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AUTHOR	Yves Gambier & Haina Jin
TITLE	A Connected History of Audiovisual Translation: Sources and Resources
YEAR	2022
DOI	https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003221678
VERSION	Author accepted manuscript
CITATION	Gambier, Y. & Jin, H. (2022). A Connected History of Audiovisual Translation: Sources and Resources. In Bielsa, E. (ed). The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Media. Routledge: London, pp. 283-301.
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A Connected History of Audiovisual Translation: Sources and Resources¹

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1. Introduction

At a very early stage, the film industry was confronted with the international market, with its enormous diversity of languages and rapid change in technical tools – first from mechanical to analogue (1920s-1990s), and then from analogue to digital (1990s-today).

A few dates can serve to underscore this rapid evolution:

- Between 1833 and 1895, several techniques and instruments were developed, e.g. chronophotography, alongside the phenakistoscope, kinoscope, phonoscope, kinetograph, and cinemascope, until February 1895, when the brothers Lumière patented their *cinématographe* (both a recording camera and a film projector) and then later, in December, showed the first public projection. Their first films were shot in March 1895 (Barnier 2010).
- From 1895 onwards, on both sides of the Atlantic, the struggle to file new patents and create new devices continued in unstoppable competition. Then, in 1993, the “cultural exception” was introduced in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations.
- The change from analogue to digital began to have an impact on all aspects of movie-making: script-writing, shooting, sound production, editing, stunts, recreation of style/housing/clothing, make-up, distribution, projection – and audiovisual translation (AVT).

¹ This chapter is based on a longer article published in *Translation Spaces* 8 (2), 2019, pp.193-230. I acknowledge the publisher, John Benjamins, who kindly granted me permission to use the article and reproduce parts of it. <https://www.benjamins.com/catalog/ts>

Today, digitisation is accelerating the convergence between production and distribution, with Netflix the latest new economic model in the industry. These changes have created alterations in certain usages and habits, such as schedules arranged by TV channels, timing organised by film distributors, binge watching, and binge racing.

2. The rapid emergence of cinema as an art and an industry

Before the talkies, silent movies were practically considered to be universal in nature: pictures were seen as easily interpreted, irrespective of the cultural background of viewers. In effect, film directors such as Sergei Eisenstein, John Ford, Karl Vidor, Friedrich Murnau, Jean Renoir, Charlie Chaplin and René Clair were opposed to the incorporation of languages in film due to their belief in the so-called global comprehension of images. For David W. Griffith, Abel Gance, Carl Dryer, Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles and Roberto Rossellini, cinema was considered to be a universal art.

Disputes and theories about what constitutes “art” and how one should classify different arts are rather common in different cultural spheres, for example with the nine muses of Ancient Greece and the six arts in China from the time of the Zhou Dynasty (11th-3rd BC). It would be irrelevant here to discuss these controversies in any detail. Suffice to say that as early as 1911 the Italian writer Ricciotto Canudo was the first to promote cinema as the sixth art (Dotoli 1999). A decade later, in 1923, he published the *Manifesto of the Seventh Art*, which was supported by Guillaume Apollinaire, Abel Gance, Vladimir Mayakovski, and Vsevolod Meyerhold, followed by the French film director, screen writer and film critic Louis Delluc (1890-1924) and the surrealists.

In a period of just a few years, cinema came to be acknowledged as a popular art form with public showings. It also very rapidly became international. This internationalization was due partly to inventors from the US (e.g. John Carbutt; Thomas Edison; Woodville Latham), Great Britain (e.g. William Kennedy-Laurie Dickson), France (e.g. Charles-Emile Reynaud; Louis and Auguste Lumière) and Germany (Max and Eugen Skladanowsky) all competing at around the same time to launch cinema as a motion picture industry – the first film studio being built in 1897. It was also partly because after only a few years (1895-1897) films could be shot and shown to audiences around the

world (Rittaud-Hutinet 1985). These film showings extended from Melbourne to Helsinki,² Kyoto to Liverpool, and Baku to Moscow.³ One year after its invention by the Lumière brothers, film was also introduced into China. In 1926, the number of foreign films in China was estimated at around 450 (Patterson 1927: 48) as against 367 in 1936, of which 328 were from Hollywood (Guo 1937: 55).

Movies – black and white, several minutes long and without recorded sound – had become the most popular visual art in only a decade, in stark contrast to other arts which had long been in place, and often only for the elite occupying positions of power (the Church, royalty, aristocrats, etc.).

