones de esta discrepancia entre la traducción de programas audiovisuales y literatura de naturaleza cómica han de ser forzosamente múltiples. Una de ellas es, sin duda, la gran aportación semiótica de la imagen, que en pocas ocasiones está jerarquizada por encima de la palabra y hace que el humor viaje mejor en formato audiovisual.

Algunos autores relativizan su trascendencia debido al contexto en el que se enmarca y a la multitud de factores que afectan a la recepción del texto audiovisual:

> Comic films are successful in many cultures, yet for different reasons. Translation must surely play an important role. However, even if we may quite safely hypothesize that quality of translation can either make or break a comedy, it is only one single factor among many which contributes to a film's success […] such as the actors, screenplay, other films on the circuit at a particular moment in time, socio-economic factors regarding audiences, advertising campaigns, and the psychological state of spectators themselves. (Chiaro 2006: 205-206).

A pesar de lo dicho, debemos reconocer que las películas cómicas tropiezan con multitud de barreras lingüísticas y culturales que, en ocasiones, no logran salvar y que provocan la extrañeza o desapego de la audiencia meta. Chiaro (2000) advierte de que el éxito de la mayoría de los humoristas se reduce a su círculo cultural. La autora se pregunta si una posible causa de ello es el uso de juegos de palabras, comparando dichas películas con otras de más éxito como *Un pez llamado Wanda (A Fish Called Wanda*, 1988)*, Cuatro bodas y un funeral*

(*Four Weddings and a Funeral*, 1994), o *Full Monty* (*The Full Monty*, 1997), que contienen muy pocos *puns* y que se basan en situaciones cómicas, parodias y otros tipo de humor que no están relacionados con la ambigüedad lingüística:

> Thus, we could begin to hypothesize that humor on screen tends to be more successful within the borders of its country of origin and less successful abroad when the type of wordplay it contains is of the punning variety simply because of translational difficulty (Chiaro 2005: 138).

Es importante subrayar que el efecto perlocutivo del texto meta cobra aún más importancia en traducción audiovisual y, concretamente, en la cinematográfica, ya que el cine es una industria y, en consecuencia, la reacción del cliente (la audiencia) es extremadamente importante por razones económicas y de mercado. A este respecto, cabe mencionar que en TAV las normas parecen más explícitas que en otros tipos de traducción por un motivo fundamental: el texto audiovisual se concibe como un producto comercial que debe ser consumido; en consecuencia, el receptor, es decir, el consumidor, adquiere mayor relevancia y sus gustos y prioridades son fundamentales. Ivarsson (1992: 66) señala que "viewers are creatures of habit", lo que implica que se debe respetar aquello a lo que esté acostumbrada la audiencia.

Autores como Whitman (2001) consideran que los productores estadounidenses sólo tienen en cuenta a la audiencia local, mientras que otros (Delabastita 1989; Chaves 2000; o Martínez Sierra 2008) aseguran que la producción de muchas películas considera los posibles objetivos de mercado en el presente contexto de globalización económica y cultural, en otras palabras, los filmes se producen con el objetivo de llegar a un amplio mercado internacional. En nuestra opinión, muchas películas y series, sobre todo las grandes producciones, aspiran a alcanzar efectivamente un éxito internacional, para lo que utilizan estrategias como la promoción y la mercadotecnia. Sin embargo, la mayoría de estas películas incluyen referencias culturales y juegos de palabras cuya comicidad puede perderse en el trasvase lingüístico a causa de la falta de conocimientos compartidos y a las características intrínsecas a cada idioma. Por lo tanto, no creemos que los productores suelan limitar la capacidad creativa de la obra por miedo a no superar las fronteras lingüísticas y culturales. A este respecto, es curioso el caso de los Hermanos Marx, que se preocupaban por no hacer chistes demasiado locales con el fin de que sus giras por todo Estados Unidos tuvieran éxito. Sin embargo, estas medidas no fueron suficientes para lograr el éxito en otro país con el mismo idioma pero diferente cultura: Reino Unido (cf. Bego 2001: 35).

4.2. *Los juegos de palabras en el cine*

 Para transmitir toda la fuerza cómica del original, el traductor debe detectar todos los juegos de palabras, esto es, debe percibir las incongruencias del enunciado y ser capaz de reinterpretar el mensaje. El proceso de interpretación del humor se puede resumir de la siguiente manera: los significados que se han ido activando durante el procesamiento de información quedan descartados por una incongruencia, es decir, las cargas semánticas no encajan con el contexto, por lo que el receptor deduce que hay una ambigüedad intencionada y vuelve a interpretar el enunciado teniendo en cuenta su carácter humorístico.

Esta tarea no resulta tan sencilla como pudiera considerarse *a priori*. En las comedias de los Marx uno de los factores que influyen en la invisibilidad de los juegos de palabras es el diacrónico; el paso de las décadas ha eliminado algunos de los significados explotados en las unidades polisémicas, lo que dificulta la comprensión de los enunciados. Por esta razón, el traductor debe permanecer atento a las diversas pistas que ofrece la versión original y que marcan los pasajes humorísticos. Estas señales pueden ser comunes a todo acto de comunicación o exclusivas del texto fílmico. Las primeras las constituyen los significados no verbales de la enunciación, que "sirven para completar, reducir, realzar o anular los significados proposicionales" (Alcaraz 1990: 146). En nuestro corpus, es frecuente que el código visual transmita información quinésica para explicitar un juego de palabras; por ejemplo, Groucho suele elevar las cejas cuando sus comentarios incluyen insinuaciones de contenido sexual. Además, el texto fílmico dispone de señales exclusivas, entre las que destacan las restricciones visuales y las risas enlatadas. Estas manifestaciones emplean la imagen o la pista de audio para indicar pasajes humorísticos y condicionan la técnica de traducción pues, de no transmitirse una carga humorística en la versión meta, se producirá el poco deseado ruido semiótico, es decir, el espectador observará una incoherencia o un desequilibrio entre los códigos de significación del producto audiovisual.

Otra característica propia de la traducción audiovisual que afecta sustancialmente al trasvase de los juegos de palabras es el ritmo: "El avance implacable de los estímulos en una película añade un esfuerzo extra a la memoria y a los procesos de inferencia del espectador" (Bordwell 1996: 33). Los productos audiovisuales imponen una velocidad que dificulta la presencia de complicados juegos lingüísticos que requieran un esfuerzo elevado de la audiencia meta. No hay que olvidar que el receptor está dispuesto a hacer el esfuerzo de procesar la información a cambio de una recompensa en forma de implicaciones contextuales (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1982) o del prometido efecto

humorístico. Sin embargo, dicho proceso requiere tiempo. Un juego de palabras excesivamente complejo exigirá un trabajo por parte del receptor que se traducirá a su vez en un tiempo del que no dispone. De modo que, frente a otros soportes –como pueda ser el libro, que permite detenerse y reflexionar sobre lo leído–, los productos cinematográficos imponen un ritmo ágil de interpretación. Es cierto que los vídeos y DVD permiten la detención de la imagen, pero resultaría molesto y contraproducente tener que parar constantemente el reproductor con el fin de descubrir el efecto cómico.

Además, el medio en que se desarrolla la TAV imposibilita una de las soluciones para los juegos de palabras: las notas a pie de página. Éstas eliminan el efecto y obstaculizan la fluidez del texto pero evitan, mediante la explicación del problema, la extrañeza del receptor ante la incoherencia del texto. La ausencia de espacio para explicaciones en el texto audiovisual impide que los juegos lingüísticos sean solucionados con este recurso.

Por último, el hecho de que el doblaje elimine la pista sonora original permite –siempre que no haya restricciones visuales que lo impidan— la adopción de técnicas de traducción imaginativas —que se alejan del texto original y que suelen ser necesarias para solucionar los problemas que surgen en el trasvase del humor— sin que la audiencia sea consciente de la modificación y no realice, en consecuencia, críticas centradas, fundamentalmente, en algunos aspectos lingüísticos tangenciales.

5. El doblaje de las restricciones visuales

A la hora de traducir, siempre que no haya paralelismos entre las lenguas en juego y que sea necesario manipular el texto origen para lograr el efecto perlocutivo, la redundancia semántica propia de las restricciones visuales obstaculiza la traducción, pues el espectador meta recibe información adicional sobre el texto origen. Por tanto, el hecho de que el espectador meta reciba tanto la traducción de la palabra como el mensaje visual original puede suponer una limitación considerable del margen de maniobra del traductor. Debido a que, por lo general en cine —a diferencia de otros medios como pueda ser la publicidad— la imagen no se modifica, el texto meta debe ser acorde con ésta, tratando de expresar por el medio acústico lo que se ve o, al menos, de no contradecirla. Evidentemente, el problema surge cuando "en algún momento en la transferencia de información se produce una ruptura en esa simbiosis de códigos que se daba de modo fluido en el producto origen" (Díaz-Cintas 2001: 122).

Las técnicas a las que se recurre para la traducción de un juego de palabras son de lo más dispares y abarcan desde el empleo de los mismos recursos del

original hasta la omisión del mismo, pasando por la recreación. Estas opciones pueden deberse bien al paralelismo etimológico entre las lenguas, bien al esfuerzo creativo del traductor. Es decir, encontramos tanto juegos de palabras sin restricción lingüística, como otros con restricción lingüística (cf. Brehm 2005). Los primeros se trasvasan con facilidad, mientras que los segundos requieren el ingenio y la creatividad del traductor. Esta manipulación del texto original puede suponer una modificación semántica que presenta a su vez diversos grados; concretamente, la carga semántica en el texto meta puede ser idéntica, similar o distinta de la original. Por otro lado, cuando no se logra trasvasar la comicidad (ya sea porque pasa desapercibida, por presión temporal u otras causas de diversa índole), la traducción puede mostrar una frase neutra que pierde todo rastro de humor, o bien una traducción literal, que puede provocar la neutralidad o la incoherencia con el contexto.

En un trabajo previo (Martínez-Tejerina 2008), después de analizar un corpus de 240 casos de explotación humorística de la polisemia, propusimos la siguiente taxonomía de técnicas, que son las que mantenemos en el presente análisis:

– Traducción literal por unidad polisémica.
– Traducción literal por unidad no polisémica.
– Neutralización.
– Sustitución.
– Recreación.
– Omisión.

Estas seis técnicas de traducción pueden provocar resultados de lo más diverso (la misma carga semántica, un efecto humorístico análogo, la incongruencia, el ruido semiótico, la neutralidad, la multiplicidad semántica, etc.), que se deben a que cada una de ellas se centra en diferentes planos del discurso, con el fin de trasvasar unos en detrimento de otros. Este fenómeno demuestra que la traducción no puede trasvasar absolutamente todas las características del texto origen y, menos aún, de las partes más vinculadas al lenguaje o la cultura original, por lo que se ve obligada a renunciar a características que resultan menos relevantes en cada contexto. Las tres peculiaridades fundamentales que encontramos en el texto origen son la forma, el recurso humorístico y el efecto perlocutivo.

A la hora de valorar estas técnicas de traducción, determinar cuándo se ha trasvasado el efecto y cuándo no resulta problemático, fundamentalmente porque la recepción del humor depende tanto de factores contextuales, como de la valoración individual. Este análisis es cuantitativo, no cualitativo, por

lo que no nos aventuramos a analizar qué versión produce más humor, sino a comentar si ha habido una intención humorística por parte del traductor (sea ésta exitosa o no desde nuestro punto de vista). Podemos señalar que, en términos generales, la carga humorística se trasvasa en tres de los recursos —traducción literal por unidad polisémica, sustitución y recreación— mientras que interpretamos que se pierde en otras tres —traducción literal por unidad no polisémica, neutralización y omisión—.

Así pues, la traducción literal polisémica trasvasa tanto la forma, como el efecto y el recurso; la traducción literal no polisémica conserva el plano formal del texto origen, pero introduce una forma ajena en el texto meta; la neutralización renuncia tanto a la forma, como al efecto y al recurso, para expresar un mensaje neutral, que pase desapercibido; la sustitución logra trasvasar recurso y efecto, cambiando la forma, al menos parcialmente; la recreación obtiene un efecto perlocutivo análogo modificando el recurso y la forma (al menos parcialmente); por último, la omisión renuncia a cualquier tipo de trasvase.

De modo que el efecto se trasvasa mediante tres técnicas: la traducción literal polisémica, la sustitución y la recreación; el recurso se conserva en otras dos: la traducción literal polisémica y la sustitución; y la forma se mantiene completamente en las dos formas de traducción literal (aunque en la no polisémica la forma introducida es ajena a la lengua meta) y parcialmente en algunos ejemplos de sustitución y recreación (cf. Figura 1).

	FORMA	RECURSO	EFECTO
TRADUCCIÓN LITERAL POR UNIDAD POLISÉMICA	X	X	X
TRADUCCIÓN LITERAL POR UNIDAD NO POLISÉMICA	X (incorrecta)		
NEUTRALIZACIÓN			
SUSTITUCIÓN	(X parcial)	X	X
RECREACIÓN	(X parcial)		X
OMISIÓN			

Figura 1. Técnicas de traducción

Usando como criterio la conservación de los distintos planos de la versión original y otorgando prioridad al trasvase del efecto, las técnicas de traducción se podrían graduar en el siguiente orden: traducción literal polisémica

> sustitución > recreación > neutralización > traducción literal no polisémica
> omisión. A continuación se explicarán cada una de estas seis técnicas y se
ilustrarán con secuencias de la filmografía de los Hermanos Marx en las que
aparecen restricciones visuales.

5.1. Traducción literal por unidad polisémica

Con esta etiqueta nos referimos al fenómeno que se produce cuando una
unidad de la lengua meta abarca los mismos significados que su equivalente
formal en la lengua origen, debido a la coincidencia lingüística. Este término
no implica que dichas unidades procedan de una tercera fuente común o que
evolucionen de forma similar en la etimología, ya que también incluimos los
préstamos en esta categoría.

En una escena de *Plumas de caballo* (*Horse Feathers*, 1932) se ve a dos
hombres jugando a las cartas en un bar. El que está barajando, le dice al otro:

> (1) V.O. *Cut the cards.*
> V.D. Corta.
> [Harpo saca un hacha y parte la baraja en dos]

La intervención del personaje se realiza en un contexto lúdico, por lo que se
activa la acepción del verbo *to cut* que expresa 'alzar las cartas para dividir la
baraja' (*DRAE*). No obstante, la actuación de Harpo recupera el significado
primario del verbo. En castellano, el verbo 'cortar' abarca los mismos signi-
ficados, de modo que la traducción literal logra expresar tanto el significado
como el efecto.

5.2. Traducción literal por unidad no polisémica

Esta técnica consiste en utilizar una unidad en la lengua meta que sólo es
equivalente en el plano formal, es decir, sólo expresa una de las cargas se-
mánticas. Esta opción traductora puede dar como resultado dos situaciones
diferentes: o bien, aunque no es muy habitual, produce la neutralidad; o bien,
provoca una incoherencia en el contexto meta, con lo cual, no sólo se elimina
el humor, sino que también puede producir el extrañamiento de la audiencia.

En la comedia *Pistoleros de agua dulce* (*Monkey Business*, 1931) un almi-
rante que está buscando a los polizones les comenta a Chico y a Harpo:

> (2) V.O. *I'm looking for a couple of mugs.*
> V.D. Estamos buscando a un par de caraduras.
> [Harpo le da dos tazas]

En esta escena, la imagen y la voz muestran la polisemia de la palabra *mug* ('caradura' y 'tazón'). Así, mientras la intervención del marinero hace referencia de forma despectiva a los polizones, el propio polizón busca un significado totalmente alejado y lo activa mostrando un objeto. En la versión doblada, la traducción literal es deficiente para trasvasar ambas cargas semánticas, lo que no sólo provoca la pérdida del efecto, sino también el ruido semiótico. La incongruencia entre los códigos puede causar bien que la audiencia se extrañe, bien que asuma el comportamiento totalmente absurdo y descabellado de Harpo como algo característico del personaje.

En nuestra opinión, la investigación debería ofrecer soluciones a la realidad práctica y ayudar a mejorarla en la medida de lo posible o, en palabras de Gottlieb (2005: 77),

> Descriptive Translation Studies may go in the wrong direction if the prescriptive 'what should be done' is replaced only by the armchair translatologist's 'what is done, and why' and never supplemented by 'what could be done'.

Debido a esta convicción, proponemos opciones traductoras cuyo objetivo es demostrar que trasladar la comicidad y traducir los guiños lingüísticos en la lengua meta no sólo es factible, sino que existen además otras muchas posibilidades. Estas propuestas surgen de distintas fuentes: traducción propia, opciones empleadas en la versión subtitulada, propuestas sugeridas por compañeros de profesión, alumnos de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona y asistentes al taller sobre traducción del humor celebrado en la Universidad Politécnica de Valencia en 2009. El objetivo no es, ni mucho menos, menospreciar el trabajo del traductor, sino emplear técnicas aplicadas en otros ejemplos de la versión doblada que demuestran la posibilidad de alternativas a las traducciones finalmente realizadas, lo que permite indagar sobre las razones de haber escogido otros caminos traductores.

Volviendo al ejemplo de traducción literal por unidad no polisémica, la reacción de Harpo tal vez podría haber sido más comprensible si el almirante hubiera dicho: *Cuando pille a esos polizones me los meriendo.*

5.3. *Neutralización*

Ante las dificultades para trasvasar la polisemia y con el objetivo de evitar el extrañamiento de la audiencia, en ocasiones el traductor opta por lograr la

neutralidad empleando diferentes recursos como la elipsis o el distanciamiento formal o semántico respecto al texto origen. Por lo tanto, esta técnica de traducción consiste en mantener el proceso de comunicación pero vaciando la traducción de efecto humorístico, esto es, se opta por un vacío ilocutivo que permite que la comunicación fluya y que evita a su vez la falta de comprensión de la audiencia.

En la misma película que el ejemplo anterior, minutos después, Chico y Harpo, disfrazados de barberos, tratan de arreglar el bigote de un marinero. Para cortarle lo que le sobra, miden la distancia entre el bigote y la otra punta de la habitación. Chico señala:

> (3) V.O. *It's about a foot too much*
> V.D. Treinta centímetros de más.
> [Harpo saca un hacha y hace ademán de cortarle un pie al marinero]

Nos encontramos de nuevo con una palabra polisémica cuyos diversos significados son expresados por dos medios diferentes. Chico expresa la medida de distancia con una palabra que Harpo interpreta como una parte del cuerpo. La versión doblada opta por una neutralización que, en esta ocasión, no resulta muy apropiada porque omite la polisemia. Aún así la situación, absurda de por sí, ya garantiza el efecto humorístico. Otra opción, teniendo en cuenta que no es posible trasvasar todos los planos del original, sería emplear una traducción literal que, a pesar de introducir una forma de medida poco utilizada en España, sería entendida por el público meta y mantendría la polisemia: *Sobra un pie* o *Hay un pie de más*.

5.4. Sustitución

Consiste en el alejamiento semántico de la versión doblada frente a la original, pero manteniendo en el texto meta el mismo recurso que crea el juego de palabras en el texto origen: la polisemia. Teniendo en cuenta que los diálogos se insertan en un contexto fílmico y que la aportación semántica de la imagen es notoria, el alejamiento semántico no suele ser excesivo, ya que se tiende a aludir a rasgos comunes y a conceptos relacionados para evitar incongruencias con los semas visuales y garantizar la coherencia con el contexto. En cualquier caso, se pueden distinguir diversos grados de distanciamiento respecto al original:

– se mantiene una de las cargas semánticas de la unidad polisémica original;

- se emplean recursos como la hiponimia o la hiperonímia con el fin de trasvasar una carga semántica similar que remite a la del original;
- se recurre a una unidad polisémica distinta con cargas semánticas diferentes a las expresadas en la versión original.

La siguiente escena de *Una tarde en el circo* (*At the Circus*, 1939) muestra la explotación de una unidad fraseológica por medio de la imagen. Groucho se presenta a Harpo, que reacciona a su modo particular; en esta ocasión, soplándole un matasuegras en la cara. Groucho responde:

> (4) V.O. *I'll thank you to keep a civil tongue in your head, not in mine.*
> V.D. Le aseguro que yo también tengo la lengua larga, cuando es preciso.

En la versión original Groucho desautomatiza la frase hecha *to keep a civil tongue* (cuyo significado es 'ser educado') y recupera parte del sentido literal 'mantener la lengua dentro de la boca'. En la versión doblada, el traductor opta por una unidad fraseológica que no es equivalente en el plano semántico, pero que logra el trasvase del humor y la congruencia con la imagen. Otra opción acertada es la empleada en la versión subtitulada: *Te agradecería que sujetaras esa lengua.*

5.5. Creación autónoma

Esta opción traductora sustituye el recurso en que se basa el juego de palabras de la versión original por un recurso humorístico distinto como la paronimia, la similicadencia, la descolocación del orden correcto de la frase, la falsa etimología o la ironía. Del mismo modo que en la sustitución, la modificación semántica con respecto al original que conlleva la aplicación de esta técnica humorística autónoma presenta diversos grados.

En *Los Hermanos Marx en el Oeste* (*Go West*, 1940), Groucho, Harpo y Chico viajan en una diligencia junto a una señora con un bebé, que llora sin cesar. La madre explica:

> (5a) V.O. *He can't stand the jerks in the coach.*
> [Groucho expresa su sorpresa abriendo los ojos de par en par, mientras Harpo y Chico abren la puerta para salir de la diligencia. Groucho les detiene]
> V.O. *No, wait a minute boys, it was nothing personal. She didn't mean it.*
>
> (5b) V.D. Es que no puede resistir los baches.
> [...]
> V.D. No, un momento, muchachos. Ha dicho baches no cachivaches.

La palabra *jerk* es polisémica y en esta escena se activan dos de sus significados; en primer lugar, el contexto del viaje en diligencia recupera el significado de 'sacudida', pero la reacción de Harpo y Chico, y la mirada y comentario de Groucho recuperan un significado coloquial: 'imbécil'. La versión doblada persigue un efecto análogo utilizando no una palabra polisémica, sino una falsa etimología que produce paronimia. Si bien la falta de verosimilitud (es poco probable confundir las dos palabras) minimiza el efecto, hay un claro esfuerzo creativo por parte del traductor.

5.6. Omisión

Consiste en la elisión total del mensaje, lo que suele producir un ruido semiótico grave. Este recurso sólo aparece dos veces en el corpus. En *Tienda de locos* (*The Big Store*, 1941), se inicia una secuencia con un primer plano de la puerta del despacho de Groucho en el que se anuncia su nombre y cargo. Seguidamente la cámara hace una panorámica vertical y muestra un mensaje que reza:

> (6a) V.O. *Bloodhounds transfused, fingerprints manicured and gim rummy.*

El juego lingüístico se basa en la desautomatización de la palabra compuesta *bloodhound* ('sabueso'), cuya primera parte significa 'sangre'. Esta carga semántica permite a Groucho decir que se hacen transfusiones de sabuesos. Este inserto no se traduce en la versión doblada, lo que conlleva la pérdida de la carga humorística. Esta omisión no está justificada, ya que las palabras aparecen en primer plano durante varios segundos y en silencio, por lo que el uso de una voz en *off* o un subtítulo sería plausible. De hecho, el anterior inserto (nombre y cargo del detective) sí se ha traducido mediante una voz en *off*. Para evitar tanto la pérdida humorística como la incomodidad producida en el espectador por un mensaje sin descodificar, se podría haber explotado la polisemia y paronimia de palabras relacionadas con el campo semántico de la sangre, como por ejemplo:

> (6b) V.D. *Transfusiones de purasangres, manicura de huellas dactilares y juegos de cartas.*

5.7. Resultados cuantitativos

La presencia de juegos de palabras con restricciones visuales es habitual en la filmografía de los Marx, pues constituye casi una tercera parte de los juegos de palabras basados en polisemia, concretamente, el 30,8%. La siguiente tabla muestra el número de ejemplos y el porcentaje en el que la versión doblada

ha recurrido a cada una de las seis técnicas de traducción de la taxonomía aplicada, expresando, por tanto, la norma traductora ante un fenómeno tan característico de la TAV.

TÉCNICAS DE TRADUCCIÓN		EJEMPLOS	%
TRADUCCIÓN LITERAL	POLISÉMICA	13	17,57
	NO POLISÉMICA	18	24,32
NEUTRALIZACIÓN		13	17,57
SUSTITUCIÓN		15	20,27
RECREACIÓN		13	17,57
OMISIÓN		2	2,7
	TOTAL	74	100

De estas cifras se deduce que la versión doblada logra trasvasar el efecto per-locutivo humorístico en una escasa mayoría de ejemplos (41 veces; 55,4%). En trece ocasiones (esto es, un 17,57%), la conjunción de códigos no supone un impedimento porque se da una equivalencia entre los pares polisémicos de las lenguas en juego. Sin embargo, el efecto perlocutivo se logra mayoritaria-mente gracias al esfuerzo creativo del traductor, que se aleja del texto original en 28 ocasiones (37,83%) con el fin de trasvasar el efecto en detrimento de la forma (trece creaciones autónomas y quince sustituciones). No hay que olvidar que la libertad del traductor queda limitada por la redundancia se-mántica, pues el espectador meta recibe información adicional sobre el texto origen a través del canal visual y, por lo tanto, el texto meta debe ser acorde con éste, tratando de expresar por el medio acústico lo que se ve o, al menos, de no contradecirlo. De este modo, observamos que los juegos de palabras enmarcados en el texto audiovisual retan a la creatividad del traductor, pues es conveniente inventar un recurso humorístico nuevo que esté relacionado además con lo que ocurre en pantalla.

Según nuestro análisis cuantitativo, la comicidad se pierde en casi la mi-tad de los casos, concretamente en 33 (18 traducciones literales por lexema no polisémico, 13 neutralizaciones y dos omisiones). Curiosamente dos de estos ejemplos son pares equivalentes que, por alguna razón, el traductor ha decidido no traducir de forma literal. Es decir, aparecen dos unidades cuyas formas y significados se podían haber trasvasado literalmente con un resul-tado satisfactorio, pero que se han traducido por medio de otras técnicas de traducción que eliminan la duplicidad semántica.

La siguiente tabla indica el porcentaje en el que se recurre a las distintas técnicas de traducción en los ejemplos con y sin restricciones visuales, con el

fin de analizar si el hecho de que el juego de palabras se exprese parcialmente a través de la imagen incide en la norma traductora.

TÉCNICAS DE TRADUCCIÓN (%)		RESTRICCIONES VISUALES	SIN RESTRICCIONES VISUALES
TRADUCCIÓN LITERAL	POLISÉMICA	17,57	33,13
	NO POLISÉMICA	24,32	18,67
NEUTRALIZACIÓN		17,57	10,24
SUSTITUCIÓN		20,27	18,67
RECREACIÓN		17,57	18,67
OMISIÓN		2,7	0,60

Pese a las diferencias que se podrían prever, las técnicas de traducción empleadas en ambos casos presentan porcentajes similares. La solución predominante es la traducción literal (41,89% y 51,8% respectivamente). La sustitución y la recreación presentan cifras porcentuales similares, mientras que la neutralización reduce su aparición cuando no aparecen restricciones visuales (10,24% frente al 17,57%). Por último, la omisión tiene una presencia prácticamente insignificante en ambas situaciones.

Los resultados de las técnicas de traducción difieren en mayor medida. La polisemia se trasvasa el 51,8% de las ocasiones en las que no aparece restricción visual, frente al 37,84% de las veces en que aparece. Por lo tanto, la multiplicidad semántica se trasvasa un 13,96% más cuando los significados no se expresan por medio de la imagen.

En cuanto a la traducción del efecto, resulta llamativo que mientras que en los ejemplos sin restricción visual se consigue en un 70,5%, cuando aparece una restricción visual el humor se reduce a un 55,4%. Esta reducción del humor se debe fundamentalmente a un aumento del uso de la neutralización (ascenso del 7,33%) y de la traducción literal por unidad no polisémica (ascenso del 5,05%). La divergencia aumenta si descartamos los paralelismos etimológicos. En los casos en los que existe una falta de equivalencia entre ambas lenguas, se pierde la carga humorística en el 44,59% de las secuencias con restricción visual frente al 29,5% de las escenas sin restricción visual. Por lo tanto, en las secuencias en que la carga semántica se expresa mediante la imagen, la pérdida humorística aumenta en un 15,09%.

6. Conclusiones

Si bien este artículo sólo ha analizado el doblaje de trece películas, las cifras que se extraen del mismo parecen demostrar que la existencia de restricciones visuales en las comedias suele provocar un aumento en la pérdida del efecto humorístico, lo que corrobora la idea de que la aparición de restricciones visuales dificulta considerablemente la traducción de los juegos de palabras cuando no se desarrolla el paralelismo etimológico. Esto se debe a que el traductor se ve forzado a expresar o no contradecir el significado que aparece en la pantalla, con el fin de evitar el ruido semiótico y el extrañamiento de la audiencia meta; en otras palabras, está más atado al significado de la versión original o, concretamente, a los posibles significados expresados por la imagen.

La pérdida del humor en los textos audiovisuales en los que aparecen restricciones visuales puede desencadenar consecuencias muy diversas: en ocasiones, el espectador no se percata de ello por razones de diversa índole, por ejemplo, la rapidez de los diálogos; otras veces, esta incoherencia extraña e incomoda al receptor, pues le recuerda que se encuentra ante un producto manipulado; y en otros casos, se produce un fenómeno curioso y es que tales incongruencias provocan igualmente humor. Detengámonos a analizar estas consecuencias.

En primer lugar, la incongruencia puede pasar desapercibida cuando el juego de palabras se desarrolla en una situación de enredo en la que abundan los recursos humorísticos (otros chistes lingüísticos, bromas visuales –caídas, gestos, disfraces, golpes y burlas–, situaciones de enredo o absurdos), lo que resta importancia a la eliminación del efecto o incluso a las contradicciones que se pueden producir entre el código visual y el lingüístico.

En segundo lugar, es probable que esa pérdida del humor provoque ruido semiótico que, si bien puede presentar distintas intensidades (la imagen puede repercutir en mayor o menor grado en la transmisión semántica), hace que el espectador sea consciente de la contradicción entre los códigos, lo que causa su extrañamiento, pues le recuerda que se encuentra ante un producto manipulado, lo que puede provocar la ruptura del acuerdo tácito denominado *suspension of disbelief*.

Ahora bien, en ocasiones, el espectador cree que esa incongruencia se debe a que el producto es absurdo, lo que genera el efecto humorístico en la audiencia meta, si bien basado en un recurso distinto del original. Curiosamente, la predilección por la traducción literal crea unos personajes y situaciones mucho más absurdos para la audiencia meta, que disfruta de sus despropósitos sin saber que la propia traducción al español los ha acrecentado, como otros estudios también han demostrado (Fuentes 2001). Es cierto

que el humor de los Hermanos Marx se inscribe en el género del absurdo también en la versión original, pero sus disparates suelen basarse en juegos de palabras, es decir, la locura procede de una fuente lingüística con un doble significado comprensible, no aparece sin más como ocurre a veces en la versión doblada. Por lo tanto, la traducción produce la modificación del tipo de humor de los Marx: el texto origen se basa principalmente en la resolución de la incongruencia y el texto meta en el absurdo, en otras palabras, ambos explotan la incongruencia, pero en el primer caso ésta se resuelve y en el segundo no. Resulta curioso que la traducción haya provocado estos cambios en las características fundamentales del humor de los Marx y, a su vez, haya logrado extender su obra por todo el mundo con gran éxito.

Uno de los factores que quizá fomentaron esta aceptación fue la cooperación propia de la audiencia de comedias. Al incluir una película dentro del género de la comedia se destaca el efecto emocional al que aspira y, por lo tanto, provoca en el receptor la actitud necesaria para interpretar la incongruencia como humor, es decir, el contexto ayuda al interlocutor a decidir la reacción que merece la incongruencia. Del mismo modo que los cómicos preparan a sus espectadores para la recepción del chiste, la audiencia española sabe que va a ver una comedia.

Por otro lado, el público actual sabe que esta comedia es de los Hermanos Marx y la idea generalizada en España hoy en día es que estos cómicos cultivan el humor del absurdo. Tales conocimientos fomentan la aceptación de un texto cargado de incongruencias y, en consecuencia, favorecen el éxito de la traducción literal como fuente de absurdos.

Otro de los factores que pudo incidir en este éxito es el monopolio del cine hollywoodiense en aquel entonces y que en cierta medida hoy perdura. A este respecto, Chiaro (2006) compara la trascendencia de los Hermanos Marx con la divulgación del cómico italiano Totò que, siendo contemporáneo de los Marx y con un estilo similar, nunca superó las fronteras de su país, a pesar de una subtitulación "perfectly adequate" (Chiaro 2006: 204).

En cualquier caso, el hecho de que la audiencia meta incluya la filmografía de los Hermanos Marx dentro del género de la comedia demuestra que, al menos desde el punto de vista descriptivista y funcional, el humor de los Marx es traducible. Aunque en el nivel estrictamente microtextual encontramos multitud de ejemplos que no se trasvasan con éxito, el objetivo de su obra –hacer reír– sí se logra.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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La doctora Anjana Martínez Tejerina se licenció en Traducción e Interpretación en la Universidad de Alicante en 2003 y obtuvo el título de traductora jurada en 2004, año en el que también le fue concedida una beca Leonardo para trabajar como auxiliar de conversación en Londres. Realizó un máster en Traducción Audiovisual en la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona en 2007, universidad en la que trabajó como profesora asociada al año siguiente, siendo responsable de dos asignaturas de la Licenciatura de Traducción. Obtuvo el título de doctor en 2008. En la actualidad trabaja como traductora autónoma en el ámbito de la subtitulación, imparte varias asignaturas en la Universitat Pompeu Fabra, donde es profesora asociada desde 2010, y es miembro del

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DUBBING DIALOGUES…NATURALLY.
A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE TRANSLATION
OF TRANSITION MARKERS IN DUBBING

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Abstract

Although research in Audiovisual Translation is said to have come of age in the past decade, there are still several key issues that have not received the scholarly attention they deserve. In the case of dubbing, the study of the naturalness of dubbed dialogue is a case in point. The aim of the present article is to analyse the use of transition markers in dubbing in order to look precisely at the naturalness of dubbed dialogue while taking into account the dubbing constraints at play. This analysis is carried out by comparing the dubbed dialogue (English-Spanish) of a popular American sitcom to the non-translated but prefabricated dialogue of a Spanish sitcom and finally to spontaneous conversation in Spanish. The results obtained in this study suggest that the analysis of discourse markers in dubbing may yield interesting conclusions not only from a translational perspective but also from the point of view of cross-cultural pragmatics.

Resumen

Si bien la investigación en traducción audiovisual se ha consolidado en la última década, hay todavía una serie de aspectos clave que no han recibido la atención académica que cabría esperar. En el caso del doblaje, el estudio de la naturalidad de los diálogos doblados es un ejemplo de ello. El objetivo del presente artículo es analizar el uso de marcadores de transición en el doblaje para investigar precisamente la naturalidad del diálogo doblado sin olvidar las restricciones propias de este tipo de traducción. Este análisis se lleva a cabo comparando el diálogo doblado (inglés-español) de una conocida telecomedia estadounidense con el diálogo original pero prefabricado de una telecomedia española y finalmente con conversaciones espontáneas en español.

Los resultados obtenidos en este estudio indican que el análisis de los marcadores del discurso en el doblaje puede dar lugar a conclusiones interesantes no solamente desde el punto de vista de la traducción, sino también desde una perspectiva pragmática.

Keywords: Naturalness. Dubbed dialogue. Discourse markers. Transition markers.

Palabras clave: Naturalidad. Diálogo doblado. Marcadores del discurso. Marcadores de transición.

1. From Audiovisual Translation (AVT) to the naturalness of dubbed dialogue: A multidisciplinary journey

Although off to a slow and shaky start in the late 1950s and early 1960s, research in Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has experienced a remarkable boom in the past fifteen years. As put by Toda (2005), gone are the days when articles on AVT used to start with an explanation of how little research had been carried out in this field. Scholars no longer need to offer detailed accounts of the terminology and publications available in this area before moving on to the focus of their study, not only because these accounts already exist but also because of the increasing difficulty of keeping up-to-date with them.

Looking back at what has been written so far, it seems that the most fruitful studies on AVT include or assume to some extent two basic notions: the independence of AVT as an autonomous discipline and its dependence on other related disciplines. Although apparently contradictory, these notions are perfectly compatible. The first one may be regarded as a starting point. As an autonomous discipline within Translation Studies, AVT is an entity in its own right, rather than a subgroup or a lesser manifestation of literary translation (Chaume 2002). When looking for models to apply to dubbing or subtitling, for instance, scholars no longer resort to extended versions of literary models (Bassnett 1980), as AVT has now its own models focusing on the specificity of this area. And here is where the second notion comes in, given that an important part of this specificity lies in its interdisciplinary nature. In this sense, if the autonomy of AVT is the starting point for research, its interdisciplinarity is the way forward (Díaz Cintas et al. 2006), as it is drawing on other disciplines that AVT finds new and fruitful avenues of research.

A case in point is the model for the analysis of audiovisual texts presented by Chaume (2004a). On the one hand, it moves away from models of textual analysis on general translation, thus highlighting the specificity of AVT as an autonomous discipline within Translation Studies. On the other, it draws on Film Studies and Communication Studies, which results in an innovative consideration of the audiovisual text as a result of the interaction of different audiovisual codes rather than as a sum of constraints.

The present article attempts to deal with the critical[1] and yet largely overlooked issue of the naturalness of dubbed dialogue (Bravo 2005), in this case in Spanish, taking very much into consideration the above-mentioned notions of the specificity of AVT and its interdisciplinary nature. Thus, dubbed dialogue is analysed here from the point of view of its specificity as dialogue that is written (from a source text) to be acted as if not written. On the other hand, based as it is on the premise that dubbed dialogue is to a great extent meant to emulate spontaneous conversation, this article draws on studies on conversation, especially on colloquial conversation. This pragmatic approach has benefited greatly from the recent growth in research in Spanish colloquial conversation (Briz 1998, 2002; Pons 2006), which seems to occupy within Linguistics a similar position to that of AVT within Translation Studies. In this sense, the main problem posed by this approach is the difficulty to narrow down the scope of the research, given the abundance of objects of study available in this area. In the case of the present article, the focus will be placed on discourse markers (DMs), regarded as essential for the analysis of naturalness in oral language (Gregori-Signes 1996), and more specifically on transition markers (TMs).

The aim of this study is thus to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of TMs as a parameter to assess the naturalness of dialogues dubbed from English into Spanish, as well as to examine the potential pragmatic implications of the results obtained in this analysis.

The next sections are devoted to the explanation of the corpora and methodology used, the notion of naturalness, the factors to take into account when comparing real and dubbed language and finally the importance of TMs for the purpose of the present study.

2. Corpora and methodology

The three corpora used in this study are as follows:

– A parallel corpus consisting of transcripts of the American TV series *Friends* (ST) and their dubbed versions in Spanish (TT): 300,000 words approximately. *Friends* was one of the most successful series of all time and, in many ways, the quintessential sitcom, featuring dialogues that are designed to sound believable and spontaneous (Nye et al. 2005).

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1. Gottlieb (2006) singles it out, along with the different synchronies, as one of the two conventions at play in dubbing, and points at naturalness as the main potential loss in this type of AVT.

- A corpus made up of 26 episodes (one season) of the Spanish sitcom *Siete vidas* (Comparable corpus: CC): 150,000 words approximately. *Siete vidas* was the first sitcom produced in Spain, also very successful and clearly inspired by *Friends* in terms of characters, plots, settings, etc. (Huerta 2005). Following Baker (1995), this corpus has a great degree of comparability with the TT, as it covers a similar domain, variety of language (prefabricated colloquial conversation), time span (1997-2000) and has a similar length (135,485 words from CC and 108,960 from TT).
- The spontaneous speech section of the Spanish corpus CREA (http://corpus.rae.es/creanet.html), elaborated by the Real Academia Española, featuring approximately 9 million words. The conversations contained in this section of the corpus meet the criteria established by Briz (1998) to qualify as colloquial conversation.

The idea is to assess the naturalness of the TT (translated and fictional) by comparing it to the language used in CC (non translated and fictional) and especially to the language used in CREA (non-translated and non-fictional, i.e. spontaneous).[2] The underlying premise is that, given its intangible nature, naturalness is best tackled in as empirically a way as possible. In other words, a comparison between a ST and a TT and the native judgement of the researcher do not suffice to provide objective insights into the naturalness of the TT. It is thus necessary to resort to empirical data about the source and especially the target language, both from a practical (corpora of naturally-occurring conversations) and a theoretical (studies on colloquial conversation) point of view. The following section delves into this theory in an attempt to explain what is understood by naturalness in this study.

3. Orality and naturalness

When compared to subtitling –the other major type of AVT–, dubbing is often described as "the oral translation of oral language" (Hassanpour n.d.). Orality, regarded as the presence of linguistic, paralinguistic and interactive phenomena that are typical of the oral register (González Ledesma et al. 2004), is thus a central notion in the study of the naturalness of dubbed dialogue. This

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2. Given that, as will be described in section 4, the audiovisual text is regarded here as a semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes (shooting code, sound code, paralinguistic code, etc.) (Chaume 2004a), its naturalness cannot be assessed only on the basis of the linguistic code. However, this is usually the only code the translator can alter, which is why it has been chosen as the focus of this article.

explains the importance of pragmatics in this article, given that, as highlight-ed by Payrató (2003: 273; my translation), "orality cannot be analysed (at least globally) without the help and the tools of pragmatics", both areas con-stituting "a marriage of convenience which will probably last for many years".

The absence of orality is often highlighted as one of the biggest problems of dubbed dialogue. Fuentes Luque (2005), for instance, explains that this is the case for the Spanish language used in dubbing, which all too often distorts source texts by adding written features that have little to do with colloquial conversation. However, although the addition of such features may well pro-vide dubbed dialogue with an artificial flavour, the same holds true for the addition of other features that do not necessarily have to be written, such as those of formal conversation. Orality is a wide notion that comprises different types of speech and different types of conversation, not all of which may be appropriate for a specific dubbed dialogue such as the one featuring in the TT to be analysed here.

It is for this reason that naturalness rather than orality has been chosen as the mainstay of this study. Naturalness is regarded here as a synonym of idiomaticity, albeit not in the traditional sense of "given to or marked by the use of idioms" (Onions 1964: 952). Instead, the notion of idiomaticity called upon here refers to the use of language that "sounds natural to native speakers of that language" (Sinclair 1995: 833). Rather than focusing on what is cor-rect or grammatically possible, naturalness/idiomaticity refers in this case to what is conventional among the many grammatically possible choices (War-ren 2004: 5). This point is sometimes made in analyses of the Spanish dub-bing language, which often features expressions that are "intelligible and cor-rect" but "uncommon in daily life" (Palencia Villa 2002: 66). Thus, drawing on Pawley and Syder (1983) and especially on Warren (2004: 1), naturalness is defined here as the nativelike selection of expression in a given context, which involves "knowing which particular combinations are conventional in a language community although other combinations are conceivable".

The reference to *a given context* is very important, as it is precisely what enables this notion of naturalness to narrow down the wide scope covered by the concept of orality. All three corpora analysed in this study belong to the same register (colloquial) and type of discourse (conversation).[3] According to Briz (1998), they thus feature (or should feature) exchanges that are oral, dialogic, immediate, cooperative and dynamic. Their discourse is informal,

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3. Not all scenes in the TT and CC can be classified as featuring colloquial conversation, but only scenes featuring colloquial conversation have been analysed for this study.

it has an interpersonal focus and presents a relation of social and functional equality (- power, + solidarity) and shared knowledge (proximity), with a familiar setting or interaction and a non-specialised theme.

From a theoretical point of view, this is what the notion of naturalness applied to the TT comprises. In other words, this is what a natural TT is expected to comply with. From a more practical point of view, CREA is the yardstick against which the naturalness of the TT is to be measured. However, the TT and even the script of the Spanish sitcom (CC) have a series of characteristics that separate them from spontaneous colloquial conversation and thus from CREA, such as the fact that they are planned and feature pre-determined turn-taking. This does not invalidate the present study, but indicates that a number of factors, mostly to do with the specificity of dubbed dialogue, need to be taken into account before the comparison of the corpora is carried out.

4. The specificity of dubbed dialogue[4]

The first characteristic feature of dubbed dialogue is that it comes from a ST that is not spontaneous. The prefabricated nature of the ST dialogue may thus have an impact on the naturalness of dubbed dialogue. According to Gregory and Carroll (1978: 42), the ST dialogue is "written to be spoken as if not written". However, this definition cannot account for a sitcom script such as that of *Friends*, whose elaboration process starts weeks before the dialogue is written. As a matter of fact, the dialogue is introduced in a fixed mould or straightjacket which has already determined the number of characters and plots involved in an episode, the development of those plots and even the duration of every conversation. Every episode in *Friends* features at least six main characters and three plots made up of five or six scenes each (Kelly 2003). Since these plots are interwoven over a total duration of 21 or 22 minutes, every episode is usually made up of some 15 or 18 scenes lasting between 1 and 2 minutes. The dialogue is introduced once the structure has been laid out, and may thus be described as planned to be written and to eventually be acted as if not written or planned. Added to this are the conventions of fictional dialogue in general, whether for sitcoms or not, such as its polyfunctionality (Pfister 2001). This refers to the fact that fictional dialogue is addressed to both the characters (diegetic level) and the audience (extradiegetic level), and especially to the fact that "every linguistic unit – including phenomena of dysfluency and error" must fulfil a function in the

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4. For a more detailed account of these features, see Romero Fresco (2009a) and Romero Fresco (2009b).

"overall communicative goal of the dramatic dialogue" (Baumgarten 2005: 86). The dialogue still has to sound natural and spontaneous (Berger 1990), but this is a carefully planned spontaneity. The ST can thus be said to feature straightjacketed dialogue that is intended to sound natural.

As a translation of the ST, the TT also has the objective of sounding natural within such straightjacket, but its naturalness or lack thereof is also affected by other factors, not least the semiotic constraints posed by dubbing. The analysis of the dubbed version of *Friends* included here will take these constraints into consideration by referring to the model for the analysis of audiovisual texts devised by Chaume (2004a). As described in section 1, this model focuses on the specificity of AVT, namely the interaction of audiovisual codes that may bring about instances of constraints but also leeway, and accounts for all the synchronies at play in dubbing. Chaume explains that in Spain the norm is that lip-synchrony, including the translation of labial and bilabial sounds, is only taken into consideration in close-ups. In the rest of the cases, only isochrony (similar length of ST and TT utterances) and kinetic synchrony (synchrony between utterances and movements or gestures) apply.

Finally, one more aspect that determines the specificity of dubbed dialogue in Spanish is its particular prefabricated orality. Although most sitcom scripts, whether translated or not, feature prefabricated dialogue, dubbed dialogue in Spanish has its own conventions, determined both by professional practice and the few guidelines available on the subject. These conventions are described in the linguistic code of Chaume's model (2004a: 167 et seq.) and do not necessarily have to be constraints. With regard to DMs, for instance, translators are advised to resort to these units so as to produce natural-sounding dialogue (Chaume 2007).

Having specified the main differences between the corpora, especially between the TT and CREA, a comparison can be attempted. However, it is important first of all to describe the DMs analysed in this study, with special attention to their importance and relevance in fictional and naturally-occurring corpora.

