

MULTIMODALITY, TRANSLATION AND AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Yves GAMBIER¹

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Abstract

In a globalised world with unpredictable tensions and a digitalised world with divides in the use of technology, "translation" never stops playing a major role in several domains of activity. In a few decades, this double move of globalisation and digitalisation has transformed and is still transforming our ways of communicating. Communication is more and more made of a complex set of (verbal and non-verbal) signs. This is not completely new, but the frequency and the diversity of multimodal interactions are impacting our daily life, blurring categories such as "translation". The audiovisual translation (AVT) is a meaningful example of this intersemiotic translation, in terms of diversity and number of signs, and consequently a dynamic research field – coping with different challenging modes. More important, the AVT field and other types of multimodal translation imply to re-visit several concepts of Translation Studies (TS).

Keywords: *audiovisual translation, intersemiotic translation, media, mode, multimodal text, multimodality, translation.*

1. Introduction

With a globalized world, sometimes subject to unpredictable clashes and tensions, and with a technologized world, where there is often a disparity in the use of digital means, translation continues to play a major role in many sectors of activity – from trade to scientific exchanges, from international relations to cultural events, from labels about food to instructions for starting up and maintaining machines. In just a few decades, this dual movement of globalization and digitalization has transformed and continues to transform our modes of communication, our ways of consuming (we are becoming both producers and consumers, hence the neologism prosumers) and also our perception of translation, long denied as a practice and a need but now desired thanks to the facilities offered by machine translation and artificial intelligence.

In what follows, we will try to identify some of these transformations and the challenges they imply – first at the level of the "text", which is increasingly multimodal,

¹ University of Turku, Finland, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, yves.gambier@utu.fi, ORCID number: 0000-0002-1858-4281

and then at the level of "translation" confronted with the plurality of signs that contribute to the production, distribution and reception of the meaning. From now on, global communication is multimodal, multimedia, multicultural, with multiple aims and multiple authors. These include online media, audiovisual media and products (TV, DVD, Internet, mobile phone, tablet, cinema), advertising (printed, online, commercial, promotional, video-clips, trailers, public service campaigns), corporate communication, the tourism industry, forms of entertainment (video games, web series, webtoons, animated films, etc.), performance arts (theatre, dance, video arts, operas, etc.), the popularization of science and medicine (illustrated brochures, leaflets, websites, etc.).

2. On multimodal text

The history of the conditions of reading, authorship of a book, and publication sheds light on the relationship between oral and written codes. The dominant fact of human language has been its orality. However, our Western societies, with the invention of the printing press, rejected work on this orality. In translation studies, there has been a tendency to focus exclusively on the text, or rather on a certain concept of text limited to its verbal dimension alone (logocentric presupposition), and to neglect the oral and/or written translation of oral narratives and epics (Tymoczko, 2007; Bandia, 2011). Even interpreting studies, long dominated by the paradigm of conference interpreting, the psycho-dynamics of orality have been underestimated.

2.1 The interaction between the oral and written codes

Orality and written form have never been homogeneous (Ong, 1982; Goody, 1987; Jousse 1990, 2008). You can speak spontaneously in a dialogue or a monologue, or by reciting or reading aloud what has been written. You can write in order to be read, to be spoken as if not written, etc. For a long time, studies have been carried out on the (realistic) representation, simulation or transcription of written texts (novels, dramas, film scripts), and how syntax and typography could show discontinuity of the verbal flow. Blurring this dominant opposition between the written and oral codes, the Dadaist movement in the 1920's and the Lettrists during and after the World War II advocated a return to fundamentals, i.e. experimenting with different means of expression in which graphics and sounds had an essential role.

Very few works have focused on how orality is embedded and then rendered in translation (Brumme, 2008; Brumme et al. 2010, 2012; Gambier & Lautenbacher, 2010). However, today these conventions and strategies are shaken up by new hybrid forms of communication which force us to rethink the oral nature of our interactions and challenge the ideology of literacy and the power ascribed to it (Monod, 2013). I am here referring to emails, SMS, chats, blogs, tweets, and interactive games in which different spellings, emoticons, avatars, acronyms, abbreviations, punctuation, capital letters, interjections are used in an expressive, deictic or emblematic way. Examples include Xu Bing's *A Story Without words* (2013) made entirely of emoticons, pictograms, symbols, and also his installation *Tianshu* (The book of Heaven)

composed of scrolls made of Chinese characters created by the artist and insignificant to the Chinese (exhibited in Beijing, 1987-1991).

