

Baños Piñero, Rocío and Díaz Cintas, Jorge (eds) (2015). *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context: Mapping and Ever-changing Landscape*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 291, £65.00. ISBN: 978-1-137-55288-4 (hardback).

Audiovisual consumption habits are subject to constant change due to globalization – digital TV, DVDs, Blu-Ray and online platforms have raised awareness about the utmost importance of translating audiovisual material for a broader audience (Díaz-Cintas and Anderman 2009). New broadcasting methods have a direct impact on audiovisual translation (AVT), both at a professional and at an academic level. Hence the publication of this book aiming to shed light on this red-hot issue, dealing with topics not only related to Translation Studies, but also to audiovisual consumption, accessibility and reception.

The contributions – both of scholars and professional translators – have been divided into three main parts focused on quality, audiences and professional practices, respectively.

In **Part I** (*Addressing Quality*), **Fuentes-Luque** presents what seems to be the first descriptive attempt to investigate institutional AVT from an academic point of view. He analyses three European platforms offering online audiovisual materials, as well as the United Nations' webcast service. He points out how institutions, although conscious of the paramount importance of their audiovisual productions, may not pay enough attention to their appropriateness. They interact with the rest of the world providing institutional audiovisual material in several languages, but their practices are not always in line with existing AVT conventions. **Romero-Fresco** and **Martínez-Pérez** defend how their NER model – a new model for assessing the accuracy, as well as the quality, of live and automatic subtitles in different countries and different languages – permits the evaluation of the accuracy of respeaking in audiovisual programs. The authors argue that this model provides a valid framework, based on a previous model illustrated in Romero-Fresco (2011), to assess the accuracy of subtitles produced through respeaking and automatic subtitling (both involving speech recognition systems). This is especially relevant in a context where subtitlers could even possibly be substituted for (semi-)automatic subtitling by means of speech recognition and automatic translation (although it is still left to see whether subtitling companies fully rely on this kind of technology). Closely related to the former is the empirical study carried out by **De-Castro, Puente-Rodríguez** and **Ruiz-Mezcua** on live subtitles synchronization in real-time contexts. It evaluates and measures delays in live subtitling in Spain and develops a model for live subtitling synchronisation to be used in different environments. According to the authors, to be successful, such a model should take into consideration the variable delays of real-time subtitles. Finally, **Iglesias-Fernández**,

Martínez-Martínez and **Chica-Núñez** trace the line in which reception studies, audio description (AD) and interpreting may converge within a larger theoretical framework to challenge the conventional use of neutral narration in AD for quality reasons. During the experiments conducted with a total of 15 blind and partially sighted subjects, participants were asked to assess the audio describer's voice qualities and the quality of the final product when being exposed to different audiovisual products. Although it seems hard to extract clear conclusions, this inter-disciplinary approach to reception studies seems qualitatively fruitful and calls for more experiments with a larger sample.

In **Part II** (*Targeting the Audience*), **Franco**, **Medina-Silveira** and **Dos-Santos-Carneiro** address the question of how audio-described audiovisual products or live performances could promote a better understanding among people with learning disabilities. In collaboration with the Brazilian Association of Parents and Friends of Exceptional People, they assessed the reactions of four students with learning disabilities when exposed to the original version and the audio-described version of the same short film. Although this study does not prove how AD helps viewers with learning disabilities, it sets a purposeful methodology for future research in this field. **Zanotti** tackles how retranslations for dubbing work in Italy; following previous research in this under-researched field – Zaro-Vera and Ruiz-Noguera (2007) – she offers a descriptive view on 18 redubbed films from the 1930s to the 1980s to cover issues such as censorship, quality, audience perception and translation norms. **Sanchez** evaluates the validity and viability of resizable and movable subtitles. Remote Subtitle, a feature launched by a French company in 2008, allows users to modify subtitles to their like. This system would go against subtitling guidelines, such as the ones suggested by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), and may interfere with the aesthetics of audiovisual programs, but it enhances interactivity and can help users with any visual or hearing impairment. Finally, **Valdés** presents a fruitful analysis of the MultilingualWeb Project, funded by the European Commission and coordinated by W3C as well as other member organisations. She focuses on the application of Translation Studies to multilingual webs, paying special attention to internationalisation, usability, cultural variables and accessibility. The aim of the multilingual web is for users to experience online content in their native language, as if translations were originals, thus relying on the invisibility of translators.

Finally, in **part III** (*Mapping Professional Practices*), **Szu-Yu Kuo** describes her empirical study on professional subtitling with an impressive success – 429 professionals from 39 different countries answered her survey. She points to a certainly worrying state of affairs in the industry for pay rates and translators' expertise, as well as to a general lack of royalties. Trends such as the increasing amount of work as opposed to the diminishing rates since 2007, and the overall prevalence of professional subtitling software

and equipment are also revealed in this study. Last but not least, she argues that an improvement of subtitlers' working conditions could enhance quality. **Nikolić** outlines a current trend in the industry – working with templates, which can take various forms and involve different workflows in the current industry. Whereas it can be argued that working with templates streamlines the subtitling process and results in time and money savings, they fail to take into account that subtitling standards vary from one country to another. Templates, he states, have also led to lower rates, over-condensation and lesser quality. **Mliczak** briefly sketches the situation of the deaf and hard-of-hearing in Poland to then observe how Polish television provides this audience with subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or sign language interpreting. As she remarks, accessible TV content is still insufficient today, and hearing-impaired people resort to online subtitled resources, which sometimes are even fansubbed. Nevertheless, she argues that the situation seems to be improving due to recent changes to Polish legislation. **Hołobut** argues that voiceover is a neglected area within Translation Studies (Franco, Matamala and Orero 2010) and carries out a descriptive analysis of fictional dialogue and its “prefabricated orality” (Baños-Piñero and Chaume-Varela 2009) by comparing Polish voiceover and subtitled versions of two episodes of *Desperate Housewives*. Her analysis reveals interesting differences between these two AVT modes as regards the rendering of orality markers. **Mendes** accounts for her experience evaluating the dubbing process at a Brazilian dubbing studio. She found that textual manipulation of the final translation is actually inevitable once in hands of the dubbing director and actors. She also argues that dubbing is a decision-making process in which (not only) time restrictions (i.e. isochrony) call for linguistic strategies to be implemented in the dubbing studio that are, in fact, analogous to the ones translators apply when translating scripts. To conclude, **Leung** thoroughly illustrates the most recent advances in AD in Hong Kong, a wealthy city where audiovisual accessibility policies have proved to be insufficient for the visually impaired audience. Despite a lack of governmental attention, ever since 2009, two main NGOs have been offering AD services and training, allowing blind and visually impaired users to enjoy audiovisual programs and live performances.

In a nutshell, this collective volume is a fantastic example of a sensibly coordinated academic publication combining theory and practice about the latest issues on AVT – be they on accessibility, reception or professional issues – that affect how translators work for the media industry today across the world.

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