5. Transition markers in spontaneous and fictional dialogue

A common feature of written and spoken discourse is the need to mark continuity and discontinuity, that is, the need to, for example, shift a topic or start a new part of the discourse (Bestgen 1998). However, whereas writing often allows much editing and the use of resources such as punctuation, spoken discourse does not (Miller & Weinert 1998). Although there are other means available, such as paralinguistic devices, speakers often resort to DMs

to segment their discourse (Horne et al. 1999). Among the many DMs that have been identified and studied in the literature, TMs are particularly useful for this purpose. They are sometimes labeled topic changers (Aijmer 2002) or topic shift markers (Zitzen 2004). They will, however, be referred to here as transition markers (Nakano & Negishi 2004; Spitz 2005) because, apart from marking changing of topic, they also enable speakers to indicate the boundaries of the conversation, signalling the beginning of a new phase:

> <u>Now then</u>, what should we do next? (Schiffrin 1987: 230)

According to Schiffrin (ibid.), TMs indicate "a speaker's progression through discourse time, by displaying attention to an upcoming idea, unit, orientation and/or participation framework." Schiffrin divides DMs in general into two groups –those focusing on prior information and those focusing on upcoming information. Although many markers can fulfil both roles, TMs always focus on upcoming information. As will be shown later on, this feature is especially relevant to the present study.

From a theoretical point of view, TMs are critical for researchers concerned with the key question of the study of units of talk (Bestgen 1998), as they provide valuable clues in this regard (Schiffrin 1987: 31). From a practical point of view, these markers facilitate discourse organisation for the speaker and comprehension for the hearer (Lam 2006). This last point is particularly relevant to the study of fictional conversation. As explained in section 4, fictional characters do not just address other characters, but also the viewers, who become addressees. It has also been mentioned that, in the case of *Friends*, every episode is made up of approximately 15 scenes lasting between 1 and 2 minutes. Each one of these scenes usually features a different conversation, and many of the 15-18 conversations featuring in an episode are already underway when the audience starts watching them. TMs that are commonly used in colloquial conversation, such as *okay* (Beach 1993), *alright* (Filipi & Wales 2003)*, so* (Mariano 2002) and *now* (Schiffrin 1987), are often used at the beginning of these scenes to enable viewers to get their bearings before a new topic is introduced. The importance of this function for the viewers' comprehension is illustrated by the fact that these transitions are sometimes also marked visually. In *Friends*, this can be with the shot of a city street or the camera panning up the side of a building where an event (or conversation) is about to occur (Kelly 2003).

After the description of the main characteristics of TMs and their importance in both spontaneous and fictional conversation, the next section focuses on the Spanish TMs analysed in this article.

6. The two transition markers (*muy*) *bien* and *bueno*

(*Muy*) *bien* and (*bueno*) are common TMs used in Spanish conversation and are usually described by comparison or opposition to each other.[5] According to Martín and Portolés (1999), they are both framing, metadiscourse devices used to indicate a change in topic as well as progression or the beginning of a new stage in the conversation. Most of the general characteristics of TMs outlined above apply to these two DMs. However, there are several differences between them. First of all, *bien* is less lexicalised than *bueno*, as it can be modified into *muy bien* (Martín & Portolés 1999). Besides, *bien* lacks the expressive value of *bueno* and is more neutral, less friendly and often used by speakers who not only take part in a conversation, but actually manage it (Martín & Portolés 1999). The use of this TM is determined by (a) the social role of the speaker and (b) by his/her attitude, and is normally used by authoritative speakers who want to appear as cold and detached (Chaume 2004c).

According to de Fina (1997), *bien* is especially recurrent in discourse characterised by specific time boundaries, social expectations, institutional needs, goal orientations and especially by a "fundamental asymmetry between participants determined by the institutional responsibility of the teacher" (de Fina 1997: 339). De Fina gives the example of what is often referred to as classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975, Van Lier 1988, Cazden 1988). In this context, teachers use *bien* to signal an upcoming change in their discourse and very often the introduction of a new phase or activity in the class. The use of *bien* highlights the centrality of the teacher's role and cannot be found in students' talk. After a brief period of time in which the teacher and the students in the data studied by de Fina engage in personal, informal conversation, thus blurring the social boundaries, the teacher quickly resorts to *bien* to regain her authoritative position. In this sense, de Fina points out that "it is the type of relationships established between participants that seems to crucially determine the kind of functions that (*muy*) *bien* can have in spoken Spanish" (1997: 352).

In sum, (*muy*) *bien* does not occur in colloquial settings (Fuentes Rodríguez 1993), but in more formal and institutionalised exchanges such as interviews, therapeutic sessions or classroom discourse, that is to say, in situations where one of the participants is responsible for the management of the conversation (de Fina 1997). In contrast, *bueno* is commonly used in

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5. It should be noted that (*muy*) *bien* and *bueno* may also occur in colloquial conversation as DMs with other functions, such as that of markers of agreement (Martín & Portolés 1999).

colloquial conversation (Gregori-Signes 1996), mainly to signal transition. When used in other contexts, e.g. by teachers or doctors in institutional talk, it is normally to attenuate or soften up an utterance (Martín & Portolés 1999).

7. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the two TMs (*muy*) *bien* and *bueno*[6]

TM	TT	CC	CREA
Bueno	89	141	74.2
(*Muy*) *bien*	84.3	5.9	1.6
Total	173.3	146.9	75.8

Table 1: Occurrences of the TMs *bueno* and (*muy*) *bien* in the three corpora
Occurrences per 100.000

TM	TT	CC	CREA
Bueno	51.6%	96.9%	99.6%
(*Muy*) *bien*	48.4%	3.1%	0.4%

Table 2: Preference for a formal ([*muy*] *bien*) or colloquial (*bueno*) TM in the three corpora

Table 1 shows the occurrences of (*muy*) *bien* and *bueno* in the three different corpora under study: the dubbed translation of *Friends* (TT), the original Spanish sitcom (CC) and the corpus of spontaneous colloquial conversation (CREA). Since these corpora have different sizes, a log-likelihood test was performed to check the significance of the results.[7] However, for the sake of brevity, it will only be mentioned when considered particularly relevant.

A first tentative look at the results shows, first of all, an overall lower occurrence of TMs in CREA than in CC and especially than in the TT. This may be explained by the fictional nature of the latter two corpora. As explained in the case of *Friends*, many of the conversations featuring in a sitcom episode

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6. Given that the aim of this study is to analyse the naturalness of the TT, the focus will be placed initially on the Spanish markers, although both the ST units triggering them and the dubbing constraints will be taken into consideration.

7. The log-likelihood test is one of several methods available to ascertain whether the differences found between two corpora of different sizes are significant or not. If the result of the log-likelihood test is greater than 6.63, the probability of the result – i.e. the difference between the two corpora – happening by chance is less than 1%. A description of this test and a log-likelihood calculator can be found on the University of Lancaster website (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html)

do not start with a greeting or an introduction, but with a marker (visual, verbal or both) indicating transition between scenes. It thus follows that TMs are likely to occur more often here than in spontaneous conversation. Another aspect that stands out is the high occurrence of (*muy*) *bien* in the TT. Whereas both CC and CREA clearly opt for *bueno*, the dubbed script of *Friends* features an almost even distribution of (*muy*) *bien* and *bueno* (see table 2). This mismatch between translated and non-translated corpora could be due to some translational factor, such as the ST units triggering (*muy*) *bien* or dubbing constraints. To clarify this point and ascertain what effect the (over)use of this marker may have on the TT, a qualitative analysis must be carried out to see how it is used and what ST units it translates.

7.1. Bueno

ST unit	Times
So	28
Okay	27
Well	21
Alright	7
Ø	4
Okay so	2
Now	2
Listen	2
Alright well	1
Right	1
Look	1
You know what	1
Total	97

Table 3: ST units triggering the TM *bueno* in the TT

The qualitative analysis of the corpora shows what seems to be a natural use of the TM *bueno* in the TT. It is used to translate English TMs that are common in colloquial conversation –especially *so*, *okay*, *well* and *alright*– and it fulfils the same function as in CC or CREA, as illustrated in examples 1-6 below. Thus, *bueno* is mainly used to change the topic and move on to a new stage in the conversation. Accordingly, it not only appears in the middle of a conversation (ex. 1 and 2), but also at the beginning, introducing the first topic (ex. 3 and 4), or at the end, introducing the farewell (ex. 5 and 6).

(Ex. 1) (*Friends*: episode 9 – season 1)
Rachel: I loved the moment when you first saw the giant dog shadow all over the park.
Phoebe: Yeah, but did they have to shoot him down? I mean, that was just mean.
Monica: **OK**, right about now the turkey should be crispy on the outside, juicy on the inside. Why are we standing here?
Rachel: Me ha impresionado ver la sombra de ese perro gigante sobre el parque.
Phoebe: Sí, pero, ¿era necesario dispararle? Ha sido muy cruel.
Monica: **Bueno**, el pavo ya debería estar doradito por fuera y jugoso por dentro. ¿Qué hacemos aquí?

(Ex. 2) (CREA)
Pero una vez que estás, o sea, que estáis juntos y en casa, pues siete no parecen tantos... **Bueno**, en fin, dejémonos de rollos y os cuento un poco, ¿no?
Back translation: 'But once you are, I mean, you all are at home together, then seven is not that many… Anyway, enough rambling and let me tell you, okay?'

(Ex. 3) (*Friends*: episode 14 – season 1)
Chandler: **So**...
Janice: Just us.
Chandler: **Bueno**...
Janice: Al fin solos.

(Ex. 4) (CREA)
Hola. Aquí, Pepe. ¿Qué tal?
*¡Hola! **Bueno**, ¿qué nos has traído?*
'Hi. Pepe here. How are you?
Hi! So, what have you brought us?'

(Ex. 5) (*Friends*: episode 9 – season 1)
Ross: **Well**, I'm off to Carol's.
Ross: **Bueno**, me voy a casa de Carol.

(Ex. 6) (*Siete vidas*: episode 8)
P: ***Bueno**, y ahora si me disculpáis, me gustaría estar solo.*
'And now if you'll excuse me, I'd like to be alone'.

On other occasions, as has already been mentioned, *bueno* is used both in CC and the TT as a device to help viewers get their bearings as they are introduced to a conversation that is already underway. In the case of (ex. 7), for example, the transition is, in keeping with the polysemiotic nature of a sitcom, three-fold: the TM *bueno* (acoustic and verbal), the preceding shot that shows

the side of the building in which the conversation will be taking place (visual, non verbal) and a short snippet of transitional music (acoustic, non verbal):

> (Ex. 7) (*Friends*: episode 16 – season 1)
> [New scene: Ross, Rachel, Chandler and Phoebe are talking while sharing a bowl of popcorn]
> Chandler: **Well**, I ended up telling her everything.
> Rachel: Oh, how'd she take it?
> Chandler: **Bueno**, al final se lo he dicho todo.
> Rachel: ¿Y cómo se lo ha tomado?

Although cases such as (ex. 7) are much more common in CC and the TT than in CREA, this fictional use of *bueno* is not problematic in terms of naturalness, as *bueno* is the most recurrent TM in colloquial Spanish conversation.

Finally, as regards dubbing constraints, the TT under study here only features four close-ups, none of which coincide with the use of a TM. The only synchrony that has a real impact on the translation is thus isochrony, i.e. the similar length of ST and TT utterances, give or take one or two syllables. This means that *bueno* can be used to translate all of the most common ST TMs (*so*, *okay*, *well, alright*, *right…*) and explains why on four occasions this Spanish marker has been added without being triggered by any ST unit (Ø). In example 8, the limited leeway that characterises isochrony allows the addition of a two-syllable TM such as *bueno*, which enables TT Joey to make clear that he is going to finish his monologue (unlike ST Joey, who does not resort to any TM):

> (Ex. 8) (*Friends*: episode 1 – season 4)
> Joey: Oh-oh! And then Ross's new girlfriend, Bonnie, shows up and Rachel convinced her to shave her head. And then Ross and Rachel kiss, and now Ross has to choose between Rachel and the bald girl **and…I don't know** what happened there either. Y'know what? Hold on, let me go get Chandler.
> Joey: ¡Ah! Y luego apareció la nueva novia de Ross, Bonnie, y Rachel la convenció de que se afeitara la cabeza. Y después Ros y Rachel se besaron, y ahora Ross tiene que elegir entre Rachel y la chica calva **y… Bueno**, pues tampoco sé lo que ha pasado. ¿Sabéis qué? Esperad, voy a ver lo que ha pasado.

7.2. *(Muy) bien*

As explained in section 6, *(muy) bien* is usually regarded as a formal TM. While it is commonly found in institutionalised talk, it does not tend to occur in everyday conversation. This explains its low occurrence in both CC and CREA but not its frequency of use in the TT, where it translates different English TMs:

ST unit	Times
Okay	17
So	11
Well	8
Alright	4
Ø	2
Fine	2
Go	1
Good	1
Total	46

Table 4: ST units triggering the TM *bien* in the TT

ST unit	Times
Alright	44
Alrighty	1
Okay	1
Total	46

Table 5: ST units triggering the TM *muy bien* in the TT

It must be noted that in English, *okay, alright* and *alrighty*, which constitute more than 70% of the ST units triggering (*muy*) *bien* (see tables 3 and 4), are commonly used in colloquial conversation as response markers but also as TMs (Levinson 1983; Leech & Weisser 2003). Things are different in Spanish: (*muy*) *bien* maybe used as a response marker in everyday conversation, but it does not feature as a TM.

A possible explanation for its use in the dubbed script as a TM may thus be that it is a direct translation from these ST TMs: the translator may simply have replaced them for (*muy*) *bien* without considering that (*muy*) *bien* may have different functions as a DM in Spanish, with different frequencies of use in different registers.

As shown in example 9, Ross is not agreeing with anything or anybody when he says *muy bien, adiós*. *Muy bien* is not a response marker here, but a TM used to initiate the closing of the conversation. The main problem posed by the use of *muy bien* with regard to the naturalness of the dubbed script is that it violates some of the key features of the colloquial register as described by Briz (1998) (see section 3). In a clearly informal situation, Ross suddenly addresses his close friends as if he was a stranger conducting an interview, thus creating a certain distance and a relation of social and functional

inequality (+ power, - solidarity) that is in sharp contrast with the colloquial nature of the ST (*alrighty*):

> (Ex. 9) (Friends: episode 22 – season 1)
> Ross: André should be there in like 45 minutes. **Alrighty**, bye bye.
> Ross: André llegará allí dentro de 45 minutos. **Muy bien**, adiós.

This change in the social and functional relation between the participants in the TT may carry important implications from the point of view of the viewers' perception. Given that, as has already been mentioned, the dialogue is addressed both to the characters (hearers) and the viewers (overhearers), the distance introduced by the use of (*muy*) *bien* between the on-screen characters may also apply to the viewers. In other words, the viewers are also being addressed in a relation of social and functional inequality (+ power, - solidarity), even though the setting is clearly colloquial, which could make it difficult for them to project themselves inside the fiction and "vicariously share the experience of the characters" (Baumgarten 2005: 100). As put by Brown and Yule (1983: 21-22), "it is quite hard to feel friendly towards someone who addresses you as if you were an audience at a public meeting".

In this sense, it is important to highlight that this sharp contrast does not only occur between the ST and the TT, but also between what the dubbing viewers can hear and what they can see. In example 10, for instance, the scene shows two characters with a great deal of proximity and shared knowledge (Chandler and Monica, best friends and also lovers) talking about an intimate topic (their first sexual encounter) in a very familiar setting (their bed). Yet, Chandler starts his intervention with the formal TM *bien*:

> (Ex. 10) (Friends: episode 24 – season 4)
> Chandler: **So**, uh, how are you? How you… how you…You okay?
> Chandler: **Bien**, ¿cómo estás? Dime, dime: ¿estás bien?

Audiovisual constraints cannot account for the use of (*muy*) *bien* as a TM in the TT. As only isochrony (same length of ST and TT utterances) applies, the ST units triggering these Spanish markers (*okay, so, well, alright…*) could have been translated (and have been translated, in many cases) as *bueno*, for example.

In fact, the translator appears to opt for (*muy*) *bien* even in situations in which the interaction of the audiovisual codes provides ample leeway for translation. A case in point is example 11. Stuck in the vestibule of a bank with an attractive woman, Chandler is thinking about what his next move could be. We can hear his thoughts, but he never actually says anything. According to Chaume's model (2004a), this is a clear example of a diegetic voice off in the sound placement code which allows total freedom in terms of

translation. Not even isochrony needs to be respected, as long as Chandler's thoughts are heard before the scene ends. Even so, the dubbing translator still opts for *muy bien* as a transition marker:

> (Ex.11) (*Friends*: episode 7 – season 1)
> Chandler: **Alright**, okay, what next?
> Chandler: **Muy bien**, ¿y ahora qué?

7.3. *Two TT TMs that are not TMs: está bien and de acuerdo*

Apart from the almost even distribution between *bueno* and (*muy*) *bien*, the qualitative analysis of the dubbed script reveals another mismatch with the non-translated corpora –the use of *está bien* and *de acuerdo* to translate ST TMs:

TM	TT	CC	CREA
De acuerdo	15.6	0	0
Está bien	37.5	0	0

Table 6: Occurrences of *de acuerdo* and *está bien* as TMs in the three corpora
Occurrences per 100.000

ST unit	Times
Alright	19
Okay	21
Uh	1
Total	**41**

Table 7: ST units triggering *está bien* as a TM in the TT

ST unit	Times
Alright	9
Okay	7
Ø	1
Great	1
Total	**18**

Table 8: ST units triggering *de acuerdo* as a TM in the TT

In the relevant literature, both markers are regarded as markers of agreement, but never as TMs. Camacho Adarve (2005) classifies *de acuerdo* as a "marcador interactivo de acuerdo" (*interactive marker of agreement*) and Llorente Maldonado de Guevara (1980) and Gómez Capuz (2001) regard *está bien* as a natural translation for *alright* when signalling agreement. Apart from having

a very different pragmatic function to TMs, these markers also differ from TMs in the key issue of their focus on the text (see section 5). As markers of agreement, *de acuerdo* and *está bien* introduce an anaphoric reference, that is, they point backward in the text (Schiffrin 1987). In the TT, however, they are used as TMs and are thus expected to point forward in the text to upcoming information (cataphoric reference).

In example 12, the repeated use of *está bien* by the nurse in the TT suggests that she is agreeing with something that has been said or asked before. However, this could not be further from her original intention, as she is using a TM (*alright* in the ST) to put an end to the chaos caused by the presence of all five friends of Ross' in the theatre as his ex-wife is about to give birth:

> (Ex. 12) (*Friends*: episode 23 – season 1)
> Nurse: **Alright**, **alright**, there's a few too many people in this room, and there's about to be one more, so anybody who's not an ex-husband or a lesbian life partner…out you go!
> Enfermera: **Está bien**, **está bien**. Ya hay demasiada gente en esta habitación y ahora va a nacer uno más, así que todo el que no sea un ex-marido o una pareja sentimental lesbiana... ¡piérdanse!

As in the case of (*muy*) *bien*, the use of *está bien* and *de acuerdo* in the TT may be regarded as a calque of the English TMs *alright* and *okay*, both of which can act as markers of agreement and TMs. This seems to be a more plausible explanation than the influence of dubbing constraints, which, once again, do not seem to justify the use of these markers. Indeed, cases like example 13, taken from the same scene shown in example 11 featuring Chandler's thoughts, show that the translator decides to use *de acuerdo* and *está bien* as TMs even when there is absolute freedom to use any other unit:

> (Ex.13) (*Friends*: episode 7 – season 1)
> Chandler: **Alright**, **alright**, **alright**. It's been fourteen and a half minutes and you still have not said one word. Oh, God, do something. Just make contact, smile!
> Chandler: **De acuerdo**, **está bien**, **está bien**. Han pasado catorce minutos y medio y aún no le has dicho ni una sola palabra. Haz algo... contacta con ella... ¡sonríe!

8. Conclusions

The present article suggests that the essential and yet largely neglected area of naturalness in dubbed dialogue may be studied empirically and that this study may yield interesting results both from a translational and a pragmatic point of view. The approach adopted here is based on two basic notions: the

independence of AVT as a discipline in its own right and its inherent multi-disciplinary nature.

The first notion helps to take into consideration the specificity of AVT, in this case the study of dubbed dialogues and how they may be affected by the interaction of the different audiovisual codes. It is paramount to recognise and characterise dubbed dialogue as what it is before any comparison with other types of dialogue can be attempted.

As for the multidisciplinary nature of AVT, it is an indicator of where the "way forward" (Díaz Cintas 2006) lies for research in this field, which, in the case of the present article, may be the field of pragmatics. The study of the naturalness of dubbed dialogue has traditionally been regarded as a slippery subject prone to impressionistic assessments, often based merely on the comparison of a ST and a TT guided by the native judgement of the researcher. In this sense, the contribution from studies on colloquial conversation and the comparison between dubbed and spontaneous dialogue (with non translated, fictional dialogue as an intermediate step) give this study a more objective basis.

Finally, a key part of this objective basis is the notion of *naturalness* around which the present article revolves. It is argued that the commonly used concept of *orality* does not do full justice to the complexity of oral discourse, whereas *naturalness*, as defined here (*nativelike selection of expression in a given context*), allows the analysis of the corpora on the basis of the specific register and type of discourse they feature, in this case colloquial conversation.

The analysis of the data in this study along these lines has produced significant findings. The first one is the higher occurrence of TMs in both sitcoms (CC and TT) than in spontaneous conversation (CREA). This is explained by the fact that sitcoms seem to use TMs as fictional tools to orientate viewers on the many occasions in which they are faced with conversations that are supposed to be already underway.

Of the two Spanish markers analysed here, *bueno* seems to pose no problems in terms of naturalness, as its use in the TT matches what is described in the relevant literature and what is shown in both CC and CREA. The same does not hold true for (*muy*) *bien*, whose use in the TT may be regarded as unnatural. Commonly found in real-life formal conversations, (*muy*) *bien* is used in the TT almost as often as *bueno*, whereas it is virtually absent from both CC and CREA.

It is suggested that this use of (*muy*) *bien* has a detrimental effect on the naturalness of the dubbed script, as it is in sharp contrast with some of the key features of colloquial register and creates a considerable distance between

the characters on the screen. This yields valuable insight from a pragmatic point of view, especially regarding the viewers' perception. On the one hand, the characters in the dubbed script suddenly seem to address each other in a cold and detached way, as if they were strangers instead of close friends, which is not coherent with the exchanges they have had before or with what the TT viewers can see on the screen. Furthermore, as overhearers, the viewers are also being addressed in a relation of social and functional inequality (+ power, - solidarity) in what otherwise is a clearly colloquial setting, which could make it difficult for them to share the experience of the characters.

An even more serious problem in terms of naturalness is the use of *de acuerdo* and *está bien* as TMs in the dubbed script. Used in spontaneous exchanges as markers of agreement, *de acuerdo* and *está bien* introduce an anaphoric reference, that is, they refer to something that has already been said. In the TT they are used as TMs, pointing to something that is going to be said (cataphoric reference), thus becoming confusing and, in general, unnatural.

As for the role played by dubbing constraints in this lack of naturalness found in the TT, the qualitative analysis carried out in this study suggests that, although existent, these constraints allow the use of natural TMs. The interaction of the different audiovisual codes gives the translator a certain leeway, yet s/he still chooses TMs that are not common in spontaneous colloquial conversation. A possible explanation for the use of the markers of agreement (*muy*) *bien*, *de acuerdo* and *está bien* as TMs in the dubbed script is that they are calques of *okay*, *alright* and *right*, which, unlike the Spanish DMs, can function both as markers of agreement and TMs in colloquial conversation in English. However, this explanation does not account for the occurrence of (*muy*) *bien*, *de acuerdo* and *está bien* to translate units such as *so* or *great*, which cannot be described as markers of agreement.

Future research could focus not only on studying other discourse markers[8] and units of colloquial conversation to confirm or refute the results obtained here, but also on finding out more about the causes of the lack of naturalness detected in dubbed dialogue thus far. It would also be interesting to gain further insight into why even if the Spanish dubbing language has been described (Gómez Capuz 2001; Duro 2001) and is still being described (Baños Piñeiro 2007) as somewhat unnatural, dubbing viewers have such a positive opinion about dubbing in their country, so much so that they seem to even forget that they are watching dubbed films (Palencia Villa 2002). Do

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8. An example of this would be *vale* (Gómez Capuz 2001; Romero-Fresco 2008), which fulfills many of the functions described in this article.

they not notice this lack of naturalness or is it rather that they do not mind it? Although a possible explanation may lie in the suspension of linguistic disbelief (Romero Fresco 2009a), this question calls for further research in the form of both reception studies and pragmatic research with a view to examining the potential cross-cultural implications of this lack of naturalness.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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A NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CONTENT SELECTION IN AUDIO DESCRIPTION. TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF NARRATOLOGICAL TIME[1]

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Abstract

As more and more countries start to provide audio description services for a growing range of products and events, research into this new discipline is growing and diversifying as well. Two questions that seem to be at the heart of much of this research focus on what should be described and how this should be done, in other words on content selection and formulation of the description. The present article looks at the first of these two questions and approaches it from a narratological point of view. After a general discussion of the use of narratology for audio description, the focus will shift to one particular constituent of narrative, namely time. The different temporal aspects will be discussed in greater detail, after which a strategy for the audio description of time in film will be proposed.

Résumé

De plus en plus de pays commencent à offrir des services d'audio description pour un nombre croissant de produits et évènements. La recherche dans cette nouvelle discipline a de ce fait tendance à se développer et à se diversifier. Deux questions paraissent être au cœur de nombreuses recherches : que faut-il décrire et comment faut-il le faire ? Ou, en d'autres termes, quel contenu choisir et comment formuler la description ? Cet article se penche sur la première question et adopte une approche à partir

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d'un point de vue narratologique. Après une discussion générale sur l'utilité de la narratologie à des fins d'audio description, l'accent sera mis sur un composant particulier de la narration: le temps. Les différents aspects temporels seront examinés plus en détails et une stratégie d'audio description du temps pour le cinéma sera proposée.

1. Introduction

As audio description (AD) as an academic discipline is starting to come of age, research in the field begins to develop in different directions. Two questions that seem to be at the heart of much of this research deal with what has to be described (the content of the audio description) and with how the product at hand should be described (the form of the audio description). To formulate answers to the former question, researchers have turned to different methodologies and disciplines such as corpus analysis (e.g. Jiménez Hurtado 2007; Salway 2007), eye-tracking studies (e.g. Vilaró et al. 2012; Orero & Vilaró, in this volume) and narratology (e.g. Kruger 2010). Contributions to the field that focus on the second question are based on discourse analysis (e.g. Braun, forthcoming), linguistics (e.g. Rodríguez 2007) or reception studies (e.g. Chmiel & Mazur 2011), among others.

The present article looks at the first question, i.e. content selection, and evaluates the use of a narratological approach to content selection in audio description. Although some of the insights and strategies presented here are probably valid for various modalities of audio description, such as theatre, opera, and television, the article will only focus on audio description for film. Part one considers the usefulness of narratology for selecting (the most) relevant information to be audio described; part two will focus on one particular narrative building block, namely 'time', and looks at how describers can go about describing this structuring element from a narratological point of view.

2. The usefulness of narratology for audio description

2.1. From guidelines to strategies

Audiovisual products such as films are inherently multimodal in nature, creating meaning from the combination of and interaction between different semiotic channels: images, dialogues, sounds and text-on-screen. This multimodality undermines the accessibility of these products for some audiences, as can be explained on the basis of the following diagram.

MODE	+ VISUAL	- VISUAL
+ VERBAL	text-on-screen	dialogues
- VERBAL	images	sound effects

Figure 1: The different meaning-making semiotic channels of films

Given their visual impairment, blind and partially sighted audiences do not have full access to the two visual channels, making it impossible for them to re-create the entire meaning of the product. Moreover, because films combine the different semiotic channels to create meaning, dialogue turns and sound effects often have a direct link to the images (Baumgarten 2008) and are therefore not always clear to these audiences either. So in order to render films accessible to the visually impaired, the semiotic channels to which they do not have access have to be translated into a mode that is accessible to them, i.e. the verbal mode. However, this type of intersemiotic translation is far from unproblematic.

There are at least two fundamental differences between visual communication and verbal communication that complicate the audio description process. First of all, visual communication is more implicit than its verbal counterpart (Sperber & Wilson 1995), making it sometimes hard to determine what exactly is being communicated. In other words, there will be instances where audio describers will find it difficult to determine the precise visual content they have to include in their verbal description. Moreover, visual communication presents information simultaneously, whereas a verbal translation of this information can only be presented sequentially (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1990) and thus takes (much) more time to render. Because audio descriptions can only be inserted in the audiovisual product when there is no dialogue or meaningful sound effect – a constraint imposed by all existing AD guidelines – there will sometimes not be enough time to describe everything shown on screen, obliging the describer to select only the most relevant pieces of information. These two difficulties might explain why the question of content selection has received so much attention in AD literature so far.

The first body of documents in which the problem of what to describe was addressed and rightfully characterized as "one of the hardest questions for a describer" (Greening et al. 2010: 4) are AD guidelines. From a comparative study of existing guidelines carried out by the RNIB we learn that they are in agreement about what has to be described, namely 'when, where, who and what' (ibid., 4), but neither the comparison nor the actual guidelines in the appendixes really discuss content selection in depth or tell describers how to

prioritize information. It is by no means the objective of the present article to explore all the merits and shortcomings of the guidelines and one might even question the use of this kind of discussion. There are, however, two issues that seem to be relevant in the framework of the present article. First, the guidelines never mention *why* you have to describe the elements they mention, i.e., they are rather intuitive and lack any form of theoretical grounding. In addition, they are either very general, stating what has to be described in one single paragraph, such as the Spanish UNE 153020 Standard (ibid., 16), or very specific, focusing on some particular elements such as colour or ethnicity, but not on others. So although the guidelines may be useful as a first introduction to what to describe, a truly valid aid to content selection in AD should be based on a solid theoretical framework and offer strategies that are general enough to be used in different film genres but specific enough to be applied to individual scenes.

2.2. A better understanding of how stories are told: basic insights in narratology

When looking for a solid theoretical basis for content selection in audio description, one possible candidate that seems to offer various advantages is narratology. A first advantage has to do with the source product. Bordwell and Thompson write that films take us through experiences that are often driven by stories (Bordwell & Thompson 2008: 2). So a theory offering insights into how these stories are created and how the medium signals what is narratologically most relevant, can be helpful for describers who have to recreate the filmic experience in a semiotic system that does not always allow them to include all the information they would want to.

When looking at the intersemiotic translation process that is audio description, a question that arises is whether stories in a multimodal medium such as film are told according to the same principles as in a 'unimodal' verbal system. In other words, is there some kind of one-to-one equivalence allowing audio describers to translate visual narrative information into verbal narrative information? The advantage narratology offers in this respect, is that the theory has been developed for both visual narrative and written narrative, allowing us to make a comparison between these two forms of narrative and analyse what principles are the same and what differences the describer of film narratives has to take into account.

As in any other translation process, the describer plays a dual role. Not only is he the author of the audio described target product; he is also a member of the audience of the source product. An advantage that narratology seems to offer in this respect is that it studies narratives both from a more

author-centred, story-creation perspective (structuralist narratology) and from a more audience-oriented, story-reception perspective (cognitive narratology). For audio description, both fields are useful. Structuralist narratology tells us what different narrative constituents or 'building blocks' authors can use to create their stories (i.e., it focuses on the *content* of our content selection process). Cognitive narratology on the other hand tells us how audiences process stories and how they prioritize information (i.e., it focuses on the *selection* of our content selection process). Together they can help clarify the double role and task of the describer.

In the present article we will focus mainly on structuralist narratology or story creation, examining the different constituents authors use to design their stories in general, and elaborating one of these constituents, namely time, in more detail. Before turning to the specific components of narrative, however, a short introduction to the general narrative creation process or the 'narrative constitution' to use Wolf Schmid's term (Schmid 2005), may prove to be useful. Based on earlier work by the Russian formalists, structuralist narratologists make a distinction between the physical narrative product an audience is presented with and the underlying abstract levels (Herman & Vervaeck 2005: 41) that reflect the different transformations stories undergo during their creation process, as we will briefly explain in the next paragraphs. Although most authors agree that narratives consist of two or three levels, the starting points for their categorizations are often different and hence they use quite different terms to label them or attribute different meanings to homonymic terms (Scheffel 2010: 4). In the remainder of the article, we will use the terminology as developed by Bal in her *Narratology. An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1995).

The first and most basic level of a narrative is an abstract construct in which the narrative events are presented in the logical order in which they would normally take place in the real world. The actants involved in those events are equally abstract 'roles' without any physical or psychological characteristics. This level is what Bal with a formalist term calls the *fabula*, a concept she defines as "a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Bal 1995: 5). As becomes apparent from this definition, the main focus on the fabula level is on the temporal relations between events: they are presented in the chronological order in which they happen, which is not always the order in which they are presented in the actual narrative the audience will receive. And although these temporal relations are narratologically very important, as we will discuss in the next paragraph, one other dimension of time is completely absent from Bal's definition:

all these events take place in a specific setting, which itself consists of a spatial component and a temporal component. It is true that in written fiction, this temporal dimension can be absent or left very implicit, but in film, unless the scene takes place in an interior space without any visual connection to the outside world or any other indication of time, e.g., in the form of text-on-screen, we always get some indication of the temporal setting, such as the time of day or year, weather conditions, etc. It is important that audio describers be aware of these two dimensions, as we will discuss later.

The second level of the narrative constitution is what Bal calls the *story* level, defined as "a fabula that is presented in a certain manner" (Bal 1995: 5). On this level, the three basic constituents of the narrative – time, space and characters – all undergo various changes and adaptations that are all clearly motivated. On the level of the temporal relations between events, the author determines their order (whether he will present the events in his narrative chronologically or not), their frequency (how often they will be presented) and their duration (whether or not they will be presented at another 'speed' than the regular, real-life speed). In the second part of this article, we will discuss these three concepts and their functions in greater detail, but one example might clarify the author's options and their possible meaning for the narrative.

The film *Slumdog Millionnaire* tells the story of Jamal Malik, an 18-year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai who is one question away from winning 20 million rupees on the game show *Who wants to be a Millionaire*. However, when the show is interrupted for the night he is arrested because the police suspect him of cheating. During the interrogation, he watches the show from the previous night with a police officer and with every question he tells a part from his earlier life that explains how he knows the answer to this question. A chronological account of all these facts would start with all the episodes from his childhood and end with the game show and Jamal's arrest. However, the film starts with the arrest, then goes back to the game show and the different questions Jamal has to answer. All these questions are then interrupted by flashbacks to earlier moments in Jamal's life. This anachrony serves various purposes. First of all, starting with the last event (i.e., Jamal's arrest) immediately arouses the audience's curiosity: why is this boy arrested? Alternating the scenes at the game show with flashbacks to events in Jamal's earlier life, has a double purpose: on the one hand, they explain why he knows the answers to all the questions, on the other hand they create suspense by postponing the answer to the question everybody in the audience has, namely will he ultimately win those 20 million rupees. In other words, by changing the

chronological order, the author can create suspense, and generate curiosity and surprise. Moreover, by inserting flashbacks that explain events that take place in the narrative present, he can clarify the story.

Furthermore, the story level is the stage at which the author, in this case the filmmaker, concretizes the setting of the events taking place. In other words, he specifies the temporal circumstances (historical period, season, time of day, weather conditions, etc.) and decides whether a specific spatial frame will function as a mere background or will have a symbolic meaning, whether the frame is to be static or dynamic and whether it is open and thus connected to other frames, or closed. He will decide what the particular contents of the spatial frame will be and will develop the relations between space and time and between spatial frames and the characters in them. Good examples of the possibilities and choices open to directors on the spatial level can be found in *Shutter Island*. The film tells the story of U.S. marshal Teddy Daniels, who investigates the disappearance of a murderess who escaped from a hospital for the criminally insane that is located on the Boston Harbour Islands. The location chosen for this movie, i.e., a secluded island, is more than a mere background. It has a very clear motivation and a highly symbolic meaning. First of all, just like the temporal example from *Slumdog Millionaire*, the space generates an intriguing question for the audience right from the start: how can somebody disappear and escape from an isolated island? The problematic nature of an escape from a 'closed spatial frame' causes curiosity and suspense from the very beginning of the movie. Also the contents of the frame, i.e., the topography of the island, are very well chosen and add to the suspense. One side of the island is covered in ominous woods, the other ends in steep cliffs, adequately described by the captain of the ship that brings Teddy to the island: "The other side of the island is rock bluffs, all the way down to the edge of the water." With his next sentence: "The dock is the only way on... or off. We'll be casting off as soon as you [two] are ashore", he emphasizes the isolation of this 'closed frame'. Again, by choosing a specific frame, giving it a clear meaning and filling it with the right content, the author can create suspense or arouse the audience's curiosity (cfr. Scheffel 2010).

It is also on the story level that abstract actors are turned into real characters: they are given unique physical features that distinguish them from other characters in the narrative; their communicative and behavioural dimension is developed, determining what acts they will perform; and the necessary psychological traits to motivate those actions are created (cfr. Remael & Vercauteren 2007). A good example of this 'characterization' of abstract actors can be found in *Law Abiding Citizen*, the story of engineer Clyde Shelton, whose

wife and daughter are brutally murdered by two burglars. When Shelton feels he is betrayed by the legal system because one of the two burglars is acquitted after making a deal with the prosecutor, he decides to take justice into his own hands. This frustration, combined with the fact that he has always been a law abiding citizen, as the title suggests, is the main character trait that motivates Shelton's retaliatory actions later on in the movie. The profession that he was given by the author, together with the supposed intellectual capacities it requires, motivate the way in which he carries out these actions, namely by designing and constructing bombs and other advanced devices to kill his opponents.

As these three examples show, the story level is where the most important narrative-shaping decisions are taken. This is where the author arouses curiosity, generates suspense and creates surprise, and where he decides what traits characters need to motivate their actions.

The third level of the narrative constitution, following *fabula* and *story*, is the *narrative text*, "a text in which an agent relates ('tells') a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof" (Bal 1995: 5). The narrative text is the actual physical level of the narrative constitution. It is at this level that the author decides by means of what techniques he will show all the choices he has made on the story level. Will a director of a film present a flashback by means of a fade-out or wipe, or will scenes that take place earlier in the fabula be presented in black and white? Or instead of showing this anachrony in an explicit manner, will he leave it more implicit by showing the characters at a younger age or will he resort to a mere scene change without any indication of time? Will the threatening atmosphere of a space be rendered physically, by presenting it as a small, confined place, or through the use of dark colours? Or will the director turn to the other semiotic channels in the medium and combine the images with ominous music? And how will he clarify what motivates the characters' actions? Will it be shown through specific body movements, a close-up of a facial expression, or again via another semiotic channel (sound or dialogue)? All these and many other choices will determine what specific narrative text the audience will finally be presented with.

But not only do these choices define the ultimate narrative text; all the visual, verbal and other aural cues the audience is presented with, also determine how they will re-create the initial fabula. Briefly, while the author of a narrative text starts from the chronological fabula, determines how he will present time, space and characters on the story level and then decides what techniques he will use to externalize them in the physical narrative product,

the audience will work in exactly the opposite direction. They are first presented with the textual cues and will use these indications to evaluate the author's choices (why was a flashback used here, what physical or psychological trait motivated this character's action, why is that room suddenly presented as a threatening space, etc.) and ultimately recreate the initial fabula (see Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, the audio describer plays a double part in this construction and reconstruction of narrative texts, and as such has a rather complicated task. As a member of the audience of the original narrative text, he will have to reconstruct the initial fabula. This means he will first have to pinpoint all the different cues (and their meaning) offered in the concrete narrative and work out what motivated the different choices the author made on the story level. As the author of the audio description of the narrative text, he will have to make sure that the blind and partially sighted audience has access to all the narrative elements necessary to recreate the fabula the original author started from. In other words, he will have to offer sufficient cues to allow the audience to determine what the temporal setting of a particular scene is and what the temporal relations between consecutive scenes are. Likewise the visually impaired audience must be able to recreate the spatial setting, atmosphere and relations from the description and must acquire enough insight into the characters' physical, behavioural and psychological dimensions to figure out what they look like, what they do and what motivates their actions.
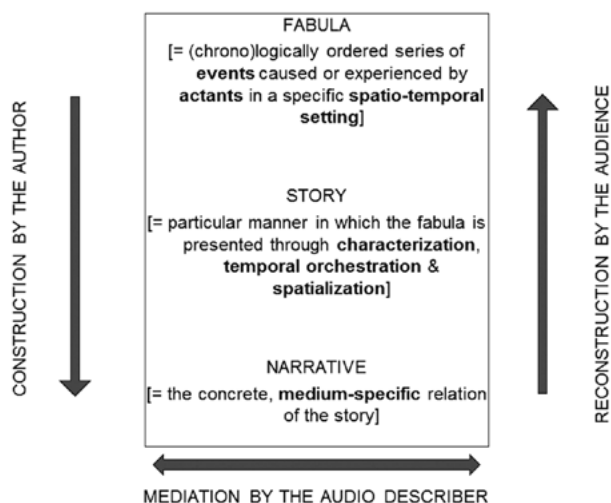

Figure 2: Construction and reconstruction of narrative texts

To accomplish this, the describer first scans all the scenes for the different cues relating to the narrative's basic constituents, i.e. time, space and characters, and determines what cues the blind and partially sighted audience can access through the other (aural) semiotic channels in the film, as well as what the audience knows from the context. In addition he will have to determine the level of explicitness of the visual cues that are possible candidates for description: elements that are explicitly shown (e.g., a text on screen indicating a time, an image of the Eiffel Tower) can be described explicitly, elements presented in a more implicit way (e.g., a shot suggesting that a character is being watched, an ambiguous facial expression) will have to be described in more 'masked' terms, and cues that are absent or unclear for the sighted audience (e.g., the exact location of a scene, or the temporal relations between consecutive scenes) can be left out of the description. Although this last observation may seem obvious and trivial, it is worth mentioning because it may help (beginning) describers to discard certain elements from their descriptions in an early stage of the script writing process when pressed for time. Next, the describer will have to decide what cues will be described and how they will be formulated so that the original fabula can be reconstructed and (as far as possible) an experience is created that is more or less equivalent to the sighted audience's.

It would be impossible to explore all these different stages in the AD script writing phase in detail in this article, or even to discuss the three basic narrative constituents. Therefore, the next part will focus exclusively on the temporal component of the narrative. The different dimensions and constituents of narratological time mentioned above will be explored in more detail, and I will then try to translate this theoretical background into a strategy that can be used by audio describers for the description of narratological time.

3. Time in Structuralist Narratology

The following paragraphs look at the different temporal aspects in narrative and will discuss whether or not, and in what instances, they need description. In other words, I will only look at the 'what' or content selection question; the question of how they should be described, will be left out of consideration. When looking at the different basic constituents of a narrative, time seems to be by far the easiest to analyse systematically from a structuralist point of view. It is true that it is much clearer and more unambiguous than characters or space. Indeed, Zoran (1984: 310-312) discusses the problems underlying the concept of space at length and Bal (1995: 132) agrees that "few concepts from the narrative text are as self-evident and have yet remained so vague

as the concept of space". With regard to characters, Herman and Vervaeck (2005: 70) note that "[O]bviously, it is not at the level of character analysis that structuralist narratology has made its most significant contribution". On-going research has shown that structuralist narratology can offer a sound basis for the definition of the basic constituents of narrative characters and space (Vercauteren 2010a, 2010b) but much more input from the cognitive field is needed to make the appropriate selections, given the myriad of different subcomponents making up the character and spatial dimensions of a narrative text. Time, as will become apparent in the next paragraph, is much more clear-cut.

3.1. Temporal Settings of Narratives

As mentioned before, the temporal constituent of a narrative text consists of two narratological dimensions. First, there is the temporal dimension of the setting that is indispensable for any narrative to exist and that is intrinsically linked to the spatial component of the setting, as becomes apparent, for example, when looking at the terminology used by narratologists. Bakhtin (1981) uses the term chronotope or 'spacetime', and Herman and Vervaeck (2005) define setting as a 'spatio-temporal' indication in which events take place. It seems to be the case that, in visual communication probably even more than in verbal communication, the two cannot be separated from each other. Every outside scene in a film shows a place and gives an indication of time, and even in many inside scenes the two are made explicit or can be inferred from implicit cues. So although we consider time as a separate element in this article, describers have to be aware that it cannot be separated from the spatial component and that they must make sure that the complete spatio-temporal setting is clear to their blind and partially sighted audience, whenever it is to the sighted audience.

In his doctoral dissertation on the spatio-temporal setting in written narrative fiction, Pitkänen (2003) discusses so-called time-oriented settings in depth, presenting three different elements that can be considered to be indications of time in narrative. The first one he mentions is grammatical tense, an important marker in written narrative, but less so in audiovisual narratives such as films. Grammatical tense obviously plays an important part in creating temporal settings that are recounted in the dialogues of a film. However, for audio describers, whose main focus is on the visual, it is less crucial. The other two elements, however, apply to both written and visual communication. On the one hand, there are purely temporal markers (mentions of a specific era, season, time of day), on the other, there are all the biographical,

socio-cultural and historical references that give an indication of the time period in which the narrative is set. This last distinction is again an interesting one for audio describers, as it seems to indicate that there are different degrees of explicitness with which time can be expressed in narrative. In film, for example, captions on screen are the most explicit renderings of the temporal setting. There are also purely visual temporal markers, but except from clocks, calendars and other visual aids giving a precise time indication, those markers are already more implicit (snow typically refers to winter, but can probably also indicate late autumn or early spring; a dark setting can indicate that it is night, but also late evening or early morning, etc.). Even more implicit from a temporal perspective are Pitkänen's biographical, socio-cultural and historical references. They require more inferring by the audience to determine the actual time period they represent and, in addition, the describer will have to judge whether his audience has the necessary extra-textual world knowledge to infer this time period from the description of the actual reference, or whether they need a more explicit time indication.

Further, Pitkänen (ibid.) distinguishes between global time and local time, the former being the general time period in which a narrative is set, the latter being the time frame of a specific scene. Translated for audio description, this would mean that the describer has to make sure that his audience knows in what time period(s) the film is set (either from a description of an explicit time reference such as a date shown on screen, or from more explicit cues such as specific buildings, people or objects referring to a specific time period), and that they know what the temporal frame of every individual scene is. So for every new scene, he will have to determine whether the global or local time has changed and if so, point this out in his description.

3.2. Temporal Orchestration

In addition to the temporal dimension of the settings in a narrative there is a second, equally important time aspect, namely the temporal relations between (consecutive) scenes. In his seminal work on narrative time, Genette (1972) uses three criteria to structure the different temporal relations in a narrative: order, frequency and duration. These criteria have been discussed in detail both for written narrative (e.g. Bal 1995: 78-113; or Herman & Vervaeck 2005: 60-67) and for filmic narrative (e.g. Bordwell 1985: 74-98), so in the present article, we will only focus on the aspects that are most relevant for audio describers. One preliminary remark to be made here is that, in an audiovisual medium such as film, the three different aspects mentioned above can be rendered both verbally and/or visually, two possibilities Bordwell

(1985: 78) calls *recounting* and *enactment*. In case of a character talking about an event that is simultaneously shown on screen, we talk about *enacted recounting* (ibid.). In the cases of recounting and enacted recounting, there is no time for description, so it is only in the cases where events are enacted, that the audio describer has to provide the necessary temporal cues (as always, if they are explicit enough to be inferred by the sighted audience).