Computer-mediated communications (CMO) or telephone-mediated communications (CMT) are now common vernacular practices, not to mention that these practices can mix (*code-mixing*) or change languages (*code-switching*) (Liénard & Zlitni, 2011): the online world has effects on our natural languages, on our ways of identifying ourselves, of presupposing (Barton & Lee, 2013). A new analogy can be drawn between physical, non-verbal gestures and the textual conventions of social media: digital and social media texts are conversational texts, too often understood and approached as “disembodied”. The mediated/embodied binary is a false dichotomy, as much as is the so-called opposition between oral and written. The text-based CMO is a written-oral hybrid where emotions, thoughts and social cognition are intimately bound. In the current evolution of our communication technologies, we are witnessing the closing of the “Gutenberg parenthesis” open in the mid-15th c. (Pettitt, 2009)

We cannot exclude from these changes the fact that literature itself is changing, ranging from cyber-literature – for example Steve Tomasula (2010): *TOC: A New-Media novel*, a mosaic of texts, medias, and collaborators, where the author’s role is multiple: writer, conductor, producer, art director, etc. – to art installations combining design and literary texts. Poetry can also be staged as an aural performance (cf. slam, rap), as a public lecture, or as a visual display (Lee, 2013). *Keitai Shousetsu* is now in Japan the name for stories written in SMS, distributed as serials on mobile phones, and then published as series in the press, like some novels in France in the 19th century.

What about translation and interpreting in this moving landscape, changing from the “graphosphère” to the “videosphère” (Debray, 1991: ch. 10-12; 1994: Annexes; 2000)?²

A number of practices blur the traditional opposition between oral and written (which are still the basis of training programmes: translation (first the written word) followed by interpretation (oral)). Here are some examples of these practices:

- simultaneous interpreting, which sometimes depends on a planned, written speech, read by the speaker.
- sight translation or *prima vista*, as a dichotomous process of language (from the source to the target language) as well as from a written into an oral form.

² For mediology (*medio-* here meaning mediation between the production of signs and the production of events – Debray 1994: 29), the widespread idea that technique is not part of culture does not hold. The history of humanity would have gone through three stages: the *logosphère*, dominated by oral culture even if it follows the invention of writing, the *graphosphère*, from the 15th century with the printing press until 1968, and the *video-sphère*, with the omnipresence of images, photos and video. This typology, which is quite recent, ignores the upheavals brought about by the Net, the Web, and social and digital networks. In fact, a fourth sphere, the *cybersphère* or *hypersphère*, could be added, or the third could be expanded from video- to the cybersphere.

- translating theatre, comics, songs, operas where several types of signs co-exist (aural, visual, musical, etc.) and where acceptability is less important than speakability, performability and singability.
- localizing video games (their rules, their user interface, their warning messages, their instructions, their manual, their story, their dialogues, their texts in images, their voice-over).
- live subtitling, as an example of *diamesic translation*, and intra- and inter-lingual subtitling, as well as surtitling (from dialogue to lines written at the bottom or on the side or top of the screen).

Besides, some tools such as speech recognition software also disturb the border between oral and written, in other words speaking what will become a written text on the screen. Coupled with Machine Translation, we can easily imagine how this would change conference interpreting in certain settings.

2.2 Towards a new concept of text?

The term *text* has been many times referred to in our discussion. Written text (utterance) has always been a move away from the place and time of initial enunciation, transcending the spatial-temporal constraints of the enunciation while being a medium for the preservation and transmission of our cultural memory. It is now time to wonder about its polysemy and our assumptions (Toury, 2006). Does text mean the same thing today in literary translation, conference interpreting, audiovisual translation and localization?

In text linguistics, text (understood as a mono-modal verbal written text) was defined by seven standards of textuality: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). These were made relevant for translation by Hatim & Mason (1990), Neubert & Shreve (1992), Jimenez-Crespo (2013: 43-49), Mira & Matthiessen (2015). However, there are differences between a text by Cicero or Virgil – to be read aloud during a special (political, religious, aesthetic) event - and a text written by M. Proust (*A la recherche du temps perdu*, 1913-1926), between a traditional literary text in a book and a text giving instructions or information. All these texts however are materially (physically) finite (self-contained) and semantically open, whereas hypertexts are both materially and semantically open. You know when you open and close a book while you never know in advance when and where you stop to read websites. Today, one does not read an e-text without the added bonus of referring to an interview on YouTube, a soundtrack, a public reading, a map (just as you do not watch a film on a DVD without rushes, a clip.)

The concept of text within the paradigms of Translation Studies changes according to the approaches or “turns” which have marked the last three decades of the field (descriptive, systemic, postcolonial, feminist, etc.); and it has also changed over time. Obviously, within the perspective of domestication/adaptation of tourist

brochures, art books, children's books, cookery books, exhibition catalogues, advertisements, the concept of text, combining writing and photos/drawings, has already changed (Gorlée, 2004). Translation studies has long been embarrassed by this kind of "text" with a specific aim and target receptors, speaking then of adaptations rather than translations (limited to the written word alone).