During the First World War, a complex transition took place in the film industry. The exhibition of films changed from short one-reel programmes to feature films, cinema theatres became larger, and techniques in shooting and lighting improved. In different countries, such as the US, UK, Italy and Denmark, the need for wartime propaganda also boosted the industry. In the U.S., Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) were a success.

The arrival of the sound era (Barnier 2002) was rather swift, at least in the U.S., where in less than two years (1927-1929) Hollywood became almost all talkie, with several competing sound systems soon standardized. The changeover was slower in other parts of the world, for reasons that were economic (the Great Depression of the 1930s overwhelmed small studios) and/or cultural. In China and Japan, silent films co-existed successfully with sound well into the 1930s.

Therefore, before the beginning of the “Golden Age of Hollywood” (1930s-1940s), all countries had to make a decision regarding translation, as cinema was no longer a “universal” language.

3. Towards a policy of AVT

How and why is any particular dominant mode selected and adopted by any given society? For instance, how did Soviet cinema adopt a language policy from the silent era

² We have documented that the first cinema showing in Finland took place in Helsinki on June 28, 1896.

³ DVD, 2015, edited by the Institut Lumière, Lyon (France): *Lumière! Le Cinématographe 1895-1905*, with a selection of 114 “views” of around 50 seconds each, shot in France and in different countries.

to the talkies that ranged from subtitling to voiceover and interpreting? The question is inherently complex and grounded in local histories. More systematic studies are still needed to investigate the diverse motivations and factors that underlie national AVT policies (On China: Jin 2018)

Very early on (1934), both subtitling and dubbing were proposed – with different and opposing claims (Cornu 2014, 201-207). The selection process between the two modes of AVT was not necessarily either rapid or permanent (Trumpbour 2002). For instance, the long and hard competition between France and Hollywood explains the hesitation in deciding between the two modes that took place in France for more than two decades (Danan 1991; 1994; 1996; Barnier and Moine 2002). One relevant feature of the AVT landscape is that most “subtitling countries” (at least in Europe) use a so-called “lesser-used language,” whereas most of the “dubbing countries” have both an “international” language (French, German, Spanish, etc.) and a bigger audience. However, today’s digital technology blurs this opposition. The reasons for choosing dubbing within dictatorial and repressive regimes (between 1920s and 1970s) have been well documented; they hinge mainly on cultural, ideological, economic, and pragmatic factors (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999; Rabadán 2000; Doherty 2013; Mereu Keating 2016). Be that as it may, one reason is still often neglected: the high percentage of illiteracy of the population. How can one offer subtitling to viewers who are unable, or barely able, to read? Whether these concerns have dealt with the credited origin (production) or the final effect (reception), all the arguments merge into the dominant ideology of the time. In sum, the history of AVT runs in parallel with the following areas:

- Political history (including the role of preventive or institutional censorship) (Garreau 2009; Montagne 2007; Vezyroglou 2014; Hervé 2015; Merkle 2018)
- Language policy (including questions concerning the relationship between language status and choice of AVT mode, the past and current roles of AVT in promoting or reviving a language minority, and the impact of English on the international exchange of films, TV programmes and series) (O’Sullivan 2016)
- Legal history (including issues of copyright law, accessibility, and European Union regulations for the media)

- Technology/media history (including consideration of the materiality of translation, a rather new topic in translation studies) (Littau 2011)

4. What kind of history do we need?

In addition to the common issues associated with historiography, such as assumptions, periodisation, space division, type of narration, metalanguage, many other questions remain open (D'hulst 2010):

- Who were the translators?
- What AV products have been translated, or have not? Why or why not?
- Where and how did the translations circulate, and how were they distributed?
- Which authorities were supportive of the translated films and TV programmes, and the translators and other agents (adapters, dubbing actors, audio-describers, etc.)?
- How were the translations made, standardized, accepted and made accessible?
- Were there time-periods and particular conditions when certain types of AVT were more easily produced and made available?
- What were the effects and repercussions of the AV translations? (Zanotti 2018: 134-135)

Over the past few years, the history of AVT has clearly attracted the attention of AVT translators, scholars, film historians and archivists, prompting at least three important events in Europe: A conference in Lausanne in April 2013, a panel organized for the August 2013 Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies in Germersheim, and a symposium held in London in May 2015.

In line with these discussions and in addition to the questions formulated earlier, there are other possible avenues of research. The list below is indicative but not exhaustive:

- How quickly did dubbing and subtitling develop in different countries? How can the technical changes (for example, for recording of voices) and the development of dubbing be correlated?