3.2.1. Order

On the fabula level, the events that take place are presented in their chronological order, but this need not be so on the level of the physical narrative text. The order in which the events are ultimately shown, can be changed for various reasons; the director might for example use a flashback to explain what motivated a certain action by one of the characters in the narrative present. He may use a flashback to deliberately delay information and create gaps in the narration to evoke suspense or curiosity, etc. Bordwell (1985: 77) distinguishes between four different possibilities, four different relations between the order in which events occur in the fabula and the order in which they are presented to the audience in the narrative text. I will discuss them briefly below, detailing the implications they may have for AD.

a) two events that occur simultaneously in the fabula are presented simultaneously in the narrative. This can be the case in split-screen scenes where simultaneous events are shown on different halves of the screen or in deep-space compositions where actions take place in the background while something is happening in the foreground as well. Because this simultaneous visual representation can never be rendered simultaneously in a verbal description, as explained in chapter 2, this possibility might constitute a problem for the describer when there is little time for description and an ad hoc solution may have to be found;

b) two events that occur successively in the fabula are presented simultaneously in the narrative. This is rare in film, as Bordwell (1985: 77) also points out. This might happen for example when an off-screen voice talks about prior fabula events while images about present events are shown. In these instances, there will be no time for description given the presence of a verbal component. Another possibility is that characters in the narrative present watch a video in which prior fabula events are shown. If in this case characters discuss the images that are shown on the video, there is again a verbal component and no

time for AD. If however, the scene is purely visual, the audio describer should try to make clear that the different events that are shown at the same time, take place in two different time periods;

c) two events that occur simultaneously in the fabula are presented successively in the narrative. The typical example of this possibility is cross-cutting. Because of the successive presentation, this possibility will presumably create fewer problems for the audio describer unless there is little or no time for description because of dialogue sequences or other verbal components. Although different description techniques could be used to indicate the simultaneous occurrence of the fabula events, a recent analysis by Remael and Vercauteren (2010: 162-165) of a small corpus of audio described films seems to indicate that describers most often turn to the conjunction 'as' to render this simultaneity. Likewise, Salway (2007: 165) concludes from his corpus analysis that both 'as' and 'while' are most used to indicate simultaneity. Caution is in order, however, because cross-cutting does not only relate to simultaneous fabula events (Bordwell 1985: 84). Indeed, it can also be used to switch between successive events. In other words, the describer will have to keep this in mind and evaluate whether we are dealing with cross-cutting employed to narrate simultaneous or successive fabula events. In this last case, descriptions using 'while' or 'as', could create a false idea of simultaneity;

d) two events that occur successively in the fabula are presented successively in the narrative. This is the typical situation in film, but it is also in this instance that the director has the most options to play around with their order. He can decide to maintain the chronology of the events from the fabula, in which case no reference to the order of events has to be made in the AD because this is the order the audience would naturally presume.[2] However, he can also decide to show

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2. It would go beyond the scope of the present article to discuss the audience's cognitive processing of narratives at length. The claim made here, can for example be found in Toolan's contribution on coherence to *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (http://hup. sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Main_Page), stating: "Addressees 'naturally' attribute relevance and coherence to any text or discourse until evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. Echoing Grice (1975), they argue that a rational assumption of relevance has shaped any speaker's (or writer's) contribution. Where an utterance's relevance, orderliness, informativeness and truthfulness is not obvious, a search for their covert presence is warranted. A corollary of this is that a speaker or writer can be assumed to be continuing to speak or write of the same spatiotemporal setting and the same characters, unless a change is explicitly signaled." (Toolan 2010: 13).

successive events out of their chronological order, showing the most recent fabula event first and showing an earlier event later, as in the *Slumdog Millionaire* example. In this case a description pointing out this anachrony would make sure that the blind and partially sighted audience knows that the events shown are not chronological. An additional difficulty for describers here is the level of explicitness of the time change. Directors can indicate anachrony in a very explicit way, for example with a text-on-screen indicating that we are in a different time period. However, flashbacks can be introduced in much more implicit ways too. This too, should possibly be reflected in the description.

3.2.2. Duration

With regard to duration, Bordwell (1985: 80-88) distinguishes between the duration of an event or series of events in the fabula, their 'dramatized' duration in the filmic narrative ('story duration in Bordwell's terminology) and their more technical duration on screen. For example: all the events taking place in *Slumdog Millionaire* span a period of approximately 14 years in the fabula. The filmic narrative only shows 2 days of Jamal Malik's life as an 18-year old boy and a few days from his earlier life. All these moments are shown on screen in 120 minutes. In other words: on the level of the whole film, the fabula time will usually be longer than the story time, which in turn will usually be longer than the screen time. Yet this is a generalization and the differences between these three types of duration might be very small (e.g. the action series *24*) or much larger (e.g. *Slumdog Millionaire*). For the durational aspect, Bordwell discusses three possibilities:

a) *Equivalence*: fabula duration, story duration and screen duration are essentially equal. On the level of individual scenes, this is the most common situation in film; the temporal aspect, i.e., this equivalence in duration, does not need description because again this is what the audience would naturally expect.

b) *Reduction*: fabula duration is greater than story duration, which can be greater than or equal to screen duration. This is the most common situation on the level of the whole film, as mentioned above. On the scene level, two further distinctions can be made:
– *Ellipsis*: some fabula events or parts of those events are left out of the filmic narrative and/or on screen, creating narrative gaps. Although existing guidelines indicate that you should only describe

what is shown on screen, I think this point should be refined in the case of ellipsis. In the opening scene of the film *Derailed* for example, we see the main character lying in bed. In the next shot, he is sitting at the breakfast table. The fabula events of him getting dressed and walking to the kitchen are not shown on screen, presumably because they are narratively irrelevant. In this case the guidelines can be adhered to and no description of this ellipsis is needed, leaving more time for description of elements that are relevant. In *Memoirs of a Geisha* we encounter an ellipsis of a completely different nature. In a first shot, a young girl is praying in a temple, presumably somewhere in spring, as all the cherry trees are in bloom. The next shot takes us outside, showing cherry blossoms falling from the trees and drifting through the air. The camera then tilts upward first showing the cherry blossoms but then snow falling from the sky, indicating that seasons have changed. The next interior shot shows that we are actually many years later and that the young girl has now grown up. As we are dealing with an ellipsis that is narratologically relevant, this is an instance where the describer would have to evaluate whether his audience can infer this gap from descriptive verbal cues or whether it needs to be included in the description more explicitly;

– *Compression*: the events from the fabula and the filmic narrative are presented in an 'accelerated' way on screen, for example through fast-forward or montage sequences. Like in the case of ellipsis, this acceleration can be irrelevant, if no narratively important information is left out. But sometimes the director aims at a stylistic effect when he chooses to use a fast-forward or montage sequence. Existing guidelines, however, give describers the advice not to use technical language in their description, i.e., not to use words like 'fast-forward' or 'montage sequence'. One possible solution to this problem is offered by Thompson, who points out that modern films often use techniques to achieve a certain stylistic effect, but that "style's most fundamental function is to promote narrative clarity" (Thompson 1999: 19). It would then be up to the describer to pinpoint this narrative function and to evaluate if and how it should be included in the description.

c) *Expansion:* fabula duration and/or story duration are shorter than screen duration. This expansion can be achieved by inserting non-diegetic material in the film (*insertion*) or by stretching out the fabula

events on screen, e.g., through overlapping editing or slow motion (*dilation*). In the case of insertion of non-diegetic elements, the expansion will become apparent to blind and partially sighted viewers from the description of those elements. The case of overlapping editing and especially slow motion is more difficult. In many cases, this expansion of fabula duration is more than a mere effect created by the director for stylistic purposes (cf. compression). Again, it will be part of the describer's task to retrieve the director's narratological intentions and see if they can be included in the description instead of the technical or stylistic feature shown on screen. In other words, in this last case there will often be no description of an actual time element, but rather of another narratologically relevant item.

3.2.3. Frequency

Frequency refers to the number of times a fabula event is presented in the narrative text. Bordwell (1985: 79-80) distinguishes between nine different possibilities (*cf. figure 3*). A fabula event can be presented 0, 1 or more than 1 time in the narrative text, and this can be done either through enactment or through recounting:

Number of times a fabula event is	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Recounted	0	0	0	1	1	1	+1	+1	+1
Enacted	0	1	+1	0	1	+1	0	1	+1

Figure 3: Number of times fabula events are presented in the narrative and how (Bordwell 1985:79)

This temporal element does not really constitute a big problem for describers. If events are not recounted or enacted (value = 0), then obviously no description has to be / can be given. In cases in which events are recounted once or more than once, the describer has no option but to let the dialogue prevail and no description can be inserted. The blind and partially sighted audience will have to infer from the dialogue that a character is talking about a new event (recounted value = 1), or is talking again about a certain event (recounted value = +1). In cases where events are enacted once (enacted value = 1), the describer will insert a description for that event. If that event is enacted again later (enacted value = +1), the describer will have to determine whether it is presented in exactly the same way or if the event is presented in a (slightly) different way (e.g. events as seen by another character, flashback to a scene shown earlier, but with new details, etc.). In that case, his description

will have to indicate that we are dealing with the same event and that, if applicable, new elements are presented.

In conclusion: as far as temporal relations between scenes are concerned, the audio describer will have to consider three different aspects, namely order, duration and frequency. In some of these cases, no audio description is needed, that is, when it is an instance that an audience would presume as being natural or logical (e.g., two consecutive scenes being shown in their chronological order, a fabula event presented on screen for its normal duration, etc.). In other instances, where events are shown out of their chronological order, when slow-motion or fast-forward is used or where a certain event is shown more than once, the describer has to indicate this temporal 'abnormality' (or its narratological function) in his description. The next question is: can these different possibilities be translated into a strategy that can be applied to any scene in a movie? In the next part, we will try to provide a first tentative answer to this question in the form of a schematic model for the audio description of time.

4. Towards a strategy for describing narratological time in film

From the discussion above, it is clear that the describer has to take into account a lot of different elements when creating a description of the temporal constituent of a narrative. For every scene, he will have to look at both the temporal setting and the temporal orchestration or temporal relations. He will have to ask different questions in order to determine what elements need description and what elements can be left out, either because they are not clear to the sighted audience or because they can be inferred from the other semiotic channels in the scene. After having analysed the first scene, he will then have to look at the following scene and determine what has changed from a temporal point of view (and possibly needs description), and what has remained the same (and does not necessarily need to be described again). Schematically, this decision making process could be presented as follows:

In this workflow, the describer starts with the first scene and looks at the temporal setting. If the setting (local and/or global time) is not clear to the sighted audience, because no explicit time reference is given or there are no biographical, socio-cultural or historical references to a specific time, no audio description is needed.[3] If the setting is clear, the describer can describe

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3. There currently is a discussion within the field of AD research about the amount of audience participation wanted in AD. Some say the blind and partially sighted should make the same inferences as the sighted audience (i.e. if the sighted audience doesn't know,
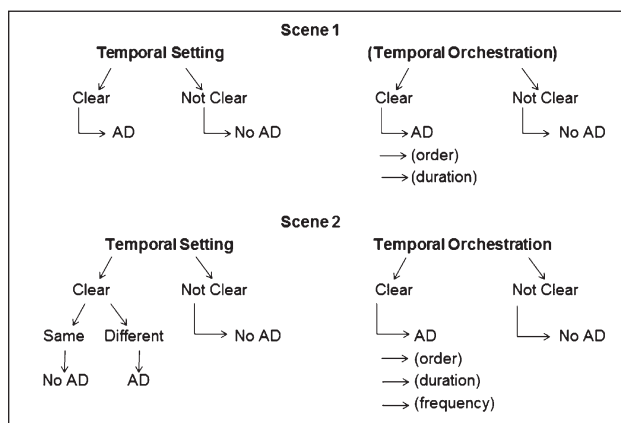
Figure 4: The audio description of narratological time – a schematic model

the local and/or global time, taking into account the level of explicitness of the temporal marker. Furthermore, he should look at the temporal relations[4] within this scene. If 'Scene 1' is understood to be the very first scene of the film, there will more often than not be no temporal relations yet. It will by definition be the first time the scene/event is shown, which explains why 'frequency' is not included under 'Temporal Orchestration' of Scene 1. With regard to the order of events in Scene 1, only simultaneous presentation [cf. cases a) and b) in section 3.2.1]; successive presentation [cases c) and d)] is not possible because it requires at least two scenes. If the scene is shown in slow-motion or fast-forward (durational aspect), the describer should

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it shouldn't be explained in the AD). Recent research (Fresno 2011), however, seems to indicate that processing aural information requires a higher cognitive load (and is less well remembered) than visual information, which could mean that a higher degree of explicitation is warranted to decrease the cognitive load required for processing the description. Moreover, as explicitation is generally recognised as one of the universals of translation (Laviosa-Braithwaite 1998: 289) it should come as no surprise that the technique is used in audio description as well, especially since it deals with translation from (a more implicit) source text to a (more explicit) target text. Hence, we will not claim that if a certain temporal aspect is not clear for the sighted audience, it cannot be described. Rather, we suggest that it can be left out of the description, if for example other narratologically relevant elements are clear and should thus get priority. Should there be enough time to include the unclear temporal element and if the describer deems a description necessary to increase understanding, it can be included.

4. 'Temporal orchestration' under Scene 1 and the elements covered by this orchestration, both under Scene 1 and Scene 2, are in brackets, meaning they can possibly be present but do not necessarily need to be.

evaluate the relevance and importance of this presentation and decide if and how it is to be included in the description.

After both the temporal setting and orchestration of Scene 1 are analysed and (narratologically) relevant decisions regarding their inclusion in the description have been made, the describer can turn to Scene 2. Although the content selection process for Scene 2 closely resembles that for Scene 1, there are a few differences. First, the describer will have to analyse whether there are any changes in the setting (local and/or global time) compared to the previous scene. If there are no changes, description of the temporal setting is not necessary and the audience will assume that nothing has changed. If the temporal setting did change and this change is clear to the sighted audience, the changed local and/or global time can be described, taking into account the level of explicitness of the temporal marker. If the change is not clear to the sighted viewers, then again, description is not necessary. As for Scene 1, the describer will also have to look at the temporal relations. With regard to the relation to the previous scene, he will have to determine whether the chronological order of events is disrupted and evaluate whether or not this has to be included in the description (is it clear to the sighted audience?; can it be derived from the other semiotic channels?). The same goes for the duration and the frequency of the scene, if applicable.

Although this model seems to cover all possibilities with regard to temporal setting and temporal orchestration in (visual) narratives in theory, a necessary next step will be to test it and see if it works in practice. The first limited tests with AD students seem to indicate that it does indeed help them in their content selection, but more research is definitely needed to confirm these first findings.

5. Conclusion

This article started from the observation that the question of content selection receives a lot of attention in current AD research. Existing guidelines do offer some basic help, but strategies with a solid theoretical underpinning that can be applied to all situations, are indispensable. When looking for possible candidates for this theoretical basis, narratology offers various advantages. It is studied both for visual and written narrative, respectively the source and target products of AD, and from a more author-centred and a more audience-centred perspective, which reflects the dual position the describer occupies. The elaboration of a strategy for one specific component of the narrative, i.e. time, seems to confirm that narratology can be a valuable aid for both AD practice and AD research. Many questions remain, however, opening up

various avenues for further research. Is the strategy developed here, applicable to all scenes? Is narratology equally useful for developing strategies for space and characters, the other basic constituents of the narrative? And can better insights into contextual frames help describers with the problem of content selection? One thing seems to be clear: the development of strategies that are widely applicable, and can be formulated in straightforward rules like the ones given above, will help beginning and more advanced describers create descriptions that are closer to the narrative the director initially wanted to tell.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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LYRICS *AGAINST* IMAGES: MUSIC AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION[1]

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Abstract

Music has been an integral part of films from as far back as the silent movie era, where a piano accompaniment was used to build the narrative and an orchestra was used to drown out the sound of the projector. Music in films can encompass a wide array of elements, from a song to a whistle, and can play many roles, as has been commented upon by many researchers. Due to the relevance of music in film narrative, it is an element which merits attention when it comes to making a film accessible, be it through Audio description, Audio subtitling, Sign Language or Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. This article focuses on Audio description (AD) and how music is handled in audio described films.

First of all, a brief review of existing AD guidelines will be presented in order to highlight the secondary role given to music insofar as these guidelines focus more on topics such as characters, locations, actions, credits, among others. This will be followed by an analysis of a corpus of audio described films, focusing on the treatment of songs with significant lyrics. Two different scenarios will be considered: on the one hand, films with song lyrics that can be understood by the audience because they share the same language and, on the other, English language films with song lyrics in a foreign language. Finally, this article proposes new approaches to the treatment of music in AD.

Resumen

La música ha sido una parte integral del cine desde la época del cine mudo, en el que se utilizaba un piano para construir la narración y se recurría a una orquesta para cubrir el sonido del proyector. Asimismo, puede abarcar un amplio abanico de elementos, desde una canción hasta un silbido, y puede desempeñar muchos papeles. Debido a la importancia de la música dentro de la narración fílmica, es un elemento que merece atención a la hora de hacer accesible una película, bien sea a través de la Audiodescripción, la Audiosubtitulación, el Lenguaje de Señas o la Subtitulación para Sordos. Este artículo se centra en la Audiodescripción (AD) y en cómo se trata la música en el cine audiodescrito.

En primer lugar, se presentará un breve repaso sobre las directrices de AD existentes con el fin de destacar el papel secundario que se ha dado a la música, dado que las directrices se centran más en asuntos como los personajes, las localizaciones, las acciones, los créditos, entre muchos otros. Más tarde, se presentará un análisis de un corpus de películas audiodescritas, centrándose en el tratamiento de las canciones con letras significativas. Así, se considerarán dos escenarios: por un lado, películas con canciones que la audiencia puede entender porque comparten la misma lengua y, por otro, películas en inglés con canciones en una lengua extranjera. Por último, este artículo propone nuevos acercamientos al tratamiento de la música en la AD.

1. Introduction

Within the existing AD guidelines developed by Spain, Belgium, UK, USA, and Australia up to May 2011 in relation to recorded AD of films, it is clear that film music is an aspect that has been largely neglected within AD studies. Until now, film music has been considered a secondary issue, unlike other elements such as characters, places, actions or credits.

One of the objectives of this article is to present an analysis of the existing guidelines and recommendations in this area. Once we have discussed how music is handled within existing AD guidelines, this article then outlines a comprehensive review of the various types and functions of music within film and concludes by giving some suggestions for AD that is more sympathetic to the use of music in films.

1.1. AD guidelines on Film Music

Although there are AD guidelines implemented in many EU countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Spain, and UK, to mention a few), their treatment of music is, for the most part, superficial – particularly so when considering that the types of music and their function in the film are so numerous and varied.

The aim of AD is to increase the understanding of films –in this case– by blind and visually-impaired people. Therefore, most of the AD guidelines consulted (ITC 2000; Benecke & Dosch 2004; AENOR 2005; Hörfilm 2005; Orero 2005; Remael 2005; Puigdomènech 2007; Vercauteren 2007; Puigdomènech, Matamala & Orero 2010; ADP 2009) say that the AD must not be used and/or introduced over dialogues, music or any other sound relevant for the comprehension of the film. In other words, the AD must be inserted during pauses or moments of silence. The reality is very different when one analyses actual examples of AD.

Among the AD guidelines dealing with film music, there are two main groups: those that mention music but do not give specific solutions and those that deal exclusively with certain types of music:

a) A commonly shared idea is that if music and other sounds do not represent an important function in terms of the tone or ambience of the film (ITC 2000, Hörfilm 2005, ADP 2009) or if they are not necessary to advance essential information to follow the plot (Benecke & Dosch 2004, Hörfilm 2005, Remael 2005, Puigdomènech 2007), there can be AD over them.

In this regard, while many guidelines and indeed individual researchers recognize the importance of music in the narrative and in the emotion conveyed by the material (ITC 2000, Remael 2005), the priority of AD is also acknowledged in specific circumstances.

b) The majority of AD guidelines discuss one or more types of film music. Most of them deal with songs –with or without lyrics–, open titles, end credits, and silence. Regarding the songs, many different recommendations can be found. Benecke (in a personal consultation and quoted in Puigdomènech, Matamala & Orero 2010: 10) recommends carrying out the AD leaving "some parts of the music or the song" to be heard and using "instrumental parts or some lines in between to describe what happens".

More specifically, ITC (2000: 24) states that the audience wants to listen to the songs without AD and suggests three different options: a) "to pre-empt a song with a brief description"; b) "judge carefully when to intervene and when to stay silent during a song, to cause least offence"; c) "The third option is to let the music play and say nothing at all". ITC also refers to children's programs (2000: 29), indicating that "describers should avoid speaking over songs where possible", but "if vital information needs to be conveyed, it should be fit in after the first verse or during repetitions in the song or during instrumental passages". In this regard, ADP (2009: 16) advises not to describe during the verse of a song or its first chorus and, more specifically, to have "caution in talking over a 'song played on the radio' because its recognition by the audience and/or the audience's hearing its content may be important to setting a mood, recalling an era, making an emotional statement, etc.". Ofcom (2006: 31), in turn, proposes to audio describe during songs "where there is a reprise of the lyrics and where the lyrics are not relevant to the storyline", while Media Access Australia (2010: 12) says "let the music and ambient sound tell the story too". Finally, ITC (2000: 22) proposes the enjoyment of the musical theme tune without any description over it.

1.2. *Points missing and objectives of study*

As it was mentioned in the previous section, there is not yet an AD guideline dealing with a comprehensive set of types of music and providing recommendations for the AD when music comes along. The importance of film music has been mentioned but never tackled adequately and the ADs analysed as part of this article do not adhere to any one complete set of guidelines when it comes to music.

After the review of the existing AD guidelines and the role given to music, the purpose of this article is, firstly, to conduct a brief bibliographical review of film music. Secondly, certain results of the analysis of a corpus of audio described films will be presented, focusing on the treatment of songs with significant lyrics. This corpus is made up of audio described films with song lyrics in the same language as the original version of the film and the language of the audience as well as audio described films that include song lyrics in a language that is foreign to the audience. In this regard, various examples will be provided to illustrate how AD affects the reception of lyrics and the advantages and disadvantages of the strategies chosen will be considered.

The corpus consists of 30 films released between 2001 and 2009. The films analysed were chosen because their ADs were carried out in the last 10 years, which assures an updated exercise and also because their soundtracks are mostly made up of songs with lyrics, some of them popular thanks to their commercial success as musical hits.

2. Film music

While a complete literature review of this field is beyond the scope of this article, it will be covered in brief in order to debunk the possible obsolete considerations of film music as a simple addition to the narrative or as a subordinated element to the image. In contrast in this article, film music will be presented as an autonomous element.

Several researchers and experts on film music from varied film studies schools (Cohen 1990, 1993, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005; Bolivar, Cohen & Fentress 1994; Chion 1997; Lack 1999; Smith 1999; Garwood 2003; Gorbman 2003, 2007; Wright 2003; Lipscomb & Tolchinsky 2004; Goldman, Kramer & Leppert 2007; Hoeckner 2007; Kocjančič 2008) discuss the relevance of, and the role played by, music in film from the beginning of cinema. Music is recognised as an integral part of the sound of a film and the soundtrack of a film is an essential element of the narrative. This study agrees with the statement of Goldman, Kramer and Leppert (2007: 3), when they point out that:

the music of a film follows a narrative track, like the events of a story, but it also tends to take on a life or identity of its own, like the discourse that frames the story. The discursive dimension of film music lies beyond the soundtrack.

Regarding music in general within film, most of the experts mentioned above tend to agree on the significance of music when it concerns the transfer of emotions and the building of the narrative, the identification of characters, times, places and themes, among many other issues. In fact, some directors and producers are so conscious of the value and importance of music that they select it before shooting the film, as is the case for Quentin Tarantino, Martin Scorsese and Zach Braff, to mention but three, as they have confirmed in interviews when promoting their works.

As regards the specifics of song selection, Kocjančič (2008: 17) points out that scenes are on occasion adapted to the duration of a song and are "impressive mostly because of the dynamic, rhythm or melody selected". In the same line, Gorbman (2007: 151) indicates that the audience now hears melodies and "song lyrics are perceived to add to, rather than detract from, audio viewing". In the last decades, it is common to have films with a complete soundtrack of radio hits, or different combinations of source music and score (Wright 2003).

As a result, people are used to hearing the music in films but also the same music in other contexts, increasing its range and importance. For these reasons, as well as those put forward in the following section, the absolute significance and value of film music must be considered.

3. Functions of music in films

The functions of film music are countless. Most of the literature consulted and this study agree on the following main functions summarised by Carey and Hannan (2003: 164), basing their arguments on previous works of Karlin and Wright (1990: 127-175) and Gorbman (1987: 11-30):

- to create a broad level of structural and stylistic unity, or musical "concept";
- to create a sense of period, location, or cultural background;
- to provoke a sense of epic grandeur;
- to accompany and support action, such as providing a musical emphasis to sound effects;
- to provide pacing, both in individual scenes and on a broader structural level;

- – to underscore dialogue;
- – to link scenes;
- – to emphasise or highlight movement, mood or humour;
- – to de-emphasise or contrast visual movement, mood or humour;
- – to show changes in moods and feelings, and accumulate emotional states;
- – to pre-empt the mood of an upcoming scene;
- – to play the thoughts of characters, rather than the actions;
- – to play an additional character, such as a ghost, or something imagined;
- – to provide a subtext: to inform the audience of events or circumstances of which the movie characters are unaware;
- – to flesh out the aural environment, contributing to a sense of spatial reality (diegetic music only);
- – to provide another level of rhythm to the rhythm of the editor's "cut";
- – and to follow the movement of the camera.

Outside of this classification, there are authors who stress the role of music as a signifier of emotion (Newcomb 1984, Smith 1999), while other scholars highlight its ability to evoke a season, a historical period, a cultural coding or even an ethnic flavour (Gorbman 2003, Wright 2003). This study also points out the significance of songs with lyrics and the use of pre-recorded music in films.

4. Classification of film music and the audience

Film music may be divided into two main groups: diegetic music –integrated music produced by people or devices that are part of the film's space– and nondiegetic music –background music produced outside the film's space. This study focuses on songs with lyrics that can be established as diegetic as well as nondiegetic music. It also incorporates songs that may be played diegetically at one point in the movie but at a later point may be played non-diegetically and vice versa. As part of the whole study, background music, the relevance of silence, musicals and sung music were taken into account and analysed, but they deserve detailed study in their own right.

In the present study, particular importance was given to the relevance of the songs and their function within the films (Lack 1999, Anderson 2003, Carey & Hannan 2003, Dickinson 2003, Grossberg 2003, Reay 2004). One issue to take into account is whether among the audience of a film, there are listeners who are not familiar with the music and listeners who are. In relation to the AD, the describer has to assume both situations. Goodson (2001)

says that there is also the possibility that the audience may miss the song lyrics, but that they may be familiar with them to some extent. Assuming the audience does hear the lyrics, experts such as Gorbman (2003) analyse the particular reading of lyrics within the film, and experts such as Wright (2003) study the use of well known, recognisable pop songs and outline how these songs can carry their own sets of "emotional baggage" in terms of the feelings and associations they evoke. In short, these researchers point out how lyrics draw attention to music.

Frequently, song lyrics have a meaning within the narrative of a film. According to Anderson (2003: 105), songs work, "providing setting information, functioning as source scoring, explaining characters' thoughts and moods, providing commentary on the narrative, and maintaining continuity between story-lines". Grossberg (2003) points out that the memory of a song is always partly visual as well as auditory.

Films can also use songs with lyrics as a substitute for dialogue. They can "play" in a scene's beginning, stopping for the key action, and be played again at its end (Anderson 2003); even the act of repeating the song serves as an association with certain ideas, characters or feelings, etc.

5. What can be done in AD when music with lyrics is heard?

After having taken into consideration the existing AD guidelines about film music and film music studies and having shown the need and interest for research that focuses on the AD for film music, this article now presents an analysis of music from selected films. After each analysis, certain strategies or approaches for an alternative AD will be proffered.

One general point to note when analysing the effectiveness of AD for film is the importance of the actual moment or scene in the film where the song starts playing. Indeed as every song has a certain structure with its chorus and verses, and is based on rhythm and tones that determine the melody of the song, decisions made in this regard have a potentially significant impact on the effect of the song and lyrics.

5.1. Songs with lyrics in the same language as the film

This section deals with films whose original version is in English, the AD is in English and the lyrics are also in English. All the songs analysed below are songs that can be heard clearly, with the exception of those songs that, even when they belong to the diegetic music, cannot be understood by the

audience because there is dialogue spoken over them or their function is as background music in a given scene.

a) *Garden State* (Braff 2004)

As it was previously pointed out, Braff is one of the directors who choose the songs for the film soundtrack before even starting to shoot the film. Therefore, the role played by music is especially relevant here. In this film there are 13 songs, only one of which is completely covered[2] by the AD –"Lebanese Blonde" by Thievery Corporation. In this case, both the lyrics and the melody of the song could be considered as relevant to the film narrative as, for example, the slow-motion images.

In most instances where songs are played in this film, the AD allows the audience to hear the chorus –or part of it– as is the case with the first song of the film, "Don't panic" by Coldplay. This could be interpreted as an ironic commentary relating to that scene in the film and the lyric "we live in a beautiful world" can be clearly heard and is particularly evocative in this regard. Later on in the film three lines from "In the waiting line" by *Zero* 7 are heard, which could be interpreted as a clear expression of the physical and emotional state of the main character.

Most of the songs in this film are played during scenes where specific action takes place, making life "difficult" for the AD. For most of the songs –7 out of 10– the space allowed by the AD, i.e. that part of the song that is not over played by the AD, does not correspond to the chorus, instead the audible part of the song is a random line located somewhere in the middle of a verse.

A very thematically significant moment occurs when the main character meets a girl in the waiting room of a hospital. She passes him a pair of headphones saying: "You got to hear this one song. It'll change your life, I swear". The audience can hear the first verse of "New Slang" by The Shins: "Gold teeth and a curse for this town / were all in my mouth / Only, I don't know how". Four minutes later, the song continues with its third verse but the AD fills the entire space. The lyrics are about leaving one's home town, job, relationship and life, which exactly coincides with the main character's situation at that moment.

Finally, the two most dramatic and cathartic moments of the film are accompanied by "The only living boy in New York" by Simon & Garfunkel and "Let go" by Frou Frou. In the case of the first song, which could be interpreted

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2. *Covered* in this context means that the AD plays on top of the song thereby making the song and its lyrics inaudible to the audience.

as an expression of the characters' feelings, the audience cannot hear any lyrics until the end of the song when it is possible to hear: "Hey let your honesty shine, shine, shine / like it shines on me". The second moment comes along at the conclusion of the story: "So, let go / Jump in / Well, what you waiting for? / It's all right / 'cause there's beauty in the breakdown". The audience cannot hear the lyrics not because there is dialogue, but because there is AD playing over all of the song. If the AD had left some space for the songs to be heard, the audience would not have missed out on any action's description, because at that moment the main characters and the action were actually paused.

b) *A Lot Like Love* (Cole 2005)

This film has, at least, 12 songs with lyrics that can be clearly heard by the audience. Some of them have excerpts of dialogues intercut, but most of them are played completely. There are three songs which are completely covered by the AD and where the audience is unable to make out a single word. One such example is at the beginning of the film, when the song "Semi-charmed" by Third Eye Blind is played in its entirety for four minutes. The lyrics are about a goodbye between a man and a woman, exactly reflecting what is happening in the film. Listening to the music could in this circumstance have aided the audience's understanding of the moment. Ten minutes later, the same happens with the song "Walkin' on the sun" by Smash Mouth. The lyrics talk about courage, tomorrow, and the need to act now in order to have a better future. Every line in the song lyrics could be linked to the plot of the film, but due to the AD, it is not possible to hear them. The same goes for "Know nothing" by Travis. In this case, the audience cannot hear the lyrics partly because there are overlapping parts of dialogues, but mostly because of the AD. There could however have been space for both AD and lyrics, as the action, at that point of the film, is minimal.

There are other songs that are partially covered by dialogue where the lyrics are related to the conversation the characters are having at that moment. More importantly, these lyrics have a meaning in relation to the storyline, as is the case with "Save tonight" by Eagle-Eye Cherry, a song about enjoying the moment because there may be no tomorrow. The same goes for "Mint car" by The Cure. This song mixes lyrics on happiness and good feelings together with a lively melody; and in a very sad moment in the film, "Hands of time", by Groove Armada, is played. Finally, in a highly romantic scene, when Aqualung sings "Brighter than sunshine", a song whose lyrics refer to deep feelings and emotions, the AD only allows the audience to hear a couple of sentences,

ruining the atmosphere of the moment. This last song is also important because it is played again at the end of the film with the end credits.

Sometimes the AD gives space to the lyrics. When "Look what you've done" by *Jet* is played, the first verse can be heard by the audience: "Take my photo off the wall / if it just won't sing for you/ 'cause all that's left has gone away / and there's nothing there for you to prove". This is a great example of what was mentioned before: sometimes songs speak for the characters.

c) *Must Love Dogs* (Goldberg 2006)

In this film there are no songs that can be completely heard in an undisturbed manner as all of them are covered by AD to some degree and some are also covered by the dialogue. All the song lyrics have a connection to the plot of the film. There are 11 songs, but the audience can only hear, for example, a few sentences of the first verse from "When will I be loved" by Linda Ronstadt ("I've been cheated / been mistreated"), which exactly captures the emotional state of the woman and also introduces what will happen in the next scenes. From "Hey there lonely girl" by Eddie Holman only the chorus can be heard ("Hey, there, the lonely girl"), and the same goes for "The first cut is the deepest" by Sheryl Crow.

d) *Goal II: Living the Dream* (Collet-Serra 2007)

With 13 songs, the AD strategy followed in this film ensures that there are moments when it is not possible to hear the song lyrics or indeed any of the music at all due to the intrusion of AD as well as moments where the AD abates and the lyrics can be clearly heard and understood by the audience. The first song in the film played in its entirety lasts over two minutes ("Bright idea" by Orson), but no lyrics can be heard. The song talks about being nervous because of fame, which, again, is a commentary on the emotions the main character is experiencing. The same happens later with "Letting the cables sleep" from Bush, reflecting the difficult emotional state of the character ("Never seem to get in the place that I belong [...] / Silence is not the way [...] I'm a stranger in this town"). There are other songs which help locate the action, such as "Turning Japanese" by The Vapors when the football team goes to Japan and others that speak for the characters or special situations, such as "Feeling the moment" by Feeder.

In one very dramatic moment of the film, the AD gives a great deal of space to the music and its lyrics, as they are both meaningful to the plot and expressive of the feelings of both characters on screen. At one point the

audience can hear "I'm here without you baby / but you're still on my lonely mind / I think about you baby / and I dream about you all the time / I'm here without you baby / but you're still with me in my dreams / And tonight girl, there's only you and me" ("Here without you" by 3 Doors Down). Something similar happens with "Friday-Friday" by Boy Kill Boy.

e) *Stomp the yard* (White 2007)

This example is complicated in relation to the function of AD as most of the time the characters are dancing –and stepping. There are 15 songs with lyrics, some of them repeated during the film, but the AD covers all of them. Mostly they are hip-hop songs characterised by having strong rhymes, specific "street" references, complex lyrical combinations and longer than usual verses. There are only three songs where the audience can actually hear part of the chorus: in each case the line that can be heard coincides with the song's title, as in the case of "Go hard or go home" by E-40 and "Walk it out" by Unk. In the case of "Let's go (dirty)" by Trick Daddy, two lines of one verse can be heard.

f) *What Happens in Vegas* (Vaughan 2008)

There are at least 17 songs within the soundtrack of this film. 8 of them are completely covered by AD. One such example occurs at the beginning of the film. "Grace Kelly" by Mika is played over a three minute section. Its lyrics are about not being liked, which could be interpreted as having a direct link to the theme and future content of film. The same happens again with "I want a new drug" by Greenspeekers, "Hit me with your best shot" by Pat Benatar, "Get down on it" by Kool & The Gang's, "It's alright" by Asa Semple, and "Save the best for the last" by Vanessa Williams.

There are other examples of songs covered completely by AD where the role of the music is possibly to inject irony or humour. After the two main characters experience some "relationship issues" and end up hating each other, "Love" by Matt White is played, giving an ironic connotation to the scene, with such lyrics as "I just want it to be loved" when the characters clearly want the opposite. Sometimes rhythm and melody are as important as the ironic lyrics, as is the case when the song "Are you gonna be my girl" by Jet is played. Other examples of humorous lyrics are "I hate you (My friend)" by John Oszajca's.

Some of the songs are partially covered by dialogues. In addition some of the songs in question have been chart hits and as such can be regarded as

hugely popular songs and widely recognisable due to their past commercial success, as is the case with "We are the champions" by Queen. In this example the AD leaves space at least for the chorus to be heard, as it does in "What a Feeling" by Irene Cara, a well-known song thanks to the success of the film *Flashdance* (Adrian Lyne 1983).

It is important to quantify the extent to which song lyrics are being subordinated by the AD. In the following table the percentages of AD's coverage are presented. Column one shows the total number of songs with lyrics that were analysed; column two shows the percentage of songs with lyrics where the entire space taken up by the song –including music– is covered by the AD; column three shows the percentage of songs with lyrics covered by a combination of AD and dialogue; column four shows the percentage of songs where the AD and dialogue allow some space; and column five shows the percentage of songs where the audience can hear only two lines or less of the song lyrics.

Total number of songs with lyrics analysed	% of songs with lyrics covered completely by AD	% of songs with lyrics covered completely by a combination of AD and dialogue	% of songs with lyrics where there is a lot of space for the melody and/ or lyrics		% of songs with lyrics where only 2 lines or less of the song are not covered
293	28%	33%	39%		21%

Table 1. Space for music: lyrics in English

It should be noted that while it has been identified that in 39% of songs (with lyrics) the AD leaves space for music, the figure of 21% represents the percentage of songs in which the AD leaves space for 2 lines or less of the lyrics of the song.

The examples outlined above are a small illustration of the relevance of songs with lyrics within a film. The question here is, are AD and the enjoyment of songs in film mutually exclusive? Why can the audience not receive appropriate levels of AD and still be able to hear the important song lyrics, when the verses and chorus have so much to say? The AD should allow the audience to enjoy the music and to understand the lyrics. If they are not able to, they may miss part of the film's message as lyrics are, without question, relevant to the full understanding of a film. It is therefore important for AD to take into account which elements need to be prioritised. Therefore, space for this kind of music should be allowed, not just in children's programs or films, but in all types of films.

5.2. Songs with lyrics in a foreign language

There are many films in English that include music in other languages in their soundtrack. This decision can be arbitrary or can have a clear objective. Foreign music is frequently used to create a sense of location, cultural coding; it can also provide a subtext. This section analyses some examples in Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Russian, Hungarian, French and Portuguese in order to explore the possible reasons behind their inclusion in films.

a) *Closer* (Nichols 2004)

This film has three song examples in Portuguese by Bebel Gilberto: "Samba da bencão [Samba of the blessing]", "Tanto tempo [So much time]" and "Mais feliz [Happier]". The three songs are played when the main characters, Alice and Larry, are in a photo exhibition. There is some dialogue over the songs, and also parts where nothing can be heard besides the AD. It is possible that the lyrics could have a direct relation with the feelings and emotional status of both characters.

b) *Garden State* (Braff 2004)

In the beginning of the film, the main character is on a plane and there is a lot of turbulence. Shown in slow motion, the scene illustrates a chaotic moment where all the passengers, apart from the emotionless main character, are screaming, crying, and are generally speaking, terrified. One woman is singing a Hindi religious song. It could be related to the emotional state of the character, or serve to counteract the stress of the moment in question. It is the only song in the whole film in a language other than English.

c) *Everything is Illuminated* (Schreiber 2005)

Although the main character comes from the US, the film takes place mainly in the Ukraine. Apart from the background music composed by Paul Cantelon, the audience are presented with music in a variety of different languages, principally in Russian and Hungarian, such as "Zvezda Rok-n-rolla [Rock n' roll star]" and "Dikiy Muzhchina [Wild man]" by Leningrad, both ska-punk songs. These songs are made up of vulgar lyrics containing what is called "Russian mat", a form of Russian underground slang full of vocabulary of obscenity used in Russian and other Slavic language communities and censored in the media (Erofeyev 2003). All these songs are covered by the AD. Only the first and last verses of the song "Amari Szi Amari [She is ours]" by Csokolom

can be heard, but not all of the melody, which normally serves to underpin the action and create a sense of location and cultural background. It may be argued that this is an indispensable part of the director's message.

d) *Goal!* (Cannon 2005)

This film also has an example, at the beginning, when "Sin ella [Without her]" by Gypsy Kings is played and where the AD covers almost everything apart from the chorus "Cómo podrías tú vivir sin ella" [How could you live without her].

e) *A Good Year* (Scott 2006)

This is a special case as the film starts in London but then moves to France and half of the soundtrack –13 songs out of 26– are in French. In general, the lyrics of the songs locate the action in one country or the other but also on occasion serve a secondary function, such as making fun of the character. A good example is when the main character flies from England to France and then, while driving a mini-car, "Moi... Lolita [Me... Lolita]" by Alizee can be heard on the radio. Although the lyrics of this song are not in direct relation to the plot, the audience could be expected to recognise it as this song was popular in 2001: "C'est pas ma faute / et quand je donne ma langue aux chats / Je vois les autres / Tous prêts à se jeter sur moi (...) Si j'entends tout autour de moi" [It's not my mistake / and if I want to quit / I see the others / All ready to throw themselves upon me (...) If I hear everything around me]. Almost invariably in this film, the AD does not allow any space for the audience to hear the lyrics, even when there is no dialogue over them.

f) *Goal II: Living the Dream* (Collet-Serra 2007)

There is a moment in the film where "La camisa negra" [The black shirt] by Juanes is played. Apart from being a popular song, at least for the Spanish-speaking audience, it can also be related to the feeling the boy has about his brother and his family situation at that moment. The AD covers a lot, but at least it leaves space for part of the chorus: "hoy tengo en el alma una pena / y es por culpa de tu embrujo / que tengo la camisa negra / y una pena que me duele" [Today my soul is in pain / and it's because you have bewitched me / I have the black shirt / and a sorrow that is hurting me].

Later "Cógelo" [Take it] by Muchachito Bombo Infierno is played but in this case the audience can only hear the lyric "cógelo", which is part of the chorus. These lyrics could be deemed as an expression of the feelings of the

character but they also provide wordplay with football, the main topic of the film.

g) *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle & Tandan 2008)

Many songs in this film are in Hindi. The first example the audience can hear is "O… Saya" by A.R. Rahman and Maya Arulpragasam, having its chorus in Hindi, but its verses in English. In the case of "Ringa Ringa" by Alka Yagnik & Ila Arun, everything is in Hindi. The song talks about how much the main character described in the lyrics has suffered because a man has taken advantage of her.

In the end of the film, "Jai Ho" by Sukhwinder Singh, Tanvi Shah and Vijay Prakash is unusual, as its lyrics are in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Spanish. The lyrics talk about having lost the faith in the past regarding his/her love.

As in the previous section, a table of data is presented in order to understand the impact of AD on foreign language songs and in particular the percentages of songs when the AD covers the whole song, the percentage of songs when AD and dialogues cover them, and the percentage of songs when the audience can hear the lyrics and music. 12 out of 30 films analysed in the corpus have songs with lyrics in a language other than English.

Total number of songs with lyrics analysed	% of songs with lyrics covered completely by AD	% of songs with lyrics covered completely by a combination of AD and dialogue	% of songs with lyrics where there is a lot of space for the melody and/or lyrics		% of songs with lyrics where only 2 lines or less of the song are not covered
38	31.5%	36.8%	34.2%		15.7%

Table 2. Space for music: lyrics in a foreign language.

As before, it should be noted that while 34.2% of songs have space for the lyrics and melody, in 15.7% of songs only 2 lines or less of lyrics can be heard.

Ultimately, the AD scriptwriter should consider the diversity of the target audience. In today's multicultural society there are many people who understand these foreign songs with lyrics, as well as people who may not. In both cases, the music plays a particular role here. For those who understand the lyrics, it could be the same situation as in the previous section (cf. section 5.1.) in terms of the specific significance of those lyrics. For those who do not understand the lyrics, the music can have an even more interesting effect

here, since it can emphasise the curiousness, the location, the cultural background, and the foreignness of the people, among many other characteristics. Therefore: what happens if the audience listening to the film can understand the original version or what happens if they do not understand the lyrics, but they want to enjoy the original soundtrack?

Regarding the popular songs that were referenced, it is worth mentioning that the basic structure of a pop song could provide the key to the decision regarding how to audio describe the scene. It was observed that most of the ADs started in the middle of a verse and/or chorus. Taking into account that almost all these songs have verses and a chorus that is repeated, in order for the audience to better understand the general meaning and content of the song, it would be advisable to avoid "interruptions" and to try to, at least, let start and/or finish a verse and/or the chorus. In fact, there would be a clear benefit to the audience if the AD were to take into account the timing and rhythm of the song. From the audience's point of view, this would be less confusing and more pleasant than only picking up certain snippets of lyrics at random points in a song.

6. Conclusions

Although, according to Remael (2009: 2), the first task for AD scriptwriters is "to identify the gaps", they should also consider if these gaps are filled by music, among other elements. As it was mentioned before, some guidelines suggest that, if necessary, AD should go over dialogues and other sounds of the original soundtrack. But occasionally, the question should be is the AD actually more important than the original work with its dialogues, sounds and silences?

There are many sounds that cannot be identified by the audience without the aid of AD. However, in the case of music, and especially songs with lyrics, the support of the AD is not always required, and music in its own right also needs time and space to express and fulfil its function within the film. AD usually takes into account the source, but it should focus more on the function of songs rather than where music comes from (radio, television, etc.). In any case, AD does not describe the music, but the action taking place in the scene. The consideration as to what is more important –describing the action or letting the music be heard is a rather subjective one that ideally should involve the director. This article has analysed a number of scenes where action, music and AD could have interacted better.

As previously defined, film is a "form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous

movement" (Princeton University Wordnet, 2011). Consequently, AD should pay as much attention to the sound as it does to the image. None of these elements can be underestimated as they can carry equal weight within the film.

The conclusion of this study is not to suggest the removal of AD nor indeed downplay its role. The idea proposed here is that in order for the audience to enjoy the film, they should be able to understand it in its entirety. The role of AD, thus, should be to enable the audience to build its own perception of the film, but guided by what the director had in mind, and thereby form their own, fully informed interpretation. AD should help the audience in this regard and act as a form of support mechanism; however, it must recognise when to allow the sound to also be a principal character in the film.

It is neither the aim of this study to suggest the negative value of AD in terms of music conveyance in films, nor to consider AD as a handicap with respect to the original version. This study acknowledges both the interpretative and heterogeneous processes of AD, as well as the convergence and co-existence processes taking place within the filmic product. Nevertheless, this study brings into consideration the role of music in films and how it has been partly neglected until recent times.

In the future, other aspects and types of music such as background music, musicals, leitmotivs, songs sung by characters, popular music, among others, should be considered regarding AD.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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FOR THE USE OF SOUND. FILM SOUND ANALYSIS FOR AUDIO-DESCRIPTION: SOME KEY ISSUES[1]

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Abstract

This article aims to outline the issues involved in the production and reception of film sound with a view to identifying its challenges for audio-description (AD). It thereby hopes to provide insights into the way in which a careful analysis and integration of film sound and sound effects are required for the production of coherence in AD, if it is to function as part of a new filmic text. However, the article also points to the limits of analysis and interpretation, and to the need for reception research as well as collaboration with visually impaired users. A detailed analysis of a scene from *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1998), a film that won an Oscar for best sound effect editing, demonstrates how complex and narratively charged the soundscape of a film can be, thereby exposing the challenges for the audio-describer and, again, demonstrating the need for further research involving the target audience.

Résumé

Cet article concerne la production et la réception de la bande sonore et cherche à dégager quelques défis dans le domaine de l'audiodescription (AD). Il vise à démontrer comment une analyse et une intégration minutieuses de la bande et des effets sonores peuvent contribuer à la cohérence dans l'AD qui doit les incorporer pour créer une nouvelle version cinématographique. Il convient cependant également de souligner les limites de telles analyses et explications. Une étude de la réception ainsi que l'apport de malvoyants viendront avantageusement compléter les méthodes proposées.

Une analyse détaillée d'une scène de *Il faut sauver le soldat Ryan* (*Saving Private Ryan*, Spielberg 1998), qui a obtenu l'Oscar du meilleur mixage, mettra en évidence la complexité et l'importance narrative du paysage sonore d'un film et dégagera les défis des audiodescripteurs et la nécessité de recherches ultérieures prenant en compte le public cible.