Text as renewed through ICT has become poly-semiotic or multimodal – a hybrid composition made up of different semiotic signs, requiring new skills and new forms of literacy. We now have texts made up of short messages (blogs, tweets), still or moving images, sounds, pictograms, tables, playing with colors and fonts, etc. These semiotic resources, playing with our (five) senses, exist by combining them, from the design and production of the text to its distribution and reception. In addition, they have their own conventions and traditions, depending on the culture: the colour white, for example, is not interpreted in the same way in Europe in general as in Japan.

Two decades of the Internet and the Web have transformed a concept that has been dominant for more than a thousand years. Texts have become fluent and fluid with other texts and other semiotic signs. The Web welcomes and distributes all previous media without amounting to the sum of them (Lancien, 2010). It favours roaming where meaning is constructed by navigation, from link to link, from site to site (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013: 54-65), giving the act of reading a decisive role in the co-construction of the text. Finally, it reverses lack of completion. Whereas every document used to be datable and assignable from the time it left the printers, with the Net we have a permanent process of actualization (updating) and at the same time non-finiteness of content. In a way, hypertexts recreate the ambiguities of medieval manuscripts where it was not always easy to differentiate between author and copyists, between original knowledge and commentaries. Today, in addition, the same text can also be conveyed through a variety of media: for example, a press article with photos can be transferred from a newspaper to a web site or a smartphone.

The relationship between the verbal and other semiotic modes of communication was hierarchical and asymmetric for R. Barthes (1964), who postulated the domination of verbal text over the other semiotic codes – the text functioning as a *relay* (text and image being in a relationship of complementarity) and an *anchor* (the text guiding the reading of the image). Today, scholars in multimodal studies, such as e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996; 2001), highlight the primacy and autonomy of visual signs. The question here is not to determine who is right but to observe that both trends point to the importance of considering multiple modes of representation in tandem – linguistic forms no longer being the only way to produce meaning. Moreover, a mode such music can be made up of sub-codes (rhythm, melody, harmony, orchestration, etc.), or for oral language: intonation, volume, voice quality, rate, pauses, etc.).

Mono-modality cannot be an approach to texts, even for certain literary writings where the layout, the margins, the typographic characters, the design of the cover

already call for a certain interpretation. Similarly, translation cannot be exclusively linked to the written form of the text. In interpreting studies, we now recognize the importance of non-verbal elements and multilingual communication. Several quality criteria have been defined here and there for, for example, interpretation in the spoken media: comprehensibility, synchrony, complete information, easy and regular enunciation, appropriate facial expressions, calm gestures, dress code not neglected.

The transformation of the concept of text goes hand in hand with the revival of genres, especially web-mediated genres (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013: 67-101) – from the 280 characters of a tweet to the intersemiotic transformations available on the Net (such as Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's "translation" of *Gangnam Style* into *Grass Mud Horse Style*). It would still be necessary to test the seven criteria of textuality on various textual materials to be translated, localized, and subtitled. Attempts have been made, particularly with the notions of coherence and intertextuality (see, for example, the work of Di Giovanni (2014) and Taylor (2014) in audio description).

Today, the changes are so rapid and so controversial that it is sometimes difficult to follow and understand what is going on. Thus, a film is multimedia (broadcast in cinemas, on television, on DVD, on the Net, on a tablet, etc.) and multimodal; a printed magazine (with text, layout, typographical choice, photos, colors, etc.) and a radio program (oral and music) are multimodal but mono-media (they can only be read, watched, or heard). These intermodal interconnections are usually treated in a holistic, global, routine way, often unconsciously, unless there is a clear disharmony between the co-present signs, and when it is necessary, for example, to train audiovisual translators. Maybe looking back at history in the long-term (*longue durée* as used by the French *Annales* school of history writing) and jettisoning our obsession with fixed verbal texts are also ways to cross the divide and view the future with confidence.

With this evolution from the text perceived only in its linguistic dimension to the multimodal text, we can return to the concept of intersemiotic translation.

3. Intersemiotic translation

The concept of Jakobson (1959) is often taken up in translation studies³ especially in case studies, but not questioned in its validity, its relevance. Just to give only two references from 2018: by Weissbrod and Kohn (where the illustrations are considered as two readings of the folktale in question to which they thus give a new dimension) and by Tsiakalou who sees the "translation" of *The Rite of Spring* by two choreographers as an "ideological intervention" (2018: 26) related to gender and sexuality. However, this concept of Jacobson must be put into context before it can be explored in the new context impacted by digital technologies, but also in the context of

³ Of the few pages of the 1959 text, a sharp criticism was recently formulated by K. Marais (2019), pleading his own case by making Jakobson say what he did not say.

a questioning of the concept of language and the paradigm of communication in translation studies (see e.g. Sakai, 2009). Jakobson in 1959 is in the lineage of semiotics, poetics and structural linguistics, and not in that of TS who has not yet emerged. Moreover, the examples he gives for translation (intra- and inter-lingual) are isolated words (such as *bachelor*, *cheese*) or morphological problems (such as masculine/feminine), contrasting especially English and Russian. Moreover, under the influence of Peirce, he speaks of the "interpretation of signs" which can then be "translated" according to one of the three types of translation mentioned in his short text, encompassing all forms of communication by means of a language with its variations, between languages and between sign systems (linguistic or not). The translation in question then appears in its ambiguity – an ambiguity that translation studies continues to convey: the term can indeed be taken as a metonymy, synecdoche (a part to designate all forms of communication) or metaphor: translation as transference, in art, in sociology (especially in the theory of the actor-network), in mathematics, in psychoanalysis, in biology and other disciplines and also in the controversial concept of *cultural translation* - Buden et al. 2009).