- How did producers, distributors and audiences respond to the evolution of AVT? For instance, what was the significance of dubbed versions throughout the 1930s, the 1960s, and the 2000s, in any given society? What was the impact of subtitling on viewers in terms of their understanding and remembering of a film?
- What kind of evidence is available on early titling practices in the absence of saved subtitles? How does one analyse a translation when dubbing and the reshooting of scenes are mixed together, as in “multilinguals”? (See section 5.3.)
- To what extent can subtitling practices of the past, when norms and conventions were not yet established, and those of today, when software allows for precise spotting, be compared? Can translators and working conditions be identified according to time-periods, countries, or technical support?
- How reliable are the film reviews and surveys of the 1930s as materials for a history of AVT? How do we read these sources without being anachronistic?
- What copies should be used as examples, especially when a film has been restored? How can foreign versions of films held in the archives be detected or recognized? What are the digital challenges and opportunities with regard to AV archives? Does the information in DVDs always provide properly contextualized data of translated films?
- How can we map the history of AVT worldwide? Are the research methods used by film historians, film archive curators, translation studies scholars and AV translators comparable?

Individually, all these questions could potentially become the subject of different research projects. An important preliminary step would need to address the issue of which historical framework is best suited for eliciting and explaining their respective answers. History can be approached in different ways. A macro perspective, for example, could be developed through the prisms of nationalism, modernity, Marxism, or (post)colonialism. Such a macro-perspective, however, is a gamble: structures, processes and agents risk being reduced to general statements and being considered through causal determinism. A micro-history approach is also possible (Munday 2014; Wakabayashi 2018a), by observing the implications and effects of a specific subject of investigation, in this case

the different modes of AVT. A study of the agency involved could furthermore highlight the links between the socio-cultural constraints of the work and the beliefs, values and representations of the groups or individuals involved.

A history of AVT could also be comparative (Valdeón 2018), with scholars comparing, for instance, the use of subtitling in different societies during the same time period and exploring the effects and consequences of its use. They could also compare the role of (self-) censorship in the production and reception of translated films under different political regimes.

A third approach, and one we would like to promote with this chapter, is one of a “connected history” (Wakabayashi 2018b). Since cinema and AVT have both developed rapidly worldwide, with the internationalisation of media (including AVT companies) speeding up and boosting contacts and exchanges in the AV industry, a transnational history (through data, concepts and methods) could well be adopted. This type of history historicizes certain analytical categories (e.g. nation, global, local, East, West, tradition, modernity, etc.) and transcends national borders, even though scholars tend to describe their respective domestic usages and habits: Italians have focused on Italian dubbing, Catalans on Catalan subtitling, etc. A connected history that is created by multiplying the sources and following the “subalterns” (a frequent status of AV translators) could provide new insights and new perspectives on the dissemination of cultures and different types of knowledge.

5. Correlating technical innovations and AVT for a connected history

One of the first elements to be taken into account for the writing of a connected history is the impact of technologies. Technology has not only sped up the development of cinema everywhere, it has also offered solutions for dealing with a wide variety of languages.

5.1. 1895- around 1930: cinema is neither mute nor silent

Silent movies (1895-1927/1930) were not entirely silent (Slide 1978; Bowser 1994; Musser 1994). There were sounds (piano music, sound effects), translated intertitles and oral input from a narrator behind a curtain who read the intertitles (for the illiterate), telling the story and making comments, not unlike a prompter in a theatre. This narrator

was known by several names: *bonimenteur* in French (Lacasse 2000), *benshi* [orator] and then *setsumeishi* [explainers] in Japanese (Dym 2003), *byensa* in Korean, *spieler* in American English, and *dilmaj* in Persian. He (or she) was part of the mediation between the film and the audience in a live collective performance (Hansen 1991; Doherty 1999). In China, the earliest record of screening foreign films with a Chinese narrator appears in the *Game Newspaper* in 1897 (Anonymous 1897). In 1915, a narration service was included in the opening advertisement of a cinema in Shanghai (Anonymous 1935). In cinemas in Guangzhou, narrators would not only explain the plot clearly but also add interesting comments (Liang 1927). Commentator-performers continued to be employed beyond the time of the silent era, for instance for Soviet films in the 1920s-1930s (Youngblood 1980; Pozner 2004), in Japan and other parts of Asia until the mid-1930s (Nornes 2007, 110, 118, 132-137), and in Iran up to the 1940s (Zhirafar 2014). A similar practice is also the case today in some African countries, for example, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania where Nollywood films (from Nigeria) are live interpreted with a kind of vocal addition. These “vee-jays” (video-jockeys or VJs) are popular figures.