1. Introduction

Film is an audiovisual medium that combines complex interactive systems of visual and aural signs to communicate a message, to tell a story. In the case of fiction film, the main concern of this article, viewers construct a narrative on the basis of the visual and aural clues that a given film puts at their disposal. However, since all viewers draw on their own backgrounds (as people, film viewers, members of different social groups and cultures etc.) they all see a slightly or considerably different film. In this respect, the experience of visually impaired audiences, which are as diverse as sighted audiences, is quite similar: they construct a personal variant of the film they are 'watching', a variant that will differ from but also be comparable to the versions experienced by other people with a visual impairment, and by sighted audiences.[2]

In view of this, cognitive mental modelling approaches to meaning construction offer a useful theoretical framework for understanding how film viewing works, i.e., how the members of a cinema audience construct a story (e.g., Branigan 1992) and how audio-description (AD) can help a blind audience construct a comparable story (e.g., Braun 2007). Building on this premise, it would seem that some of the core issues that the writers of AD scripts must resolve and that, indeed, feature prominently in all existing AD guidelines (Vercauteren 2007) are: determining which cues the film offers, when and how, and, which ones are not accessible to the AD audience.

It is the combination of the active participation required by film viewing and the combined 'audio'-'visual' nature of film that makes AD possible. By identifying the crucial strands of meaning that remain accessible and by filling in the gaps, AD creates a new meaningful story that allows its own varied audience to understand and enjoy the film, and remains close enough to the versions that sighted audiences construct. It is, indeed, important for the visually impaired audience to also benefit from the social functions of AD

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2. I am well aware that the target audience of AD is very diverse and comprises blind people as well as people who suffer from different forms and degrees of visual impairment. In what follows, the term visually impaired (audience) will be used to refer to the entire group of blind and partially sighted people.

(e.g., providing points of convergence between the worlds of sighted and non-sighted people). Given the above, the first question AD scriptwriters must tackle is: where are the gaps? And this almost automatically leads them to focus on visually conveyed information. Definitions of AD usually run along the following lines,

> [A]udio description (AD) is a precise and succinct aural translation of the visual aspects of a live or filmed performance, exhibition or sporting event for the benefit of visually impaired people (Hyks 2005: 6).

In addition, AD guidelines emphasise that

> Descriptions are usually delivered during pauses or quiet moments. It is permissible to let pauses or quiet moments pass without a description. Conversely, since it is more important to make a production understandable than to preserve every detail of the original soundtrack, it is permissible to describe over dialogue and other audio when necessary (http://www.skillsforaccess.org.uk/howto.php?id=104).

At first sight, it seems logical that AD should focus on rendering visual information accessible and that this type of information should be given priority over elements of the sound track. However, AD-guidelines may be suffering from a bias that film studies is in the process of shedding, namely that film is a visual medium, aided by sound (section 2). The present article therefore aims to sketch the issues involved in the production and reception of film sound with a view to highlighting its importance and identifying some of its challenges for audio-description. It also shows (section 6.3) the difficulties involved in trying to identify where the limits lie of what can be reconstructed by a visually impaired audience on the basis of sound, and what cannot, with an analysis of a particularly complex scene in terms of sound design from *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1998).

2. Sound and vision – functional and material complexities

Few would be as radical as sound designer Randy Thom and state: "My opinion is that film is definitely not a visual medium" (1999: 4), but in film studies and practice alike the contribution of sound to film and its interaction with the medium's other sign systems, is being taken very seriously today (Jordan 2007, Barsam 2007: 273-314). The addition of sound is no longer considered to be an afterthought in film production, indeed, its role in cinematic meaning construction continues to grow, sound is considered to be integral to understanding the images or, in other words, sound shapes the picture sometimes as much as the picture shapes sound (Thom 1999: 1).

This is also why Chion (1990: 61) writes: "il n'y a pas de bande son" (the sound track does not exist). Moreover, sound technology is possibly the fastest-evolving domain within cinematography today and this too is affecting the way sound functions in film, as well as the way in which the entire filmic sign system addresses the audience. As Thom writes:

> It is even a little misleading to say 'a role sound plays' because in fact when a scene is really clicking, the visual and aural elements are working together so well that it is nearly impossible to distinguish them. (1999: 4)

Both film scholars and technicians specializing in sound therefore have their work cut out for them, analysing, improving and controlling the complex narrative functioning of sound, as well as the influence of material factors on its production. Altman (1992) stresses that (sound) events that are thought of as a single sound (e.g., a violin playing), are not singular at all. Distinguishing 'sound' and 'sound event', he points out that the production of any sound is a material occurrence that takes place in space and time, and involves the disruption of surrounding matter. Consequently, every sound event is composed of more than one sound, indeed, it

> includes multiple sounds, each with its particular fundamental array of partials, each with its characteristic sound envelope, each possessing its own rhythm within the sound event's overall temporal range. (Altman 1992: 19)

What is more, for a sound to function, it must be heard and

> By offering itself up to be heard, every sound event loses its autonomy, surrendering the power and meaning of its own structure to the various contexts in which it might be heard. (Altman 1992: 19)

As Altman points out, the concept of a sound 'event' introduces both a temporal dimension and spatial factors into the production and perception of sound. A sound will be different when heard from a distance or from another room, but as listeners we disregard certain aspects of sound events, while allowing others to play in our interpretation of what we hear. Using a term coined by Metz, Altman (ibid.) writes that the sound will be different but the "name of the sound" will be the same (it still is the neighbour's lawnmower that we are hearing, for instance) However, we may need visual or contextual information to figure this out.

All these aspects of sound are used in film, but also pose complex challenges for film production, and – one might add – film reception for a visually impaired audience. Today, film sound is 'constructed' during the post-production phase of filming as much or more than it is 'recorded' during production (Barsam 2007: 275). In Altman's terms (1992: 29), what recorded sound does is to

represent(s) sound events rather than to reproduce them, recorded sound creates an illusion of presence while constituting a new version of the sound events that actually transpired.

To return to AD, and considering its 'material' side, i.e., that of its representational quality, it would seem that, again, current AD practice underestimates the importance of sound, more specifically, the importance of quality recording. Blind test audiences regularly complain about the intelligibility of AD on DVD's.[3] The problems they encounter in understanding the AD are related to the loudness and complexity of the aural channel of some films (cf. the increased prominence of sound in film discussed above), but also the poor mixing of AD into the sound track. In fact, a Dutch study into AD recording practices in the U.K., the European AD market leader (van der Heijden 2007), showed that these sometimes leave much to be desired. Having observed recording practices at ITFC and RedBee, van der Heijden concludes that the audio-describers often record their own text, but have little or no knowledge of sound and recording techniques. Men and women with very different voice qualities therefore tend to use the standard set-up of the recording equipment provided by the scripting software, whereas the equipment does allow users to adapt it. This can obviously result in poor recording quality (van der Heijden 2007: 17), and insufficient control over the undesirable 'material' sides of sound production. All the same, blind people are always expected to make the most of what they hear.

3. Hearing and interpreting sound events, listening to a film

An informative Flemish booklet, published by a local blind association and meant to promote understanding of blindness, states that

> In their daily lives, people with a visual handicap use all their senses in their relations with the world. They can hear it when a car drives alongside the pavement, when it stops at a traffic light or when it is far away. By means of a subtle form of echolocation they hear the difference between covered and open spaces. (*Infomap Volwassenen* 2007: 38, my translation)

It is generally accepted that blind people do not necessarily have better hearing than sighted people, but that they have developed and trained their hearing in order to compensate for their lack of access to visual information. They are supposedly better at determining the place of origin and source of sounds,

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3. This also happened during the discussion following my talk on film sound at the symposium "Audio-description for visually impaired people", held at the University of Surrey at Guildford on 28-29 June 2007.

the distance of the source, the influence of material factors of a sound (revealing information about the environment) and even determining personality on the basis of a person's voice (van der Heijden 2007: 10). On the other hand, Seiffert (2005: 67) starts her article on "Räumliches horen", i.e. the way sound can convey information about the space in which it is produced, with a quote (taken from Hull 1992) rendering the way one blind person makes sense of his/her environment, showing the limits of aural compensation. The author claims that only actions produce sounds, whereas static environments do not (and must therefore be included in AD). This, however, is only partially true since some information about a room can be derived indirectly from the way sound (events) produced by a given source reverberate in space (cf. the concept of 'echolocation' above). On the other hand, the degree of recognition achieved will remain limited and will be conditioned by the functioning of the sound effects in the case of film (cf. *infra*). What is more, how and to what extent blind people can identify and interpret sounds will also be determined by personal factors that will vary from one listener to the next. In short, we can assume, basing ourselves on accepted opinion and the varying testimonies of blind people, that their hearing is developed through training, but that the extent to which it is heightened is difficult to ascertain, especially in general terms. (*Infomap Volwassenen* 2007)

The lessons to be learnt for film viewing and AD are therefore far from straightforward. They are determined by the complexities of sound production and reception generally, by what the specific target audience can or cannot handle, and by the way film uses sound. In brief, it is important for film sound to be fully available for the blind audience and for the interaction between aural and visual film narration to be enhanced, exploited to the full. However, which sounds the audience will or will not be able to distinguish and interpret cannot always be taken for granted because of the various production and reception issues, mentioned above, but also because film sound is a narratively motivated representation that merely poses as realistic sound and that is 'realistic' only within the context of some film genres.

4. Film sound and film narrative

The realization that film sound is anything but reproductive and has surpassed the era of indexicality, i.e., that there is not a straightforward relationship between a given film sound and a sound that exists in a pre-production environment, is central to understanding how film sound functions. Consequently, it is also central to understanding how this functioning can contribute to improving its integration into AD. On the one hand, a blind person

may be trained in identifying sounds and therefore should be given the opportunity to put this skill to good use when watching a film; on the other hand, not necessarily being realistic, film sounds can be difficult to place for an audience without access to the images they complement. Finally, locating the source of a sound does not guarantee access to the function the sound fulfils in the narrative.

Recent research has shown that it is a fallacy to believe that AD can recreate 'a' film, that it can be objective, and that it suffices for describers to "describe what they see" (see Díaz-Cintas *et al*. 2007, Fix 2005, Jiménez Hurtado 2007, Remael & Neves 2007). AD should allow its blind audience to understand and enjoy films, while offering them inroads into the visual world around them – which implies that when they have 'watched' a film, their interpretation and appreciation of the movie should be within the sighted audience's range of interpretation and appreciation (cf. above). The film signs from which the experience is constructed cannot and need not function in the same way for both audiences.

When considering film sound and visuals from this perspective, they can be handled quite creatively by the describer. If the "referent of Hollywood sound is not the pro-filmic scene at all, but a narrative constructed as it were 'behind' that scene […]" (Altman 1992: 59), this means that its functioning varies with each production (and scene), but is also determined by genre. When a film leans towards the poetic rather than the narrative, for instance, both its visual and aural signs will function quite differently. Moreover, sound can both complement and detract from the visuals on screen, meaning it is up to the describer to determine its function, relevance and usefulness for the (re)creation of a film story in each particular instance.

Some of the main tasks that the sound track can take on are (Thom 1992: 9):

- – suggest a mood, evoke a feeling
- – set a pace
- – indicate a geographical locale
- – indicate a historical period
- – clarify the plot
- – define character
- – connect otherwise unconnected ideas, characters, places, images, or moments
- – heighten realism or diminish it
- – heighten ambiguity or diminish it

–   draw attention to detail, or away from it
–   indicate changes in time
–   smooth otherwise abrupt changes between shots or scenes
–   emphasize a transition for dramatic effect
–   describe an acoustic space
–   startle or soothe
–   exaggerate action or mediate it

Moreover, Thom writes (ibid.), sound is likely to be doing several of these things at once. Still, the sound track consists of music, dialogue, and sound effects, each of which have their own features and 'specialties', so to speak. The subsequent sections of this article will focus on some of the peculiarities of sound effects and the challenges they may present for AD.

5. Sound effects within the bigger picture

One dictionary definition of 'sound effect' reads: "a sound other than speech or music made artificially for use in a play, film, or other broadcast production" (New Oxford Dictionary 1998). The crucial words in this definition, from the point of view of AD, are "made artificially". The extent to which the artificial source of the sound will turn out to be problematic for a blind audience – or not – is of course directly linked to how this source is embedded in the filmic sign system as a whole.

Turner (2005) distinguishes three different types of effects: impact, Foley and ambience effects. Impact effects are created either for a diegetic inanimate object that has no aural identification in the 'real' world, or for an object that needs emotive impact within the diegesis (e.g., car tyres screeching). Foley effects, named after pioneer Jack Foley, involve artists who synchronize the actions of a character projected on a screen and record the relevant sound in a 'sound pit', which usually has ground platforms of different materials (e.g., footsteps, opening and closing of doors). Ambience effects aim to recreate the sound of specific locations (e.g., the echo of a cave, but also the roar of a crowd in a stadium).

Since even sounds generated to increase realism, are usually created artificially, this raises questions about how recognizable they are independently of the images. Moreover, the distinction between sound effects and music, for instance, is often blurred, which supposedly places an even heavier burden on the capacities of blind audiences to interpret what they hear. Classic examples of such mixing of sound types occur in Hitchcock classics such as *The Birds* (1963) in which avian noises imitate the functions of music, or *Psycho* (1960)

in which music (screeching violins) imitates both birds and the screams of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), as she is assassinated in the shower. An added difficulty may be the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic noises (or sound effects). The source(s) of the latter may be less easily identifiable and may require more support from the AD) (see 6.3).

Film narration will usually come to the rescue as long as a diegetic noise can be associated with a source, i.e., with an action on or off screen, and on condition that there is time for this action to be described. What must then be restored is what Chion (1990: 55) calls "la synchrèse":

> …la soudure irresistible et spontanée qui se produit entre un phenomène sonore et un phenomène visuel ponctuel lorsque ceux-ci tombent en même temps, cela indépendamment de toute logique rationelle.[4]

What is more, even if sound and image do not fully coincide (whether temporally, spatially or logically), the spectators (constructing their story) will experience them as synchronous.[5] Our hypothesis is that for this effect to work in AD, it must supply the visual information with which the sound must be linked, whenever this cannot be deduced from the sound itself (cf. 6.3)

According to Chion (1990: 25-32), we perceive sounds in three ways, but one of these, causal listening, is by far the most important one for the way we experience the world, and by extension, films.[6] This way of listening uses a sound to identify its cause or source. Listeners do this on the basis of their knowledge of types of noises and their causes as much as on the basis of hearing (cf. 6.3). Moreover, they use contextual hearing: they may, for instance, know that the neighbours have a dog; or, in the case of film, that the main character has a dog. Sometimes listeners will only recognize a category, say, a radio presenter, without knowing what she looks like; or they hear a rhythm that repeats itself and punctuates events, and can recognize it as human versus mechanical, without knowing its exact source. Moreover, a noise can be identified by different sources working together, like a pencil making a scratching noise on paper versus chalk on a blackboard. The purpose of sound effects is often to make the audience believe that certain sounds are produced by certain sources, whereas they emanate from others.

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4. …the irresistible and spontaneous suture that is produced between an aural and visual phenomenon when these occur simultaneously, irrespective of logical connections. (My translation)
5. The dubbing of foreign language productions also relies on this effect.
6. Causal listening (see main text), semantic listening (which uses a code or language to produce meaning) and reduced listening (which takes a sound as its object of observation).

This may lead to problems for blind audiences when the cinematic source that the sound is meant to represent is difficult to identify without the help of visual input. The next section considers a few examples that involve lack of synchrony, point of view sound (or subjective sound as experienced by a character), multiple and/or diffuse sounds.

6. Challenging sounds: a few examples

6.1. Lack of synchrony and point of view sound

Not all instances with asynchronous sound are necessarily problematic. In *The Hours* (Daldry 2002), Leonard Woolf (Steven Dillane) is seen walking home with his dog early on in the film, and the ambient street noises are audible, but the dog does not make a sound. When man and dog reach the house, the dog runs towards the front door, ahead of Woolf, and starts to bark. The blind audience can place the sound because the AD anticipates it and tells its audience that Woolf is accompanied by his dog while they are still in the street. In fact, this sound is not fully asynchronous: when the dog barks it is also on screen, the animal has simply been introduced visually first, unknowingly to the visually impaired (or in this case, blind) audience. This is a gap that can easily be identified and filled.

In some instances, however, asynchronous sound will supply additional information almost independently; it can – for instance – be produced (and heard) simultaneously with images to which it does not refer, but build on a combination of this visually conveyed information and the active summoning of narrative logic in order to make sense. In one classic scene in *Le Million* (René Clair 1931), shots of characters scrambling to find their lottery tickets are accompanied by the extradiegetic sounds of a football game for comic effect. For such a scene to work, it may suffice to explain the visuals and to let the sounds of the football match interact with the description in much the same way as the sound would otherwise interact with the images. However, only reception research can confirm or falsify this hypothesis. In another classic, Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped* (1956), a man held in a Nazi prison never sees the world beyond the prison walls again, but remains aware of it as he hears the sounds of church bells and trains 'out there'. The sound is asynchronous in the sense that the source of the sound is not part of the character's world. In this case, the AD would have to make sure the audience associates the sounds the character and they themselves hear, with the character's experience. The sounds introduce point of view into the story, a very common trick of the trade. The standard example of the use of such

subjective intradiegetic sound is that of a noise growing dimmer when the distance between its source and the fictional character who hears the sound grows. In an AD aiming to allow the sound to fulfil its function, the character in question would probably have to figure as a reference point to explain the gradual fade.

6.2. *Multiple or diffuse sound and its functioning*

The presence of multiple sounds often results in an overall effect of diffuse sound since a multitude of different sounds coming from different sources may be difficult to distinguish from one another. However, multiple sounds too are more problematic in some cases than in others and can sometimes help a non-sighted audience construct a variant of the visual narrative that functions perfectly.

Seiffert (2005: 71ff) writes that when describing a particular space, audio-description makes use of the listener's supposed mental images of that space. Blind audiences can be expected to know, for instance, what kind of furniture they might encounter in a space named 'office'. This knowledge can even allow the description to take the presence of some objects for granted and to refer to them with a definite article (e.g., 'the' desk) even the first time they are named. Cohesion is maintained thanks to the general mental image any viewer within a certain cultural context can be expected to have of an office. This mental modelling approach can also be applied to sound. A battle, for instance, is associated with certain noises, which means that the viewer/hearer will usually be able to place them without requiring much description. What is more, if the viewers can be expected to have some historical knowledge of the battle, the landing on the heavily fortified beaches of Normandy in *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1998), for instance, the sound track alone may allow them to conjure up quite specific events (cf. section 6.3). Indeed, anyone about to watch a film on DVD or in the cinema will have consulted the programme and have some idea of what to expect. But then again, some (action) scenes may become too aurally complex or loud in some cases, and it will be up to the describer to decide which noises are traceable and which are not, with the help of a test audience.[7]

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7. This can also occur in disaster films such as *2012* (Emmerich 2009), in which the world as we know it comes to an end. In order to maintain the suspense of disaster scenes, the AD will have to create some order in the cacophony of noises (Matamala & Remael 2011; and work in progress).

Very specific types of action scenes and fights, visually and aurally impressive ones, are those that are the staple of science fiction movies such as *V for Vendetta* (MacTeigue 2005) or *X-Men. The Last Stand* (Ratner 2006), but also of poetic martial arts films such as *Hero* (Zhang Zimou 2004). In such films some fighting noises will still be recognizable, whereas others will refer to weapons from another time or place and the setting will probably be out of this world – again to a greater or lesser extent. Moreover, some images and complementary sounds may have a purely aesthetic function. Such sounds may then be especially difficult to trace to a source and even harder to place within the ongoing narrative including with the help of AD. In *Hero* many of the fights are like ballets of movements and sounds. Rendering all the movements and thereby identifying the sources and functions of all the sounds is quite impossible. What is more, in one particular instance, some of the objects of the temple in which a fight takes place also produce sounds that can be identified in themselves, but cannot be related to the fight. At one point, for instance, a drop of water falling from the roof of a building into a bucket is shown in close up. The event comes in between the shots of the fight, the sound is quite distinct and the image adds to the atmosphere and aesthetics of the scene. Again, there is no time to describe all this visual information. The English AD on the DVD of the film limits itself to rendering some of the movements of the fight, and selects some ambient noises in between. It actually summarizes the fight, ensuring that it thereby also explains the most audible sounds that the movements of the combatants produce, thereby creating a sort of 'order' in what might otherwise come across as a diffuse ensemble of noises, but leaving quite a bit to the imagination. The symphony of sounds replaces the symphony of sounds, movements, shapes and colours of the visual rendering, and the AD allows its target public to construct its own version of the scene within the ongoing narration, ensuring its narrative functions are covered.

6.3. *The case of* Saving Private Ryan *(Spielberg 1998)*

Among the many Oscars won by the Spielberg film *Saving Private Ryan*, were Best Effects and Best Sound Effect Editing.[8] The 30 most famous minutes of the film are those including the landing of the allied forces on the beaches of Normandy in 1944. In these scenes, the spectator is meant to feel (s)he is physically present among the soldiers who are being blown to pieces by

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8. The people responsible for these were Gary Rydstrom and Richard Hymns (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120815/awards)

German enemy fire. This is conveyed visually by gruesome close-ups of wounded soldiers, by the chaos and desperation in the shallow water close to the beach, on the beach and beyond, but also by the sound track, which mixes the sound of the guns with the screams of the soldiers and other loud battle noises. The question for the AD is: how many noises need to be described and to what extent can the sources of the noises be identified, thereby making description unnecessary.

As I pointed out in Section 1, "viewers construct a narrative on the basis of the visual and aural clues that a given film puts at their disposal", and mainstream feature films are constructed to supply what is needed, moreover, effects are usually meant to enhance the narrative (McClean 2006) – but not for a visually impaired audience. In the analysis below, I try to identify which noises are identifiable on the basis of narrative context and in conjunction with other noises. The exercise proved to be quite complex, but it is one that any audio-describer would have to make.[9] I start from the premise that the audience knows they are about to watch an American film about World War II that starts out with the landing of some of the allied forces on the coast of Normandy. The date is "June 6, 1944" and the place "Dog Green Sector, Omaha Beach". In fact, this text appears on screen and would be mentioned by any AD.

First, the sound of violent waves washing ashore is heard (and can be contextualized on the basis of the above text). The waves hit intricate rows of huge metal crosses that form part of the German defence lines (and these must be described, cf. *infra*). The sound of the sea changes and is combined with the metallic sound of a humming motor (identifiable: boats at sea; not identifiable: type of boat, this the AD must specify). To the above, a less distinct but audible metallic sound is added (a soldier in one of the boats drinks from a gourd, he wears a helmet: AD of both helmet and gourd are required, cf. *infra*). The repeated sound of vomiting is heard and is quite obvious (identifiable through the sound track and the narrative context of boats on a rough sea). The sound of the motor has now become more distinct and could be identified as that of a smallish boat (audience testing required, but it may be better to mention the type of boat when the vessel is first introduced). The instructions quoted below are then shouted. These further clarify the events

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9. To my knowledge, there is no AD of the film available. The purpose of the second stage of this research is to write the AD, record the scene again and test it on a visually impaired target audience.

on screen: the boats are packed with soldiers about to land on Normandy's "Omaha" beach.

> The soldier at the helm of one boat says:
> "Clear the ramp! 30 seconds to landing. God be with you!"
>
> A voice (Captain Miller/Tom Hanks, the character remains unnamed at this point) shouts:
> "Port side, stick. Starboard side, stick. Move fast and clear those mortar holes."
>
> In another boat, a second voice shouts:
> "I want to see plenty of beach between men. Five men is an opportunity. One man is a waste of ammo."
>
> First voice:
> "Keep the sand out of your weapons. Keep those actions clear. I'll see you on the beach."

Miller's line, "I'll see you on the beach", is accompanied by the noise made by the waves hitting both the boats and the men in the boats (which can be seen, but may be hard to hear), then a whizzing sound follows (bullets, identifiable given the context), followed almost immediately by the sound of heavy explosions and more sounds of vomiting. The power of the enemy fire is obviously formidable, whereas the men in the boats are sick (and weak?) as they sail into the firing line. The mixture of sounds that follows next signals that the landing is approaching, but they are quite diffuse: cannon fire, mortar fire, coughing, the sound of the motor of the boat slowing down, more vomiting, a whistle blowing, the sound of the ramp opening, and orders being shouted simultaneously. These are accompanied by 'unheard' visually rendered actions that render the anxiety the soldiers must be feeling: one soldier is crossing himself and another kissing the cross on a chain round his neck. Are these actions essential, one might ask. The sound track alone would no doubt convey a general picture of the chaos of the landing, but the silent reactions of the men add to the personal drama of the scene, and these would go unnoticed without AD.

As the order "Open mortar holes" is shouted and the screeching noise of the ramp opening is heard, the noise of the shooting suddenly increases dramatically in volume. It is composed of a mixture of machine guns, the darker sound of cannons and the very prominent whizzing sound of bullets. Visuals and noise together show that the specific boats and their 'cargo' of soldiers that we have been following have come under fire, but this must be mentioned to confirm the meaning of the change in sounds.

What is more, now and again, the boats are shown from the point of view of the German soldiers in their bunkers. In these shots the noise of the machine guns increases, but the link between this subtle change in sound and the change in point of view is probably impossible to make without visual support. And yet, the change in camera position is important, because it reveals the metal crosses on the beach again (in and close to the water). The German viewpoint and the defences on the beach must be described to allow the target audience to reconstruct their story. (cf. also *infra*).

Meanwhile, the whizzing sound stands out among the other firing sounds and is meant to be experienced as close by: it is as if the bullets could hit you, the viewer, any time. There is also the sound of bullets hitting metallic objects: the boats and/or the helmets of the soldiers, objects that have been mentioned earlier by the AD. Indeed, at this point, the noise is so deafening that it would be virtually impossible to shout a description over it, but if boats, soldiers, helmets, metal crosses and the beach landing are in place, the sounds can hopefully be left to do their job. On the other hand, one just about hears Miller's 'Over the side' – which in combination with what feels like an almost material "wall of noise" ought to explain the soldiers cannot get out of the boats at the front. Then again, due to the barrage of noise the voices of other men shouting orders ("Port and starboard, over…") barely get through. In other words, the instructions, telling the soldiers to jump overboard, which are clear in combination with the images, may well be lost, but soon enough, the splashing of water and the sound of heavy objects falling into the water are added to the previous noises. These sounds are again identifiable and tell the attentive listener that the soldiers are jumping or falling into the water – which, or that is my hypothesis, may have to be confirmed only briefly by the AD.

When the camera goes under water to film the action, the gunfire is muffled at once, and is replaced by a droning underwater sound, as well as the sound of air bubbles, movements, shuffling under water, and a softer whizzing sound, that of bullets piercing the surface of the sea. This continues for some time. The overall noise has quietened down and has become more diffuse. While it is clear that the action is now taking place under water, it becomes even harder to make out what exactly is happening. Maybe visually impaired audiences would be able to guess that some soldiers are seen struggling under water, however, what will be lost once again is the variety of ways in which they struggle and die (shot by bullets or drowning as they try to get out of their heavy gear).

The continuous drone and the underwater noises are then punctuated by loud interruptions of splashing combined with the loud noise of gunfire. This is the result of the sound track and visuals alternating between sounds under water and above water, signalling the struggle of the soldiers trying to reach the beach. The visuals include a point of view shot of what a soldier struggling to leave the water sees, which – of course – remains unheard.

The sounds then remain above water: This signals a subsequent stage in the chronology of the landing, which may have to be confirmed by the AD. All the different types of gunfire from earlier on in the scene have returned and to this another sound is added, a clanging sound. It is the sound of the soldiers' weapons hitting the huge metal crosses laid out in rows on the beach, which would have been described by the AD earlier on. A brief repeat-mention of the crosses should be able to create cohesion with the earlier description and place this sound. On the other hand, all the noises together constitute an overwhelming cacophony of gunfire, shouting, waves rolling on to the beach and the continued clanging of metal against metal as the soldiers remain stuck between the metal crosses and cannot move on. It is not altogether clear whether visually impaired viewers would be able to determine what is happening; the aural picture that the deafening and varied battle noises paint remains less detailed than the visual-aural one. The occasional alternation between machine guns (bunker point of view) and clanging (soldiers' point of view) is very difficult to distinguish on the basis of sound alone, and the listeners keep missing the occasional focus on what happens to individual soldiers as they are killed and colouring the sea red. Captain Miller, for instance, has survived the landing and is moving between the bodies and men. As he tries to help one private get out of the water, and the soldier says 'Thank you', the latter is shot. The gunshot can be heard, but without the help of the AD, its function is lost.

Then, rather abruptly, the cacophony of noises stops and intradiegetic sound is replaced by a monotonous, humming extradiegetic sound, one that cannot be linked to the ongoing action. The visuals switch to slow motion and focus on the agony of a number of individual soldiers as witnessed by Miller, i.e., from his point of view, as he is sitting on the beach close to the metal crosses. The combination of this quieter, eerie sound, and the slow motion butchery the audience witnesses from Miller's subjective point of view, convey (at least for this viewer) the feelings of helplessness and shock experienced by the commander as he watches his men being killed or maimed. One particularly harrowing picture is that of a soldier whose arm has been blown off. He picks it up and continues walking up the beach.

Obviously, these personal stories complement the overall picture painted jointly by image and sound, but do not come across through sound alone. The sound track now only produces the eerie background sound, the images provide the narrative. The functions of image and sound appear to have been separated. AD is required, but must the eerie extradiegetic sound accompanying the slow motion be identified? Or can this be done indirectly through the description of what Miller sees? Since the sound track is now monotone and much quieter, it can be overruled to provide detailed description.

Adding some form of AD here is essential since this part of the landing scene has at least two functions: the cruelty of the war is personalized (we see individual soldiers suffering) and this has an impact on Miller, one of the protagonists. Indeed, as McClean (2006) writes, effects are used to enhance the narrative, and especially the bravery of protagonists, which is a driving force in Hollywood type causal narratives (Bordwell & Thompson 2008): Since Hollywood movies are character-driven, the events that have an impact on Miller are bound to have an impact on the narrative as a whole. In other words, the way in which Miller witnesses and experiences the slaughter is as important as the slaughter itself. If some of the concrete events he witnesses are explained, from his point of view, our hypothesis is that this would automatically clarify the more symbolic function of the eerie sound track that focuses the sighted audiences' attention on Miller's feelings. The combination of extradiegetic sound and slow motion signals a shift from 'external' reality to 'internal' or subjective reality.

7. Concluding remarks

The first part of this article has demonstrated the importance of sound and sound design for film narration, discussed some of the complexities involved in the production, reception and interpretation of sound, and hence the importance of its integration in what we could call 'AD design', both at scripting and recording level.

The brief analysis of one visually and aurally complex film scene with distinct, diffuse, intradiegetic and extradiegetic sounds, has demonstrated what the challenges can be. The central question that remains is to what extent the film can be trusted to tell its own story and the audience given an active role in constructing 'their' story. The visual narrative definitely adds more dramatic detail to the story because it helps the sighted audience identify sounds -even if this guidance or interaction goes unnoticed- and, in addition, it sometimes contributes 'silent' visually conveyed information. This means that in some cases, the AD will have to identify the source of a sound, in others it

will have to give narrative context, or even indicate the narrative function of a sound (cf. the example of extradiegetic sound). What is more, the exact relationship between sound and (subjective) point of view begs more questions than this article can resolve. The only solution seems to be: Testing scenes such as the one described above, and others, on visually impaired audiences, with a view to establishing if guidelines can be drawn up regarding the way these audiences use and/or can learn to use the sound track in conjunction with the other filmic systems to reconstruct 'their' story.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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MULTI-SENSORY APPROACHES TO (AUDIO) DESCRIBING THE VISUAL ARTS[1]

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Abstract

Making art accessible to blind patrons requires the ability to convey explicit and implicit visual messages through non-visual forms. Audio description is often seen as the best way to offer visual texts to blind people; however, one may query whether words alone are sufficient to convey the subtleties of art and to transport the emotional charge such works offer. It is a fact that the dialogue between words and touch may allow these particular "readers" to "see" art in its tangible forms, but perhaps more is needed if one is to give them the opportunity to live the art experience to the full. This article discusses different multi-sensory approaches to making art available to visually impaired people and proposes soundpainting as a form of artistic transcreation.

Resumen

Para que el arte sea accesible para las personas ciegas es necesario saber transmitir mensajes visuales, tanto explícitos como implícitos, a través de formas no visuales. La audiodescripción se considera, a menudo, como la mejor manera de ofrecer textos visuales a los ciegos; sin embargo, uno se puede preguntar si las palabras por sí solas son suficientes para transmitir las sutilezas de las artes visuales y transportar la carga emocional de estas obras. Es cierto que el diálogo que se establece entre las palabras y el acto de tocar puede permitir a estos "lectores" particulares "ver" obras artísticas en sus formas tangibles, pero quizás se necesite más si el objetivo último es brindarles la oportunidad de disfrutar la experiencia artística en todas sus dimensiones. En este

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artículo se analizan varias aproximaciones multisensoriales encaminadas a conseguir que las artes visuales sean accesibles a las personas con discapacidad visual y propone el *soundpainting* como una forma de transcreación artística.

Art stimulates perception, thought, feeling, physicality, spirit.
(Meredith Monk)

1. Blindness and the Museum

When one faces the long winding queues at the Museo del Prado, in Madrid, at the Louvre, in Paris, or the Accademia di Bella Arti, in Florence, one can only wonder what makes people want to visit art museums. In general terms, Van den Berg Haarlem (2008) believes that museums raise in their visitors feelings of two kinds: personal feelings and social feelings. This museum marketing professional believes that, on a personal level, visiting museums can develop a feeling of *entertainment*, "being entertained feels good, you feel joy and fun"; of *education*, "understanding how things work, solving a puzzle, raises your self esteem"; and of *aesthetics*, "the awe of seeing a great object of art, is uplifting, it stretches the imagination, it crosses a mental boundary". On a social level, it might involve the heightened thrill of *sharing feelings*, "seeing the same beautiful work of art, and sharing that feeling enhances the aesthetical feelings"; or those of *superiority* or *inferiority* in which people measure themselves to the standards of their peers; at times, when "others decide for you to go, like in a school trip", such social feelings are simply *lethargic*; but they can also be that of the *landmark* when each experience is one of "a once in a life time event".

When art is the focal point, there are reasons to believe that a new set of feelings come into play because, as Mock (1990) puts it:

> art offers something else – depth, involvement, a new way of looking at the world that we live in, a fresh approach to what we take for granted, a chance to experience freedom of the imagination. (…) Art becomes a paradigm for whole, integrated human beings using the fullness of their resources as artists and as audiences.

So, whatever the reasons for visiting, when art is at stake, in museums, people are given the opportunity to go on personal journeys brought about by a dialogue between each work and its beholder. But what happens when the beholder cannot access the work of art for the simple fact that s/he is blind

or has low vision? Does this mean that the art experience is off boundaries for people with visual impairment? Why would a blind person want to visit an art gallery, or a museum of any sort, in a time when museums are mainly visual experiences?

Smith (2003: 221) highlights the fact that there is no difference between sighted and blind museum goers when he responds that:

> [t]hey may simply want to be in the presence of great art, great scientific achievement, important historical objects or documents, anthropological and archeological findings and specimens, or multi-cultural information of all kinds. […] whatever the reason, a visually impaired person hopes to leave the museum fully enriched by the experience.

Even in the context of visually oriented museums, the key to enriching experiences can easily be found in the provision of alternative means of access that may lead to similar effects. To this Smith testifies (*ibid.*: 222) in the first person, "[b]y using vivid description, and engaging my senses of touch, hearing and smell, they are able to give me a greater level of access than they would to many researchers with sight."

Multi-sensory communication is still a fairly novel concept that is bound to change the world of multimedia in the near future. Sensitizers, smellitizers and sense stimulating gadgetry are already in use in theme parks – e.g. the *Horizon* experience at Disney's Epcot center (Epcot Central 2008), but haven't yet found their way into museums at large. However, in practice, and through solutions such as those referred by Smith (*op.cit.*), visitors are already being offered multi-sensory experiences either through carefully set up exhibitions or through special (live or electronic) guided tours, touch sessions and oriented workshops.

At present, the most common multi-sensory experiences at museums are made available to visually impaired visitors through one of the following solutions: special exhibits/museums that have been devised with them in mind (e.g. Anteros Museum, in Bologna, or the Museo Tiflológico, in Madrid); special live tours/touch sessions (e.g. V&A or the British Museum in London) that take visitors with special needs as their main addressees; or specific audio guides (e.g. Winston Churchill Museum and recently the British Museum, in London) that have specially made descriptions for blind users. In most cases, these solutions resort to words and touch to help blind patrons "see" the exhibits, a solution which becomes particularly complex when the visual arts are involved.

In simple terms, works in the visual arts are either tri-dimensional or bi-dimensional. Tri-dimensional art, such as sculpture, is theoretically readily

available to touch even though it is mainly to be seen. In those cases, one may think that words are dispensable or merely an extra. Bi-dimensional art, such as painting, drawing or photography, which are in essence purely visual, is a real challenge both to visually impaired visitors and to conveners who wish to make them accessible to as many visitors as possible. In these cases, words often take the lead and audio description is called upon to present or describe the exhibits.

One might say that audio description is inherent to the art experience in many museums throughout the world. Every time (human) guides lead visitors through art galleries, filling in information about the exhibits, calling attention to details or discussing technique and style, they are using language to make the art experience meaningful. However, conventional (live or electronic audio guided) tours to museums are mostly directed towards sighted visitors for they serve to direct the gaze and to highlight the elements that make each exhibit special. In such circumstances language is used as a go-between; it helps the less knowledgeable to understand the work of art, enhances interest, or simply adds the social element to an experience that, otherwise, would be more solitary and probably less enjoyable. When visually impaired patrons join in, what is said is what is seen, so words gain special importance. Words can become the art experience itself, a situation that is particularly true when no alternative haptic, *i.e.* hands-on solutions have been provided.

Not many art galleries offer especially conceived audio guides for visitors with visual impairment. Perhaps this is the case because there is a belief that blind people will not be interested in the visual arts; there has been no real demand for the service; or simply because curators do not know how to go about promoting the true inclusion of visually impaired patrons. A sign that things are changing is the fact that more and more museums are being creative and are now providing alternative solutions for visitors with special needs and that commercially based companies providing content for audioguides now advertise specific audio description for blind visitors. However, such contents are far and few and at a time when there is a growing demand for special solutions, in line with the *Civil Society Platform on Access to Culture – "Policy Guidelines"* (EU 2009), more needs to be done, and a lot can be learnt by analysing what is already in place.

2. The tailor-made experience – a personal narrative

Anybody visiting the Anteros Museum (Museo tattile di pittura antica e moderna Anteros), in Bologna, is bound to come away with an unforgettable experience and many lessons learned about making the visual arts available

to people with visual impairment. This special venue is unique in that it holds plaster cast tactile versions of over 40 masterpiece painting of all times, especially made so that blind people can "see" them through touch. Visits are planned and booked ahead and only one masterpiece is addressed each time. Each experience is a personal narrative. Elena[2]'s story encapsulates one of those experiences:

Elena is now 23 and has been blind since birth. At school she learned all about history and art; she knows that paintings are naturally directed towards sighted people, but she feels she too can come to know them better. She knows that here she will be able to "see" paintings that are hanging in the Louvre, in Paris; in the National Gallery, in London; in the Musée Royaux des Beaux Arts, in Brussels; or as far as in the National Gallery of Tokyo. She also knows the "paintings" at the Anteros Museum have been especially designed for people like her, people who "have to" or "choose to" see through touch and through hearing. Elena knows that her experience is one that can never match that of looking at the original work of art in its actual setting, but she also knows that here she will be able to see for herself, even if in an environment that does not have the makings of traditional art galleries.

The Anteros Museum has one main room open to the public and presents itself as an educational platform, whose aim is to disseminate and develop knowledge both among blind and sighted persons. In its website (http://www.cavazza.it/museoanteros/) one may read, "to know how to see with the hands and touch with the eyes means, whether for blind or sighted persons, that preconceptions cease to be an issue in order to freely learn about the real beauty of things." By proposing to offer visual art through tactile solutions, the Anteros Museum is proposing multi-sensory experiences that can make the perception of art richer for visually impaired and sighted visitors alike. This is done with the knowledge that there are distinct differences between what is perceived through the different senses. As Secchi (n/d), the museum's curator, puts it,

> [t]he starting point of this process is education to constant improvement of visual, tactile and ideally[synaesthesic] senses, by taking into account all inevitable variations and corrections aimed at partially filling the visual deficit. […] This is not meant to find a simplistic equivalence between optic and tactile perception but rather to identify some common ground between the organisation of optic and haptic visual processes.

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2. The name "Elena" is fictitious, but the facts are exact and the experience/exercise was witnessed during a research visit to the Anteros, in 2009.

By watching Elena's visit to the Anteros, a number of interesting questions come to the fore in matters pertaining to making art accessible to visually impaired people and many more in the domain of audio description for the visual arts.

Elena was warmly welcomed by the museum team: the curator and a (legally blind) guide. All parties agreed on the picture to be addressed in that particular visit: *The Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (1480), a painting by the Italian renaissance painter Andrea Mantegna. She was led to her seat, in front of a table on which a three dimensional to-size-plaster-cast-picture was propped. Elena knew exactly how to place herself and was soon touching the picture freely. She knew nothing about the picture when she arrived. The only cue she had on which to build expectations was the title of the painting and the fact that it was a work by Mantegna. Had she known other works by this painter or even by painters of the same period, she might have brought in the previous knowledge when she was asked to say what she could make of the painting through touch alone. But she had very little on which to build her tactile perception. And she found very few words to express what she thought she was feeling. The complex compositional whole, the unexpectedness of the viewpoint and the effect of perspective compression makes this painting particularly difficult to discern through touch alone and Elena ventured a few loose utterances: "waves… the sea?... are these feet? … there is somebody here (in the top left hand corner)…". Left on her own, and through touch alone, there was very little she could "see". She was soon to be rescued when her hands were taken and guided to explore the painting, little by little, to the sound of words.

She was first invited to take in the whole as she circled the frame to get the picture's overall dimension. She was then offered a focal point from which to build on, the feet; and she was conducted, little by little, making sense of perspective, to explore every detail, minutely carved in the bas relief. Her face lit up every time she made sense of what a few minutes before her fingers had made very little of.

Her hands and fingers were gently but firmly guided to explore every detail and she was invited to take on the posture of the weeping women, re-enacting their pose with her own body. But the picture only came to life through language. Words were used in profusion. Some were denotative and talked of size, shape and location; others were technical and spoke of style and perspective; others were descriptive and filled in what the white plaster did not have: colour and visual texture; and many more spoke of emotions

as they told stories that were obviously built upon culture and lore[3]. Elena spoke little, but when she did, she wanted to know more about the feeling or feelings the original evoked. It was clear that she was building mental images that were far beyond the ones she could certify through touch. If initially words were used to supplement touch, as the visit progressed, touch just gave body to words, and close to the end of the visit, the hands rested and words alone took over and a free dialogue took place. The conversation came and went, to and from the work of art under scrutiny. Knowledge from previous experiences and other fields were conveyed and the experiential whole became relational rather that circumstantial. Elena was clearly integrating the newly acquired knowledge with that which she had brought with her to this exercise. She was living the art experience like any sighted person would have done; only that she had taken over an hour to do it and she probably went deeper than a sighted visitor to the Pinacoteca di Brera, in Milan, where the original is hanging, would have gone.

The unique setting of this particular visit encapsulates many of the issues that need to be discussed when addressing access to culture in general and when addressing the importance of audio description for access to the visual arts in museums at large. Elena's visit had the makings of an (almost) ideal visit to an art museum. The Anteros Museum has taken down the main barriers to inclusion, as proposed by Dodd & Sandell (1988: 14) by guaranteeing physical, sensory, intellectual, financial, emotional/attitudinal, decision-making, information and cultural access to its visitors. Elena had total ease in finding and arriving at the museum; she was made welcome and was given full individual attention; she didn't have to pay for her visit; her visit was tailor-made to her specific needs and she was the one to "lead" her own experience even if she was to be led by those guiding her visit; she was given access to information and culture to a measure that she might not be given had she visited the actual venue where the original is presented. Despite the privileged almost-perfect-situation, Elena was not to experience the emotion of living the art experience to the full. Like any other museumgoer, Elena would have preferred to face the original painting *in loco*, at the museum where it is exhibited, most probably in the company of family or friends. Even though she was given full attention and the artwork was described until she was perfectly satisfied, she did not get the chance to preserve her identity and to live her personal and social art experience in full privacy. Elena's experience

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3. A written version of the verbal guide can be found in http://www.cavazza.it/museo anteros/index.php?nav=Lamento%20Cristo%20morto.none26

was, above all, and in tune with the museum's aims, pedagogical rather than entertaining. As mentioned before, Elena is a regular visitor to the Anteros Museum, and clearly enjoys her visits, but her regularity is one that derives of her special needs, to which here alone she finds a response. Just like the Museo Tiflológico (http://museo.once.es/), in Madrid, the Anteros Museum is specifically directed towards visually impaired visitors and takes on a very strong social and educational role. Even though both venues stimulate visits by non-visually impaired patrons, their main focus is openly placed in providing rewarding experiences to that specific group of people. In the case of the Anteros Museum, the art forms that are made accessible are problematic in their very nature. Paintings are meant to be seen and making them accessible to visually impaired people might be challenging, but by no means impossible. If museums were only to make a few of their exhibits accessible in the lines of what these two specilised museums do, they would be opening their doors to a group of people who are forced by their personal circumstances to be excluded from most cultural venues. And in view of Elena's experience, it might not be that difficult to find interesting solutions for what is still seen by many as a great problem. One of the most interesting (and democratic) solution might be had in audio guides.

3. Audio guides to promote multi-sensory art experiences

Audio guides were first introduced in museums in the 50s, taking on from the guidebook which, at the time, was the main portable interaction medium available to visitors. Printed material still holds valid in the present context and can even be a precious aid to visitors with disabilities. Such materials can be printed in different formats, sizes and can even allow for the tactile experience. Further to materials in Braille, many museums now offer simplified versions of some of their works of art on swell paper (microcapsule paper), with which blind visitors can feel the main contours of the elements in any picture, thus perceiving shapes, layout, perspective and proportion. When used in conjunction with other solutions, such as audio description, these raised diagrams can be interesting aids to make the visual arts more tangible. The importance of providing words (in print or via speech) to make sense of such printed materials is very obvious, particularly when the users are not acquainted to the technicque or simply are not given other contextual information with which to decode the raised images. As with other printed material, people need to learn how to "read" tactile materials and this process can be made easier with the aid of audio description to help guide the fingertips.

The audio guides that are available in most museums, and even those that have been conceived for blind visitors, do not serve to guide people's hands in the tactile experience. They normally limit themselves to providing a description of the work and this will either take the person to look at the picture in a particular way – in the case of audio guides for sighted people –, or simply provide a description that might allow blind people to create an image in their mind's eye. Tactile experiences such as Elena's or those using raised images are particularly challenging because reading through touch is time consuming and pre-recorded material to aid touch experiences will need to take that element into account and it is not easy to determine how much time is needed to explore and to take in the combined experience of sound and touch. Rebecca McGinnis, access coordinator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, explains in *Art Beyond Sight* (n/d) that exploration through touch takes time because

> touch is sequential, not instantaneous, because you have to touch each part of a sculpture and build up an idea of it. It takes a lot longer; it's more taxing to the memory, distraction is a bigger issue perhaps.

The question remains, how can touching a piece and listening to a audio guide go together in adequate synchrony when each will necessarily require different time frames? This can only be achieved through interactive audio guides.