"Intersemiotic translation" or "transmutation," according to Jakobson (1959), is "an interpretation of linguistic signs by means of non-linguistic sign systems" (1959: 233), "from verbal arts into music, dance, cinema or painting" (Ibid: 238). Jakobson does not go any further about this type of translation, sometimes referred to by others as *diatechnical translation* (variations depending on technical media and codes). As examples of this "mutual translatability" (Ibid: 234) between sign systems, we can cite a short story translated into a film (often referred to as an *adaptation*) like a Polish ballad whose translation into English will inspire a short film, or the film *La vie de bohème* by Aki Kaurismäki (1993) derived from a text published in serial form in 1845-49, then published in several volumes in 1851-52, after being dramatized in 1849, and before being used for Puccini's opera libretto in 1896 (Gambier, 2004), or murals, the result of an official written appeal, visualizations sketched by the artist, and collective bargaining (Gambier et al., 2021). It should be noted here that Jakobson does not mention the reverse process, i.e. a non-linguistic system rendered by a text, e.g. audio description (i.e. the translation of images into a linguistic form), a television series becoming a novel (sometimes referred to as *novelization*), or the verbal representation or description of a painting (or *ekphrasis*), or the repetition of images in a novel, as in *Le méridien de Greenwich* (1979), *Lac* (1989), *Envoy spécial* (2016) by Jean Echenoz. It should also be noted from the outset that this notion of intersemiotic translation is ambiguous: it does not distinguish between genres (e.g. passage from tragedy to opera) or media (i.e. the effects of materiality on the content, on its interpretation: e.g. during the transition from a printed book to a performance) nor does it envisage the transition from one non-linguistic system to another, as from a film to a video game, from a painting to a choreography.

In order to go beyond Jakobson's notion of intersemiotic translation as well as the triple distinction proposed by Toury (1986/1994) between intrasystemic (or intralingual) translation, intersystemic (or interlingual) translation and intersemiotic translation (between different codes), and to take into account genres and media, Kaindl (2013: 261-262) rightly relies on the difference between mode (or semiotic code) and medium. He is positioned within the framework of the multimodality marked by MAK Halliday's functional systemic linguistics (FSL) while we opt for a more semiotic terminology (hence code rather than mode) (see section 3). Here is his typology, rather different from Gottlieb's one (2008) with 30 types of translation:

- *intramodal* (or *intracodic*) translation, between two similar modes, within *the same culture* (e.g. a Neapolitan play translated into standard Italian, *the Marseillaise* by a military band changed to reggae, a recipe image in a children's cookbook) or *between different cultures* (e.g. a Mickey Mouse comic book in manga).

- *intermodal* (or *intercodic*) translation: this is the proper meaning of transmutation, i.e. free transposition, change of form, of nature. Here too, it is either *intracultural* (e.g. from the Bible printed to the Bible on video, a poem becoming an image, written texts translated into sign language) or *intercultural* (e.g. a management manual, with illustrations, rendered by a DVD in Finnish, a Spanish comic book transformed into an American cartoon).

- *intramedial*⁴ and *intracultural* translation (e.g. a music video by a rapper first in English and then in Spanish, for the US market) or *intercultural* translation (e.g. the trailer of a British film partly recomposed for its Russian version, as modes such as film editing or musical production can be modified because they have a cultural dimension that influences the medium used).

- *intermedial* and *intracultural* translation (e.g. a German novel turned into a German film, a poem written in Spanish recited aloud in front of a Spanish-speaking audience), or *intercultural translation* (e.g. the novel *Les Misérables* changed into an English musical or the painting by L. da Vinci: *Mona Lisa* visualized with tousled hair or parodied by M. Duchamp with the title L.H.O.O.Q, 1919). Intermedial translation can be seen as synonymous with Jakobson's intersemiotic translation.⁵ It can also be subdivided, in the words of Elleström (2010; 2014), into "transmediation" (novel → film) and "*media representation*", the object of (re)presentation being the other medium itself (e.g. a work of art included in a documentary, a review or a press review of a film, or epitext according to Genette (1987). See also Bruhn & Schirmmacher, 2022.

⁴ We won't discuss here the distinctions between trans-/inter-/cross-medial, or how one moves from one medium to another. Analogous ambiguities and challenges are found in trans-/inter-/cross-disciplinarity.