In addition to narration, the use of intertitles has also been a part of AVT history. From the earliest stages of the Chinese film industry, Chinese filmmakers have ambitiously screened Chinese films not only for domestic audiences but also for international audiences. The earliest extant Chinese film, *Laborer's Love* (*Lagong zhi aiqing*, also known as *Romance of a Fruit Peddler*, Zheng Zhengqiu 1922), has bilingual intertitles. For most films made in the 1920s and early 1930s, bilingual intertitles were added by Chinese film companies. A small number of extant Chinese films which were screened abroad have foreign language intertitles that were added by overseas exhibitors. They include, for example, the French intertitles in *The Rose of Pushui* (*Xi xiang ji*, a.k.a. *Romance of the Western Chamber*, Hou Yao 1927). However, in 1931 and 1933, the Nationalist government repeatedly issued decrees forbidding the inclusion of English intertitles in prints of Chinese films intended for domestic consumption.

Other technical changes had an impact on cinema and AVT in many different places and at more or less the same time. A few examples are noteworthy. Shots increased from one minute (or less) to 4 and even up to 20 minutes, with a corresponding effect on narration and editing. Cameras, first made of wood and later of metal, were heavy and noisy, and

placed in a sound-proofed booth. The evolution in equipment increasingly differentiated the concepts of time/space between cinema and theatre, the latter having served as a model in movie-making for a long time. The viewfinder of a camera and camera lens also made it possible to shoot close-ups of people and items, and to frame them differently. Finally, the camera dolly (a camera on a trolley on rails) allowed for long takes and sequence shots. These developments inspired new genres, such as musicals. At the same time, they would have tangible repercussions on subtitling practices.

Prior to the appearance of sound-film, there were discussions on editing and other matters. Exposure, fast/slow motion and types of cuts were among the themes dealt with by Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1946), Dziga Vertov (1896-1954) and Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970), among many others. From the 1940s, the focus shifted to editing and the producer rather than editing and the film director. Again, as for the types of shot, editing would have consequences for AVT.

5.2 A new era (1920s-1930s): the talkies

With regard to experiments with sound, the situation was rather unfortunate for a long time (Eyman 1997). How does one effectively trace the complexity and turbulence that characterised the transition to sound when it was more meandering than linear? The first public exhibition of projected sound films appeared in Paris in 1900, but these were never made commercially practical. In the 1920s, several sound systems were developed on a disc or the film itself, such as Photokinema (1921), Phonofilm (1923), Fox Movietone (1927), etc., but the system which prevailed in the competition and the markets was set up in 1926 by the Warner brothers. After having founded a distribution company in 1904 in Pennsylvania and a studio in Hollywood in 1918, they had financial problems and needed to find a solution to avoid bankruptcy. In 1925 they were the pioneers of synchronized sound, and by 1926 they had established the Vitaphone. This analogical sound-on-disc system became profitable and was widely used as a soundtrack separate from the pictures. In August 1926, *Don Juan*, directed by Alan Crosland, became the first film to use Vitaphone sound effects with a synchronized musical arrangement (no spoken dialogue). Although it did not get a warm reception in New York among the aesthetes, it did please the audience.

The transition from silent films to the talkies is commonly marked by *The Jazz Singer*, shown in New York on the 6th of October 1927 (Geduld 1975). At that time, cinema was a commercial success almost everywhere in the world.⁴ When this musical film, based on the theatre play *The Jazz Singer*, directed by Alan Crosland and produced by Warner Brothers, was released with lip-synchronous singing and a few short dialogues, it was a public success. Prior to talking, cinema was singing, as if songs were a necessary step in the transformation of the seventh art. The end of the silent motion picture era was not immediately apparent. Movie theatres had yet to be converted to sound.

The first 100% talking film was the crime drama *Lights of New York* in 1928. Of course, progress on the soundtrack did not come to a stop in 1926-1927 with the Vitaphone. In 1930-1931, the Moviola system allowed for the synchronization of separate tracks: voice, music, and effects. Finally, a hallmark of the late 1980s is the adoption of a timecode by the film industry, with a real impact on the spotting of the subtitles.