Technology has come a long way since, in 1952, Sandberg first used a closed-circuit short wave radio broadcasting system to deliver pre-recorded audio guides to people visiting Amsterdam's Stedelijk (municipal) Museum. In fact, under the umbrella term of "audio guide" we can presently list a number of different solutions that span from the touch/push buttoned wand systems to the mp3 player, whilst passing through podcasts that can be downloaded into mobile phones and PDAs, containing sound and/or image and with a greater or lesser degree of interaction. Museums often make their choices on the basis of the costs involved and of the type of contents that they wish to make available. Where blind patrons are concerned it makes great sense to find a solution that will leave hands free both to hold the cane or the guide dog's leash and/or to touch anything available. In general, visitors are expected to press a number that identifies each audio described element. This task is particularly difficult for people who cannot actually see such numbers and audio signposting becomes essential. Museums with infra-red or wifi systems are now offering automatic Line of Sight Aware Systems, making the audio/video go on when visitors approach the object in case. These systems can be sophisticated and not many museums have the dimension or the means

to use technology that is complex in its set up yet flexible to use. In a not so far away ideal world, museum guides will be flexible and dynamic enough to adapt to the needs of each visitor, who can select beforehand the kind of visit they want to experience, the type of (audio/video/multimedia) content they wish to use, and even have special materials printed out either to use during the visit or to take home with them. Downloadable contents, made available using web solutions, are soon bound to become widely available in museums, cutting down costs and creating greater opportunities for all alike. By breaking down technological barriers, and by bringing in the tendencies of the Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 collaborative culture, museum guides will become freely available and what was once the field of highly specialised professionals is soon to be democratised and made by many. In the line of what fansubbers did for the film industry, informal curators are now providing dowloadable ipod audio guides free of charge for anybody to use. Art Mobs producing audio guides for MoMA (New York's Museum of Modern Art) state their case (Glibert 2005):

> We've produced (unofficial) audio guides for MoMA, and we're making them available as podcasts. 'The mission of Art Mobs is to explore the intersection of communication, art, and mobile technology.' With the near ubiquity of iPods and other portable MP3 players, the platform is already out there, in our bags, our coat pockets, on our belts.

What started off as a class project has given way to open source audio guide production, an example that is inspiring museum lovers everywhere. Just as happens with live tours that are sometimes run by volunteer guides – arts students or friends of the museum – art mobs are usually equally enthusiastic connoisseurs who offer their time and knowledge in exchange for the experience of sharing their love for the subject with other physical or virtual visitors. Though it may be true that in most cases people who venture to produce audio guide contents are in total command of the subject matter, they do not necessarily have the technique or linguistic ability to make audio guides that are simultaneously informative and entertaining. This is particularly the case when the audio guides are to be used by blind people and even more so when the audioguide is not only meant to describe visuals but are also to guide people's hands in the haptic experience of the arts.

4. Sound and touch making sense of art

Anybody wishing to make the visual arts available to the blind via audio description is bound to follow set and tried guidelines as those proposed by the

Art Beyond Sight Project[4]. The AEB guidelines (Axel *et al*. 1996) state that audio described museum tours should cover the following elements: (1) present *standard information* "found on a museum's object label: artist, nationality, title, date, mediums, dimensions, and the custodian or location of the work"; (2) give a *general overview* of subject, form, and colour, providing "visual information in a sequence, allowing a blind person to assemble, piece by piece, an image of a highly complex work of art"; (3) give *orientation* with directions specific and concrete information "to indicate the location of objects or figures in a work of art"; (4) mention the importance of the *technique or medium*, to enable the blind viewer "to understand the ways in which meaning, style, or both are generated from the materials"; (5) focus on *style* by "referring to the features that identify a work as being by a particular artist or school, or of a movement, period, or geographical region"; (6) use of *specific words* avoiding "ambiguous and figurative language"; (7) provide *vivid details* with "enough information so that listeners can form an image in their minds, and come to their own opinions and conclusions about a work of art"; (8) indicate *where* the curators have installed a work and say "how the work under discussion relates to these other works, as well as to the viewer and the surrounding space"; (9) refer to *other senses* as analogues for vision to enable blind viewers to "construct highly detailed impressions of a work of visual art"; (10) explain *intangible concepts* with analogies even when "visual phenomena, such as shadows or clouds, may be difficult to describe objectively"; (11) encourage understanding through *reenactment*, allowing "the blind person to mimic the depicted figure's pose"; (12) provide information on the *historical and social context*; (13) incorporate *sound* in creative ways: (14) allow people to *touch* artworks because "direct touch is the best way to explore an object"; (15) provide *alternative touch materials* or (16) *tactile illustrations* of artworks, normally "black-and-white relief images are schematic diagrams, and they do not represent the actual object in every detail".

Very much in line with the established guidelines and with the knowledge of experience, De Coster & Mühleis (2007: 193) put together a proposal for a two tier (intersensorial) type of audio description that in practice sums up to three distinct phases:

> First, establish a geometrical structure as a frame of reference, and then refer back to this structure later on in the description, i.e. describe the painting in relation to it. Next, proceed to describe the signs that are clear or relatively

unambiguous before tackling the ambivalent signs, if this is possible given the picture chosen.

The audio description that De Coster and Mühleis (*ibid.*) propose divides the visual message into objective, tangible elements and subjective, intangible elements. In so doing they have brought to the fore one of the main features of art – ambiguity –, which they believe to be untranslatable through words. However, they add that "one can give an idea of visual ambiguity […] if a comparable ambiguity exists in another sensorial field (touch, hearing)".

De Coster and Mühleis' premise is complex but productive. It leads one in the direction of what word painting (also known as "tone painting" or "text painting") does in music, in which the musical technique reflects the literal meaning of the song (i.e. music translates the meaning of words). However, these authors are suggesting that the ambivalent (visual) signs that are difficult to be translated into words can have their meanings explained (still through words). This reads as somewhat contradictory, in that the audio describer will be interpreting, explicitating and giving meaning to signs that are meant to be kept ambiguous.

This approach is also contrary to that of audio description for film, for instance, in which ambiguity and subjectivity are to be avoided at all costs. It may be defensible that in films audio description should add "precise, concise verbal descriptions of visual images – about people, objects, scenes, body language, facial expressions, sizes, and colors" (Schmeidler & Kirchner 2001: 197); however, when addressing works of art, in which creativity and subjectivity are central, audio description necessarily needs to be addressed in a different manner.

De Coster and Mühleis' proposal could be understood in a quite different manner if instead of explaining the meaning of the ambivalent signs, audio describers could find in words the same "sensorial ambiguity" that is said to be found in sound or touch. This different approach could be addressed as "soundpainting" or even *poesis* much in line with the ekphrastic tradition. Ekphrasis, which Pujol & Orero (2007: 49) define as "a literary figure that provides the graphic and often dramatic description of a painting, a relief or other work of art", can include "elements that can be considered objective, whereas other elements are completely subjective" (*ibid.*: 53), serving both the "clear signs" and "ambivalent signs" that works of art are made of. If ekphrasis is a "poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art" (Spitzer 1962: 72), audio description that wants to suggest rather than to explicitate might find a solution just there.

It may be risky to be poetic when describing painting, particularly because, as Da Vinci wrote in his notebooks, words are never as strong as images. In the effort to show how painting is superior to poetry Da Vinci (653, in Richter 1880) writes:

> though the poet is as free as the painter in the invention of his fictions they are not as satisfactory to men as paintings; for though poetry is able to describe forms, actions and places in words, the painter deals with the actual similitude in the forms, in order to represent them.

However, if the blind person cannot have direct access to the work itself, might it not be better to be given an "alternative work of art" to look at through the other senses? People who cannot see the work of art will not be able to relate to it as sighted people would do unless they gain access to the explicit and the implicit meanings the piece conveys. Furthermore, art is expression, and conveying the expressive nature of any work of art through words alone may be truly challenging. If only explicit signs can be expressed through words, then ways must be found to convey the feelings and sensations that are only invoked or raised through feelings. Soundpainting does that by bringing together multiple sound "textures". Carefully chosen words and a careful direction of the voice talent to guarantee adequate tone of voice, rhythm and speech modulation can all work together with specific sound effects and music to provide the "story(ies)" and emotions that a particular piece of art may offer. In many ways, soundpainting goes against the grain of conventional museum audiodescription, particularly for being openly subjective and interpretative in nature. By trying to capture and recreate artistic subtleties, it might be seen as a form of transcreation, particularly because it aims to "substitute" the original form by an equivalent and yet new art form. Balemans' (2010) account of transcreation is relevant to soundpainting in that:

> [t]ranscreation is used to make sure that the target text is the same as the source text in every aspect: the message it conveys, style, the images and emotions it evokes and its cultural background. You could say that transcreation is to translation what copywriting is to writing.

In a similar manner to the transcreation strategies found in the realm of marketing, in the context of the visual arts, a visual text can give way to a new sound-based multi-sensory text that recreates the style and emotions of the first, suggesting, guiding people through tactile readings (should there be a tactile reproduction to be used) and yet still allowing for interpretation and the "rewriting" of yet another personal text. Despite the fact that soundpainting may be interpretative or subjective in nature, it can still be loyal to the

original piece of work in its effort to convey the messages and emotions of the first through new modes of expression.

Whichever the option taken towards making art accessible to blind patrons – live descriptions, audio guides with conventional (neutral) audio description or expressive soundpainting, a special effort must be made if one is to offer purely visual art through the sense of hearing and of touch. Providing equivalent effects through apparently opposite means of communication is a challenge that requires inventiveness and artistic competencies that go well beyond the use of words. Complex multimodal, multi-sensory solutions are bound to offer richer experiences to blind and sighted people alike when museum professionals or translators are called upon to transcreate the essence of art.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Josélia Neves

Josélia Neves has a degree in Modern Languages and Literatures, an MA in English Studies and a PhD in Translation Studies, with a dissertation on Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. She teaches at the Instituto Politécnico de Leiria (IPL) and at the Universidade de Coimbra, in Portugal. She has carried out a number of projects within the field of audiovisual translation and sensory accessibility, involving Portuguese broadcasters, distributors and Deaf and/or blind viewers. Apart from publishing a set of guidelines on SDH and another one on AD, which are being used by Portuguese broadcasters, she has published widely in international translation journals and has made regular contributions towards collective volumes. At present she is working on a post doctoral research project, at Imperial College of London, which addresses inclusive communication in museums.

Josélia Neves posee un título de Grado en Lenguas y Literaturas Modernas, un Máster en Estudios Ingleses y un doctorado en Estudios de Traducción, con una tesis sobre el subtitulado para personas sordas y con dificultades de audición. Da clases en el Instituto Politécnico de Leiria (IPL) y en la Universidad de Coimbra, en Portugal. Ha llevado a cabo una serie de proyectos en el ámbito de la traducción audiovisual y accesibilidad sensorial, del que forman

parte emisoras portuguesas y distribuidores y espectadores sordos o ciegos. Además de la publicación de una serie de directrices sobre subtitulación para sordos y otra en audiodescripción, que están siendo utilizadas por los organismos de radiodifusión portugueses, ha publicado numerosos artículos en revistas internacionales de traducción y ha contribuido regularmente en volúmenes colectivos. En la actualidad se encuentra trabajando en un proyecto de investigación postdoctoral, en el Imperial College de Londres, centrado en la comunicación inclusiva en los museos.

EYE TRACKING ANALYSIS OF MINOR DETAILS IN FILMS FOR AUDIO DESCRIPTION[1]

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Abstract

This article focuses on the many instances when minute details found in feature films may have direct implications upon the development of both the visual and plot narratives. The main question we would like to ask examines whether very subtle details which may easily go unnoticed by the viewer should be audio described. To assess the visual consciousness of such minute details, a perception experiment was conducted using eye-tracking technology and questionnaires. Though the result is not conclusive, it shows a clear methodological approach in the field of the audio description of visual details, and does give some indication as to what should be taken into consideration in future studies and analysis. The article concludes by hinting at further tests and analyses which could be undertaken using eye-tracking technology.

Resumen

Este artículo estudia los numerosos pequeños detalles que hay en la narrativa visual de las películas y que aunque aparentemente insignificantes pueden tener una

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repercusión directa en el desarrollo de la narrativa visual y la trama. El tema principal es analizar si los detalles muy sutiles –que fácilmente pueden pasar desapercibidos para el espectador– deben describirse. Para evaluar la conciencia visual de estos detalles, hemos llevado a cabo un experimento utilizando la tecnología de *eye-tracking* acompañada de cuestionarios. Aunque el resultado no es concluyente, debido a la complejidad del formato del corpus de análisis, se muestra un claro enfoque metodológico en el campo de la audiodescripción de los detalles visuales, y se apunta a futuros estudios y análisis. El artículo concluye con una alusión a otras pruebas y análisis que podrían llevarse a cabo utilizando la tecnología de *eye-tracking*.

1. Introduction

Andrew Holland, who has been audio describing for theatre in the UK for many years, defines audio description (AD) as "a way of translating artistic material from one medium to another [...] [that] should aim to get to the heart of a work of art and to recreate an experience of that work by bringing it to life" (2009: 184). AD is an access service which provides an *ad hoc* narrative to any artistic representation, from a surrealist painting to a circus act. AD can trace its origins back to the rhetoric figure of ekphrasis, where "graphic and often dramatic description of a painting, a relief or other work of art is provided" (Pujol & Orero 2007: 49) or hypotyposis, defined by Eco (2003: 104) as "the rhetorical effect by which words succeed in rendering a visual scene". AD has been considered a type of translation: intersemiotic, intermodal or cross-modal (Benecke 2007; Bourne & Jiménez Hurtado 2007; Braun 2007 & 2008; Orero 2005). Both audio description *per se* and eye-tracking analysis applied to audiovisual translation and media accessibility are relatively new avenues of research. Audio description has been studied from a descriptive perspective, departing from the recommendations and guidelines drafted by its practitioners – from their own professional experience. However, these recommendations and guidelines were not written with any scientific basis. New experimental studies taking into consideration eye-tracking technology have started to provide very interesting insights for both researchers and practitioners. It is hoped that articles and studies which take this methodological approach will help to improve decision making when drafting AD scripts, which up until now has been based simply on personal choice and common sense.

2. "Describe what you see": Some basic concepts of visual perception

Some basic concepts need to be addressed with regard to audio description before embarking on experiments in perception and cognition, particularly when the research approach is a multidisciplinary one.

Even after watching the same film, different people have different recollections and interpretations, and in some cases some details are observed by

some while going unnoticed by others. How can perception be so different? This issue recurs time and again throughout this article.

A question posed since antiquity is how the exterior world travels into the interior self (Goldstein 2006). A century ago, the same enquiry gave rise to the field of psychology as a scientific discipline, which examines the limits and characteristics of human perception.

From an evolutionary perspective, it can be said that our senses are designed to help us survive (Gibson 1986). In this sense, the recurrent metaphor of the photographic camera to explain human visual perception is limited exclusively to optics and eye function. While it is true that the eye works as a *camera obscura* (the basis of cameras), the camera will never be able to reveal the content of the pictures taken (Maiche & Gómez, forthcoming). On the other hand, for humans, it is actually a trivial activity to identify and enumerate the objects in our visual range (Holland 2009) – this is what some AD guidelines and studies advocate: describe what you see (Snyder 2008).

Proximal stimuli are often ambiguous, since retinas are flat surfaces where a tri-dimensional world is reflected with depth. This allows for the same proximal stimuli to correspond to different objects in real life, i.e. a pencil held at a few centimetres from an eye may generate the same stimuli as a tree trunk 100 metres away. Hence, compared with the camera, we do not simply register pictures. Nowadays we know that our perception is far from a simple reflection of the world but it is instead an *interpretation*. We interpret from previous knowledge and experiences stored in our memory, as well as from many other factors, such as our emotional state, cultural context, personal expectations, etc. See for example the work of Purves, Lotto and Nundy relating to visual illusions (2002). They propose that what we see is what the stimulus signified to us in the past, indicated by behavioural experiences of success or failure, rather than what it actually is in the present. Thus, in order to perceive we need some knowledge which will allow us to untangle these situations through the generation of a concrete situational interpretative hypothesis. In short, for each case we don't perceive solely what is gathered by the retina, but what the brain establishes according to an interpretative hypothesis. This mechanism provides complementary information to that provided by light, allowing for a better environmental adaptation and hence a higher chance of survival (Gibson 1986).

During our everyday exploration of the world, and whilst we are generally unaware of it, our eyes jump from one point to another. These fast eye movements are called saccades. Eye movements are important since humans only have high visual accuracy in the fovea, which is a tiny region of the retina.

Through eye movements, we can direct the fovea towards those areas of interest within the visual field. During a saccadic movement there is no visual perception, i.e. the visual system acts as a corrector whose objective is to maintain a stable perception of time and space through what is called saccadic suppression (Burr, Morrone & Ross 1996). It is possible to check this mechanism; if we look into a mirror from one eye to the other, we will never see the eye-movement. Without this mechanism, vision would be reminiscent of a blurred film. Between two saccades there are fixations: periods of relative stillness that allow the eye to look clearly at the chosen focused area. When looking, we don't capture an instant detailed picture of the surrounding world, but instead capture the most relevant information through a perceptive strategy.

Eye movements are directed by visual attention and this plays a key role in the active process of visual perception. It can be said that visual perception (and perception in general) has a sensorymotor aspect (O' Regan & Noë 2001). Personal experience and expectations provide a large amount of the information needed to provide meaning to the flux of visual data input from the retina. For this, and indeed in every moment, an active exploratory process of the visual range is guided by cognitive needs. Alfred Yarbus (1967) showed how eye movements are revealing with regards to one's exploratory strategies when looking at a picture. In his experiments Yarbus presented his subjects with a set of images in order to study patterns of eye movement. Figure 1 shows different patterns of eye movement on the same picture when subjects were required to provide different information about the image: 1. Free examination; 2. Estimate material circumstances of the family; 3. Give the ages of the people; 4. Surmise what the family had been doing before the arrival of the unexpected visitor; 5. Remember the clothes worn by the people; 6. Remember positions of the people and objects in the room; 7. Estimate how long the visitor had been away from the family.

In figure 1, there are some straight thin lines which represent fast and ballistic eye-movements while the subject explores a scene: the saccades. The densest points along the lines show fixations. Yarbus's results show how the eyes change fixation points in order to select the features of interest in a given scene. These results show how psychological factors drive the perception process. Likewise, when watching a film, different expectations, interpretations and motivational states influence which information is selected and able to be assimilated. We can conclude that our perception guides actions or behaviours to guarantee personal survival: visual perception is an active process which constructs environmental knowledge regarding our world.
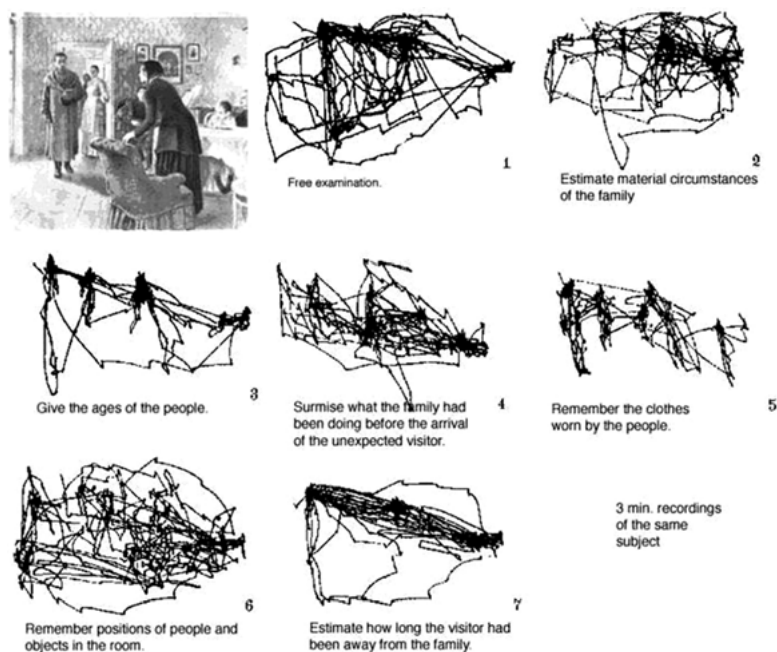
Figure 1. Eye-movement patterns of a subject required to perform various attentional tasks (Yarbus 1967: 190)

From this basic introduction to perception and cognition, we return to the original question of the different perceptions of the same film. When a film director decides to build up a scene with the addition of elements such as props and specific character traits, the intention is to convey to the audience a certain message which is enriched by the audiovisual experience. Even minute details are there for a reason, and they are often vocalized in the director's comments on DVD extras, when he explains exactly how each scene was conceived and filmed. However, when our eyes look at a film scene in an active way, searching only for those elements which are relevant, it is possible to appreciate only a proportion of these minute details.

3. What should be audio described?

There is agreement in most AD guidelines that continuity errors, mistakes, and other flaws (examples of which are shown in figures 2 and 3) should not be audio described since they don't contribute to the enjoyment of the film.

Figure 2. Left and right hand holding the cup in the same scene.

Figure 3. Moe drinks two different beers in the same scene.

But what should be done with elements which are a small part of the characterization and are only shown very briefly? We are referring to frames which are hardly ever noticed the first time a viewer watches a film, but become unavoidable as soon as they are spotted. After analysing a large corpus of films (cf. paragraph below), we noticed that in some instances such details have been described whilst in others they have been avoided.

Audio description faces the unavoidable constraint of time, and hence descriptions tend to prioritise crucial and obvious information. Nevertheless, even though in some films directors include specific information which may not be relevant to the development of the story, these can be enjoyed by those who pay close attention to minor visual elements, and either contribute to the development of the plot or help to build the traits of a character. Although these brief flashes of extra information may not seem to have a clear function, they have been included for a reason, and it is arguable whether audio description should omit such interesting frames. This issue has been raised time and again particularly following when an excerpt of Woody Allen's *Match Point* (2005, USA) was shown as an example of one of the first commercial AD releases in Spanish (see figure 7). In the Spanish AD, Ian (Nola's neighbour) is described as "un hombre negro de treinta y tantos años baja la escalera" ('A thirty-some black man comes down the stairs'). Is the colour of his skin a relevant detail contributing to the viewer's enjoyment of the story? To give a second example, why in the TV series *The No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* (Minguella 2008-9, BBC, UK/USA; see figure 4) is there no mention of the skin colour of any of the actors? Arguably, when most of the actors in a film are white, those who are black are there for a purpose (and vice versa), since the colour of the skin may have implications in terms of the portrayal of character traits, or perhaps the colour of the person's skin is intended to make some sort of unsaid political statement. But in the AD of films such as Michael Gondry's *Be Kind Rewind* (2008, USA), Mike, one of the two main characters, is described as "black". In fact, many of the other actors are black, and the neighbourhood where the film takes place is a black district of Passaic, New Jersey, where the jazz pianist Fats Waller lived: an important factor in the development of the story. The other main character, Jerry Gerber, is white, yet that is never mentioned. The owner of the shop, along with many other characters, is also black, and yet this is also never mentioned.

There are further examples of this irregular description of ethnic origin, such as in the opening credits of *Rat Race* (2002, USA), directed by Jerry Zucker, where Cuba Gooding Jr is audio described as "a black", while Whoopy Goldberg's skin colour is never mentioned in the audio description.

Away from the issue of skin colour, there is an example from the Spanish AD of the film *Torrente 3* (Santiago Segura, 2005, Spain), where the description explains how the main character, Torrente, uses two empty tins of pickles and olives to lift weights: "Sentado en la cama de su piso bebe güisqui y levanta pesas. Las pequeñas son dos latas de banderillas, las grandes, de aceitunas" ('In his flat, sitting on his bed, he drinks whisky and lifts some weights:

Figure 4. Frame from *The No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* (Minguella 2008-9).

the little ones are tins of pickles, the large ones are tins of olives'). Why is this information given when there are so many other details (see figure 5) to choose from in Torrente's derelict flat which may have given a wider overall impression of the slum he inhabits?

How much should be described when there is a strict time restriction is a question to which there is no straight answer. However, this has already been raised by, for instance, Vercauteren (2007), and also by Braun (2008: 21), who claims that "more research is required into audience expectations with regard to type and amount of information in the descriptions". Data from the study by Bourne and Jiménez Hurtado (2007: 177) of the Spanish and English audio-described versions of Stephen Daldry's film *The Hours* (2002, USA/UK) show the clashing approaches of two AD traditions, with a telling
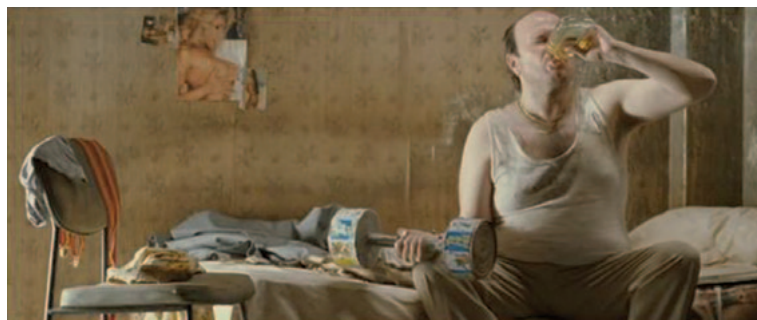
Figure 5. Excerpt 1 – *Torrente 3*. Torrente, the main character of the film, is lifting some weights in a fitness routine.

difference in the AD length of almost 3,000 words: more than 7,000 words in English and almost 5,000 words in Spanish. This *décalage* comes as no surprise considering the describer responsible for the Spanish AD tradition: Javier Navarrete.

Navarrete himself (2005) states that the Spanish audience does not require as much information as is provided in an English AD. Navarrete's succinct AD style is confirmed by Bourne and Jiménez Hurtado (2007), who point out that there was "comparatively little information in Spanish concerning character and setting", i.e. there was relatively scant "detail with regards to clothes, expressions and situational context". This is a very interesting issue which needs further research, since information provided by an AD may reach the point of saturation where an audience can neither process nor remember any further details. This is the case, for example, in the animation *Monsters Inc,* directed by Docter and Silverman (2001, USA), where the characters have the following uninterrupted AD:

> J.P. Sullivan is a huge shambly monster covered in bluey-green fur with purple patches. He has lots of teeth, little ears and small curved horns on his head. His short, thick tail drags on the ground. Mike Wazowski is much smaller than James, his body and head is just one green circular blob with a single huge eye above his mouth. He has two tiny horns and two very thin green legs. Mr Watermoose is a fat monster in a jacket, red waistcoat and a bow-tie. He has five eyes, several double-chins and walks on six long thick crab's legs. Randall is a reptilian monster with a wide fat head and a big mouth full of sharp teeth. Three long sharp antenae drip from the back of his head. He has long slinky body and like J.P. Sullivan he walks upright. He can also disappear by taking in the colour of his surroundings. Celia is slim with

> one leg and one eye, her hair consists of five live rattle snakes. Roz is big, green, has a wedge of grey hair and wears swept up glasses and badly applied lipstick. All the scary monsters have smaller monsters who help them, like Mike and J.P. Sullivan.

This case is quite representative of the issue, since the target audience is children and arguably the AD offered can be fully understood and remembered by young users (Orero, forthcoming). In order to begin studying what and how much should be audio described and how to discriminate between the information, an experiment was set up involving some perception tests carried out using eye-tracking methodology and complementary questionnaires.

4. Assessing the visual input in films

While watching a film, the viewer takes as his one goal the arranging of events. This sorting can be done with the help of cues gathered from the many elements present in a film narration (Bordwell 1985). However, while we may perceive several sensorial inputs simultaneously, for example being aware of the colour of the tiles in the toilet whilst realizing that the toilet paper is finished (Tallis 2008), we can only *focus* on small pieces of information and express one idea at a time (Chafe 1980). Therefore, although we can perceive many simultaneous visual and auditory inputs, we can only express one of these at a time. Which one will be chosen when performing an audio description? Trying to understand what information should be prioritised when drafting an AD led us to design and set up the following experiment.

4.1 Objective

We have designed our experiment departing from Holsanova's (2008) assertion that verbal and visual foci are the two windows to the mind, and that they are the basic components that need to be studied in order to understand the cognitive process of the reception of an audiovisual product, and the epigonic activity of producing a narrative text. On one hand, verbal focus is "the basic discourse-structuring element that contains activated information" (Holsanova 2008: 6). This information is considered a central element in the speech unit and it usually takes the form of a sentence or a clause. In their research, both Chafe (1980) and Holsanova (1996, 2008) commence by using data gathered from spoken utterances, and we have also prepared questionnaires which will elicit oral comments. On the other hand, verbal focus is a unit which, according to Chafe (1980), coincides with one idea, taking into consideration the fact that the human mind can only formulate one idea at a

time. This fits with the departing hypothesis of Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1986) as applied to audio description. When there are multiple pieces of semiotic information available, which is the prominent single idea that is chosen to be audio described?

In this study we want to test if the AD of minute details offered in films matches the eye gaze and its intensity. There are many elements in a film which we could have chosen to create the material for our experiment, but it was decided to test the most important element in film narrative: the character (Bordwell 1985). In order to narrow down which features to test from the character, we examined the three different character components as suggested by Phelan (1996: 216): the synthetic, the thematic, and the mimetic (see section 3.3).

Prior to testing the correlation between AD and the perception of minute details, it is necessary to check what is perceived and what is processed. That is, how far people's perception of the same visual input will produce uniform perception and cognitive experiences, as has been examined by Romero-Fresco (forthcoming) regarding when people watch television news. Interestingly, Romero-Fresco shows how the perception of subjects exposed to the same excerpt of news varies considerably to the extent that some participants stated that Tony Blair was present in a news clip, an assertion which was in fact untrue.

4.2 Experiment Design

Following Holsanova's (2008) experiments testing both the verbal and visual foci, we decided to embark on an experiment where visual input would be measured through eye-tracking technology and questionnaires.

Close attention was paid to the choice of video segments, as we had to find representative elements condensed into a very short time span. As explained by Germeis and d'Ydewalle (2007: 458), "films consist of a series of shots edited together to make a coherent visual story. A shot is a single run of the camera, while a cut is the transition between the end of one shot and the beginning of the next." The segments used were part of a shot offering ample information. In a sense one could say that the shots were saturated with information and detail, since in a two-minute clip the element which is the object of analysis is shown without any preamble. The choice of clips was governed by the issues which we wanted to test, in this case the three different components of a character: synthetic, thematic and mimetic –explained below–.

4.3 *The corpus*

With all these considerations as the basis for the research, data was gathered through user tests examining the perception of sensorial stimuli in the form of three different excerpts, each chosen for a different reason (see figures 5, 6 and 7). The films used were *Torrente 3* (S. Segura, 2005, Spain), *Raising Helen* (Garry Marshall, 2004) and *Match Point* (W. Allen, 2005, USA). The clips lasted 47 seconds, 54 seconds and 34 seconds, respectively and were shown without any audio in order to avoid exogenous attention control.

In the classification of characters by Phelan (1996: 216), we find the s*ynthetic* – a character that "plays a specific role in the construction of narrative as made object". Torrente, portrayed in the first excerpt (see figure 5), has been chosen as a representative of this type.

It is important to note all the details which surround Torrente: his clothes, his haircut, his moustache, etc., and also the many elements which are present in his flat. This extreme characterisation is a significant part of the film's narrative which, after all, is the portrayal of an archetypal Spanish fascist in 21st century Spain. Torrente is a right-wing Francoist ex-cop; he is selfish, petty, chauvinistic, misogynistic, racist and homophobic. His attitudes towards disability, religion and sex are as politically incorrect as humanly possible. This clip is chosen in order to check if the audience looks at the weights he is lifting, since they are very 'do-it-yourself' made as they are from recycled cans of pickles and olives regularly sold in bars and restaurants. The film *Torrente 3* was audio described in Spanish in 2005, and precise information regarding the weights was provided: "Sentado en la cama de su piso bebe güisqui y levanta pesas. Las pequeñas son dos latas de banderillas, las grandes, de aceitunas" ('In his flat, sitting on his bed he drinks whisky and lifts some weights: the little ones are tins of pickles, the large ones are tins of olives'). The key question here was how many people would notice the cans of olives and pickles without the exogenous attention control of the audio description?

The second excerpt was taken from *Raising Helen*, and was chosen to represent the *thematic* character, defined as "any character representative of one or more groups and functions in one way or another to advance the narrative's thematic concern" (Phelan 1996: 216). As can be seen in figure 6, two famous actresses are seated in the first row of a fashion show: Sofia Loren and Paris Hilton. They are part of a crowd of people watching a fashion show. The AD that is presented simultaneously to the selected scene read "Two male and two female models strut on to the stage wearing striking underwear. Sara in a pink stripped cardie spots Amber and her dog."

Figure 6. Excerpt 2 – Paris Hilton and Sofia Loren in *Raising Helen*.

The clip was selected to examine through eye tracking whether participants looked at both women, or if instead they fixed their attention on only one of them and, if this was the case, which one. The key point here is that human faces are the priority area of interest when displayed on a screen (Palermo & Rhodes 2007). In this case there is a crowd, and in that crowd there are two people of particular interest. Should the audio description mention there is a crowd of people including two famous actresses, or instead simply limit itself to describing a crowd watching a fashion show? The element of surprise was also present since this clip involves what can be considered as a cameo appearance by Sofia Loren and Paris Hilton.

Finally, in excerpt 3 (figure 7) taken from *Match Point,* we meet Nola's neighbour Ian, a young black man. In this case the clip was chosen to represent the *mimetic* character from Phelan's classification (ibid.), defined as a "character like a person" in the sense that they imitate real life and have the appearance of normality. In this case, the subject is the person next door. Woody Allen's choice of a young black person as the neighbour has the effect of normalising the status of black people, deliberately contradicting any existing prejudices or stereotypes held by the viewer. The neighbour is well-dressed, well-spoken and is shown to be a kind and caring person since, in only a very brief appearance, he both knocks on an old lady's door to see if she needs anything from the shops and also checks with Nola details of the walkman she wanted to buy. Viewers, according to Bordwell (1985: 30), are humans with many prejudices and personal perspectives, the "ideal viewer" being an impossible reality. Thus our interpretation of this character, and the

Figure 7. Excerpt 3 – *Match Point*. In the picture, Ian, who is Nola's neighbour.

excerpt was included in order to check if participants noticed the fact that he is black. Furthermore, should the audio description highlight this fact? The AD says "Un hombre negro de treinta y tantos años baja la escalera" ('A thirty-something black man comes down the stairs').

4.4 Participants

Eighteen sighted volunteers were recruited and took part in the test, comprising 10 male and 8 female. They were all university students and their average age was 29.5. Participants had normal or corrected vision.

4.5 Apparatus

Tests were performed on a Tobii T-60 eye tracker with a 60 Hz sampling rate and a 1280×1024 display. The recording had 0.5 accuracy, about 10×10 pixels at 50 cm distance from the observer.

4.6 Procedure

The test was set up to consist of two phases. The first phase involved the recording of the gaze whilst watching the excerpts. To achieve this, volunteers were sat centered in front of the eye tracking display and asked to adopt a comfortable position, keeping movements to a minimum. All recordings were calibrated in the eye tracker in order to guarantee good quality data. Participants were told that they would see three excerpts from three different films. They were also told to watch the three excerpts as if they were at home sitting

in front of the television. The first phase was approximately three minutes in duration. The excerpts were presented sequentially always in the same order (*Torrente 3, Raising Helen,* then *Match Point*), and were separated by a brief pause of a blank screen. After watching the excerpts, in the second phase volunteers were asked about the target element in each case. The questions were:

1) What does Torrente use as weights?
2) Are there any famous actresses in the crowd?
3) Was Nola's neighbour white or black?

To control any possible memory bias, the participants were also asked if they had previously seen any of the films.

4.7 Results

All participants were accepted, since recordings were correct and declared valid. Eye fixations data were obtained for the areas of interest (AOI) for each excerpt and heat map visualizations were created. AOI were defined prior to the experiment by the target element we wanted to test according to visual details.

Heat maps of all the recordings are presented below. Areas with a higher number of fixations (counts) during the scene are coloured in red. This indicates where participants tended to look. Heat maps were created from data of a very brief scene. The length of each segment calculated is mentioned in each case.
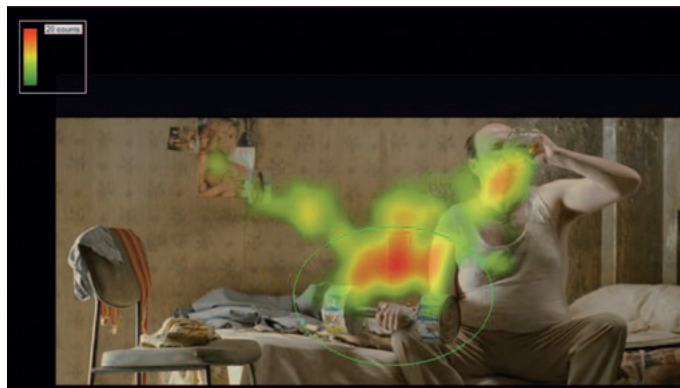
Figure 8. Excerpt 1 – Heat map for *Torrente 3.*
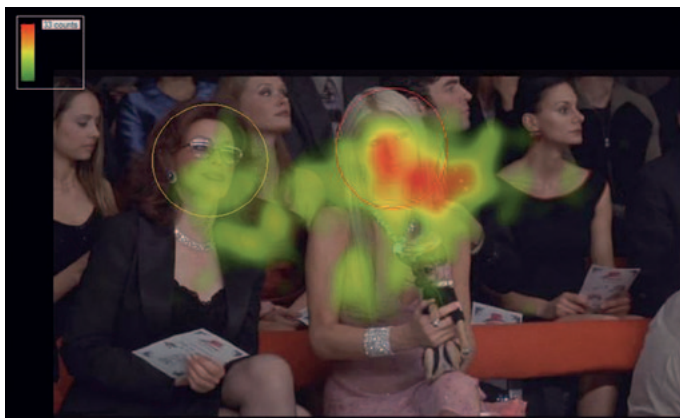
Figure 9. Excerpt 2 – Heat map for *Raising Helen*.

Figure 10. Excerpt 3 – Heat map for *Match Point*.

Data for excerpt 1 is from a 15-second scene. The main fixation length in the AOI is 4.35 seconds (standard deviation = 1.1 seconds). The heat map in figure 8 shows the accumulated number of fixations from all the participants.

Data from excerpt 2 is based on an 11-second scene with two AOI: the faces of Paris Hilton and Sofia Loren. The two AOI comprise the same area of the total image. A fixation of 4.6 seconds (standard deviation = 3.1) has been observed on Paris Hilton's face, and a shorter period of 1.2 seconds (standard

deviation = 1) on Sofia Loren's face. The heat map in figure 9 shows the ac-cumulated number of fixations.

Data from excerpt 3 is from a 4-second scene. The main fixation length in the AOI is 2.1 seconds (standard deviation = 1.3 seconds). The heat map in Figure 10 shows the accumulated number of fixations.

As can be observed from the images, all the target features have fixations. If we look at individual data, the same fixation pattern is repeated between participants and it could be said that the scan patterns for each excerpt are very similar for the different participants. Regarding the analysis of the sec-ond phase of the test (the stage that involved answering questions), for ex-cerpt 1, 33% realized that the weights were made from cans; regarding the second excerpt, 44% recognized the famous actresses in the fashion-show; finally, 83% answered that the man going downstairs was black.

5. Discussion

Since perception is selective (i.e. we cannot simultaneously perceive every-thing around us), attention mechanisms take place with the function of se-lecting one of the many information inputs in a given moment. Attention can be either voluntary (endogenous control) or automatic (exogenous control).

Results from the eye tracker show that eye fixations and scanpaths are very similar among all participants, suggesting a role for exogenous control of attention. In 1980, Just and Carpenter formulated the Eye-Mind Hypothesis, according to which there is no perceptible lag between what is fixated and what is processed. This hypothesis was often questioned in light of *covert attention* (Posner 1980), meaning the attention to something that one is not looking at. Thus, eye tracking recordings would often show not where the attention had been, but only where the eye had been looking, meaning that eye tracking would not necessarily indicate cognitive processing. It is pos-sible that when a participant fixed his eyes on a part of the scene (e.g. on Torrente's weights or Sofia Loren's face), his attention wasn't actually there but instead was actually somewhere else (such as on Torrente's wall poster or Paris Hilton's bust). Consequently, the part of the scene where the participant happened to fix his eyes would not necessarily have been consciously per-ceived. In this sense, we still cannot directly infer specific cognitive processes from a fixation on a particular object in a scene. At present, the consensus is that visual attention is always slightly (by between 100 and 250 milliseconds) ahead of the eye (Hoffman 1998), but as soon as attention moves to a new position, the eyes will want to follow (Deubel & Schneider 1996).

With eye tracking measurements, we added one more testing procedure to assess the conscious perception: answering a questionnaire. Data gathered from the second phase of the experiment showed how perception is not uniform amongst all participants. Another issue which should be taken into consideration when interpreting data is the participant's own memory. It is possible that there was some biased perception for this reason. 72% of the participants had seen *Torrente 3*, 1% had seen *Raising Helen*, and 5% had seen *Match Point*. Given the varied prior experience the participants had of the different films, the impact of this is difficult to assess. That said, it should also be noted that tests were performed in the summer of 2009, with the films having been released in 2004 and 2005. The ideal situation would have been that no participant had previously seen any of the films.

Regarding our results, this implies that fixation on a specific element does not automatically mean that information is processed and remembered. It can be said that covert attention is implied, since there isn't agreement between eye-tracker data and questionnaire data. For this reason, issues such as movement in the film as AOI should be studied, or at least taken into consideration, such as the movement of Torrente's weights. Is attention focussed on the weights because they provide essential clues to the development of the character and the plot of the film, or are the results obtained due to the eye scanning for movement? Matching these two sources of information allows us to observe the disagreement between fixations and perception, and this will be the starting point of a future article.

6. Conclusions

Some recurrent audio description research areas have been analysed and, given their importance, it is clear that they need to be studied further. Take for example the theory that perception stays at the level of the discourse or text type known as description, defined by Chatman (1990: 3) as "the evocation of the properties of objects for their own sake". This essentially means that description performs the same function as a camera. Perception is the sensorial stage before cognition which in turn would correspond to the text type known as narration. It would be very interesting to proceed along this line of research in order to evaluate the different text types (description vs. narration) and the function of each according to cognitive requirements, taking into account the point made by Chatman (1990: 2), "the old prejudice that Narrative somehow dominates Description. Most texts utilize one overriding text-type, but this is generally subserved by other text-types".

Regarding the data obtained from the three-clip analysis, a quick comparison was established with the interest shown on some spots by sighted viewers and the existing commercial ADs available on DVD. In all three cases there was no correlation between what was audio described in the commercial DVD and the areas of interests identified by the study. Again, this correspondence shows the deviation from the information offered in the AD and the visual clues, used by sighted viewers to construct the lineal narrative. The disparity of information may correspond to what is a recurrent topic in AD, namely "subjectivity", a much maligned term in AD, though unavoidable since we are in the realm of creative writing. We also need to take into consideration the relevance of information according to each person who watches and then drafts the AD, hence while in Translation Studies the term "subjective" translation has never been an issue, perhaps we could move away from this tendency in the field of research in AD. The reality of AD scripts as human constructs, with all its possible interpretations is a fact. Research in this issue should take more interesting directions such as understanding basic narratological elements and their function, as in the work of Kruger (2009 & 2010) and Vercauteren (forthcoming).

Finally, given the lack of a critical mass regarding audio description, we would like to highlight some points which should be given due consideration when embarking on this type of research. Close attention was paid to the choice of video segments (Germeis & d'Ydewalle 2007). The segments used were part of a shot offering ample information. Little attention was paid to the perceptual processing of film segments (Hochberg 1986; Hochberg & Brooks 1996), since the element under investigation was extracted from the environment of a cut. That said, the level and intensity of attention required when watching a two-minute segment without audio and a ninety-minute film must vary considerably. Can evaluation performed under such different circumstances still count as a valid analysis of perception, attention, memory, and cognition?

Regarding the interpretation of data, a key consideration is the fact that subjects were not watching the clips in a natural and relaxed environment. An ideal situation would be to conduct tests without the knowledge of the participants. How a relaxing and cosy atmosphere can be achieved in user labs, even if only still offering a *simulation of* home conditions, is an interesting challenge.

To conclude, once the technology is understood and the range of its use properly evaluated, it may well be that eye tracking could prove to be an efficient tool for the analysis of audio description. The new Special Issue from

Perspectives 2012, edited by Jan Louis Kruger and Iwona Mazur, where many articles take this experimental approach, highlights the level of interest in the methodology. While the technology is nothing more than a piece of hardware, with some detailed studies and careful methodology it may be possible to make progress in the field and obtain meaningful data which will be of great help when investigating some AD theories.

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PROFILING DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING USERS OF SUBTITLES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING IN ITALY: A QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the results of a questionnaire-based study carried out as part of the author's Master's Degree dissertation about Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing (SDH). In particular, the need to gather specific information regarding audience design will be highlighted in the paper, since this research field has long been neglected in Italy.

The questions were aimed at shedding light on the needs, cultural environment and world-view of Italian SDH users, by eliciting personal data as well as subtitle-related information. Moreover, the 232 respondents were asked to suggest improvements to SDH services in Italy.

Although these first results cannot allow definite conclusions because of the limited number of respondents to the survey, they might prove to be helpful for professional translators and subtitlers to better know their intended recipients.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente trabajo es dar a conocer los resultados de una investigación sobre subtítulos para sordos (SpS) llevada a cabo por la autora en el ámbito de su tesis de máster. En particular, se hace hincapié en la necesidad de disponer de la debida información acerca de las personas con discapacidad auditiva, un tema bastante descuidado en Italia hasta ahora.

Para ello ha sido elaborado un cuestionario que arroja luz sobre las necesidades, el entorno cultural y la visión del mundo de los usuarios de SpS en Italia. Asimismo

los 232 entrevistados pudieron dar sugerencias sobre cómo mejorar los servicios italianos de SpS.

Aunque no se puedan sacar conclusiones generales de estos primeros resultados, dado el número limitado de encuestados, éstas podrán ser utiles para los traductores y subtituladores, puesto que muy raramente poseen información sobre el perfil de los usuarios de SpS.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Accessibility and Disability Studies have gained wide recognition in the field of Audiovisual Translation. Emphasis has been placed above all on Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing (SDH) and Audio Description (AD) for the blind and visually impaired. However, Italy seems to be quite backward in terms of academic research in this field.

In Italy, SDH has been used since 1986, when Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* was the first feature film to be aired with teletext subtitles on the public TV channel RAI (Liso *et al.* 2002: 185). From that year on, TV stations and DVD producers have been providing SDH on a regular basis. And yet, only lately has the Italian academic community begun to show interest in the study of accessible subtitling. As a result, there are still few Italian studies that focus on the analysis of SDH from an audiovisual perspective. In particular, little is known about the Italian deaf and hard-of-hearing audience: this fact suggests the need for more in-depth investigations into the field of audience design.

1.1. Rationale of present study

Western societies heavily rely on audiovisual media as means to disseminate information. When SDH is needed for people who suffer from hearing impairment to be successfully integrated into the information society, a number of operational criteria come into play:

- Semiotics of subtitling: the interrelation between dialogue, image, sound and subtitles, and the influence of filmic conventions on SDH (Ivarsson 1992; De Linde & Kay 1999; Chaume 2004; Neves 2005; Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007; Sokoli 2009).
- Adaptation of subtitles: the much debated question of the appropriated level of adaptation as opposed to requests for more verbatim subtitles (Jensema 1998; De Linde & Kay 1999; Liso *et al.* 2002; Neves 2005; Ofcom 2005; Schilperoord *et al.* 2005; Di Silvio 2006).
- Spatial restrictions: the maximum number of lines available (usually two), the position of subtitles on screen, the justification of the

subtitles and the maximum number of allowed characters per line (Neves 2005; Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007).

– Temporal restrictions: the sound-subtitle synchronisation (*leading* and *lagging*) and the image-subtitle synchronisation (filmic conventions) (Ivarsson 1992; De Linde & Kay 1999; Liso *et al.* 2002; Neves 2005).