⁵ From the end of the 3rd to the 18th century, many works of visual art in the West depicted subjects sometimes borrowed from a written source (Bible, myths, chronicles), such as the sacrifice of Isaac, the beheading of Medusa or Gorgon, Venus, sometimes inspired by an already existing painting or sculpture (e.g. the series of sculptures of David by Donatello (c. 1431), Michelangelo (1501-1504), Cordier at the very beginning of the seventeenth century).

These four categories, with their internal subdivision between intracultural and intercultural, can also form hybrid genres, such as a Shakespeare play performed on stage and broadcast in French on television or cinema, with close-ups (both intermodal, intermedial and intercultural translation) or like the Mickey Mouse comic book in manga becoming a Japanese animated film, dubbed into English (intramodal, intermedial and intercultural translation).

4. The challenges of audiovisual translation (AVT)

Before the use of new digital technologies became popular, AVT was fertile ground for research on translation and media. At first, it was mainly concerned with the transfer of dialogues, monologues, commentaries into another language/culture. In fact, what do we mean when we subtitle? What, then, is the original "text"? Schematically, we can say that there is an inter-linguistic translation of the dialogues but considering the context constituted by all the other multimodal elements, i.e. taking into account the interrelations between verbal, visual and sound elements, each of which makes sense according to the others. It should also be noted that AVT is often seen in terms of a "problem" or "loss", rather than in terms of a set of innovative solutions to international distribution problems: without it, films, for example, would not cross linguistic borders. Finally, it is also important to remember the diversity of formats and projection settings: feature and short films in cinemas, television, computers, DVDs, webpages, tablets, mobile phones, theatres, museums, outdoor events, etc. Not to mention the diversity of genres (news, fiction, documentaries, animated films, television and web series, children's programmes, operas, musicals, sitcoms, commercials, video games, corporate videos, etc.

4.1 Multi-semiotic dimension

An audiovisual product or performance (AV) consists of a certain number of signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning. The spectators, including the translators, apprehend the series of codified signs, articulated in a certain way by the director via framing and shooting, and the editor (editing). One of the main challenges of AVT as a practice and object of research is to identify the types of relationships between verbal and non-verbal signs. The positions and quantities of signs are always relative: in given sequences, the importance of sound can sometimes go beyond visual semiotic forms. In other sequences, the film code may go beyond the language elements. The table below summarizes the 14 different semiotic codes that are active to varying degrees in the production of meaning (Gambier, 2013: 48).

To the 14 systems of signs presented below (or 15 if we separate the literary code from the theatrical code), we could add that of "objects" or registered trademarks which are not without effects on the spectators, holding their attention on the emotional, cognitive, symbolic implications of these objects (e.g. car marks, aperitif marks in James Bond films). These marks are all the more significant in the

interpretation because they are both visible with a certain frequency (they contribute to the financing of the film) and because they pose a problem for the audio descriptors (Davila & Orero, 2014).

	AUDIO CHANNEL	VISUAL CHANNEL
VERBAL ELEMENTS (signs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>linguistic code</i> (dialogue, monologue, comments/voices off, reading) - <i>paralinguistic code</i> (delivery, intonation, accents) - <i>literary and theatre codes</i> (plot, narrative, sequences, drama progression, rhythm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>graphic code</i> (written forms on screen: letters, newspaper headlines, menus, street names, ads, brands, intertitles, subtitles)
NON-VERBAL ELEMENTS (signs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sound arrangement code</i> (ambient noises, sound effects - special or not: phone ringing, door slamming, car starting, revolver shot, etc.) - <i>Music code</i>, (recorded musical piece, live accompaniment, songs, etc.) - <i>Paralinguistic code</i> (voice quality, pauses, silence, voice volume, prosody (pitch-direction, pitch-range, loudness, tempo, etc.), vocal noises, crying, screaming, coughing, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>iconographic code</i> (colors, symbols, representations, etc.) - <i>photographic code</i> (lighting, perspective, colours, etc.) - <i>scenographic code</i> (visual environment signs of plans, scenes, etc.) - <i>film code</i> (shooting, framing, editing, cutting into shots, camera movements, scenes and sequences, genre conventions, direction of actors, etc.) - <i>kinesic code</i> (gestures, ways of standing, manners, postures, facial features, gazes, etc.) - <i>proxemic code</i> (movements, use of space, interpersonal distance, etc.) - <i>dress code</i> (including hairstyle, make up, etc.)

Table 1. The semiotic codes in the production of meaning of a AV product/performance/event

4.2 Diversity of AVT types

There are different ways of presenting these types, depending on their age (from the late 1920s to the present), their use of a specific technique (most often now a set of software), their emphasis on oral or written. The types are classified below according to two main groups: translation between codes (oral and written codes, visual code) mostly within the same language; and translation between at least two languages, other codes (visual, sound) also being at play in this inter-lingual transformation. Certain types can be intra- or inter-lingual and could be placed within either of the two groups.