In short, talkies were largely accepted between 1926 and 1930 (Walker 1986).⁵ The development of soundtracks and the presence of foreign languages in films had deep implications for the film industry, with changes taking place in the shooting of scripts, in narration, in the techniques of directing, and in framing (O'Brien 2005; O'Sullivan 2011). The issue of languages was raised very quickly. How and where would one export if audiences did not understand the original language of the film? (Vasey 1997). The question of languages amplified the territorialisation of cinema (Rossholm 2006). They also seriously endangered the U.S. cinema's world market, which by 1929 had generated 35-40% of major studio profits (Thompson 1985, 164). Everywhere, and in less than a decade, the film industry had to cope with languages.

⁴ We must also remember that cinema was not a male business only. A set of four recently published DVDs (Lobster Films 2018), *Les pionnières du cinéma*, highlights the work of women. They focus on the period between 1895 and 1930, with references to Alice Guy (France) who shot more than 200 short films and founded the Studios Solax in the US where she worked from 1907 to 1922; Lois Weber (US) who was the first woman to be admitted into the Motion Picture Directors Association in 1917; Mable Normand (U.S.) who directed Chaplin during his early years; Marie Epstein (France); Karin Swanström (Sweden); Germaine Dulac (France); Mary Pickford (U.S.); and Jeanne Roques, or Musidora (France), etc.

⁵ In this section, our presentation focuses mainly on the Western history of cinema and AVT. See, for instance, Chomenstowski (2014) on how Soviet cinema adopted a certain language policy from the silent era to the talkies, from subtitling to voice-over, and Razlogova (2014) on how interpreting was also used, especially during film festivals.

5.3 Between the 1930s and the 1960s: coping with language diversity

Concerning languages, there were several more or less co-existing options for satisfying the emerging demands (Crafton 1998; Nornes 2007, 123-154; O'Sullivan & Cornu 2019a, 2019b).

Film directors made second versions of actors performing in their own language, sometimes including different shots in order to better target a certain audience. At the beginning, in particular after 1929, multi-language versions (MLV or LVs) or foreign-language versions (FLVs) were shot, mainly from US films (Dubrovičová 1992, Barnier 2004: 215-262), in the same setting, in the U.S. or Great Britain, with local actors from France (e.g. Maurice Chevalier, Charles Boyer), Germany (e.g. Marlene Dietrich), Sweden (e.g. Greta Garbo) and Italy. Famous films such as *Blue Angel* (Von Sternberg 1930), *Dracula* (Browning 1931) and the *Threepenny Opera* (Pabst 1931) were shot in two or three languages (mainly English, French, German and Spanish). But, due to the costs of producing so many different similar versions, the shooting was outsourced, with Hollywood building studios in Germany (Studio Babelsberg in Berlin, Wahl 2009; 2016), France (Joinville), Italy (Rome), England, etc. These multilingual versions (especially between 1929 and 1932) were expensive and often a commercial failure. Nonetheless, during 1930-1931, 84 films were produced as multilinguals by major U.S. studios, of which 22 were in French. It was clear that a new strategy was needed – and possible. It took the form of post-synchronisation, despite the recurring problem of voices.

The 1930s saw the emergence of dubbing (Cornu 2014, 91–133, 177–220). From 1931 on, linguistic challenges were no longer taken up by production companies but by distribution firms and importing countries (Higson and Maltby 1999). Opting for dubbing was motivated by protectionist, financial and technical incentives. The original equipment for dubbing featured only a soundtrack with conglomerated voices, music and effects. In 1930-1931 the multitrack Moviola system enabled separate tracks to be synchronized. However, this technical tool did not mitigate the controversy underway. In the 1930s, studios and distributors quickly discovered that dubbing could accommodate chauvinistic audiences, and for far less money than the MLVs. Riots took place in Paris, Prague, Budapest and Milan against the use of foreign tongues on the screen, particularly English and German. Violence, intolerance and fascism were also on the rise in several