– Conveyance of verbal information: emphasis, tone of voice, accents, dialects, foreign language and humour (De Linde & Kay 1999).

– Conveyance of non-verbal information: the position, description and identification of speakers; sound effects; music and songs; silences (De Linde & Kay 1999; Neves 2005; Tercedor Sánchez *et al.* 2007; Neves 2009).

– Presentation of the text and legibility of the text on screen: the choice of the font to be used, font colours, type and colours of subtitle background (Ivarsson 1992; Ofcom 2005; Clark 2006a, 2007a, 2007b; Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007).

All of these criteria are influenced by one very basic but often overlooked variable: the actual audience, made up of deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers.

When giving prominence to the point of view of the deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, two questions naturally arise:

1) Are people who prepare SDH aware of who their intended recipients are?

2) Do they know what their needs, preferences, expectations and requests are, so as to deliver a high-quality subtitled product that actually serves the purposes for which SDH is created in the first place?

At the moment, no Italian institution provides structured training programmes in media accessibility other than single courses in university degrees, summer schools or postgraduate masters programmes. Therefore, in most cases, those who are asked to produce SDH generally acquire the necessary skills through first-hand working experience. Translators and subtitlers working in this field are usually professional translators who, being already specialised in interlingual subtitling, are presumed to be able to cope with the peculiar issues that characterise SDH. But, as the very term suggests, subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing has to cater for the special needs of a well-defined group of addressees.

When translators and subtitlers are called upon to translate an audiovisual text into a target language, they are usually aware of the audience they are addressing because they share (or at least they should share) the same target language, culture and world-view of their intended recipients. Instead, when translators and subtitlers are asked to produce subtitles for a hearing impaired audience, they do not share the same cultural environment, set of knowledge and world-view of their intended recipients, as they must be hearing people in order to be able to do the job.

Because of the current lack of academic and professional training courses offered by Italian institutions, as well as solid scientific studies regarding the composition of the Italian deaf and hard-of-hearing audience,[1] translators and subtitlers may often have no other choice than to try and guess the needs, preferences, expectations and requests of this peculiar kind of audience.

1.2. Aim of the present research

The empirical study herewith reported was designed so as to investigate on the composition of a group of Italian SDH users, in an attempt to identify their peculiar needs, expectations, preferences and requests.

The information thus collected might be used as a guide by professional translators and subtitlers in the definition of adequate SDH operational criteria to be applied when creating or adapting subtitles for the hearing impaired.

1.3. Chosen method of study and study design

The data regarding a group of Italian SDH users were collected upon questionnaire completion.[2]

In support of the main goal of this research, the present study set out to give a precise answer to the following questions:

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1. Only another article seems to have been published on the topic of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing audience analysis in Italy, that is, a research study conducted by the ENS (2002), the Italian National Association of Deaf people. However, this survey study focused only on assessing the levels of user satisfaction in television subtitling.
2. The questionnaire here presented has been developed and administered as part of the author's research for her Master's Degree dissertation, entitled *Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing in Italy: How and why. An example of production process and subtitling best practices for cinema and DVD industries*, defended on March, 30th 2011 and tutored by professor Elena Di Giovanni (University of Macerata). The results of this questionnaire were also presented by the author at the international conference on Screen Translation, ScreenIT2010, organised by the Advanced School of Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators (University of Bologna at Forlì) in October 2010.

1) What are the personal characteristics that shape the needs of Italian SDH users in terms of subtitling?

2) How do Italian SDH users perceive and judge SDH in its current form in Italy?

3) What other measures would Italian SDH users like to see being taken in the field of media accessibility, in particular, regarding subtitling?

The questionnaire was designed and structured so as to mirror this sequence of questions.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

In order to answer the questions posited in section 1.3, the survey was submitted to a wide-ranging sample of deaf and hard-of-hearing people. The eligibility criteria for inclusion in the study were: being an Italian citizen, and suffering from some kind of hearing impairment.

No hearing people took part in this survey. This choice was intentional, given the specific aim of the research. The questionnaire was to be taken individually and was anonymous. A total of 234 people took part in this study. Only two of them did not complete all the questions that were asked in the questionnaire form.

2.2. Preparatory work: procedure and structure

The survey had to be completed online by clicking on a URL address that linked to the free-of-charge website platform used to create the questionnaire, called eSurveysPro.com.

The questionnaire was available online from April 26th to May 26th 2010. The questions, twenty in all, were phrased and structured as: single choice questions; multiple choice questions; matrix choice questions; and free text box questions.

 The blank survey was posted on an online forum called "Sordità Online" (http://www.sorditaonline.it/forum3/index.php). This is a meeting place on the Web, where people with different degrees of hearing impairment join together regularly to discuss issues regarding not only SDH, but also problems linked to deafness in general. Social networks also played a big role in attracting more people to complete the questionnaire, as this was also posted on various groups on Facebook that deal with deafness and SDH. A list of these groups follows:

- FIADDA Umbria Onlus
- Tutti i sordi italiani in gruppo: iscrivetevi e condividete se siete sordi!
- Sordi italiani unitevi! Per la riappacificazione tra ENS e FIADDA
- Vlog Sordi
- Sottotitoli in tutte le TV italiane e al cinema
- Deafhood – Il popolo dei sordi
- Sottotitolazione e audiodescrizione televisiva cinematografica e teatrale

The choice to promote the questionnaire on new channels of communication was rooted in the very intention of the survey: that of gathering Italian deaf and hard-of-hearing people from different backgrounds, lifestyles, interests and ages, so that this research could be as wide-ranging as possible in the representation of a portion of Italian SDH users.

In order to answer the three specific questions that fulfil the aim of this research (see Paragraph 1.3.), the survey was structured and divided into three sections:

1) Demographic profile and personal data: questions 1-12;
2) Subtitle-related questions: questions 13-19;
3) Free text space for suggestions: question 20.

Finally, the relevant data gathered through the questionnaire were examined using the analysis tool of eSurveysPro.com. When cross-analyses among questions or groups of questions were needed, the information was processed using Microsoft Excel 2007.

3. Results

The results of the questionnaire are tabulated in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 below. They are presented in three paragraphs, each one corresponding to the sections in which the questionnaire was organised: 1) Personal characteristics; 2) Subtitle-related questions; 3) Suggestions and comments.

3.1. Survey participants' personal characteristics

	Characteristics	Respondents (%)
1 Single choice question	**Sex:** a. Male b. Female	129 (55.60) 103 (44.40)
2 Single choice question	**Age:** a. 0-14 b. 15-24 c. 25-40 d. 41-59 e. 60-74 f. 75+	1 (0) 19 (8) 97 (41) 105 (45) 10 (4) 0 (0)
3 Single choice question	**Education level:** a. First school degree b. Second school degree c. High school degree d. University degree e. Doctoral degree	4 (1.72) 69 (29.74) 129 (55.60) 30 (12.93) 0 (0)
4 Single choice question	**Education in schools for deaf and hard-of-hearing children:** a. Yes b. No	 135 (58.19) 97 (41.81)
5 Single choice question	**Current occupation:** a. Study b. Unemployed or cannot work c. Retired d. Other (work)	34 (14.66) 23 (9.91) 22 (9.48) 153 (65.95)
6 Single choice question	**Level of hearing loss:** a. Mild (20-40 dB) b. Moderate (41-70 dB) c. Severe (71-90 dB) d. Profound (91-120 dB) e. Cophosis (121+ db)	5 (2.16) 19 (8.19) 80 (34.48) 110 (47.41) 18 (7.76)
7 Single choice question	**Age of onset of deafness/ hearing impairment:** a. From birth b. 0-18 months c. 18 months – 3 years d. 4-19 years e. 20-34 years f. 35-54 years g. 55-74 years h. 75+ years	129 (55.60) 44 (18.97) 38 (16.38) 16 (6.90) 2 (0.86) 2 (0.86) 0 (0) 1 (0.43)

8 Single choice question	**Use of hearing aids:** a. Hearing aids b. Cochlear implant c. Other	149 (64.22) 9 (3.88) 74 (31.90)
9 Multiple choice question	**Method of communication:** a. Italian sign language (LIS) b. Oral language c. Both (LIS + oral language) d. Lip-reading e. Other	59 (20.77) 57 (20.07) 128 (45.07) 32 (11.27) 8 (2.82)
10 Multiple choice question	**Eyesight problems:** a. No b. Myopia c. Presbyopia d. Astigmatism	141 (57.55) 61 (24.90) 11 (4.49) 32 (13.06)
11 Single choice question	**Reading deficiencies (e.g. dyslexia):** a. Yes b. No	18 (7.76) 214 (92.24)
12 Single choice question	**Affiliation to Italian associations for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing:** a. No b. ENS c. FIADDA d. Other	38 (16.38) 173 (74.57) 12 (5.17) 9 (3.88)

Table 1. Socio-demographic and physical characteristics of the group of Italian survey respondents

Out of 232 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 202 were aged 25 to 59. The sample of people who took the questionnaire shows that two poles, namely the age groups 0-24 and 60-75+ respectively, were not adequately represented. The low participation of people aged 60+ can be attributed to the fact that the survey was posted on the Internet. New channels of communication, such as forums and social networks, have been used to disseminate the questionnaire, and the case could be that older Italian people are not quite accustomed to using them yet.

Regarding the educational level, the survey shows that the majority of respondents (55.60%) obtained a high school diploma, while 69 out of 232 respondents (29.74%) held a middle school diploma. This means that 85.34% of the sample would eventually have adequate to high levels of literacy. What is interesting, though, is the low number of respondents that completed a university programme. Actually, only 12 out of 232 respondents held a university

degree while none of them succeeded in earning a doctorate degree. These data mirror a very common situation in Italy, where disabled people in general, and hearing impaired people in particular, tend to encounter many difficulties when deciding to graduate or enter a doctorate programme.

The data regarding the professional background of the respondents testifies to the integration of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the Italian working sector. As a matter of fact, the majority of the sample (65.95%) turned out to be employed.

As far as the level of hearing loss is concerned, the majority of respondents (81.89%) suffer from severe or profound deafness, while 7.76% is completely deaf. These results may be integrated into the answers given to Question 7, which regards the age of onset of the hearing impairment.

The data gathered in the present study reveal that more than half of the respondents (55.60%) are born deaf, while 18.97% of the respondents became deaf aged 0 to 18 months and 16.38% of the respondents became deaf aged 18 months to 3 years. The results obtained by cross-analysing the answers given to Questions 6 and 7 (see Chart 1 below) show that the majority of respondents who suffer from severe, profound or total deafness were born deaf or started to suffer from deafness before having turned 3. As Adams & Rohring (2004: 17) state,

> the age of onset of hearing loss is important as a base for acquiring and using spoken language. Individuals who experience a hearing loss before they acquire speech and spoken language, typically before the age of 3, are considered to have prelingual hearing loss.

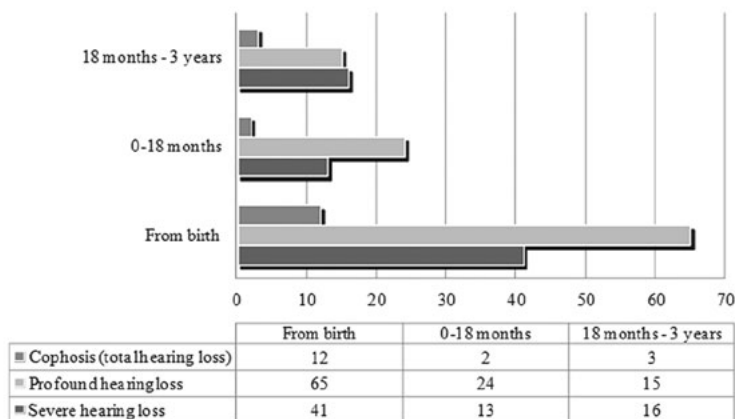|	From birth	0-18 months	18 months - 3 years
Cophosis (total hearing loss)	12	2	3
Profound hearing loss	65	24	15
Severe hearing loss	41	13	16

Chart 1 - Relationship between level of deafness and age of onset of deafness (y-axis: age of onset; x-axis: number of respondents)

As shown in Chart 1 above, respondents to the questionnaire were mostly prelingual deaf people, who are most likely to use sign language as their first language. Actually, according to Adams & Rohring (2004: 17), "individuals with prelingual hearing loss […] are often delayed in [...] language achievement because they primarily use visual means to communicate rather than oral or aural means."

In this context, the use of hearing aids (Question 8) may help deaf, but above all, hard-of-hearing people to use the oral language as their first language, especially if deafness shows itself during the first three years of a child's life and if it is of a mild or moderate entity. The results of the present survey indicate that a vast majority of respondents (64.22%) use hearing aids, while only a small portion of them (3.88%) opted for cochlear implants. This last option is obviously a bigger and much more invasive choice, and this might be the reason why so few respondents have chosen to go through it. The choice of raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child according to one approach or the other, signing as opposed to oralist respectively, has consequences for cognitive and language development.

Notwithstanding what has been said above, many respondents do not use only one way of communication. The data that result from cross-analysing the answers to Questions 6, 7 and 9 demonstrate that a great majority of deaf respondents (those who suffer from severe, profound or total deafness) are also able to communicate orally, even though they know and use sign language too. In particular, here are the data concerning those who can communicate orally, as well as by using a combination of sign language, oral language and/or lip reading:

- 34 people born deaf who suffer from severe hearing loss out of 41;
- 54 people born deaf who suffer from profound hearing loss out of 65;
- 9 people born deaf who suffer from total deafness out of 12;
- 8 people who grew deaf aged 0-18 months and suffer from severe hearing loss out of 13;
- 15 people who grew deaf aged 0-18 months and suffer from profound hearing loss out of 24;
- 1 person who grew deaf aged 0-18 months and suffers from total hearing loss out of 2;
- 14 people who grew deaf aged 18-36 months and suffer from severe hearing loss out of 16;

– 15 people who grew deaf aged 18-36 months and suffer from pro-
    found hearing loss out of 15;
– 1 person who grew deaf aged 18-36 months and suffers from total
    hearing loss out of 2.

These results demonstrate that, even if the majority of the sample is compo-
sed of people who suffer from severe, profound and total deafness from birth,
the great majority of respondents are able to communicate using both sign
language and oral language. This result may also have been achieved thanks
to the widespread use of hearing aids by the respondents.

The following two questions (10 and 11) were designed so as to examine
the possible consequences of eyesight problems and reading deficiencies on
the reception of subtitles by deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers. As far as eye-
sight problems are concerned, these might negatively affect the legibility of
the subtitles presented on screen. Although the majority of respondents do
not suffer from any eyesight problems (57.55%), a relatively noticeable per-
centage of them (37.96%) does suffer from myopia or astigmatism (37.96%).
These types of eyesight problems might jeopardise the optimal reception of
subtitles, especially if deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers who suffer from myo-
pia or astigmatism sit too far from the screen, be it at home or at the cinema.

Another possible obstacle to the correct reception of the text presented on
screen is when deaf or hard-of-hearing viewers suffer from reading deficien-
cies, like dyslexia. The data gathered from the questionnaire show that only
18 out of 232 respondents (7.76%) do suffer from any reading deficiencies:
even if this is a small percentage, it accounts for an existing problem.

The last question of this section inquired about respondents' affiliation
to Italian associations for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing people. The majority of
respondents (173 out of 232) are affiliated with the ENS (the Italian National
Association of Deaf people), which is a body that represents and safeguards
the rights and interests of Italian Deaf and Hard-of-hearing people by law. Sec-
ond comes the FIADDA (Association of the Italian Families for the Defence
of Hearing Impaired People's Rights), with only 12 associated respondents
out of 232.

3.2. Survey participants' response to subtitle-related questions

The second section of the questionnaire addressed subtitle-related issues. The
questions (see Table 2) were designed so as to gather information about Ital-
ian users' subtitling preferences.

	Subtitle-related questions	Respondents (%)
13 Multiple choice question	**Which of these media do you <u>mostly</u> use with SDH?** a. Analogue television b. Digital television c. Satellite television d. DVD/Blu-Ray e. Cinema f. Other	 120 (24.59) 139 (28.48) 65 (13.32) 114 (23.36) 41 (8.40) 9 (1.84)
14 Single choice question	**How long have you been using SDH?** a. Less than 1 year b. 1-5 years c. 6-10 years d. 11-19 years e. More than 20 years	 3 (1.29) 21 (9.05) 39 (16.81) 72 (31.03) 97 (41.81)
15 Matrix single choice question	**According to you, what is the quality of SDH today in Italy?** *On television (pre-recorded subtitles)* a. Insufficient b. Sufficient c. Acceptable d. Good e. Very good *On television (live subtitles)* a. Insufficient b. Sufficient c. Acceptable d. Good e. Very good *On DVDs* a. Insufficient b. Sufficient c. Acceptable d. Good e. Very good	 43 (18) 78 (33) 64 (27) 37 (15) 10 (4) 98 (42) 72 (31) 38 (16) 19 (8) 5 (2) 8 (3) 28 (12) 42 (18) 75 (32) 79 (34)
16 Single choice question	**How many hours do you watch TV daily?** a. I do not watch TV b. Less than 1 hour c. 1-2 hours d. 2-3 hours e. 3-4 hours f. More than 4 hours	 1 (0.43) 24 (10.34) 78 (33.62) 73 (31.47) 32 (13.79) 24 (10.34)

17 Multiple choice question	What kind of subtitled TV programmes do you usually watch? a. Films and TV series b. News c. Talk-shows and entertainment programmes d. Documentaries e. Sport f. Other	216 (31.30) 194 (28.12) 68 (9.86) 130 (18.84) 65 (9.42) 17 (2.46)
18 Single choice question	According to you, which TV channels offer better subtitles in terms of quality? a. Rai (Uno, Due and Tre) b. Mediaset (Rete 4, Canale 5, Italia Uno) c. La7 d. Sky e. Other	117 (50.43) 44 (18.97) 2 (0.86) 55 (23.71) 14 (6.03)
19 Multiple choice question	According to which criteria do you judge the quality of TV SDH? a. Quantity of offered subtitles b. Type of language used c. Synchronicity with spoken dialogue d. Speed of subtitles e. Adaptation of subtitles f. Legibility of subtitles on screen g. Other	100 (19.80) 69 (13.66) 77 (15.25) 91 (18.02) 62 (12.28) 98 (19.41) 8 (1.58)

Table 2 – Survey participants' response to subtitle-related questions

The first question of the second section suggests that subtitles are mostly used by Italian deaf and hard-of-hearing people on TV and DVDs, while only a small percentage of respondents (8.40%) regularly enjoy subtitled films at the cinema. These data reflect a national trend, according to which only a few cinemas, usually located in the big cities, offer regular subtitled screenings (Pirelli 2005).

Question 14 regarded familiarity in using SDH: according to the data gathered through the survey, 72% of all respondents said they have been using subtitling for over 11 years.

Question 15 was designed with the intention of investigating how the respondents judge the quality of SDH services as they are currently provided on Italian TV channels and on the DVDs released in Italy. As far as TV channels were concerned, a distinction between pre-recorded and live subtitling was made, in order to account for all types of subtitles that are currently available on Italian TV channels. The answers to this question show that the respondents deem DVD subtitles as good (32%) and very good (34%). To the contrary, TV subtitles did not meet with as much success: only 47 out of 232 respondents thought that pre-recorded TV subtitles are good to very good. The majority of them (33%), instead, think that these are just of a sufficient quality. The worst results, though, were scored by live subtitles on TV: the great majority of respondents (42%) deemed them as of insufficient quality, while only a mere 10% of them judged live subtitles on TV as good or very good. This might be due to the fact that RAI, the Italian state-owned public service broadcaster, began experimenting with live subtitling only in 2008: according to RAI (2011: 6), in 2010, 46% of all Italian subtitles were created through stenography while 14% through voice recognition. This new service has since been used to subtitle mainly the news and talk shows and is still in its experimental phase. As far as the other private broadcasting companies are concerned (Mediaset Rete 4, Canale 5 and Italia1, and La7), no officially published data have been found regarding their subtitling policies to the benefit of their hearing impaired viewers.

The third question of this section regarded how many hours of TV the respondents usually watch daily. The data gathered from the analysis of this question show that the majority of respondents (65.09%) usually watch 1 to 3 hours of TV on a daily basis.

The following point in the survey, Question 17, dealt with the types of subtitled TV programmes usually watched by the respondents. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (31.30%) prefer watching films and TV series, while live programmes such as talk-shows, entertainment programmes and sport programmes scored lower percentages (9.86% and 9.82% respectively). The bad results reported by live programmes probably originate from the fact that they are usually subtitled live.

The last two questions of this section were designed to scrutinise how quality is perceived as far as TV subtitling is concerned. Question 18, in particular, asked respondents which TV channels they thought currently provide better quality subtitling. The great majority of respondents (117 out of 232) chose RAI.

Question 19 asked respondents to indicate which criteria they use in order to assess the quality of a subtitled programme: quantity was the most chosen answer (19.80%), followed by the legibility of subtitles on screen (19.41%) and the speed of subtitles (18.02%).

3.3. Survey participants' suggestions

The third and last section of the questionnaire (Question 20) was a free-text space question where respondents could express their personal preferences, expectations, requests and suggestions regarding subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Out of 232 respondents, 113 decided to take this question, thus adding a personal contribution to this study. The suggestions expressed by the respondents can be classified into four groups, which correspond to the most submitted proposals:

1) Request for 100% subtitling (commercial breaks included), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on all TV channels, especially on digital TV channels and on the public TV channels of RAI. Moreover, many respondents lamented the fact that they are obliged by law to pay a TV licence fee but that, unlike their hearing peers, they cannot enjoy all programmes as not all of them are subtitled;
2) Request for lower levels of adaptation, in favour of more verbatim subtitles;
3) Request for more subtitling at cinemas;
4) Request for TV broadcasters to pay more attention so as to avoid technical problems, such as the interruption of subtitles transmission in the middle of a programme or film, or after a commercial break.

Following are some of the answers that were given by the respondents to this last open question:

Respondents' answers to Question 20	Translation into English
Request for 100% subtitling	
Salve, A mio parere per ora sono contento a metà, perchè in tv non fa vedere sottotitoli in 24 su 24 ore, così sarebbe più giusto per dare e capire al 100%, noi abbonati paghiamo al 100% quanto noi sordi abbiamo diritto di vedere sottotitoli alla totalità. Saluti da un sardo	Hi, I'm only half happy, because TV programmes do not have subtitles 24/7, this would be only fair in order for us to be able to understand 100%, we pay 100% and, because of this, we have the right to benefit from total subtitling. Greetings from Sardinia
l'offerta è molto limitata,fa eccezione rai3 che però ha una sottotitolazione di scarsa qualità come il resto. Manca una seria offerta dedicata alle tematiche della cultura, medicina, politica..	the offer is very limited, with the exception of Rai3, but this is badly subtitled, as is the case with all the other TV channels. The offer is lacking, while it should cover the topics of culture, medicine, politics…
Si dovrebbe aumentare l'offerta dei programmi sottotitolati in tutti i canali Rai e Mediaset. E questo per quanto riguarda tutti gli orari di programmazione, non soltanto per la serata. In più sarebbe bello che ci fossero sottotitoli anche per i nuovi canali digitali come Rai 4, Iris ecc...	The offer of subtitled programmes should be increased on all Rai and Mediaset TV channels. And this should regard all showtimes, not only the evenings. Moreover, it would be nice that the new digital TV channels be subtitled too (e.g. Rai 4, Iris, etc.)
Attualmente in Italia si passa dall'analogico al digitale, ma i nuovi canali che si affacciano al digitale sono privi di sottotitoli. Provo molta rabbia per il fatto che almeno i film, telefilm, documentari non siano sottotitolati all'origine come il sonoro. Non comprendo il fatto che un film che oggi è trasmesso su un canale con sottotitoli tra qualche mese mi venga riproposto in un altro canale ma privo di sottotitoli. Mi auguro che si possa trovare una soluzione a questo problema. Se i sottotitoli fossero obbligati dalla legge a essere applicati tutte le nuove produzioni, i sottotitoli sarebbero indivisibili dal film. telefilm ecc.. e quindi essendo applicati senza ulteriori costi da tutti i media, la diffusione dei sottotitoli avrebbe la giusta diffusione che tutti i sordi desiderano.	As of today, Italy is moving from analogue to digital technology, but the new digital TV channels do not have subtitles for the hearing impaired. I am very angry, because films, TV series or documentaries are not subtitled from the very beginning as is the case for dubbing. I really do not understand why a film that is broadcast on analogue TV today is not going to be subtitled when is broadcast again on digital TV channels. I hope that a solution to this problem will be found soon. If all new productions were obliged by law to provide subtitles for the hearing impaired, subtitles would be inseparable from the film or TV series, etc.. and, therefore, if no additional costs arose, the diffusion of subtitles would be the one that all deaf people wish.
aumentare la sottotitolazione a qualsiasi tipo di programma	To increase SDH in every kind of programme
voglio aumento i sottotitoli su 24/24 ore tutti i programmi tv.	I want an increase in subtitling 24/7 on all TV programmes.
Mi piacerebbe vedere tutto SOTTOTITOLATO dico dappertutto almeno 90/100% in tutti i canali 24h su 24h e anche vorrei nelle pubblicità. Ricorda che in America sono molto avanzati rispetto a noi e qui ancora in Italia ancora molto indietro :-(	I'd like to have all TV programmes subtitled, and I mean, everywhere, in at least 90-100% of the cases, 24/7 and also during commercial breaks. In the US they have made huge improvements when compared to us, Italy is still backward :-(

I sottotitoli dovrebbero essere disponibili in qualsiasi programma, in qualsiasi spot, dovrebbero essere disponibili al momento dell'accensione della tv azionando ovviamente il tasto txt del telecomando. Noi sordi vogliamo questo, non che ci troviamo davanti un film bellissimo senza sottotitoli come accade di solito, che delusione.	Subtitles should be available on every programme, commercial breaks included, right away when you turn on the TV, by pressing the Teletext button on the remote control. We, deaf people, want this, and do not want to have to see a film without subtitles, as usually happens. How disappointing!
Vorrei che ci fosse una legge nazionale che obbliga tutte le emittenti televisive (RAI, Mediaset e Sky) a sottotitolare il 100% dei programmi TV come avviene negli USA e nel Regno Unito.	I'd like that a national law be passed, compelling all broadcasters (RAI, Mediaset and Sky) to subtitle 100% of all TV programmes, as happens in the US and the United Kingdom.

Lower levels of adaptation	
sinceramente non sono contenta, perché... 1 - i sottotitoli spesso è il riassunto del riassunto, inoltre i sottotitoli non correttamente ad esempio nel film uno dice: va bene (audio) ok (sottotitoli) non sono d'accordo... poi i sottotitoli: la frase è molto povera ed elementare. 2 - dovrebbe mettere sottotitoli 24 ore su 24 ore anche la pubblicità come l'audio... visto io pago puntuale il canone 3 - a volte sottotitoli le parole sono errate o "immobili" in bocca al lupo.	To be honest, I am not happy because... 1 – subtitles are often a summary of the summary, and they are not faithful to what is being said on screen, for example if one says: "it's all right" (in the soundtrack), you see "it's ok" in the subtitles, I do not agree with that. 2 – subtitles should be available 24/7, even during commercial breaks, as it happens with the soundtrack, given that I always and timely pay the TV license fee 3 – sometimes the words in the subtitles are wrong or they "freeze", all the best.
Mi auguro che la sottotitolazione migliori soprattutto nelle dirette, i contenuti siano fedeli al pensiero di chi parla e intelligibili e che la velocità di scorrimento sia tale da permettere l'intera lettura Auguri per la tua tesi	I really wish that subtitling would get better, above all on live programmes, and that their content would be more faithful and intelligible and the subtitle presentation speed would allow sufficient time for reading.
Purtroppo i servizi di sottotitolazioni non sono gradevoli!!! Ho notato che spesso ciò che dicono gli attori, presentatori ecc...e sottotitoli non li scrivono e si ha meno partecipazione diretta con i film ecc... per me dovrebbero scrivere tutto anche se parlano i dialetto o parole complicati...vanno scritti cmq!!!e spesso sono pochi film sottotitolati e seguo per nulla i programmi televisivi perchè fin da piccola non offrivano i servizi.. spero proprio che con il tempo migliori!!!	Unfortunately, subtitling services are not enjoyable!!! I have noticed that what is being said by actors, TV presenters, etc… is not often written down in the subtitles and this lowers the involvement in the film, etc… in my opinion, they should write everything down, even if the characters speak with a dialect or if they use complex words… they should write them down all the same!!! And the offer of subtitled films is very limited and I do not watch TV programmes because subtitled programmes were not available when I was a little child… I really hope that they improve as the time goes by!!!

la sottotitolazione, della tv, deve seguire fedelmente alle parole dettate dall'interlocutore senza mai sotituire o abbreviare (per es. invece di dire babbo, scrivono papa' e così via). Questo perche' ci priva di arricchire il nostro vocabolo o altre cose anche come per chi avesse le protesi acustiche e ha la possibilita' di "captare" le voci, con volume della tv alzata, mentre legge i sottotitoli (un utile allenamento per "sincronizzare" le parole come facevo a mio tempo) e trovando due parole diverse tra parlato e scritto potrebbe dare confusione alla persona sorda e con il tempo non si ha piu' voglia di ascoltare proprio perche' non si e' piu' in sintonia di sentire e di leggere in parti uguali.	Subtitling on TV has to follow closely what is being said by the character without ever substituting or abbreviating (for example, they write "dad" instead of "daddy" and so on). By doing this, we could enrich our vocabulary or it might be useful for those who wear hearing aids and can therefore "pick up" the voices, by turning the volume up while reading the subtitles (this is a useful training to "keep up" with the words scrolling, as I used to do in the past). Finding two different words could cause confusion in the hearing impaired viewer, and, as time passes by, the viewer could give up trying to hear because what they can hear and read is different.
sarebbe utile includere come sottotitolazione sempre il testo integrale quindi anche i detti o le parlate in forma dialettica nonchè i testi delle canzoni (ad es. in stile Karaoke). AUGURI PER LA TESI	It would be useful to always reproduce the text verbatim, including dialectal forms, sayings and accents, as well as song lyrics (e.g. in karaoke style). ALL THE BEST WITH YOUR THESIS WRITING
Vorrei che nei sottotitoli venisse riprodotto perfettamente il parlato, senza inutili abbreviazioni.	I'd like verbatim subtitles, there's no need for pointless abbreviations.
Che la sottotitolazione sia pura e integrale. Ciò rispecchia che la ricezione telesiva sia uguale per i non sordi che per gli udenti. [...]	I'd like subtitling to be pure and verbatim, in order for the viewing experience to be the same both for the hearing impaired and for the hearing viewers. [...]
Esiste una falsa credenza per cui il sordo è per forza un mezzo analfabeta, ne consegue che spessissimo i sottotitoli sono: diversi estremamente semplificati estremamente sintetici cosa che spesso consenste la corretta cmprensione del senso, ma ne fa perdere tutte le sfumature, cosa che impoverisce la narrazione	There's a false myth that deaf people are half-illiterate, and the result is that subtitles are often different [from what you can hear on screen], extremely simplified, extremely synthesised. This allows for a full comprehension of the overall sense, but prevents from catching the nuances. This negatively impacts the storytelling
More subtitling in cinemas	
i televisivi con i sottotitoli non si offrono quasi mai! Oppure quando vado a cinema con amici soffro perchè manca i sottotitoli	TV programmes are seldom subtitled! And when I go to the cinema with my friends, I'm sad because subtitled screenings are not available
Per i sottotitoli vorrei che almeno un cinema a Milano trasmettesse solo film sotottitolati in italiano sia in lingua originale che in italiano...per fare ciò è importante spingere udenti e sordi ad andare a quel cinema. In bocca al lupo per la tesi!	Regarding subtitles, I'd like that at least one cinema in Milan screened subtitled films both in Italian and in a foreign language... To this purpose, it would be important that hearing and deaf viewers alike went to that cinema. All the best with your thesis writing!

da sempre desidero vedere anche in italia in tutte le città i sottotitoli al cinema.so che è una questione di mentalità, ma mi auguro che la tecnologia ci aiuti!! complimenti x il test, molto interessante.spero sia uitle a tutti. buon lavoro.	I've always desired to go to an Italian cinema, in whatever city, and see subtitled films. I know that it has to do with our mind-set, but I really hope that technology could lend a hand!! Congratulations on your survey, it was very interesting. Hopefully it will be useful to all of us. Keep up the good work.
Secondo me sarebbe ideale sottotitolare anche i cinema ... Magari fare delle sale apposite x i sordi di modo che anche loro possano andare al cinema, tranquillamente come tutti gli altri ...	I think subtitled screenings at cinemas would be just the ideal solution... They could reserve a cinema screen for the hearing impaired moviegoers so that they too could go to the cinema just as the rest of the world does…
magari migliorassero la qualità dei sottotitoli, e soprattutto integrarli nei Cinema.	I wish that the quality of subtitles would improve and, above all, that they would offer subtitled screenings at cinemas.
Nelle multisale cinematografiche non esistono sale attrezzate per i non udenti come nella maggior parte in Europa.	[Italian] Movie theatres are not equipped so as to offer subtitled screenings, as happens in the rest of Europe.
Gradirei i sottotitoli anche al cinema. Nelle maggior parte della città italiane mancano totalmente!!!	I'd like to have subtitles also at the cinema. They are not available in the majority of Italian cinemas!!!
Da grande appassionato di cinema, quello che manca in Italia è la possibilità di vedere film in sala sottotitolati per non udenti.... sarebbe giusto consentire la possibilità di fruire del cinema anche ai non udenti.	As I am a big movie fan, I recognise that what is missing in Italy is the possibility to go to subtitled screenings for the hearing impaired... it would be only fair to allow deaf people to enjoy cinema screenings.
Avoid common technical problems	
i sottotitoli non devono assolutamente interrompere!!!!!!! moltisisme volte succede e si perde il filo, fa venire proprio tantissima rabbia non poter seguire tutto tutto per filo e per segno, non è possibile con la tecnologia del terzo millennio....grazie.!!!!!	Subtitles should never suddenly disappear!!!!!! On innumerable occasions, it happens and you lose the thread of the conversation, this makes me really angry because it prevents me from following exactly [what's going on on screen], this is not acceptable with all that the third-millenium technology can grant…. Thanks!!!!
PARLO PER RAI.qualche giorni i sottotitoli funziona bene. resto male colpa operatore o altro per esempio quando c e pubblicita i sottotitoli fermo blocca o indietro o niente. mi sono inervosito. penso operatore va bar o bagno.cosi i film cominciato dopo pubblicita operatore ancora pausa. soprattutto i sottotiloli non funziona bene quando ce pubblicita. In piu spesso film che ho visto c era sottotitoli.in poi film stesso titolo non ce sottotitoli.e un tecnologia obsoleto [...]	I'M TALKING ABOUT RAI. On some days everything works just fine. In the rest of the cases, it all gets messed up, it's the operators fault, or for example, during commercial breaks subtitles disappear or stop working. I get angry and I think that maybe the operator has gone to the bar or to the toilet. After the commercial break, subtitles still do not appear. This happens mainly when there are commercial breaks. Plus, subtitles were available on films in the past, the same films that now come without subtitles. It's an obsolete technology […]

| Purtroppo i sottotitoli in tv in italia fanno schifo, perchè non funzionano bene e speravo che miglioravano ogni anno e invece no mi sbaglio. all'estero credo che hanno fatto un passo gigante rispetto all'italia. | Unfortunately, TV subtitling in Italy sucks, because they do not work smoothly. I was hoping they would get better year after year, but I was wrong. They have done giant steps abroad when compared to Italy. |

Table 3 – Selection of survey participants' answers to Question 20

4. Discussion

In the present study, respondents to the questionnaire were asked a series of questions aimed at identifying their needs, preferences, expectations and requests. Personal and subtitle-related information as well as suggestions and comments were elicited to this purpose.

The results obtained from the present questionnaire-based research provide an initial framework within which to study the composition of the Italian users of SDH. In particular, they inform us about the main personal and physical characteristics of the participants and about respondents' preferences and suggestions regarding SDH.

Judging from the answers received from the surveyed group, the majority of respondents are adult, male viewers, who attended special schools for deaf children. Whether people have been educated in special schools for deaf children may make a difference in terms of the first language spoken. In fact, children who attend these special schools are usually, even though not necessarily, taught LIS (the Italian Sign Language) as their first language. This has consequences in terms of decoding strategies used when reading written texts, such as the subtitles that appear on screen. It is indeed believed that deaf people who use sign language as their first language use different decoding strategies with respect to those used by their hearing peers (De Linde & Kay 1999). Because of these considerations, it is likely that these people use sign language as a means of decoding written texts (e.g. subtitles) (De Linde & Kay 1999).

Most of the respondents suffer from profound hearing impairment and are deaf from birth, but because of their constant use of hearing aids, they are able to communicate using both sign language and oral language.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents do not suffer from eyesight problems nor from reading deficiencies, such as dyslexia. In spite of these last results, though, the questionnaire data also account for a significant percentage of respondents who are short-sighted, astigmatic or who suffer from reading deficiencies. Therefore, extra attention should be paid when deciding which fonts to choose for SDH so as to ensure maximum legibility. In order

to avoid any errors in the reception of subtitles, fonts with characters whose shapes are non-interchangeable and non-symmetrical should be privileged. In particular, as Clark (2006b) suggests, fonts that present the following features (such as, Arial, Helvetica or Univers) should be avoided:

- Confusable character shapes, including all the classic combinations (Il1|, S568, rn m, cl d);
- Reversible character shapes (bdqpg), which generate confusion for dyslexics and others with reading-related learning disabilities.
- Too tight default spacing, particularly for captions, which glow, hence blur into each other.
- Geometric character shapes (OGQ are near-perfect circles by design), which translate poorly into low-resolution media like TV.

Digital television will also allow for better designed and more legible fonts to be used, as opposed to the traditional AlphaMosaic font used until now in analogue television.

Finally, most of the respondents are affiliated with ENS, an association that tends to prefer an approach in favour of sign language, as opposed to the policy of another important Italian association of Deaf people, the FIADDA, which tends to support the oralist approach, and subtitling in particular.

As regards subtitle-related issues, the majority of respondents said they use SDH on digital television.

Furthermore, most of survey respondents usually watch TV for 1-2 hours a day, choosing films and TV series over live programmes, with a clear preference for RAI TV channels.

These results are closely related to the answers given to Question 19 about the criteria used to assess the quality of the subtitled programme. According to survey respondents, SDH quality mainly depends on the quantity of subtitles provided, the legibility of subtitles on screen and the speed of subtitles. When addressing this topic, it should be pointed out that Italy still lacks legislation compelling all public and private TV broadcasters, as well as DVD distributors and cinemas, to provide minimum quantities of SDH per day (Remael 2007). However, RAI has committed itself to subtitle for the deaf and hard-of-hearing at least 70% of all programmes that are broadcast by its three public TV channels (RAI Uno, RAI Due, RAI Tre) by 2012 (RAI 2011: 6). This commitment results from a triennial agreement between the Italian Ministry of Communications and RAI. Hence, it can be understandable why most respondents chose RAI over other broadcasters in Question 18.

The speed of subtitles, as the third most important criterion chosen by the surveyed group to judge the quality of SDH, is another issue that has to be taken into consideration when creating or adapting subtitles for hearing impaired audiences.

In the final section of the questionnaire, respondents were prompted to express their suggestions and comments on any areas that they thought need improvement.

The most significant observation that has to be made at this point regards the claim for 100%, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week subtitling on all analogue and digital, private and public TV channels. On this topic, there seems to be confusion among survey respondents: in fact, one of the main complaints resulting from Question 20 is that SDH is almost completely unavailable on digital TV channels, while the results of Question 13 indicate that the majority of respondents use SDH on digital TV channels.

Another issue regards the level of text adaptation in SDH. This much debated and controversial topic seems to lie at the heart of a lot of respondents, who expressed the wish that Italian subtitles be less adapted than they currently are. As Durante (2005: 11) explains,

> Il grado di complessità dei sottotitoli della RAI cambia secondo il tipo di trasmissione, in considerazione del presunto livello di scolarizzazione e di competenza linguistica in italiano dell'utenza. Le trasmissioni destinate ai bambini presentano il più alto grado di semplificazione e di sintesi, seguite dai telefilm pomeridiani e dalle soap-opera. Anche queste trasmissioni sono abbastanza semplificate perché si presume siano seguite da un pubblico di un livello medio-basso di scolarizzazione o da persone anziane, con problemi uditivi. I film e ancor più i documentari sono invece i generi di trasmissioni dai sottotitoli meno facilitati. La sottotitolazione dei telegiornali è invece [...] integrale, mantenendo un linguaggio del tutto giornalistico.[3]

On the whole, the analysis of the results of the present questionnaire offers an indicative picture of the composition and preferences of a sample group of Italian users of SDH.

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3. The degree of complexity of the subtitles provided by RAI changes according to the type of programme that is being broadcast. The presumed level of audience alphabetisation and linguistic competence in the Italian language are taken into consideration to the purpose of subtitling. Programmes for children are the most simplified and synthesised, followed by afternoon TV series and soap-operas. These programmes are also simplified too as it is supposed that they are watched by an audience with a medium to low level of alphabetisation, or by older people who suffer from hearing impairment. On the other hand, films and documentaries are the least facilitated programmes. TV news subtitling is, instead, mostly verbatim and the language used is rather journalistic. [My translation]

Knowing what the needs of the intended recipients are is essential for the creation of high-quality, accessible subtitles. While the first section of the questionnaire was designed so as to give an overview of the personal and physical characteristics that shape the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing people, the second one was conceived so as to judge the current level of satisfaction regarding SDH services as they are currently provided on the Italian media (TV, DVDs and cinemas). Finally, the free text space for suggestions and comments in the last section of the survey put the real recipients of SDH centre stage, letting them take the floor and speak for what they really need and want.

Finally, the information resulting from the analysis of the data herein presented may have interesting implications for professional translators and subtitlers when creating or adapting subtitles for the hearing impaired. For instance, the collected data might be relevant to determine patterns for: adaptation, condensation, synchronisation, rendition and conveyance of verbal and non-verbal information (speaker identification, sound effects, music and silences) and presentation of the text on screen in a legible form.

Obviously, these findings are based on a very limited sample of the Italian population that makes constant use of SDH. The results here exposed cannot be taken as statistical facts, but they can be used as a guide by all those people, primarily professional translators and subtitlers, who need to have a more precise idea of who their recipients are.

The main limitation of this study lies in the fact that, as is often claimed, deaf as opposed to hard-of-hearing people consider themselves in a different way: born-deaf people usually feel a greater sense of belonging to a separate community, that is ruled by precise conventions and by a well-defined language – sign language – which is often their first language. On the other hand, people who become deaf later in their lives tend to "identify themselves with the hearing community. They have acquired the condition through age or disease but they mainly partake of the social order of the community in which they were raised" (Neves 2009: 155). The present questionnaire was posted on various places on the Web, attended by people belonging mainly to the first category, who thus recognise their role inside the "deaf community" and actively participate in it. In this regard, Ivarsson (1992: 140) states that people who are born deaf make up "a small but significant proportion of the population (less than one-thousandth)." It is therefore possible that the "much larger group [that] suffers from acquired deafness or hearing impairment" (Ivarsson 1992: 140) might not be well-represented in this research, as they would not be likely to take this survey, either because they think of

themselves as belonging to the hearing community or because they do not usually visit these websites. This may be the case of large groups of people who become deaf very late in their lives, or who gradually developed some kind of hearing impairment.

Future research in the field of audience design might take up from this initial and limited study and expand its scope thanks to more in-depth investigation, for example, into the influence that personal and physical characteristics (like the age of onset of deafness or the preferred way of communication) exert on the practice of subtitling.

5. Conclusions

In summary, the study that has been conducted here was aimed at defining an initial framework of the needs, expectations, preferences and requests of the actual users of SDH in Italy, in the belief that audience design should be one of the many preconditions that professional translators and subtitlers ought to be aware of before starting the actual work of subtitling.

By knowing the needs, expectations, preferences and requests of deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, translators and subtitlers can be better prepared to cope with the issues of adaptation, condensation, synchronisation with sound and images, rendition of verbal and non-verbal information legibility issues.

In addition, profiling Italian deaf and hard-of-hearing users of SDH might also prove to be useful to those in charge of deciding which subtitling policies to adopt, as is the case of TV broadcasters and cinema managers: the questionnaire respondents made it clear by expressing their suggestions and comments that there is still a long way to go before they can call themselves happy with the services they get. In the end, it is not all about quality, but quantity as well: digital TV broadcasters and cinemas will have to make this accessible revolution happen.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Agnese Morettini

Agnese Morettini holds a degree in Language Mediation and a Master's Degree in Modern Languages for International Communication and Cooperation, both from the University of Macerata. Her research interests include audiovisual translation and media accessibility, specifically interlingual subtitling, Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing (SDH) and, as of lately, respeaking and Audio Description (AD). At the moment, she is a freelance translator and proofreader, mainly in the audiovisual field (subtitling and voice-over for DVDs and broadcasting). She also works on script adaptation, spotting, timing and SDH projects for international film festivals (Venice Film Festival, Rome Film Festival and Turin Film Festival). As of June 2011, she is participating in a European-level project, aimed at investigating the reception of translated audio descriptions and audio introductions (from English into Italian) by a group of Italian visually impaired people.

Agnese Morettini es licenciada en Mediación Lingüística y licenciada superior en Lenguas Modernas para la Comunicación y Cooperación Internacional por la Universidad de Macerata. Sus temas de investigación abarcan distintos aspectos de la traducción y accessibilidad audiovisual: la subtitulación interlingüística, la subtitulación para sordos y, recientemente, el rehablado y la audio descripción. Actualmente trabaja como traductora y revisora autónoma en el campo de la traducción audiovisual (subtitulación y *voice-over* para DVD y canales de televisión). Se ocupa también de adaptación de guiones, *spotting*, *timing* y subtitulación para sordos en ocasión de festivales de cine internacionales (Festival Internacional de Cine de Venecia, Festival de Cine de Roma, Turín Film Festival). A partir de junio de 2011, participa en un proyecto a nivel europeo que tiene como objetivo investigar la recepción de audio descripciones y audio introducciones, traducidas del inglés al italiano, por parte de un grupo de discapacitados visuales italianos.

MUSEOS PARA TODOS. LA TRADUCCIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN PARA ENTORNOS MULTIMODALES COMO HERRAMIENTA DE ACCESIBILIDAD UNIVERSAL[1]

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Resumen

La Traducción Audiovisual (TAV) tiene la responsabilidad científica de desarrollar metodologías de análisis para el fenómeno textual de la multimodalidad así como para sus estrategias de traducción, a la vez que ha de proporcionar a los estudios en accesibilidad universal una poderosa herramienta de acceso al conocimiento.

Este artículo ofrece reflexiones en torno a los fundamentos teóricos de la TAV y a la proyección de estos en nuevos perfiles profesionales; todo ello aplicado a la accesibilidad museística universal.

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1. Proyecto AMATRA (P07-SEJ/2660).

Abstract

"Museums for All. Translation and interpreting for multimodal spaces as a tool for universal accessibility"

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has a scientific responsibility to develop analytical methodologies for the textual phenomenon of multimodality, and for the translation strategies associated with it. At the same time, it should aim to provide studies of universal accessibility with a powerful tool for facilitating access to knowledge.

This article offers some reflections on the theoretical foundations of AVT and considers how these are projected in the creation of new professional profiles, with specific application to universal accessibility in the museums.

Palabras clave: Traducción audiovisual. Multimodalidad. Accesibilidad universal. Acceso al conocimiento. Museo.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation. Multimodality. Universal accessibility. Access to knowledge. Museum.