In the first category (**Between codes, for the same language**), there are four basic types. In *intralingual subtitling* or "Same Language Subtitles" (SLS), there is a shift from the spoken code of the verbal exchanges in a film or television programme to the written code of the subtitles. Such intralingual subtitles serve at least three different purposes:

- to facilitate understanding between linguistic variations, in particular between geographical dialects, thus sometimes contributing to a certain standardization of the language, e.g. a Quebec film subtitled in French from France, a program in Catalan or Basque when these languages did not have a recognized written standard, a Dutch documentary screened on Flemish television in Belgium.

- for language learning (young people, migrants): TV 5 in French, BBC4 in English, STV 4 in Swedish are examples of channels that make it possible to improve the mastery of a language and also to strengthen the reading skills of all viewers.

- for accessibility, defined as the right to access AV texts, especially for the deaf and hard of hearing (*SDH: subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing*).

To these subtitles could be added the forms of *running subtitles* for karaoke or public announcements (verbatim), or the lines on *breaking news* at the bottom of the screen.

The procedure is a little different for these types of intralingual subtitling. The former (to facilitate intralingual comprehension and language learning) do not report noises such as ringing telephones, slamming doors, angry voices, shouting, etc. The second type (for SDH) usually renders the verbal and non-verbal audio material into texts, often according to a colour code or sometimes by playing with typography (capitals, italics). These two forms of intralingual subtitling are subject, like interlingual subtitles, to the norms and conventions of exposure times, reading speed constraints and lexicosemantic density. But, in contrast to interlingual subtitling and closer to dubbing, it respects a certain degree of synchronization, following to a certain extent the lexicon and syntax of the original, because many hearing-impaired people use lip-reading as an additional source of information. Our eyes are also used to hear. It should be noted, however, that deaf people are not a homogeneous group: the extent, type and the age of onset of deafness vary widely among individuals. The language and communication needs of the congenitally deaf are not the same as the needs of a deaf viewer because of a degenerating process or age.

The second type, *Live Captioning* or *Live Subtitling*, sometimes also referred to as *Respeaking*, is often used for intralingual transfer; However, it can also appear in an interlingual form. Carried out in real time for live broadcasts (e.g. for sporting events, TV news), it needs technical support, sometimes a special "Velotype" keyboard (with syllables and not letters) to speed up typing, but more often today the use of voice recognition software. The subtitler repeats or rephrases what is said on screen and the software "translates" the short utterance into lines written at the bottom of the screen. The time gap is very, very short. There is hardly the time, or resources, to proofread the output before it is broadcast.

The third type, *Audio description* (AD), gives access to films, art exhibitions, museums, opera/play performances, etc. to the blind and visually impaired. It can be intra- or interlingual. It involves the reading of information describing what is going on on the screen (action, body movements, facial expressions, costumes, objects). This information is

added to the soundtrack of the dialogue or to the dubbing of the dialogue for a foreign product, with no interference from sound and music effects. Making the visual aural is only possible if films do not contain too great a load of spoken information, e.g. rapid, dense dialogue, frequent sound effects, etc. A saturated soundtrack would not facilitate accessibility and comprehension. This kind of sight interpretation or double dubbing is more effective for certain genres, such as dramas, feature films, nature programmes and documentaries, than for news or short stories, game shows, which in any case have sufficient spoken content to be followed by the vision-impaired. AD can be live for operas and drama plays, or pre-recorded for domestic and foreign films, museum audio guides, etc. Like the deaf, the community of blind is not homogeneous: People born blind have no visual memory to draw upon, while elderly people with visual impairments or sick people with a progressive degeneration of sight remember films and TV and may even know some cinema terminology. The fourth and final type, *audio-subtitling*, is useful for dyslexic people, the elderly, the partially sighted and anybody who cannot read fast. A text-to-speech software "reads" the subtitles out loud.

In the second category (**Between languages**), we identify eight types of AVT. Their practice is also changing. The first type, *scenario/script translation*, is needed in order to obtain subsidies, grants and other financial support, particularly for co-productions, or for searching for actors, technicians, etc. (Cattrysse and Gambier, 2008).