1. Introducción

La Traducción Audiovisual (TAV) como modalidad y corriente dentro de los Estudios de Traducción tiene varios retos ante sí que son a la vez grandes oportunidades de expansión y de su confirmación como disciplina teórica y metodológicamente fundada. En primer lugar, la TAV se encuentra ante el reto de desarrollar innovadoras metodologías de análisis para el fenómeno de la multimodalidad y las estrategias de traducción que la caracterizan. Aunque la multimodalidad ha sido desde siempre algo inherente a cualquier fenómeno textual, es desde hace unos años cuando parece existir un interés real por desvelar sus propiedades semióticas, el acceso cognitivo que la caracteriza, así como su potencial semántico (Ventola *et al.* 2004: 2). El fenómeno social de crear textos multimodales donde imagen, sonido, materia y lenguaje escrito alcanzan una cooperación semántica igualitaria es el más sobresaliente entre la textualidad actual. En este sentido, le corresponde a la TAV seleccionar las teorías que explican de forma más adecuada la composición multimodal del TO de cara a la posterior traducción; teorías o constructos teóricos que predigan y expliquen la funcionalidad de cada modo y su interacción con el resto, así como las posibles dificultades de traducción que éstos entrañen. Para ello, la TAV ha de hacerse eco de los análisis de corpus multimodal existentes (Baldry 2007 y Bateman *et al.* 2007) y su aplicación a corpus paralelos, comparables o de traducciones en diferentes lenguas y códigos. Los análisis actuales en TAV no transcienden la introspección subjetiva y si bien éstos suelen ser interesantes como explicación para un caso concreto, carecen de la capacidad de generalización necesaria.

Por otro lado, la TAV tiene la responsabilidad profesional de integrarse en los estudios sobre acceso al conocimiento, así como aquellos que se centran en la accesibilidad universal como recurso íntimamente ligado al proceso de la traducción y la interpretación. La capacidad de hacer lingüística, cognitiva y socialmente accesible un texto de cualquier naturaleza y con la utilización de diversos códigos o modos para el mayor número de receptores posibles es inherente a la propia naturaleza de la competencia traductora. Las dificultades que pueda plantear la inmensidad del concepto de accesibilidad universal al

conocimiento como filosofía del pragmatismo traductológico se verá restringida por un estudio de géneros textuales en entornos multimodales (Bateman *et al.* 2007). Estos géneros, a su vez, nos proporcionarán las bases para la creación de los novedosos perfiles profesionales que nos esperan en la Traducción para Entornos Multimodales. El museo es el texto por excelencia y el representante más adecuado de este nuevo paradigma.

En este artículo, ofrecemos una reflexión sobre los tres retos planteados: (a) una reflexión en torno a la adecuación de las teorías sobre la multimodalidad y su capacidad de análisis de los nuevos TO, (b) un acercamiento a la traducción como herramienta para la accesibilidad aplicado al ámbito museístico y (c) la necesidad de un estudio social de los nuevos perfiles profesionales de la Traducción para entornos multimodales.

2. El museo para todos

La accesibilidad es la cualidad de un producto, dispositivo, servicio o entorno que describe en qué grado los individuos son capaces de acceder a él. En origen, este concepto surgió para referirse al acceso de las personas con discapacidad en el marco del Modelo social de la discapacidad, que reclama, por un lado, el deber de la sociedad de identificar y paliar las barreras que impiden o dificultan la integración social en igualdad de oportunidades y la autonomía de las personas con discapacidad y, por otro, la necesidad de incluir el concepto de accesibilidad desde la fase de diseño de un producto o servicio para posibilitar dicha integración y autonomía y para que sea reutilizable por individuos con diversas características (Thomas 2007).

Este nuevo concepto de discapacidad, unido a los cambios demográficos de las últimas décadas, ha llevado a una mayor sensibilización de las diferentes necesidades de los diversos grupos e individuos que conforman la sociedad, no sólo en relación a la discapacidad, sino también a la edad (niños, jóvenes, ancianos), el origen socio-económico y la cultura. Esta concienciación ha impulsado la promoción de políticas sociales más comprometidas con la garantía de accesibilidad para todos los individuos. En el caso de las personas discapacitadas, otro concepto central íntimamente relacionado con el de accesibilidad es el de autonomía, entendido el primero como una vía para alcanzar este último (Palacios 2008: 331). Para describir esta evolución del concepto de accesibilidad hacia la inclusión de otros grupos sociales, se ha acuñado el término accesibilidad universal o integral.

Aplicada al contexto del acceso al arte y la cultura, decimos que la accesibilidad universal museológica es la cualidad que describe el grado en que cualquier individuo es capaz de acceder al entorno físico y a los contenidos

de un museo, cualesquiera sean sus capacidades e interés personales. La numerosa legislación nacional e internacional y directrices en materia de accesibilidad existentes avalan la gran importancia que ha adquirido el acceso universal en la sociedad contemporánea.

2.1. Marco normativo e institucional de la accesibilidad universal museística

La proliferación de planes de accesibilidad universal o integral en museos se debe, por un lado, a las demandas y presiones de los movimientos sociales de colectivos discapacitados que a su vez han confluido con un cambio paradigmático en el concepto y la función del museo en el que éste ha asumido el papel de agente de inclusión social y democratización del conocimiento. Por otro lado, estas reivindicaciones requieren el apoyo de un aparato jurídico que defina las obligaciones de las instituciones culturales para con la accesibilidad universal.

Para definir el marco normativo de la accesibilidad universal en museos es necesario hacer una revisión de la legislación existente en materia de Derechos humanos (igualdad y no discriminación), Discapacidad, Patrimonio artístico y cultural y, finalmente, la específica sobre Museos. Los principales textos de estos ámbitos podrían resumirse, de lo general a lo particular, en los siguientes: a nivel internacional, la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos, adoptada y proclamada por la Resolución de la Asamblea General 217 A (iii) del 10 de diciembre de 1948, la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea, aprobada por el Consejo Europeo en el 2000 y las Normas Uniformes de las Naciones Unidas sobre la Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Personas con Discapacidad, aprobadas por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas el 20 de diciembre de 1993; en el comunitario, la Estrategia Europea sobre Discapacidad 2010-2020: Un compromiso renovado para una Europa sin barreras, aprobada por la Comisión Europea el 15 de noviembre de 2010; y en el nacional, el I Plan Nacional de Accesibilidad Universal 2004-2012 (AACEPLAN), la Ley del Patrimonio histórico español (LPHE) y la Ley 8/2007, de 5 de octubre, de Museos y Colecciones Museográficas de Andalucía.

Con referencia al marco institucional, existe en la actualidad un conjunto importante de guías y directrices producidas por administraciones estatales y locales, organizaciones y asociaciones no gubernamentales, fundaciones filantrópicas, instituciones culturales y educativas y empresas privadas, que son de gran valor y utilidad para aquellas entidades que deben implementar la legislación vigente en materia de accesibilidad universal en museos. Éstas provienen en su mayor parte del RU y EE.UU., países pioneros en este campo

(RCMG 2004; Smithsonian Institution 2000; American Council of the Blind; Arts Council England). En el ámbito nacional existe asimismo un número considerable de publicaciones, pero en su mayoría presentan un enfoque más general que las anteriores o bien se centran en aspectos relacionados con la accesibilidad urbanística, tecnológica y turística. Se aprecia, por tanto, en nuestro país una carencia de instrumentos que contengan información útil y directrices para la implantación de planes de accesibilidad integral en museos. Entre las escasas publicaciones existentes cabe destacar las de Consuegra Cano (2009) y Espinosa Ruiz (2002 y 2006).

2.2. Accesibilidad museística en la actualidad

Hoy en día la accesibilidad es un concepto muy generalizado y presente en todas las sociedades contemporáneas, ya sea de forma superficial o con mayor desarrollo y compromiso. Esta situación incluye al área de la Museología, donde es frecuente que los museos ofrezcan recursos de accesibilidad y se declaren comprometidos con la función del museo como forma de divulgación de cualquier tipo de conocimiento. Sin embargo, un análisis más detenido y exhaustivo de la situación mundial en este ámbito permite comprobar que los museos que han puesto en práctica planes de accesibilidad exhaustivos son un número mucho más reducido de lo que podría parecer y, normalmente, coinciden con aquellas instituciones más destacadas por el valor de sus colecciones y afluencia de público y con mayor prestigio internacional. Esto no es de extrañar si tenemos en cuenta que el diseño, planificación, puesta en práctica, evaluación y mantenimiento de un plan de accesibilidad museística integral conlleva una considerable inversión económica, pues requiere una gran dedicación por parte de una serie de profesionales de ámbitos muy diversos. No obstante, el fomento de la colaboración interdisciplinar entre la Museología y otras áreas académicas y profesionales, necesarias para el desarrollo de planes y recursos de accesibilidad, está impulsando la generalización de la accesibilidad en los museos de todo el mundo; una de estas áreas es la de Traducción e Interpretación (en adelante TeI).

En el panorama actual internacional existe un gran número de museos que ofrecen recursos de accesibilidad. Sin embargo, en la práctica éstos suelen reducirse a la supresión de barreras físicas para la discapacidad física o motora. Un número considerable de museos incluye además entre sus servicios algún tipo de ayuda para los visitantes con diversidad funcional sensorial, como dispositivos de audición asistida para visitantes con deficiencia auditiva, o señalización en braille y folletos en macrocaracteres para invidentes y personas con pérdida visual. No obstante, los museos que han implantado planes

de accesibilidad globales para todo tipo de visitantes son aún escasos en el panorama internacional y podríamos decir que casi se reducen a los siguientes: Thyssen Bornemisza, Museo Nacional del Prado, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía y Guggenheim Bilbao (España); Tate Britain, Tate Modern, British Museum y The National Gallery (Reino Unido); Louvre, Cité de Sciences et de l'Industrie y Centre Pompidou (Francia); Landesmuseum Mainz y LVR Landesmuseum Bonn (Alemania); New York's MoMA, Washington's National Gallery of Art (EE.UU.); y Melbourne Museum y National Gallery Victoria (Australia). De éstos, la mayor parte son museos de artes plásticas; el British Museum es un museo arqueológico; la Cité de Sciences et de l'Industrie es científico-técnico; el LVR Landesmuseum Bonn es histórico; y, por último, el Melbourne Museum engloba historia, cultura, ciencia y arqueología.

La accesibilidad museística se puede dividir en dos áreas fundamentales: (1) la de la accesibilidad del entorno físico; y (2) la de la accesibilidad de los contenidos, a saber, la adecuación de las técnicas expositivas y elaboración de recursos de accesibilidad para su adaptación a diferentes tipos de visitante. La siguiente tabla recoge la totalidad de los recursos de accesibilidad universal empleados en la actualidad por los museos anteriormente citados, con lo que conforma una relación exhaustiva de los recursos disponibles atendiendo al tipo de visitante:

General (adultos)	Guía multimedia: imagen, audio, vídeo. Audioguía adaptada a duración y temática diversas. Recorrido autónomo adaptado a duración y temática diversas. Visita guiada adaptada a duración y temática diversas. Colección en línea. Visita virtual en línea. Recursos multimedia en línea: *podcast*, vídeo, audio.
Niños	Audioguía infantil: adaptación textual. Guía multimedia infantil: vídeo, audio, actividades interactivas. Sitio web infantil: actividades interactivas. Taller adaptado. Visita guiada adaptada.
Adolescentes	Audioguía adolescentes: adaptación textual. Taller adaptado. Visita guiada adaptada.
Educadores y escolares	Guías didácticas para educadores (en línea y en el museo). Visitas guiadas adaptadas. Talleres adaptados.

Familias	Guía de preparación de visita (en línea). Material didáctico para la visita (en línea y en el museo).
Hablantes de una lengua distinta a la del museo	Guía multimedia multilingüe. Audioguía multilingüe. Sitio web y/o folleto informativo multilingües.
Personas con diversidad funcional visual	Audioguía: indicaciones sobre recorrido y ubicación, audiodescripción del entorno y de expositivos. Audiodescripción de audiovisuales. Locución de texto impreso. Visita guiada (táctil) con descripción verbal: autónoma con audioguía o en grupo. Plano en relieve. Maqueta. Modelo. Reproducción. Textura. Olor. Impresión en termorrelieve. Reproducción en macrocaracteres. Reproducción en alto contraste.
Personas con diversidad funcional auditiva	Signoguía. Visita guiada en lengua de signos. Subtitulado e interpretación de lengua de signos de audiovisuales. Transcripción de audio y vídeo. Sistemas de audición asistida: bucle magnético, lazo de inducción. Audioguía compatible con sistema de audición asistida.
Personas con diversidad funcional psíquica o intelectual	Visita guiada adaptada. Taller adaptado. Grupo de trabajo.
Personas con diversidad funcional física	Diseño de edificio e instalaciones adaptado. Mapa de accesibilidad del museo.

Tabla 1. Clasificación de los recursos de accesibilidad museística en función del visitante.

Cada tipo de visitante presenta unas características específicas que requieren unos recursos de accesibilidad diferentes. De todos ellos, en el panorama actual de la museografía ocupa un lugar destacado la guía móvil para museos, debido a su versatilidad y adecuación a diversos tipos de usuario. El incesante desarrollo en la última década de la informática móvil, también denominada informática ubicua o informática nómada, ha permitido la creación de sistemas cada vez más sofisticados de guías móviles que no sólo ofrecen al visitante una gran variedad de contenidos multimedia, sino también funciones de geolocalización, adaptación al usuario y de experiencia aumentada o

enriquecida e interacción social con otros usuarios. Así pues, en los últimos años hemos asistido a un aumento en el interés por el desarrollo de las guías móviles gracias a los avances en tecnología móvil, impulsados a su vez por el desarrollo sin precedentes y la generalización en el uso de potentes plataformas portátiles (*netbook*, tableta, PDA y telefonía móvil 3G), y de redes inalámbricas. La principal ventaja de estas tecnologías es, siguiendo el paradigma de la informática adaptada al contexto (*context-aware computing*), la posibilidad de proporcionar a los usuarios servicios adaptados al contexto a partir de la explotación de información tal como la ubicación del usuario, el tiempo de permanencia en un lugar determinado, los individuos y objetos cercanos y las actividades realizadas.

La guía móvil para museos, también llamada herramienta de interpretación móvil, consiste en un dispositivo electrónico portátil que permite la reproducción de contenidos en formato de audio, vídeo o ambos. Toda guía móvil consta pues de dos elementos fundamentales: (1) los contenidos, y (2) el soporte o dispositivo empleado para su reproducción y el modo de acceso a los mismos. En el contexto del museo, los contenidos desarrollados en la actualidad incluyen la audioguía general, la audioguía específica para personas con discapacidad visual, niños o adolescentes, la signoguía para personas con discapacidad auditiva signantes, y la guía multimedia general y la infantil. Con respecto a los dispositivos utilizados, éstos van desde el reproductor de audio digital, hasta el ordenador tableta, pasando por el reproductor multimedia digital, la PDA y el teléfono móvil inteligente.

El desarrollo de estas guías móviles suele contratarse a empresas externas al museo, cuyos equipos multidisciplinares de profesionales se encargan de todo el proceso, desde la creación de aplicaciones informáticas y las características técnicas (como sistemas de geolocalización del visitante y expositivo) del dispositivo, hasta la creación de contenidos, siempre en estrecha colaboración con los departamentos pertinentes del museo-cliente. Algunas de las empresas más destacadas en este sector son Orpheo, Pocket Proof, Ubiquity, Media Access Australia, Audioguiarte, Acoustiguide, Antenna Audio, Art-2Guide, Nous, Audissey Guides y iGuide Kulturaufnahme GmbH.

3. La accesibilidad museística desde la traducción y la interpretación

3.1. El museo como evento comunicativo multimodal: análisis del concepto

El fenómeno de los textos multimodales es el objetivo central de los recientes Estudios en Discurso Multimodal y de la Multimodalidad en general, así como uno de los focos de las investigaciones realizadas en otras disciplinas

como la Narratología (Ryan 2004), Análisis del Discurso (Dijk 2008 y 2009; Biber *et al.* 2007), la renovada Gramática Sistémica Funcional (Matthiessen 2007; Royce 2007), los análisis de Semiótica Social (Thibault 2007) y, ante todo, los análisis en torno a la recopilación y etiquetado de corpus multimodal (Bateman *et al.* 2004). Existe consenso en que la multimodalidad consiste en que el significado se construye gracias a la interacción de diversos modos o recursos semióticos, entre los que se encuentran el modo del código lingüístico, (diferentes lenguas); el visual, representado por diferentes tipos de imágenes, ya sean éstas estáticas o dinámicas o no verbales, los gestos y todo tipo de kinésica; el acústico y el táctil/material, si nos centramos en una representación artística material como la escultura, por ejemplo.

Por otra parte, los museos en la actualidad se conciben como espacios con una clara finalidad social implícita de difundir el conocimiento y varias finalidades expresas según las exposiciones permanentes o itinerantes que acojan. Estas finalidades condicionan el desarrollo de las actividades presentes, así como las funciones que la institución desee desarrollar. Una de las funciones básicas de todo museo es la comunicativa (Rivière 1993: 347), dado que el "discurso expositivo traduce el discurso científico". Con ello, el objeto expositivo se convierte, como todo concepto, en un objeto conceptual funcionalista, esto es, en una unidad de significado susceptible de ser analizada a partir de la función social y comunicativa que cumple. De ahí que la exposición, a su vez, se pueda y deba concebir como un "espacio de comunicación y de transmisión de saberes" (Santacana y Serrat 2005: 52).[2]

De este modo, el museo constituye un evento comunicativo multimodal e interactivo y, como tal, transmite el significado por medio de un discurso multimodal que podemos, de cara a su análisis, distribuir arbitrariamente[3] de la siguiente forma: (a) un nivel macrotextual (la exposición como género) y (b) un nivel microtextual (los objetos de la exposición y las relaciones que se establecen entre ellos como textos que actualizan tipos textuales), todo ello vinculado a un macrocontexto situacional determinado (el museo). La interacción le viene dada por el hecho de que la museística define a su público como agente museológico activo. El conservador científico no articula la comunicación entre pieza y público, sino que el museo sale de los muros

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2. Caballero García (1999) lo llama objeto museal y dice de él, citando a Rivière, que es un documento contextual.
3. Decimos que es una clasificación arbitraria dado que podríamos considerar el museo en su conjunto como un texto inmerso en un contexto socio-comunicativo y cultural como los propietarios, la ciudad, las instituciones o las funciones específicas que lo avalan.

no interactivos para conocer los discursos sociales y ofrecer respuestas a cada uno de ellos (Caballero García 1999), esto es, interactuar.

3.2. Elementos teóricos de análisis del espacio museográfico como TO

Actualmente, es difícil concebir una investigación textual sin que medie un corpus representativo de textos que la avale y que incluya un tipo de etiquetado que responda a las necesidades de análisis intencionado. Por lo tanto, para describir las posibles formas de hacer accesible un espacio museístico, en primer lugar, sería necesario hacer acopio de exposiciones accesibles para diferentes tipos de público, etiquetar la gramática multimodal de sus expositivos y relacionar éstos con las estrategias traductológicas utilizadas. Ese corpus aun no existe, entre otros factores, porque la comunidad científica está reflexionando sobre la forma de compilarlo y de etiquetarlo, y sobre las posibilidades de asociarlo a las estrategias de traducción accesible que se hayan empleado[4]. Sin embargo, su creación ofrecerá documentación y evidencias significativas acerca de las normas que se emplean al hacer accesible un tipo de exposición u otra, así como las particularidades traductológicas de hacer accesible un objeto museístico determinado ubicado en su contexto situacional, esto es, la exposición.

Uno de los requisitos básicos para interactuar adecuadamente es conocer las características sociales, así como las capacidades y habilidades cognitivas de nuestro receptor (Levinson 2000), de modo que se pueda plantear el discurso expositivo tanto en el marco de su macroestructura (género, tipo textual, tema, nivel de acceso cognitivo), como en su superestructura (desarrollo lógico del discurso), de forma óptima (Dijk 2008, 2009) y adecuada (Grice 1975).

Considerando, por tanto, la exposición como un conjunto de objetos conceptuales funcionalmente significativos que cumple un primer acto de traducción del discurso (científico) expositivo, estamos ante el inicio del análisis de género.

En primer lugar, hemos de considerar los elementos de análisis consensuados en la tradición de las teorías lingüísticas y de la comunicación en general. El propósito es predecir y explicar el comportamiento de determinadas estructuras semánticas y pragmáticas de un texto como el que nos concierne.

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4. En el proyecto AMATRA P07-SEJ/2660, financiado por la Junta de Andalucía, hemos compilado un corpus de textos audiovisuales en los que se han etiquetado y asociado al TO las estrategias de traducción utilizadas para hacerlos accesibles para personas ciegas (Jiménez Hurtado *et al.* 2010).

Desde un punto de vista de los estudios de género textual (más desde la lingüística funcional o la pragmática lingüística que desde la retórica o el análisis literario), el primer paso consiste en determinar, en el análisis, los dos elementos pragmático-funcionales más importantes en el establecimiento de la comunicación: el contexto comunicativo y social semiótico y, relacionado con éste, el conocimiento temático y lingüístico previo de los interlocutores (Levinson 2000). Entendemos contexto como un sistema dinámico de estructuras de cualquier naturaleza que son necesarias para comprender adecuadamente un texto y que condicionan las expectativas y las presuposiciones de los que interactúan (Halliday 1977/2003). Entre lenguaje y contexto existe una relación de covariación: cuando cambia el contexto, se da una variación en el tipo de lenguaje y viceversa. Cuando cambia el tipo de exposición, cambia el lenguaje modal del objeto en exposición y con toda probabilidad las normas de traducción que lo hagan accesible al abanico de público.

> Particular changes in context, for example variation along an interpersonal dimension of a more or less formal situation, or variation along a textual dimension of more spoken or more written, give rise to particular systematically conditioned changes in the language that occurs. (Bateman *et al.* 2007: 148)

La perspectiva de que el contexto está directamente relacionado con la naturaleza de todo texto es algo ampliamente aceptado en diferentes teorías más o menos tradicionales del discurso (Adolphs 2008); por lo tanto, hemos de entender, por un lado, la tipología de los museos (museos de ciencia, museos arqueológicos, museos de arte contemporáneo) como contextos socioculturales de las exposiciones y, por otro, las particularidades del espacio y el tiempo en que se produzca la exposición, así como la función particular que desempeñe, como un contexto situacional del objeto museístico.

Por otro lado, habría que estudiar los tipos de exposiciones a partir de las teorías del género textual multimodal y entender la macroestructura de las mismas como el desarrollo temático de la exposición donde existen unos contenidos dados y otros nuevos o focalizados en el sentido de Ducrot (1972). La superestructura, por su parte, es el diagrama que relaciona el espacio y el tiempo en una exposición, es decir, el desarrollo lógico de la ubicación de los objetos museísticos en un espacio y las razones lógico-espaciales que existen para ello.

Una vez estudiados los contextos (tipo de museo) y el género (tipo de exposición, conjunto de objetos y sus relaciones y su ubicación en espacio y tiempo) nos adentramos en el análisis del TO propiamente dicho: el objeto museístico. El objeto museístico es el TO por excelencia que consta de un

tipo de gramática multimodal en función de su naturaleza (visual, acústica, lingüística o combinación de ellos). Utilizamos el concepto de gramática en un sentido amplio y evidentemente susceptible de ser aplicado a los textos multimodales. En el caso del vídeo, esta parte central del análisis del TO incluye un análisis semántico de los objetos que aparecen en la imagen; uno morfosintáctico en el que se incluiría la morfología de los objetos compuesta por elementos tales como color, textura, tamaño, etc.; y un análisis sintáctico en el que se describe la relación espacio-temporal entre los objetos que aparecen en el vídeo y el medio en el que lo hacen. Finalmente, distinguimos en el estudio de la imagen el análisis pragmático-discursivo o perspectiva desde la que se presentan los objetos en la imagen. Evidentemente, este análisis gramatical del vídeo se transfiere a otros objetos en los que es necesario un estudio de los códigos visuales no verbales, como puede ser una pintura, una escultura, una ilustración o un objeto.[5]

> Taken together, these findings suggest that sequential image comprehension uses a grammar that extends beyond semantic associations between individual frames. The comprehension of graphic narrative is guided by an interaction between structure and meaning, akin to that between syntax and semantics in language. (Cohn *et al.* 2011)

Los vídeos que se integran en la exposición *Viaje al cuerpo humano*, por ejemplo, han sido analizados teniendo en cuenta este tipo de experimentos que relacionan percepción de una imagen dinámica y acceso al conocimiento de la misma. Si aceptamos la integración de parámetros narrativos en el almacenamiento e interpretación de las imágenes en general, podemos aceptar un análisis de estas en términos gramaticales. Ubicando al receptor ciego en el tipo de imagen (gráfica, natural, animada, real, etc.) y describiendo los objetos conceptuales (tipo de objeto) y su morfología (color, textura, tamaño, etc.), la sintaxis de la imagen da cuenta de la relación entre los mismos; y de si el movimiento se produce de forma no marcada (izquierda derecha) o marcada (otro tipo de movimiento en escena); o de si la perspectiva es no marcada (*eye-angled*) o subvertida (picado, contrapicado).

Asimismo, se incluyen elementos de análisis de la Teoría de la estructura retórica (Mann, Matthiessen y Thompson 1992) que describen la elaboración del contenido a lo largo de cada objeto museístico complejo. En el caso de la exposición que nos ocupa, hemos audiodescrito un módulo denominado

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5. Seguimos los postulados del estructuralismo y el funcionalismo de los estudios de cine representados por Metz (1973) y Carmona (1991 y 2002) y los del cognitivismo de Bordwell (1985 y 1996).

"Sistema nervioso", integrado por un conjunto de paneles escritos acompañados por objetos reales, modelos, imágenes estáticas y dinámicas y dispositivos interactivos. Entre los módulos, como en cualquier texto, no se activan relaciones retóricas estándares o prototípicas como la adhesión o la ejemplificación, sino que, en algunas ocasiones, entre los diferentes módulos, estas relaciones eran de un calado algo más complejo, como la expansión o la reelaboración de una información que había que traducir con expresiones lingüísticas que reprodujeran estas estructuras retóricas a la vez que no se repitieran en exceso o no fuesen excesivamente difíciles de procesar a la par que el resto de la información semántica.

La consideración de las cuestiones pragmático-discursivas se realiza desde tres perspectivas teóricas que ofrecen fructíferos análisis en ámbitos de la lingüística en general y la multimodalidad en particular. Independientemente de los estudios de público que realice el museo, en los que se obtiene información acerca del visitante prototípico en materia de expectativas, necesidades, capacidad de acceso a la información, interés y actitud ante una exposición, los traductores especializados en accesibilidad han de familiarizarse con aquellos análisis referidos a los conceptos de acceso al conocimiento, adecuación textual, relevancia y cortesía. Todos ellos han sido estudiados por la pragmática lingüística y pueden ser aplicados a la traducción accesible. En nuestra exposición y en el proceso de las diferentes modalidades de traducción e interpretación que hemos empleado, pero especialmente en el caso de la Subtitulación para personas Sordas y de la ILSE (Interpretación de Lengua de Signos Española), allí donde se activan términos especializados sobre una materia científica, se analizó el nivel cognitivo y terminológico del lenguaje empleado y se tomaron decisiones acerca del acceso a un determinado conocimiento para las personas sordas. Una vez realizado el análisis lingüístico y visual, como la medida en que el modo visual ayudaba al acceso al conocimiento de determinadas estructuras lingüísticas, se tomaron decisiones traductológicas relacionadas con las estrategias de cortesía y el principio de relevancia en el texto que estábamos produciendo. La cortesía en los textos y de los textos relaciona el acceso al conocimiento para determinados sectores con la cortesía verbal en la medida en que es poco cortés utilizar estructuras cognitivamente muy complejas en textos para niños o en el hecho de que se transgrede el principio de cooperación cuando se ofrece información poco relevante según la función comunicativa o la actitud del receptor ante la exposición. En este mismo sentido, cuando se han adaptado los módulos para un público adolescente, se ha intentado ser estrictos con sus intereses; en estos casos, lo que ha guiado el proceso de traducción ha sido el respeto sobre todo
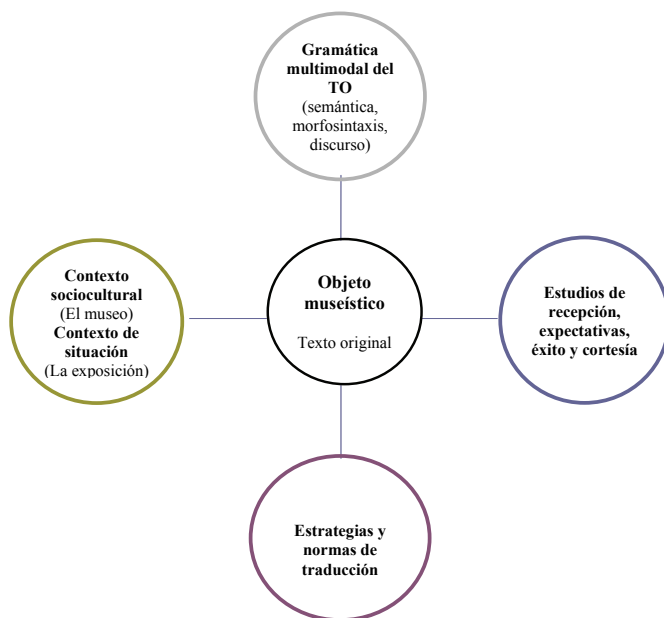
Figura 1. Elementos teóricos de análisis del objeto museístico como TO.

a las máximas de relación y modo, además de incluir elementos apelativos en el discurso y estrategias de cortesía de captación de la atención. Lo veremos ejemplificado más adelante (véase la figura 1).

Una vez determinados los rasgos constituyentes del objeto museístico, se realiza el segundo acto de traducción de lo que debe ser una exposición para todos, independientemente de la diversidad funcional sensorial (visual y auditiva), de la capacidad cognitiva o del interés particular como veremos a continuación.

3.3. Nuevos perfiles profesionales para el traductor-intérprete

Independientemente del conocimiento profundo de, al menos, dos lenguas, la profesión del traductor e intérprete se caracteriza por recibir una formación generalista a la que se suma siempre un entrenamiento para potenciar la capacidad de adaptación al medio específico en que se desarrolla cada encargo o proyecto de traducción. La red no sería hoy lo que es si no se hubiera dado la ingente cantidad de traducciones de contenidos web.

Entendiendo que el museo es una institución en continuo cambio y que el área de la TeI es una de las más dinámicas y adaptables a la evolución social

y científica, estamos convencidos de que el futuro de la accesibilidad museística está en la colaboración e interacción de museos con los traductores e intérpretes, donde el traductor es un experto y asesor en accesibilidad en los museos, ya sea de cara a una interpretación en lengua de signos para una visita guiada específica para personas sordas signantes, ya sea para subtitular una muestra de vídeo-arte para personas sordas oralistas, realizar una descripción verbal de una escultura en una visita táctil para personas invidentes o una adaptación textual para niños; pero no sólo eso. Además de estas modalidades más novedosas de TeI accesible para museos, las competencias de los traductores e intérpretes son requeridas en el entorno museográfico para realizar las versiones multilingües de los folletos, carteles y paneles de exposiciones, la audioguía, la guía multimedia y el sitio web institucional del museo para los hablantes de lenguas distintas a la principal del museo. Esta parecería la actividad traductora más clara y evidente que debería darse en un museo que quiere abrir sus puertas a la accesibilidad universal, pero la realidad es que muy pocos museos ofrecen información multilingüe fuera de los círculos de mayor prestigio.

En el marco de la Traductología, se creó el concepto de Traducción e Interpretación accesible para referirse a una serie de modalidades de TeI[6] que permiten a personas con diversidad funcional sensorial (visual o auditiva) acceder al conocimiento y comunicarse. No obstante, al igual que sucediera con el Diseño para todos, este concepto se ha enriquecido y ha visto ampliados sus límites al comprobarse que dichas modalidades podían ser beneficiosas para otros tipos de individuos con características determinadas, sin que una de ellas sea la discapacidad. Estas modalidades son la audiodescripción (AD) para personas con discapacidad visual, la interpretación en lengua de signos (ILS) para personas con discapacidad auditiva signantes, el subtitulado para personas sordas (SpS), el subtitulado intralingüístico y el rehablado para personas con discapacidad auditiva oralistas, y la adaptación textual para individuos con niveles diversos de conocimiento previo (lego, semilego, experto), capacidad cognitiva (niños, adolescentes, jóvenes, ancianos) e interés (los que tienen prisa, los que desean iniciarse en un área).

Dichas modalidades tienen diversos ámbitos de aplicación[7], y así se distingue entre TeI accesible en el arte y la cultura (museos y exposiciones, monumentos, artes escénicas); y TeI accesible en las Tecnologías de la

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6. Manera en la que se lleva a cabo la actividad traductora/interpretativa y las operaciones mentales implicadas.
7. Tipo de evento comunicativo y situación social en los que tiene lugar el trabajo del traductor/intérprete.

Figura 2. Modalidades y ámbitos de aplicación de TeI accesible.

Información y la Comunicación (web, TV, cine, videojuegos), si bien no todas las modalidades se desarrollan en todos los ámbitos relacionados. La figura 2 recoge de forma esquemática las modalidades y los ámbitos de aplicación de la TeI accesible.

Las modalidades de TeI accesible que se emplean en el ámbito de los museos y exposiciones son la audiodescripción, la ILS, el SpS y la adaptación textual. En relación a esta clasificación podemos definir los siguientes nuevos perfiles formativos y profesionales del traductor-intérprete para la accesibilidad universal museística: a) Intérprete de lenguas de signos de textos museísticos; b) Guía-intérprete de lengua de signos para museos; c) Subtitulador para museos; d) Audiodescriptor para museos; e) Guía-audiodescriptor para museos; f) Adaptador de textos museísticos para públicos con capacidades diversas; g) Experto y asesor en accesibilidad museística a través de la traducción e interpretación.

En el contexto específico del museo y de una exposición, estos desempeñan las siguientes funciones:

a) Intérprete de lenguas de signos de textos museísticos
    Función: interpretación de los textos del museo y sus exposiciones a lengua de signos para su difusión como archivo de vídeo a través de los medios dispuestos por el museo (página multimedia del sitio web institucional, signoguía).
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional auditiva signantes.

b) Guía-intérprete de lengua de signos para museos
    Función: interpretación de los textos del museo y sus exposiciones
    para su difusión durante visitas guiadas individuales o grupales.
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional auditiva signantes.

c) Subtitulador para museos
    Función: subtitulación para personas sordas de los elementos del museo y sus exposiciones que así lo requieran, así como de la signoguía.
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional auditiva oralistas.

d) Audiodescriptor para museos
    Función: audiodescripción del museo y sus exposiciones para su difusión a través de los medios dispuestos por el museo (página multimedia del sitio web institucional, audioguía).
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional visual.

e) Guía-audiodescriptor para museos
    Función: audiodescripción del museo y sus exposiciones para su difusión durante visitas guiadas individuales o grupales, táctiles o no.
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional visual.

f) Adaptador de textos museísticos para públicos con capacidades diversas
    Función: adaptación textual de los textos del museo y sus exposiciones para su difusión en la propia exposición, en audioguías y guías multimedia, o durante visitas guiadas individuales o grupales.
    Destinatario: niños, adolescentes, jóvenes, personas con diversidad funcional auditiva oralistas y en general personas con diversas capacidades cognitivas, conocimiento previo e interés.

g) Experto y asesor en accesibilidad museística a través de la TeI
    Función: asesoramiento a los departamentos museísticos que así lo requieran sobre los recursos de TeI accesible disponibles y su adecuación a un proyecto museográfico específico y coordinación de la puesta en práctica de dichos recursos.
    Destinatario: personas con diversidad funcional auditiva, personas con diversidad funcional visual y, en general, personas con diversas capacidades cognitivas, conocimiento previo e interés.

Estos perfiles requieren, además de las competencias generales del traductor-intérprete y las concretas de cada modalidad, el desarrollo de las siguientes

competencias específicas que comparten con el resto de perfiles enmarcados en la mencionada TeI accesible:

– Reconocer la diversidad humana, su esencia dinámica y universal, y su dimensión positiva.
– Conocer y razonar los orígenes sociales, económicos, normativos y éticos de la Accesibilidad Universal.
– Conocer los distintos recursos de eliminación de las barreras que impiden la igualdad de oportunidades.
– Conocer los conceptos básicos de los procesos de percepción, cognición y comunicación humanos.
– Capacidad para relacionar los conceptos sobre percepción, cognición y comunicación con el proceso de traducción e interpretación accesible.
– Capacidad para detectar y evaluar problemas de accesibilidad relacionados con la traducción e interpretación accesible en distintos ámbitos.
– Capacidad para introducir la accesibilidad como elemento transversal en los distintos ámbitos de aplicación de la traducción e interpretación accesible.

Asimismo, por su pertenencia al ámbito de los museos y exposiciones, estos perfiles exigen una competencia temática en los principios fundamentales de Museología y Museografía, así como en la temática del museo o la exposición, si bien esta última es una competencia que correspondería desarrollar durante la etapa de práctica profesional, ya que el objetivo de la etapa formativa es ofrecer una formación más generalista basada en el desarrollo de competencias fundamentales.

4. Accesibilidad integral en el museo de ciencias

En el grupo de investigación Tracce (Traducción y Accesibilidad) estamos llevando a cabo, dentro del marco del Proyecto de Excelencia de la Junta de Andalucía AMATRA, un proyecto de accesibilidad universal museística a través de la TeI denominado *Traducción y Accesibilidad. Ciencia para todos* en colaboración con el Parque de las Ciencias de Granada. Éste es un museo interactivo de renombre internacional, de más de 70.000 m², que se compone de los siguientes espacios expositivos: edificio Macroscopio, donde se ubican seis de las exposiciones y salas permanentes del museo; edificio Péndulo de Foucault, que alberga otras cuatro salas permanentes y el Planetario; edificio

Vía Láctea, reservado para exposiciones temporales; los exteriores, un espacio al aire libre salpicado de módulos científicos, jardines botánicos y un área para el vuelo de aves rapaces; Mariposario tropical y Torre de observación.

El objetivo principal de este proyecto es desarrollar un prototipo de guía multimedia accesible para el museo utilizando las modalidades de TeI accesibles para el ámbito museográfico: audiodescripción (AD) para personas con diversidad funcional visual, la interpretación en lengua de signos (ILS) para personas con diversidad funcional auditiva signantes, el subtitulado para personas sordas (SpS) para personas con diversidad funcional auditiva oralistas, y la adaptación textual para individuos con niveles diversos de conocimiento previo (lego, semilego, experto) y capacidad cognitiva (niños, adolescentes, jóvenes, ancianos). Tratándose de un prototipo, nuestro trabajo no pretendía ser exhaustivo, sino ilustrar la aplicación de cada una de estas modalidades a una selección de las unidades expositivas del museo. En concreto, se decidió acotar el área de trabajo a una sola exposición, la del pabellón Viaje al Cuerpo Humano (figura 3).

Ésta se compone a su vez de una serie de salas que se dividen en varios módulos temáticos. Para el objetivo de nuestro proyecto decidimos centrarnos en dos salas: "Aparato reproductor" y "Sistema Nervioso". Esta decisión se tomó con el asesoramiento de un audiodescriptor y una intérprete de lengua de signos profesionales y las razones que la avalaron fueron las siguientes: en primer lugar, estas salas presentan una variedad considerable de tipos de expositivo, lo que permite que el prototipo sea lo más ilustrativo posible. En

Figura 3. Pabellón Viaje al Cuerpo Humano, Parque de las Ciencias de Granada.

el caso de la sala "Aparato reproductor", se determinó que era especialmente adecuada para el desarrollo de recursos de accesibilidad para personas con diversidad funcional visual, dado que contiene dos módulos con expositivos táctiles ("Formar y crecer" y "Me puedes ver"), y uno de los tres vídeos del pabellón donde se podía insertar una audiodescripción ("El Parto"). Con respecto a la sala "Sistema nervioso", los profesionales consideraron que pese a tratarse de la sala que presenta el menor grado de accesibilidad en su estado actual, era interesante escogerla para el prototipo por estar más estrechamente relacionada con la situación específica de los visitantes con diversidad funcional sensorial, por lo que podría despertar un interés especial en estos grupos y constituía asimismo un reto para el equipo del proyecto.

Más adelante, se decidió completar el prototipo con otros audiovisuales del pabellón, de las salas "Entrada" (Presentación pabellón), "Aparato digestivo" (Somos lo que comemos) y "Genética" (El ADN). El primero constituye la presentación e introducción a la exposición, por lo que su inclusión en el prototipo serviría para contextualizar los contenidos de las dos salas. En cuanto a los otros dos vídeos, se escogieron para ejemplificar los recursos de accesibilidad dirigidos a personas con diversidad funcional auditiva, ya que presentan una dificultad especial para este colectivo por su elevado nivel de especialización, que se traduce en un uso profuso de terminología científica. Su adaptación es necesaria tanto para las personas oralistas, cuyas competencias en lectoescritura están menos desarrolladas que las de una persona normoyente, como para las signantes, puesto que la Lengua de Signos dispone de un léxico científico aún limitado.

El prototipo de guía multimedia accesible desarrollada consta de dos elementos fundamentales: los contenidos y el soporte tecnológico. Los contenidos incluyen, a grandes rasgos, los siguientes:

a) Audioguía
Destinatario: adultos con diversidad funcional visual.
Contenidos: locución de textos escritos: paneles y carteles; audiodescripción de espacios y objetos; audiodescripción de audiovisuales.

b) Signoguía
Destinatario: adultos con diversidad funcional auditiva signantes.
Contenidos: interpretación en Lengua de Signos de textos impresos: paneles y carteles; interpretación en Lengua de Signos de audiovisuales.

c) Videoguía
Destinatario: adultos con diversidad funcional auditiva oralistas.
Contenidos: Subtitulado para Personas Sordas de audiovisuales.

d) Audioguía infantil

Destinatario: niños con diversidad funcional visual.

Contenidos: Adaptación textual y locución de la audioguía realizada para adultos.

e) Audioguía para jóvenes

Destinatario: jóvenes con diversidad funcional visual.

Contenidos: Adaptación textual y locución de la audioguía realizada para adultos.

Respecto al soporte tecnológico de estos contenidos, se decidió utilizar un blog de Wordpress adaptado para su correcta visualización en los dispositivos iPod Touch y iPhone, titulado TACTO (Traducción y Accesibilidad. Ciencia para Todos), disponible en: tacto.tracce.es. Con el fin de ilustrar estos contenidos, se muestran a continuación algunos ejemplos de fragmentos de la guía multimedia accesible:

(1) Contenido: Audioguía

Sala: Aparato reproductor

Módulo: Encontrándonos

Expositivo: Encontrándonos

Tipo de expositivo: Modelo-Diagrama luminoso

Modalidad de TeI: Audiodescripción

Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional visual, adultos

Guión audiodescriptivo (GAD): [VOZ 1] Un cartel dice: [VOZ 2] La fecundación es el complejo proceso que permite la unión del óvulo y el espermatozoide. El núcleo de ambas células tiene 23 cromosomas y de su unión se obtendrá una nueva célula, cigoto o huevo, con 46 cromosomas, iniciándose el desarrollo de un nuevo ser. Este desarrollo precisa de un habitáculo y de un ambiente que le facilite todo lo necesario para su crecimiento y maduración, el útero, al que llegará recorriendo la trompa en sentido inverso al que utilizó el espermatozoide. De los millones de espermatozoides que llegan a la vagina, la mayoría no consiguen alcanzar la trompa de Falopio, y de los que lo logran, sólo uno, tras perder su cola, atravesará la cubierta externa del óvulo y lo fecundará.

[CAMPANILLA]

[VOZ 1] A un metro a la derecha del cartel hay una vitrina. En su interior hay dos maquetas: una de un óvulo, de cuarenta por veinte centímetros, y otra del aparato reproductor femenino, de ochenta por ochenta centímetros. Esta tiene LED. Bajo el cristal hay un botón, al pulsarlo los LED se iluminan

Figura 4. Expositivo "Encontrándonos", pabellón Viaje al Cuerpo Humano.

intermitentemente: los de color blanco simulan el recorrido de los espermatozoides en la vagina; los de color amarillo, el recorrido del óvulo avanzando por la trompa de Falopio izquierda y los de color verde la fecundación y el recorrido del óvulo fecundado hasta el útero.

En la parte inferior de la vitrina hay un cartel con los nombres de los recorridos y su color correspondiente.

El óvulo se muestra con una sección cortada que permite ver las distintas capas que lo forman: el núcleo de color rosa oscuro, el citoplasma de color rosa medio y la parte exterior de color marrón y forma irregular. Está rodeado de espermatozoides intentando entrar, sólo lo ha conseguido uno.

[CAMPANILLA]

(2) Contenido: Audioguía
Sala: Sistema nervioso
Módulo: Sistema nervioso
Expositivo: Encéfalo y médula espinal
Tipo de expositivo: Objeto
Modalidad de TeI: Audiodescripción
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional visual, adultos
Guión Audiodescriptivo (GAD): [VOZ 1] Un cartel dice: [VOZ 2] El sistema nervioso humano es uno de los dispositivos más complejos creados por la naturaleza. Comunica información sobre nuestro entorno a través de los sentidos. Controla todos los procesos que ocurren en nuestro cuerpo, recoge

Figura 5. Expositivo "Encéfalo y médula espinal", pabellón Viaje al Cuerpo Humano.

información de sus diferentes partes y le envía instrucciones para que funcionen correctamente. Además, constituye la central de inteligencia responsable de que podamos sentir, aprender, recordar, razonar, imaginar, crear, proyectar, creer, gozar,...

[CAMPANILLA]

[VOZ 1] A un metro del cartel hay una urna cilíndrica, atornillada a la pared a media altura. Dentro de ella hay un sistema nervioso central: cerebro, cerebelo y médula espinal.

[CAMPANILLA]

(3) Contenido: Audioguía

Sala: Sistema nervioso

Modalidad de TeI: Audiodescripción

Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional visual, adultos

Guión Audiodescriptivo (GAD): La sala del sistema nervioso es un espacio abierto con forma circular. Hay una mesa redonda en el centro que contiene un experimento de destreza motora que emite sonidos y paneles sobre la pared. El recorrido se efectúa en el sentido de las agujas del reloj. Si alguien estuviera realizando la actividad se podría oír dicho sonido. Esta mesa se describirá al final del recorrido.

Figura 6. Sala "Sistema Nervioso", pabellón Viaje al Cuerpo Humano.

(4) Contenido: Audioguía
Sala: Sistema nervioso
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional visual, jóvenes (alemán)
Guión Audiodescriptivo (GAD) alemán: Ihr befindet euch jetzt im Ausstellungssaal des Nervensystems in der Messehalle zum Menschlichen Körper. Dieser ist ein offener und kreisförmiger Raum. In der Mitte steht ein runder Tisch und an den Wänden hängen Tafeln. Ihr legt die Route am besten im Uhrzeigersinn zurück.
Im Zentrum des Raumes steht dieser runde Tisch mit einem Experiment, mit dem ihr eure motorischen Fähigkeiten testen könnt. Die dazugehörigen Apparate erzeugen Geräusche. Wenn irgendjemand dieses Experiment durchführt, werdet ihr dieses Geräusch hören. Dieser Tisch wird am Ende des Rundgangs näher beschrieben.
[GLOCKE]

Discusión: En este primer fragmento en alemán se pueden apreciar diferentes indicaciones del registro utilizado en la AD en alemán para jóvenes y grupos familiares. Además del uso del *tú* coloquial, partículas modales temporales como el *jetzt* o lexemas de nivel de base como *Tafel*, frente a *Paneel* o *Messehalle* frente a *Pavillon* utilizado en la AD para adultos expertos, se pueden apreciar diferencias en las estructuras sintácticas y discursivas que respetan las capacidades cognitivas en el caso de los jóvenes y familias que acuden al museo con una serie de expectativas lúdicas y un proceso de atención diferente a

las exigencias del visitante alemán experto, cuyo acceso al conocimiento temático le facilita procesar una sintaxis más compleja y cognitivamente más concentrada. La cortesía de las expectativas juega aquí un papel de gran importancia. El contexto sociocultural alemán exige, por ejemplo, la adecuación discursiva a cada tipo de receptor. La utilización de pronombres personales no corteses puede en el caso de los jóvenes alemanes producir extrañeza y cumplir una determinante función apelativa.