The second type, *interlingual subtitling*, involves moving from oral dialogues in one or several languages (multilingual films) to one or two lines written in another language. Thus, for example, Finnish (agglutinative language, with cases) does not necessarily follow the (often monosyllabic) word order of English (language with prepositions). These subtitles have sometimes been treated as diagonal, oblique translation (from oral to written, from one language to another, and coexisting with the utterances in the source language(s)), while intralingual subtitling was perceived as vertical (similar to a transcription) (Gottlieb 1991/ 1994). Today, the work is more and more carried out by the same person: translating, locating, i.e. locating the beginning and the end of each line (*Spotting* or *cueing*, according to the *timecode* or timing in tenths of a second, then adapt, re-read/replay, edit (checking that there is a correspondence between repartee and subtitles, that each line of the subtitle is appropriate to the audiovisual context, that the subtitles are easy to read), all thanks to *ad hoc* software. For a long time, and still in some TAV agencies or TV channels, the work used to be divided between a translator, responsible for the written translation from a post-production script or a list of dialogues, and after watching or not watching the film, and a technician-adaptor of this translation, spotting and timing the subtitles, with or without a command of the foreign language(s). Interlingual subtitling adds a semiotic channel of information (it is superimposed on the original dialogue), while dubbing (for example) replaces the existing channel. Bilingual subtitles, as practiced, for instance, in Finland and Israel, are usually offered in cinemas, more rarely on television.

The third type, *simultaneous* or *on sight translation*, is generated from a script or another set of subtitles already available in a foreign language (pivot language). It is used, for example, during film festivals and in film archives (Cinematheque) when the film is screened only once or twice in this new language. For example, an Iranian film with French subtitles can be simultaneously translated orally into Finnish from the back of the theatre.

The fourth type, *dubbing*, or adapting a text for on-camera characters on the screen, cannot be reduced to lip-synchronization. It may be also synchronization between voice and body movements, temporal synchronization or isochrony (the length of doubled utterances must correspond to the length of utterances in the original). Not all viewers have the same degree of tolerance towards visual or lip dischroty and gesture, facial expressions/voice dischroty. Dubbing can also sometimes be intralingual: for example, *Harry Potter* have been dubbed in the USA, and films shot in an Italian dialects (from Palermo or Bari) have been dubbed or subtitled into standard Italian to be shown anywhere in Italy.

The fifth type, *free comment*, one of the oldest forms of oral reformulation (*Revoicing*), is clearly an adaptation for a new audience, with additions, omissions, clarifications and comments. Synchronization is done with on-screen images rather than with a soundtrack. It is used for children's programmes, documentaries and corporate videos.

The sixth type, *interpretation*, takes several forms on screen. It can be consecutive (most often pre-recorded), simultaneous (the original voice being turned down after a few seconds) or using sign language. Important parameters in media interpreting are voice quality (uncontrollable) and the ability to keep the floor to prevent listeners from getting bored or skipping or changing channels. A distinction can be made between interpreting that takes place in a TV studio-based event, with or without the presence of an audience (interviews and talk shows) and interpreting for broadcasts of event occurring in a remote location (political speeches, press conferences, royal weddings, official ceremonies, etc.). Psychological pressure, especially when working in both directions (language A \leftrightarrow language B), staggered schedules, last-minute recruitment (e.g. live coverage of disasters or sudden crisis situations) are rather typical of media interpreting.

The seventh type, *voice over* (or *half dubbing*), is used for documentaries, interviews, or films translated and broadcast in synchrony by a journalist or an actor who can thus "half" dub several characters. The target voice is superimposed on the voice(s) of the original, which are almost inaudible or incomprehensible.

Finally, the eighth type, *surtitles*, is a kind of subtitling placed above a theatre or opera stage, or on the back of seats. It is displayed non-stop throughout a performance. The surtitle file is not released automatically since actors and singers do not perform twice in the same way, or at the same rate. The translator, seated among the audience,

inserts the surtitles during the show. To sum up: the various types of AVT do not translate in the same way, using the same codes. Some emphasize orality (dubbing, interpreting, voice-over and free commentary); others are a switch from oral to written (interlingual, intralingual, live subtitling and surtitling), or from written to written (script translation), or from pictures to oral (audio description), or from written to oral (sight translation, audio-subtitling). This raises the interesting question of whether we can say that some types of AVT are more domesticating modes of translation than others. It is true that dubbing, free commentary, perhaps even interpreting and audio description, allow the manipulation of the linguistic material in order to please dominant expectations and local preferences, sometimes censoring dialogues or changing part of the plot to conform to the ideological requirements of the receiving culture and/or its aesthetic norms. The history of the AVT, still in its infancy, sheds light on the use of those types of AVT as instruments of linguistic protectionism and language purism, violating ethical principles to a certain extent by erasing traces of the Other – including his/her voice, his/her speech. However, the powerful role of AVT cannot be only based on such assimilation or subordination; it is also, in its way, working to solve the problem of international distribution, of opening cultures to each other, and of making possible a large circulation of AV products and performances.

5. Re-examining concepts of translation studies

All of the changes outlined above now require revisiting some well-established concepts in translation studies, especially when considered in their application to AVT (Gambier, 2021). For example:

- The concept of *text*. "Screen texts" are short in duration and multimodal; their coherence depends on the articulation between images and sounds. From the conventional notion of text as a linear arrangement of sentences, or as a sequence of linguistic units, to the notion of hypertext on the Net, *text* becomes ambiguous, if not blurred (see section 1; Gambier & Lautenbacher, 2024).

- The concept of *authorship*. In literary studies and translation studies, the author has often been perceived and continues to be perceived as a single individual. In TAV, the issue of authorship cannot be overlooked, since a number of groups or institutions are part of the process (screenwriter, producer, director, actors, sound engineers, cameraman, cinematographer, editor, etc.). The list of e credits at the beginning or end of a film constantly reminds us that the stakeholders are very diverse, encompassing intellectual and manual workers, such a diversity manifesting the diversity of semiotic signs in the meaning-making process.

- The concept of *meaning*: In TAV, meaning is produced neither in a linear sequence nor with a single system of signs. There is multiple interaction: between the various agents involved in the creation of the AV product; between these agents and the viewers; between the different AV productions (visual references, allusions). The

hierarchical relationship between original and translation, between production and reproduction, between initial broadcast and rebroadcast, is transformed into AV, knowing that a film can be edited for different purposes and in different ways (final cuts), for television, a DVD, for a captive audience on a plane or other screening venues (politically correct distribution, redacted versions of coarse words, etc.). The globalization of the film industry cannot be equated with the standardization of the senses, narratives and feedback of audiences.

- The concept of a *translation unit*. The revised notions of text, authorship and meaning also invite us to revisit the question of the unit of translation in AVT. Thus, a subtitle would be an interlingual translation but considering other semiotic elements.

- The concept and types of *translation strategy*. Strategies vary at the macro and micro levels, also considering the socio-political and socio-cultural effects of AVT.

- The links between *translation standards* and technical constraints: thus, for example, fandubbers or amateurs introduce typographical variations, add glosses or comments, modify the positions of lines, etc. To what extent does technology imply certain new norms?

- The relationship between *writing and speaking* (see section 1), between written norms, and between ordinary speech and dubbing, etc.

- The notion of *quality*: it can include many parameters (visibility, readability, linguistic acceptability, synchronization, relevance, etc.), but and first of all, it depends on a collective organization, including the commissioners/clients in a broad meaning (buyers, film importers and distributors, TV channels, end users), the AVT agencies (local or regional branches of a multinational company, national AVT company, and their managers outsourcing the AVT), the translators (staff, freelancers, subcontracted professionals, amateurs being online) working under certain conditions, with certain competences, dealing with the status of their working languages, and viewers who have different needs, habits, expectations, and preferences: they determine the choices of other stakeholders.

- *Accessibility* is a keyword in AVT, not only as a legal and technical issue but also as a concept that disturbs the dominant way of evaluating the quality of translations, the aim being to optimize the usability of AVT, software, websites and other applications. It covers a variety of characteristics such as acceptability, visibility, readability (for subtitles), degree of synchronization (for dubbing, voice-over, and free commentary), and relevance (what information should be transmitted, omitted, added, clarified, explained).

Even though interdisciplinarity is increasingly a hallmark of AVT research today, the frameworks in which AVT research is conducted remain, predominantly, linguistic. While research is gradually moving away from case studies and specific problems towards corpora-based approaches and more systematic theorization (Gambier, 2008), there is still a long way to go to reach a coherent field of research that would combine the wide diversity of semiotic codes and their influence on linguistic aspects. More

experimental studies are needed on viewers' habits, reading strategies, and reception patterns (Di Giovanni & Gambier, 2018). The current fragmentation of audiences requires a better understanding of their needs and also a better understanding of the articulation of viewing time and space and the resulting priorities for AVT translators.

AVT and the localization of software, websites, mobile devices, video games can maintain a fruitful dialogue. They have three features in common: both types of translation are the result of teamwork (directly or indirectly); the work focuses on volatile and often intermediate texts (production scripts, lists of dialogues, online documents in production, draft versions of software, regularly updated content from social media and the Net), which goes beyond the traditional dichotomous boundaries between source and target text and raises the question of the very notion of the original; and the quality criteria focus more on acceptability, to include comprehensibility, accessibility and usability. All three traits have implications for training.

6. Concluding remarks

The transformations underway in the field of translation practices and reflections make it difficult to project the more or less near future. We can think that from now on, multimodal translation will include multimedia translations of which AVT would be only one branch, such as journalistic translation, the localization of software, websites, and video games. Moreover, instead of being an exception, multimodality could become the norm for all texts to be translated. Finally, the content of translation studies would be broadened according to a more encompassing definition of "translation" - perceived as linguistic, cultural, modal and medial transfer. Therefore, investigative tools, based on corpora and using *offline* methods (such as think-aloud protocols, interviews, questionnaires) and *online* methods (such as keylogging, eye-tracking, brain imaging) would require more interdisciplinary training of researchers, borrowing concepts, methods, tools from sociology, experimental psychology, film studies, reception studies, cognitive science, history, discourse analysis, pragmatics, statistics, etc.

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