(5) Contenido: Audioguía
Sala: Sistema nervioso
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional visual, conocimiento experto (alemán)
Guión Audiodescriptivo (GAD) alemán: Der Ausstellungssaal des Nervensystems im Pavillon „Der Menschliche Körper" ist ein offener, kreisförmiger Raum. In der Mitte befindet sich ein runder Tisch mit einem Experiment zur motorischen Geschicklichkeit, bei dessen Betätigung Geräusche erzeugt werden. An den Wänden hängen Paneele. Die Begehung erfolgt im Uhrzeigersinn. Der Tisch wird am Ende des Rundgangs detaillierter beschrieben.

(6) Contenido: Signoguía
Sala: Sistema nervioso
Módulo: El gusto es mío
Expositivo: El gusto es mío
Tipo de dispositivo: Texto impreso
Modalidad de TeI: ILSE signoguía de texto impreso
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional auditiva (signante)
Texto impreso: El gusto es mío. Tenemos alrededor de 4.000 papilas gustativas, principalmente en la lengua, pero también en la boca y en la garganta. Cada una de ellas contiene alrededor de cien células receptoras del sabor. Identificamos cuatro sabores primarios: el dulce, situado en la punta de la lengua; el salado, en los laterales anteriores de la lengua; el ácido, en los laterales posteriores de la lengua, y el amargo, en la parte posterior de la lengua. Discusión: Al ser la Lengua de Signos una lengua minoritaria y de uso restringido en el ámbito científico y tecnológico, la interpretación de la exposición en general ha presentado un nivel alto de dificultad derivado de la falta de terminología científica en LSE equivalente a la empleada en la exposición en español. La técnica utilizada para paliar esta carencia fue la creación léxica en LSE. Esta es una práctica frecuente en el ámbito de la interpretación de la LSE, especialmente entre los intérpretes que prestan sus servicios en centros educativos y de investigación debido a la reciente incorporación de las personas

Figura 7. ILSE del expositivo "El gusto es mío" (texto impreso).

sordas al ámbito académico. Los signos de nueva creación del proyecto se han recogido y organizado en forma de glosarios para posibilitar su difusión y consulta. Respecto a la interpretación del título del expositivo, el original "El gusto es mío" se sustituyó en LSE por el de "Gusto bueno" debido a que en este idioma el primero carece del doble sentido que tiene en español y es una expresión que no se usa. Para mantener en la medida de lo posible la intención del original, se decidió hacer un juego de signos consistente en utilizar la misma configuración para los dos signos de la frase: 'gusto' y 'bueno'.

(7) Contenido: Signoguía
Sala: Genética
Módulo: Del genoma al organismo
Expositivo: El ADN
Tipo de dispositivo: Multimodal virtual audiovisual (vídeo)
Modalidad de TeI: ILSE integrada
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional auditiva (signante)
Transcripción: Si pudiéramos viajar a nuestro interior y adentrarnos en una de nuestras células, veríamos 23 pares de cromosomas empaquetados en un núcleo. Cada cromosoma contiene una larga cadena de ADN. Si estirásemos las cadenas de ADN de los 23 cromosomas de una célula, la cadena de ADN mediría más de metro y medio. La doble hélice de ADN contiene la información
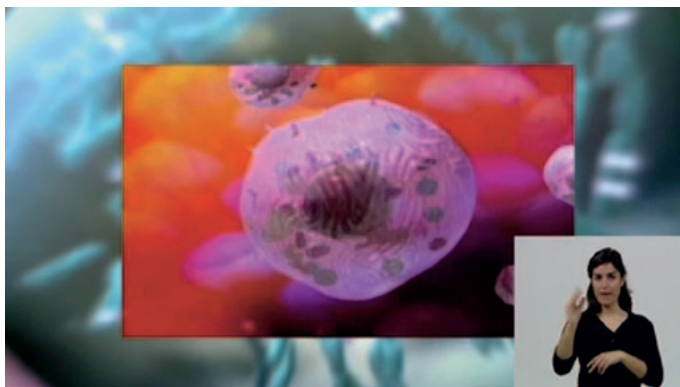
Figura 8. Expositivo "EL ADN" con ILSE integrada.

mediante cuatro estructuras químicas emparejadas: la A que siempre se une a la T, y la C que se une a la G.

(8) Contenido: Videoguía
Sala: Entrada
Expositivo: El ADN
Tipo de dispositivo: Multimodal virtual (vídeo)
Modalidad de TeI: SpS
Categoría de visitante: Diversidad funcional auditiva (oralista)

Figura 9. Expositivo "El ADN" con SpS literal.

Figura 10. Expositivo El ADN con SpS adaptado.

Discusión: Como vemos en este último ejemplo, en la videoguía que incluye el subtitulado para personas sordas oralistas, se han realizado dos tipos de subtítulos: los que simplemente transcriben el contenido y en los que la traducción realiza un proceso de adaptación a las capacidades de acceso cognitivo de las personas sordas. Ambos tipos de traducción responden a las demandas sociales, así como a las funciones textuales. Mientras en los primeros la función principal es la del aprendizaje de las estructuras de la propia lengua española frente a las funciones subordinadas de acceso al conocimiento sobre biología celular básica, el segundo tipo de subtítulos ofrece la alternativa de acercarse al texto desde lo lúdico, sin mayores esfuerzos cognitivos y con una serie de ayudas de acceso al conocimiento para personas sordas como emoticones o números sin transcribir, etc. Se ha simplificado la semántica ("ir" frente a "viajar" en el ejemplo) y la sintaxis (eliminación de gerundios y sustitución formas verbales, como el potencial por el presente de indicativo en el ejemplo) y se ha recurrido tanto a lexemas de base o prototipos, a la vez que se han suprimido algunos pronombres posesivos o estructuras más complejas como la iniciada con "mediante".

5. Conclusiones

Según la museología más actual, el visitante de museos busca una experiencia de ocio que aúne diversión a un proceso de aprendizaje, en primer lugar, y a una experiencia emotiva, en segundo. El museo debe ser un ente vivo, abierto y dinámico, un lugar de encuentro en el que cada sector de la sociedad

pueda jugar el papel que le corresponde a través de un abanico más amplio de ofertas.

Si pretende abrir nuevos ámbitos de aprendizaje e investigación, así como ofrecer formación en nuevos perfiles profesionales, la Traductología del futuro tiene que adentrarse en el proceloso mundo de la multimodalidad y estudiar las formas de hacerla accesible a todo tipo de posibles receptores con sus respectivas posibilidades de acceso al conocimiento.

Para ello, el nuevo concepto de museo nos permite entenderlo y analizarlo como un evento comunicativo multimodal. El estudio de este evento multimodal y de su traducción requiere el análisis y la comprensión de los mecanismos de construcción de significado de cada modo semiótico individual y en interacción con otros modos. Las antiguas pero asentadas, por validadas, teorías de la expresión lingüística, así como los estudios de pragmática social y acción comunicativa nos pueden servir de orientación y guía.

No obstante, queda un largo camino por recorrer y es deber de las Universidades contribuir a que se avance con la creación de nuevos perfiles profesionales y con la implantación de los currículos e itinerarios correspondientes, que formen a los futuros graduados en competencias específicas necesarias para la realización de planes de accesibilidad universal en las diferentes esferas de la sociedad que así lo requieran. Esta especialización formativa es un paso esencial para la creación de nuevos perfiles profesionales ligados a la accesibilidad universal, pero no es el único; al mismo tiempo, es necesario que los responsables de los entornos, servicios y productos que precisan medidas de accesibilidad se conciencien de esta necesidad y demanden a esos profesionales con una formación específica y de calidad: los traductores-intérpretes especializados en traducción para entornos multimodales accesibles.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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EXPLORING TRANSLATION STRATEGIES
IN VIDEO GAME LOCALISATION[1]

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of video game localisation focusing on the different strategies to be used from the point of view of Translation Studies. More precisely, the article explores the possible relation between the translation approaches used in the field and the different genres or textual typologies of video games. As the narrative techniques and the story lines of video games have become more complex and well-developed, the adaptation of games entails a serious challenge for translators. Video games have evolved into multimodal and multidimensional products and new approaches and insights are required when studying the adaptation of games into different cultures. Electronic entertainment provides an interesting and barely explored corpus of analysis for Translation Studies, not only from the point of view of localisation but also concerning audiovisual translation.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el campo de la localización de videojuegos centrándose en las diferentes estrategias utilizadas desde el punto de vista de los Estudios de Traducción. En concreto, el artículo estudia la posible relación entre los enfoques traductológicos utilizados en este campo y los diferentes géneros y tipologías textuales de los videojuegos. La mayor complejidad en las técnicas narrativas y el argumento de los videojuegos ha provocado que su adaptación proporcione un reto considerable

para los traductores. Los videojuegos han evolucionado hasta convertirse en productos multimodales y multidimensionales, por lo que nuevos enfoques son necesarios cuando se estudia su adaptación a diferentes culturas. El entretenimiento electrónico proporciona un corpus de análisis interesante y apenas explorado para los Estudios de Traducción, no solo desde el punto de vista de la localización sino también en lo que respecta a la traducción audiovisual.

1. Introduction

The evolution of video games has run in parallel with the progress of new technology and the availability of electronic appliances for the wide audience. The very first titles developed in the decade of the 60s –like *Spacewar* or *Pong*– (Bernal 2006, O'Riada 2007) have nothing to do with the current multimedia and multimodal titles where the involvement and the interaction of the player with the game is a key element. Similarly, the concept of video games has evolved regarding not only technical issues, such as graphic and audio components, but also as long as the own story lines of the video games are concerned. The introduction of more complex narrative techniques has allowed for the creation of more compelling and though-provoking plots.

Currently, video games are one of the most common forms of entertainment for millions of users around the world[2] and in many countries they have already overtaken the music and film sectors according to the figures of the sector. Moreover, the game industry has enlarged the horizon by addressing more and more different types of players: the profile of the games has changed and the new features included in the games –together with well-planned marketing campaigns– has allowed to reach new targets and markets. The so-called casual gaming, with new kinds of video games designed for mature people and multiplayer titles to be enjoyed by the whole family have broadened the arena for computer and game companies. Also, the evolution of the Web to its 4.0 version –the ubiquitous Web– has promoted the creation of thousands of online platforms and applications for casual gaming that are used on PCs and also on mobile phones. Indeed, according to statistics there are more than 200 million users of online casual games[3].

Regarding hardcore games, the promotion and optimization of online gaming with cooperative modes has enabled players from all over the world

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2. According to the Entertainment Software Association, 67% of American households play computer of video games. Source: http://www.theesa.com/facts/index.asp. Accessed on October 27th 2011.
3. Source: the Casual Games Association. http://www.casualgamesassociation.org/news.php. Accessed on October 27th 2011.

to compete and collaborate with each other in massive campaigns and open games: according to Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO, the number of registered users of Xbox Live in 2011 amount to 30 million[4].

In the framework of globalisation, new technologies and digital natives, video games provide an interesting and trendy corpus of analysis for academia, as this type of entertainment can be addressed from different disciplines. However, even when the figures of the game industry have shadowed other art forms like cinema, this field has been largely ignored by scholars since video games "are easily and readily denigrated as trivial" (Newman 2004: 5). The analysis of electronic entertainment from an academic and scientific point of view is still in an initial stage and many of the research lines in the field have not been sufficiently explored so far.

Research has been conducted on video games from the point of view of ludology (Frasca 2011) and studies have been published focusing on the localisation process and workflows (Chandler 2005). As long as Translation Studies is concerned, video games have been studied by several scholars (Bernal 2006, 2007, 2009; Mangiron & O'Hagan 2007; Muñoz Sánchez 2008; O'Hagan 2007 & 2009) and this can be regarded as an emerging field at the moment on the basis of the number of workshops and international congresses where this topic is being addressed. However, the true potential of video games and the possibilities they can pose for research in translation-related issues have not been fully approached yet: the relation between audiovisual translation and video games can be further studied, as the introduction of voice over, dubbing, subtitling and lip-sync techniques are still to be analysed; similarly, the question of accessibility in audiovisual translation can also be applied to the case of electronic entertainment (Orero 2005, Tercedor 2005).

The translation of video games is a key element in order to allow more players to enjoy a game in their own language, and nowadays most titles provide high quality translations, far away from the poor standards of the well-known English adaptation of *Zero Wing*, which turned the famous sentence "All your base are belong to us" into a popular icon of the game industry. As it happens in software localisation, game developers are investing more and more human and economic resources aiming to localize games into different locales and the simultaneous-shipment of a title into several target markets is a must to succeed in achieving a global echo with a video game. However, the adaptation of games into a different culture is not a straightforward

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4. Source: Gamespot. http://ces.gamespot.com/story/6285921/xbox-360-sells-50-million-kinect-8-million?tag=top_stories;title;2. Accessed on October 27th 2011.

process and it goes beyond the simple language transfer from one language into another.

In order to keep the game experience and the "look and feel" of a title into the target locale, translators have to face different challenges (Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006). The advanced technology and the introduction of more multimedia features like cut-scenes and spoken dialogues make video games an appealing area for audiovisual translation (Bernal 2006, Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006) and include them in the framework of constrained translation (Mayoral *et al*. 1988). On the other hand, the manifold cultural references and technical challenges to be faced also suggest that games have to be on the radar screen of localisation. Besides providing more appealing products, the addition of new features to the games has contributed to achieve more creative and well-developed plots that improve the game experience and promote the involvement of players in the story they are interacting with.

To this regard, this paper focuses on the different translation strategies that can be observed in the adaptation of video games. The starting premise is that different types of games require different translation strategies (Bernal 2007). Therefore, the core issue to be discussed here is whether the adaptation of different genres and textual typologies may require relying on different translation approaches. In other words, is it possible to associate particular translation strategies like transcreation, domestication or literal translation, with specific genres or types of games like RPGs (role-playing games) or first person shooters? As it will be argued in the paper, modern games are more difficult to classify under one single category. Hence, an opposite hypothesis could be formulated stating that the hybridity of game taxonomies leads to the use of a combination of translation strategies when dealing with games of the same genre or even in the adaptation of a single title.

This paper is intended to analyse which of the two approaches seems to be more reliable from a scientific point of view. In order to shed some light on this issue, several games belonging to different genres have been analysed and examples will be provided to explain the main translation strategies used in the localisation of video games.

The article is structured as follows: section two focuses on the relevance of multimodality and multidimensionality for the development of more creative story lines. Section three comments on the different textual genres and typologies of video games, while section four explains which are the main translation strategies in video game localisation. Finally, section 5 includes the main conclusions of the paper.

2. Video games and multimodality: in the beginning was the video

The multimodality of video games has bridged the gap with other art forms such as cinema and has allowed players to interact with the story and get involved in the game at a higher level (O'Hagan 2005). Indeed, as it is explained by O'Hagan (2009), video games "create a polysemiotic and multimodal environment where the player interacts with the game system via different communication channels". Modern titles are pieces of art that combine video, audio and narrative techniques to make compelling stories in which the players do not observe the advance of the game but take part and perform an active role in the development of the story. The current level of interaction has been achieved by a number of technical breakthroughs and also by means of a combination of narrative techniques. Obviously, translation is the driving force that allows to represent an original atmosphere in a foreign culture.

In the beginning, video games consisted on basic and simple interfaces that allowed users to perform certain (reduced) functions. The development of graphic design and programming techniques set the basis for more complex games where players could assume more and more functions that promoted the interaction with the machines. However, games only included rudimentary synthesized sounds and music, and special effects were progressively integrated and optimized until reaching the current situation in which players can notice the position of an enemy by means of the sound of gunfire (Tavinor 2009: 77). Nowadays, video games rely on original soundtracks composed by renowned musicians and recorded by recognized orchestras. The audio component of video games turns to be more relevant for translation purposes as we concentrate on spoken dialogues. The primitive on-screen texts displaying the dialogues of the games' characters have been replaced by the real voices of actors who record the spoken dialogues in professional studios (Chandler 2005: 186; Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006). The fact that the characters of a game "speak" contribute to create real settings and scenarios and are a turning point in order to improve the interaction of the user and the engagement of the players in the story.

Similarly, the use of cut-scenes is a common resource in modern games for the purpose of showing certain parts of the story (O'Hagan 2009). In other words, cinematics are used as a narrative technique to build and develop the plot or the story line of modern games. These video sequences can be easily compared to the scenes of animation movies like *Monsters, Inc.* or *Finding Nemo* and pose an additional challenge in the translation of video games. As there are close-ups of some of the main characters, special lip-sync techniques are used by game developers to fit the facial expressions of the characters with

the phonemes they utter (Chandler 2005: 121). As most companies develop games in Japanese and English the localisation into the FIGS (French, Italian, German and Spanish) or any other language must tackle the adaptation of the dialogues taking into account the usual features applied in dubbing, subtitling or voice over (Bernal 2007, Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006).

Besides hi-fi music and spoken dialogues, modern games also include the option of turning subtitles on at any given point. Intralingual subtitles (i.e. subtitles in the same language of the dialogues of the game) allow the deaf and hard of hearing to fully enjoy the gameplay while interlingual subtitles address those people who do not speak the language of the title they are playing (Díaz-Cintas 2003: 200; Gottlieb 2001: 247). The former types of subtitles are the standard in the industry, although examples of interlingual subtitles can be exceptionally found in some titles which have not been fully localised and keep the voices and the dialogues in the source language (e.g. *Grand Theft Auto IV*). In any case, subtitles must be synchronized with the actual dialogues of the game according to the basic rules of audiovisual translation (Agost & Chaume 2001; Díaz-Cintas 2001: 41).

The introduction of audio components is intended to create more realistic and compelling stories that provide a more intense game experience. This aim is also pursued with the use of more complex narrative techniques and more creative plots. In addition, emerging trends like online gaming or the marketing of motion sensitive devices (e.g. Kinect and PlayStation Move) will contribute to foster and consolidate the multimodality and multidimensionality of video games.

In this context, translation turns to be a key process to adapt the game into different cultures and preserve the game experience. Similarly to video game development, Translation Studies is a young discipline that has evolved and progressed in the last decades with the recognition and the integration of new branches –like interpreting studies or audiovisual translation– and the interaction with related areas (e.g. IT and computing in the case of localisation). In the particular case of video games, translation is no more exclusively related to the transfer of language strings form the origin into the target language. Beyond the translation of textual contents, translators have to cope with the adaptation of non-textual and semiotic elements that configure the "translatable assets generated by the game industry" (Bernal 2007): besides the aforementioned audio components such as the dialogues and the spoken sentences uttered by the characters, games also include cultural and legal elements –e.g. games depicting gore or violent scenes have to be modified to comply with the German national laws that also demand to remove blood or

turn it green (Chandler 2005: 26)– and even with marketing questions, as the documents, licenses and all the materials that are sold with the game must be localised into the corresponding target locale. Beyond the box in which the video game is distributed, official websites and trailers are a major concern for studios, as they might have a relevant influence in the turnover of a particular title.

In a nutshell, the evolution of video games and the introduction of new audiovisual features have bridged the gap with other art forms such as films or music, and nowadays video games are complex multimedia and multidimensional products. Therefore, the adaptation of games into different cultures is not a straightforward process and requires different approaches and strategies. The translation of video games is fully within the scope of Translation Studies and it can be studied from different points of view.

3. Different genres and typologies in video games

This section is not intended to provide a complete classification of the different genres of video games, as it is a rather wide question to be addressed here and it would fall out of the scope of this paper. The main purpose is to analyse the idea that different genres configure different textual typologies and, therefore, different translation strategies may be required for each particular case (Bernal 2007). Moreover, the well-defined and clear game categories of the 80s and even the 90s have become blurred and opaque due to the development of more complex plots and storylines and many modern games cannot be easily tagged; indeed, many titles can be regarded as crossovers due to the impossibility of categorizing them under a single umbrella: these are the 'mixed genre games' or titles that do not fall in only one category (Scholand 2002). Consequently, the hybridization of video games can be a determining factor in order to support the hypothesis that translation strategies cannot be strictly associated to a single genre or textual type but they are usually combined to preserve the game experience of video games. In other words, the translation of video games may require a functionalist approach where particular strategies will be selected according to the context and the particular purpose or *skopos* to be fulfilled (Nord 1991, 1997).

Even when there are some 'standard' taxonomies used in the game industry by developers and specialized magazines, the categorization of games is not a simple question due to the number of genres, sub-genres and titles breaking or transgressing the boundaries of these labels and providing exceptions and 'irregularities' to the established classification.

Games can be categorised according to the platform they have been designed for –there are PC-based, console-based, handheld or arcade games (Mangiron & O'Hagan 2006)–, the analysis of the concept of video games (Bernal 2006), or even the distinction between casual and hardcore games. Also, other criteria can be applied in order to define video game categories: Frasca (2001: 6-9) reformulates Callois' terms and Piagets' rules to redefine the concepts of *ludus* and *paideia*, establishing a basic two-category system on the basis of ludology. While the former category refers to those games whose result establish a winner and a loser, the second one does not define these roles.

Focusing on more narrative-related elements, the content and the nature of some titles allow to define certain textual categories: as in the case of cinema or literature, different genres can be established to classify the different types of video games according to their specific features. The fact that several typologies can be set in the study of video games is a relevant issue from the point of view of translation, as some types of games –such as RPGs– rely on more complex story lines, are heavily narrative-driven and they may include more text and translatable assets (Mangiron 2004).

Berens and Howard (2001: 25-27) provide an initial taxonomy on the basis of seven categories: action and adventure, driving and racing, first-person shooters, platform and puzzle, roleplaying, strategy and simulation, and sports and beat'em ups. Obviously, this classification system can be broken into further sub-categories in order to sort out all the possible approaches and stories that developers can create: therefore, additional labels can be established for fighting games (e.g. *Tekken*), real-time strategy (e.g. *Command and Conquer*), hack and slash (e.g. *God of War*), graphic adventures (e.g. *Sam and Max*), education or information games (e.g. *Brain Training*), sandboxes (e.g. *Red Dead Redemption*), survival horrors (e.g. *Resident Evil*), etc. A thorough analysis of the particular features of the previous categories could lead to establish a specific textual type or genre for each of them.

On the basis of the narrative techniques and the plot of some games, it can be stated that certain genres –such as RPGs like *Final Fantasy*– include more translatable assets and therefore have more implications as long as translation is concerned (Mangiron 2004); graphic adventures or RPGs seem to have more translatable contents than football or racing games. However, the development of video games and the introduction of more features in many titles (i.e. cut-scenes, archive files, databases with technical information, etc.) has contributed to reduce these differences: while classic racing games did not contain many translatable strings beyond the menus and some in-game

screen messages, current titles like *Forza Motorsport 3* contain dialogues and voices and complete databases with information regarding cars, circuits, history, companies, etc., providing virtual encyclopaedias for car lovers.

The game industry and the specialised media define new categories and sub-categories to fit the modern and complex types of video games, and the flexibility of English allows for the creation of neologisms on a regular basis (Scholand 2002). In this sense, the game industry feedbacks from the magazines and the game reviews where new tags and labels are frequently coined and updated. However, no scholarly classification has been defined, since the taxonomy of video games can be "extremely nebulous" and it does do not include all the fixities and the nuances of certain titles (Newman 2004: 12).

In any case, it can be concluded that different genres can be established on the basis of the specific features of video games. This is an element to be taken into account from the point of view of Translation Studies, as different textual typologies may require different approaches and strategies in order to preserve the gameplay in the target culture. The next section describes the main strategies observed in the translation of video games and discusses if the selection of these strategies can be clearly associated with specific genres, creating tendencies or regularities.

4. Translation strategies reviewed

Translation is a context-sensitive process and, as any human activity, it is also highly conditioned by the particular decisions and the choice of the translator who has to convey the meaning from the source culture to the target audience. The adaptation of multimedia products also entails the idea of constrained translation (Mayoral *et al.* 1988) as the particular characteristics and restrictions of the text being transferred will have to be taken into account. In this sense, this paper relies on the idea that the translation of video games is a rather functionalist process where keeping the game experience is the main priority to bear in mind when adapting the game (Bernal 2006, O'Hagan 2009). In other words, a Mexican, French or Chinese player should enjoy a similar gameplay and experience than somebody playing in the original American or Japanese version. However, this statement poses a number of questions regarding translation. First of all, is it *always* necessary to keep the look and feel of the game, or is it possible to adopt a strategy in which this can be modified in order to meet the expectations of the target audience? Secondly, is it always possible to keep the same game experience without losing any shade or nuance? The use of humour and puns in some video games makes

it almost impossible to adapt the message without suffering a loss in meaning and compensation strategies may be required (Di Marco 2007).

As long as video games are concerned, the concept of 'right' or 'wrong' translation does not apply and translators focus on achieving the objective of meeting a functionalist objective: preserving the game experience. Therefore, fulfilling the expectations of the users in the target audience is the underlying principle. This is not a straightforward task, as translators might need to know all the meta-textual references of video games (sometimes to previous editions of the same title or to other sagas and game-related material) in order to meet the expectations of experienced players.

4.1. Domestication vs. Foreignization

The classic distinction defined by Venuti (1995) is intended to establish a difference between translations aimed to keep a 'foreign flavour' or those texts adapted to the particular features and standards of the target culture. This is an approach that can be clearly applied to the case of video games. Indeed, it can be argued that this is one of the most relevant decisions to be taken in the translation process since it may influence the whole localisation strategy of a video game into the target locale and will also lead to the application of other particular strategies (for instance, the 'non-translation' of certain names or items). Foreignization strategies are intended to keep the look and feel of the original game and transfer the atmosphere and the flavour of the source culture into the target locale.

A fairly good example of a successful foreignization strategy can be observed in *Assassins' Creed*, where the original atmosphere and flavour of the Italian culture has been effectively preserved in the destination locales. The game is based on several Italian cities and regions, and a huge number of local names, places and cultural references are mentioned in the story. In different moments, certain characters use Italian words or expressions that have been preserved in the English or Spanish versions. Also, the professional actors recording the spoken dialogue apply a gentle Italian accent in some of the cut-scenes, contributing to create the compelling atmosphere of the game. Similarly, *Grand Theft Auto IV* includes different accents to represent the ethnic origin and the nationalities of many of the foreign characters of the game like Nico Ballic and some of his relatives coming from Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, domesticating strategies aim to bring the game closer to the target culture. Even when some of the games developed in Japan rely on foreignizing approaches in order to meet the expectations of manga and anime supporters, one of the best-known video game sagas developed in Japan,

Final Fantasy, provides a good example of domesticating strategies, as it has been concluded by Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006):

> As an overall strategy for localising these FF titles, the translators opted for a domesticating approach in a Venutian sense (Venuti 1995); or, to follow Toury's terminology (1980), an acceptable translation which aims to bring the game closer to the target culture. This domestication is achieved mainly by the use in the target text of idiomatic and colloquial language, the adaptation of jokes, sayings and cultural references, and the re-creation of new cultural references and plays on words. All this gives a distinctive, original flavour to the localised version.

Similarly, one of the most relevant and famous characters created by Shigeru Miyamoto has been effectively adapted to local cultures: Mario Bros and his brother Luigi have been designed with an "international flavour" and their names, jobs and even physical appearance have been thought to be suitable for the wide audience without having to go through major changes. Also, the names of the worlds, characters and items of "Mario's universe" have been translated with a great amount of creativity into different languages. Similarly, jokes and colloquial expressions have been adapted to bring the games closer to the target audience. An example of this might be observed in *Super Smash Bros Brawl*, a title including several characters of Mario's world, where the use of colloquial expressions, jokes and puns in the target language is a strategy consistently used in the different locales in which the game has been translated from the original Japanese (USA, UK, Spain, France, Germany and Italy). For example, one of the characters of the game –Wario– has to eat some garlic in order to launch a special attack: in the Spanish version of the official website of the game (http://www.smashbros.com/es), this transformation is explained with the idiom "el que se pica, ajos come", which is intentionally used to create a pun based on the fact that Wario has to eat some garlic to upgrade his performance and become "Wario Man". The domesticating approach used in the translation of the game can be also observed in the adaptation of some of the weird and rude special movements of Wario since he relies on his flatulent nature to create an explosive wave that blows his enemies away. This attack has been translated as "Tufo Wario", "Wario Waft", "Folata di Wario", "Vent Wario" and "Wario-Wind". Accordingly, it is described in the different languages of the website as "cuesco", "cute little poot", "bella puzzetta", "gentil petit prout" and "kleines Püsterchen".

Another example can be found in many sports games, like *Fifa* or *Pro Evolution Soccer*. These titles can be regarded as clear representatives of domestication strategies, as they are localised, adapted and tailored to meet the expectations and the preferences of the users of the corresponding markets

where the games are sold. In the case of Spain, for instance, both games are always promoted by stars of the two most representative football teams (Real Madrid and Barcelona). However, the game distributed in England or Italy may include a player of Manchester United or Juventus in the cover of the game. This does not only affect the trailers and the promotional materials, but also the menus and the user interface that may be adapted to display a particular league and nation by default.

Finally, examples of domesticating approaches can be found in graphic adventures like the classic *Monkey Island 2: Lechuck's Revenge*. When the main character goes to the library looking for a book, the librarian asks a series of questions to issue a temporary card. When the player is enquired about his or her personal address, several false answers can be provided, including "Palacio de la Moncloa S/N" or "La Zarzuela". In the English version, users can choose among "Baker Street", "10 Downing Street" or "1600 Pennsylvania Avenue".

4.2 No translation

Beyond the different levels of localisation a game may have –no localisation, partial localisation, docs and box, complete localisation–, a non-translation strategy can be used by the translator at any given point of the game. The non-translation of certain names, terms, places or expressions may be subject to a wider foreignization strategy. Again, this may be the case of many Japanese titles in which the game experience would be hampered if all the dialogues, names and expressions were translated into a European language.

A well-known case of a non-translation strategy can be found in the widespread saga *Street Fighter,* where the combos and the special movements of many of the characters are not translated into any language. If expressions like *Hadouken*, *Shoryuken*, *Shoryureppa*, or *Tatsumaki Senpukyak* were transferred into English or French, the expectations of the players would not be fulfilled since they are used to the specific terminology of this fighting game saga. The use of English expressions like "Blastwave" or "Fireball" to describe Ken's or Ryu's martial attacks could be regarded as suitable from the linguistic point of view but would not be acceptable translations according to the expectations of the players, who would reject this domesticating approach.

Even when some fighting games like *Tekken* also include examples of non-translation strategies, it cannot be concluded that this is an approach to be extended to the whole genre as some other titles like the already mentioned *Super Smash Bros Brawl* rely on a rather domesticating strategy in which all the combos and movements are translated and adapted into the corresponding

locale. These differences can support the idea that the domestication of foreignization approaches in the translation of a game will influence the rest of the strategies selected by the translators.

Non-translation strategies can also be found in many titles developed in the US or the UK. Indeed, it is interesting to mention the standard non-translation strategy regarding the titles of video games: unlike the tendency in the film industry, in which the titles of the films are usually translated, the name of video games is kept in English in the different locales, so titles like *Medal of Honor*, *Monkey Island*, *Starcraft* or *Little Big Planet* are easily recognizable all over the world. Interestingly, countries with protective policies like France, where the Toubon Law[5] leads to the translation of most commercial materials and advertisement, also stick to this general tendency.

Non-translation strategies can be also related to the particular development of a game and its internationalization policy. Some of the weapons, vehicles or places are given a "proper noun" or they are named after a mythological place or a biblical event; therefore, they are not translated into any language as they are regarded to be specific terminology associated with the story. This is the case of the assault rifle "Lancer" or the city of "Jacinto" in *Gears of War,* the submerged city of "Rapture" in *Bioshock* or the "Covenant" alliance in *Halo*.

4.3 Transcreation

Transcreation is a concept applied to video games by Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006) in order to refer to the *carte blanche* of translators to meet the objective of preserving the game experience in the target locale. As the other approaches commented in this section, transcreation can be considered as a cross-wise strategy that might be used and applied at certain points in any title. However, some genres would be more likely to be adapted using the freedom of the translator in order to achieve a suitable game experience and preserve the look and feel of the title. As it is suggested by Mangiron (2004) narrative-driven genres can include more translatable assets; this statement can be further commented, as the narrative of games might be directly linked to the freedom of the translator or the degree of creativity that they may have when adapting the game. In a nutshell, the more complex and creative a storyline, the more useful transcreation may turn in the translation process.

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5. The text of the Toubon Law can be accessed at: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/. Accessed on October 27th 2011.

On the basis of the previous explanation, transcreation may be observed in those genres that rely on narrative techniques and well-developed plots like RPGs, action and adventure games. To this regard, Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006) provide several examples of transcreation in the analysis of the role game *Final Fantasy X*, where American localizers created new names from scratch for weapons and armours that could not be literally adapted due to space restrictions. As long as transcreation is concerned, the language transfer between European language pairs seems to be less demanding and translators do not require such a degree of creativity as the one needed when translating from less friendly languages like Japanese. Even when the translation of weapons and items in role-playing games seems to be a challenging task on the basis of the mystic and meaningful names coined by the creators of the game, it is also possible to find examples where these objects are translated in a more literal way; this is the case of the classic *Diablo II* or the most recent *Darksiders* where the translation of weapons from English into other languages has been done following a rather word-for-word pattern: the main weapon in *Darksiders*, a sword known as the "Chaoseater" is translated as "Devoracaos" into Spanish. Similarly, the "Abbysal Armor", the "Crossblade" and the "Harvester" turn into "Armadura Abisal", "Hoja Cruzada" and "Segadora", respectively.

Obviously, those titles with an important amount of cut-scenes like *Metal Gear Solid 4* or *Uncharted 2* can be regarded as suitable candidates for the use of a transcreational strategy on the basis of their narrative pattern. It is noteworthy to mention that transcreation does not necessarily imply a rupture with the source text and a translation from zero, but the freedom of the translator to select a suitable alternative in order to preserve the game experience.

Transcreation can be observed in the translation of dialogues, subtitles or even proper nouns. A simple example can be found in the adaptation of some of the items players can use in the game *Mario Kart Wii*: a special shell that 'attacks' the player causing that he or she loses some time during the race is named "Spiny Shell" in the English version and is translated as "Caparace épineuse" in the French game. However, it has been adapted as "Caparazón azul" in the Spanish version, where no reference to the spines is provided but rather to the colour of the shell. This might have been caused by the extension of the text if the translators had preferred the literal "Caparazón con espinas" or "Caparazón con púas". Indeed, space restriction is a major concern for video game translators and the limitations imposed by the number of characters that can be included in the user interface –or even in the manual– of the target locale may have some influence in the decision-taking process.

A more illustrative example of the creativity associated with transcreation can be found in the translation of the vehicles to be chosen by the players in *Mario Kart Wii*. While in the English version players can run with the "Wild Wing" –a medium size kart–, Spanish users have the "Alerón Chiflado" (the "Crazy Wing"); similarly, the "Tiny Titan" turns into a "Minitractor" or the "Dolphin Dasher" (a dolphin shaped bike) is translated into Spanish as "Velocidelfín". The coinage of these terms can shed some light on the creativity required by translators and the freedom they have when adapting names and concepts in video game localization.

4.4 Literal translation

This is an acceptable approach in video games and it may turn to be particularly effective in the case of sports titles, racing games or simulators, where there is a good amount of technical words and specific terminology. Racing cars like *Forza Motorsport 3*, *Gran Turismo 4, Formula 1 2011* or the *Test Drive* series provide databases with complete information about car design and development and the game preferences allow users to adjust the car to fit their preferred driving style. These menus usually include terminology on spark plugs, tires, flaps, catalysers and exhaust systems that are normally literally translated into the target languages. To this regard, the adaptation of certain kinds of games can have some similarities with technical or specialised translation, where terminological issues are one of the main concerns of localisers.

Similarly, in flight simulators technical terms abound together with English expressions that are no translated into the target language because they are used in the professional sector on a regular basis (e.g. "heading", "cockpit", "rotate", "taxi", "may day", etc.). To this regard, *Jane's Combat Simulation* games or *Microsoft's Flight Simulator* series are clear examples of technical translation specialised in the fields of the aeronautics. The high ratio of repetitions in many "technical games" –as many of the specialised terms are used in different parts, menus and windows of the user interface– could raise the question of the usage of Computer Assisted Translation in video games, although this is a topic out of the scope of this paper.

It could be argued that many simulators and sports games do not rely on complex storylines or plots and the narrative load is lower than in other genres such as adventure games or RPGs. Therefore, the degree of creativity of translators can be somehow reduced and literal translation seems to be a suitable and acceptable strategy in order to keep the game experience into the destination locale. This does not signify that the translation of these games is

an easy process, as expertise relevant to the specific genres and subject mat-
ters of the games is required (Dietz 2007).

4.5 Loyalty

Most video games present stories created by the studios developing the title.
However, there are games that have been designed on the basis of a literary
work, a comic book or a film. This is the case of *Indiana Jones*, *James Bond*,
Star Wars or *Harry Potter* games or the superhero titles based on the original
comic books like *Spiderman* or *Batman Arkham Asylum*. In the case of these
titles, there are metatextual references to the films, books or other art forms
related to the story being depicted in the game. Therefore, translators must
keep a balance between the transcreation or the freedom to adapt the contents
in order to achieve an appropriate game experience in the target audience
with the loyalty to the original source of the video game. Superhero games,
for instance, should be adapted taking into account the editorial policy of the
destination locale: while in Spain there is a no translation strategy and names
like "Lois Lane" or places like "Small Ville" are kept in the target text, in
Central and South America they could be adapted as "Luisa Lane" and "Villa
Chica" since this was the strategy followed by the publishers distributing DC
comics in the area.

　　In this sense, the concept of loyalty (Nord 1997: 125) or the fidelity to the
source text might be relevant in the adaptation of those video games based
on literary works or other materials, as the preservation of the atmosphere of
the story will be a key element in order to meet the expectations of the target
audience. The team involved in the production of the video game *The Lord
of the Rings* had to read the novel by Tolkien and pass a test on the contents
of the book previously to the development of the game (Bernal 2009). As the
game recreates a universe that has already been invented and represented in
a novel, the strict preservation of the elements of the original story suggests
that the loyalty or the faithfulness to the source text are a suitable strategy to
be applied.

　　To a lesser extent, loyalty can be also seen in games recreating historical
events or settings, like *Age of Empires* where a good number of civilizations
like the Persian, the Phoenician or the Egyptian ones were represented trying
to keep a certain degree of accuracy as long as the items and the features of
these people were concerned.

4.6 Loss of meaning and compensation strategies

The creativity and current narrative techniques used in video games can pose additional challenges in the translation of certain titles. In case there is a partial or total loss when translating the text, translators may engage in partial rewriting in order to "negotiate functional equivalents" that will allow to compensate for the loss of meaning (Di Marco 2007).

The adaptation of humour is a particularly difficult feature to be achieved by translators, as the use of word plays or puns is becoming more and more usual in video games and they may be extremely difficult to translate from the source into the target culture; this may be observed in the adaptation of *Batman Arkham Asylum* into Spanish, where there are a number of puns and riddles that cannot be effectively transferred into the target language without suffering a partial or a total loss in meaning. The impossibility to convey the message into the target culture might be frequently seen when puns, word-play or humour are involved.

Even though compensation strategies seem to be preferred on the basis of providing a more intensive and compelling gameplay, the omission of contents is another alternative that can be observed in some games in which certain references to the origin culture cannot be easily adapted. Many of the puns and references of the game *Torrente* have been omitted in the English version, as jokes regarding Atlético de Madrid football club can be extremely difficult to adapt to other cultures.

Another example can be observed in *Monkey Island 2: Lechuck's Revenge*. Although the game was successfully localised into Spanish, some particular examples of meaning loss can be found: the tavern where pirates usually joined in the game was the "Scumm Bar". This name created a pun with the word "scum" and the scripting language SCUMM (Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion) which was a game engine specifically designed for developing graphic adventures. The "Scumm Bar" was not translated into any target language. Similarly, the name of the main character, "Guybrush" –which was not translated into any language– was coined by the developers of the game to refer to the draft file where they saved the development of the character ("guy.brush").

In spite of these two exceptions, most of the jokes and puns of this game were effectively adapted by means of compensation strategies; the conversation between Guybrush and the carpenter (see examples 1 and 2) includes a complicated tongue-twister where the alliteration of the phoneme /w/ is conveniently adapted into Spanish, where the /r/ sound is repeated.

(1) Dialogue in English:

Guybrush: How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
Carpenter: A woodchuck would chuck no amount of wood since a wood-chuck can't chuck wood.
Guybrush: But if a woodchuck could chuck and would chuck some amount of wood, what amount of wood would a woodchuck chuck?
Carpenter: Even if a woodchuck could chuck wood and even if a woodchuck would chuck wood, should a woodchuck chuck wood?
Guybrush: A woodchuck should chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood, as long as a woodchuck would chuck wood.
Carpenter: Oh shut up.

(2) Localisation into Spanish

Guybrush: ¿Cuántos robles roería un roedor, si los roedores royeran robles?
Carpintero: Un roedor no roería robles, ya que los roedores no roen robles.
Guybrush: Pero si un roedor pudiera roer y royera alguna cantidad de robles, ¿cuántos robles roería un roedor?
Carpintero: Aunque un roedor pudiera roer robles, y aunque un roedor roye-ra robles, ¿debe un roedor roer robles?
Guybrush: Un roedor debería roer si un roedor pudiera roer robles, siempre que el roedor royera robles.
Carpintero: Oh, cállate.

4.7 Censorship

The adaptation of a game to a different culture must take all legal issues into account. Some countries do have particular rules or regulations regarding video games showing an excessive violence or offensive language. This is the case of Germany, where blood must be turned green and the use of violence or some kind of symbols are strongly monitored and watched by the authorities (Chandler 2005: 26). The Unterhaltungssoftware Selbskontrolle or USK –the body regulating the distribution of video games in Germany– banned Capcom's *Deadrising* or the blockbuster *Gears of War* due to the excessive violence to be found in the game[6] (something that also happened in Japan).

Even when the game is accepted by the authorities in a foreign market, translators have to take all legal questions into account and they might have to alter their choices and decisions on the basis of the regulations in the target locale or the recommendations of the distribution companies. In this case, the

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6. Source: http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,227443,00.html. Accessed on October 27th 2011.

objective of making the game suitable for the destination culture clashes with the original message of the author (the concept of loyalty) and the freedom of the translator to choose a particular strategy. However, we have to bear in mind that the adaptation of video games is a market driven activity and therefore it does not differ substantially from other sectors like cinema or TV.

The question of censorship is a controversial issue in the game industry, and violence is not the only element in the radar screen of the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) or other related agencies. Sexual connotations –like the ones included in the GTA series– can also be an issue when adapting video games, and even political elements, as many war or combat titles are banned in certain countries of Asia and the Middle East due to the historical facts or events recreated in the games.

5. Conclusions

The translation of video games is an emerging field that can be effectively approached by Translation Studies. As multimodal and multidimensional products, video games are a concerning issue for audiovisual translation, and the growing importance of the game industry suggests that this sector will gain momentum in the short term. Besides the technical development of video games and the addition of new visual and audio features, titles are more and more complex as regards the plots and the narrative techniques used to create compelling stories and atmospheres. The translation of video games into different cultures shares most of the stages to be found in any localisation process but it also incorporates additional challenges like the ones that are faced by translators in audiovisual or even literary translation.

The setting of textual typologies or genres in video games is a complicated task due to the heterogeneity of many titles and the difficulty of setting clear boundaries that separate categories from each other. This might be used to support the idea that different settings and types of games may require the use and application of different approaches and strategies. It can be stated that some tendencies or regularities may be found, as the games that have heavily narrative-driven can provide examples of transcreation, or the titles with a high ratio of technical vocabulary like simulators are frequently adapted relying on literal translation. However, even when some genres can be associated with a particular translation strategy, the narrative development of video games and the hybridization of many genres does not allow to conclude that some strategies are more appropriate for certain categories as a matter of fact.

As a functionalist process and a type of constrained translation, the adaptation of games is subject to the particular function the product has to produce in the target audience. Therefore, as it has been argued in this paper, there are differences regarding the strategies used in titles belonging to the same genre or category; moreover, a combination of different strategies can be observed in the translation of a particular title. In other words, the final objective of keeping the gameplay in the target locale is the ultimate goal to be achieved by translators. In order to meet the expectations of the final users, different resources and strategies can be used when adapting games to different cultures.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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6. Works cited / references: This section will only include works really cited in the text and will begin after the article has come to an end. The list will be arranged in alphabetical order by author and year of the first edition, and according to the following pattern: Monographs: Author (Surname(s), complete first name). Year (in brackets) *Title* (in italics). City: Publisher. Journal article: Author (Surname(s), complete first name). Year (in brackets). "Title of the article" (with quotation marks). *Name of the journal* (in italics). Volume: Issue, first page-last page (preceded by the abbreviation pp.)
At *MonTI*'s website (http://dti.ua.es/es/monti-english/monti-authors.html) numerous examples of each of these variants are available.

7. Deadline: The deadline will be June 30. The contribution and a short CV (a maximum of 150 words) for each of the authors in a separate file will be sent as an attachment (in Word or any other word processor compatible with Word) addressed to the Managing Editor of MonTI: <email: monti.secretaria@ua.es>

8. After requesting the editors' approval and receiving the reports from the referees, the journal will provide the authors with a reasoned statement regarding the acceptance of their contributions.

PRINCIPALES NORMAS DE REDACCIÓN

MonTI edita un número anual. Los trabajos originales e inéditos que se propongan para su publicación en la revista se someterán estrictamente a las siguientes normas:

1. Extensión máxima: 10.000 palabras, incluida la bibliografía.

2. Tipo de letra: Times New Roman. Tamaño de letra: 11 pt. Interlineado: sencillo.

3. Lenguas vehiculares: alemán, castellano, catalán, francés o inglés.

4. La primera página incluirá, por este orden y en líneas sucesivas, lo siguiente:
Título del trabajo, seguido de una línea en blanco de separación. Autor(es). <Correo electrónico>. Centro de procedencia, seguido de una línea en blanco de separación. Resúmenes en inglés y en otra de las lenguas vehiculares (extensión máxima de 150 palabras cada uno). Palabras clave: se aportarán cinco términos en los dos idiomas de los resúmenes.

5. Remisión a la Bibliografía. Se seguirá una de las principales variantes del estilo Chicago de citas: Apellido(s) del autor (año: páginas) o (Apellido(s) del autor año: páginas).

6. Bibliografía: este epígrafe sólo recogerá los trabajos citados en el artículo, y aparecerá después del final del texto. Se ordenará alfabéticamente por autor y año del siguiente modo.Monografías: Autor (apellido(s), nombre completo). Año (entre paréntesis) *Título* (en cursiva).Ciudad: Editorial. Artículo de revista: Autor (apellido(s), nombre completo). Año (entre paréntesis). Título del artículo (entre comillas). *Nombre de la revista* (en cursiva). Volumen: fascículo, páginas de comienzo y fin del artículo (antecedidas por la abreviatura pp.). En la página web de *MonTI* (http://dti.ua.es/es/monti/normas-de-redaccion.html) se puede acceder a numerosos ejemplos de cada una de las variantes de referencia bibliográfica.

7. Envío de originales: el plazo de recepción finalizará el 30 de junio. Los textos –y un breve currículo (150 palabras máximo) de los autores en otro documento– se remitirán en soporte informático (Word o cualquier programa de tratamiento de textos compatible con Word) dirigidos al Secretario de la revista: <e-mail: monti.secretaria@ua.es>

8. La Dirección de la revista, vistos los informes de los asesores y el parecer de los editores, comunicará a los autores la decisión razonada sobre la aceptación o no de los trabajos.

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