European countries. For the Chinese market, experimentation with dubbing was carried out by American film companies, Soviet film companies, and Chinese individuals. MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, founded in 1924) released *Tarzan's New York Adventure* (Richard Thorpe 1942) with a Chinese dub (Guan 1946); Sovexportfilm dubbed *Zoya* (Lev Arnshtam 1944) (Khoo and Metzger 2009, 81); and Wang Wentao and Chinese students in Italy experimented with dubbing *A Song to Remember* (Charles Vidor 1945) into Chinese, which was screened in October 4, 1947 in Shanghai (Anonymous 1947). Deep concerns regarding the Chinese film industry appeared in film reviews because Hollywood films could be watched by the Chinese audience without a language barrier, which would threaten the development of the Chinese film industry (Guan 1946). Subtitling was also experimented with both in and after the 1930s. As with many different aspects of the history of cinema and AVT, it is not possible to attribute only one name to the invention and development of subtitling. The evidential sources for early titling practices are various, making the need for a connected and comparative history more compelling. Naturally, historians have tended to prioritize their own domestic inventors. The first film to be subtitled in Great Britain was *Kameradschaft*, in January 1932, with around 80 subtitles.⁶ The first subtitlers (not necessarily translators or adapters) into French, Dutch, German and Japanese were brought to the major U.S. studios at the beginning of the 1930s. They had to cope with various problems, such as the length and position of the subtitles, the size of the fonts, and their synchronization with pictures. In China, cinemas first printed Chinese subtitles on the film but later used projectors to show Chinese subtitles for foreign films on a neighbouring screen. The latter was less complicated and made it easier to correct mistakes but often distracted the audience's attention. In 1926, the inclusion of subtitles in film became a selling point for the screening of *The Veil of Happiness* (*Le voile du bonheur*, Albert Capellani, 1910). These two methods coexisted in China until the end of the 1940s. The technical evolution of subtitling in cinema has been slow (Cornu 2014, 223-283). Between the 1930s and 1945, two techniques were dominant: thermal and chemical

⁶ Before World War II, subtitlers were said to use between a half and a third of the subtitles provided today for similar films. However, studies on the correlation, over time and across film genres, between the number of subtitles and the type of verbal manipulation are yet to be carried out.

subtitles. In 1933, a patent for chemical subtitles was registered both in Sweden and in Switzerland for a method to permanently engrave subtitles on silver film. Two French companies controlled this market: Titrafilms, which launched in Paris in 1933 but rapidly gained a foothold in the Belgian, Dutch, American and Brazilian markets, and Cinétitres (1958). In the 1980s, two new systems appeared: laser subtitling, which gradually replaced chemical and optical subtitling in Europe and Asia during the 1990s, and electronic subtitling with time codes, very handy for TV, DVD and film festivals. Simultaneous interpreting was also used for some time as a way to cope with language diversity. In 1939, the top cinemas in Shanghai began to experiment with simultaneous interpreting services while screening foreign films. The first attempt was conducted on the translation of *Return of the Cisco Kid* (Herbert I. Leeds, 1939) by the Grand Theatre in November 4, 1939. The three interpreters not only interpreted all the dialogue but also gave a brief narration of the plot and introduction of the characters. However, the audience complained that, “just as the Chinese subtitles are disturbing our vision, simultaneous interpreting disturbs our hearing” (Anonymous 1939). The practice of simultaneous interpreting in cinemas was popular in Shanghai until 1949 and was also used elsewhere, in particular in the 1950s and after in film festivals, such as the one in Moscow mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Another solution to cope with foreign languages in cinema was also developed in the 1930s. Known as the remake, it resembled a kind of appropriation that changed the language and, to a certain extent, the plot (with all its values and assumptions), characters, and cultural context. Whilst during the years 1930-1950, most of the remakes were U.S. *films noirs* re-contextualised in and for Europe, the process has been reversed since the 1980s, with successful European films being remade in the United States (Mazdon 2000; Verevis 2005; Moine 2007).

To sum up, a number of strategies were used, simultaneously or successively, for the transition from the silent film era to the talkies, at least in the few countries where changes have been documented (US and UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Russia, Japan, China, and others). These changes include intertitles in a foreign or local language, live synchronisation with *bonimenteurs*, partial adaptation of the same film with several versions in different languages, multilinguals shot in different places,

dubbing and subtitling, and remakes. What is needed now is to survey other parts of the world where research has either not yet started or has been carried out but is not necessarily easily available.

6. Methodological challenges

Various resources and methods can be used to map out the history of AVT in different countries.

6.1 Direct and indirect sources of information

Direct sources comprise intertitled, subtitled and dubbed versions, stocked in film archives and off-air TV recordings. Gaining access to these involves practical, logistical and financial difficulties, however. In the 1920s, Chinese cinemas used to print bilingual pamphlets of foreign films with the plots and names of all the people involved in the film's production. Extant Chinese films with bilingual intertitles serve also as excellent research material. For example, *Song of China* (*Tianlun* in Chinese; Fei Mu 1935) was produced by the Lianhua Film Company. When Douglas Maclean, an actor and producer with Paramount travelled to Shanghai, he was attracted by this film and decided to bring it to the US (Law, Bren and Ho 2004). *Tianlun*, which means "family relationships" in Chinese, is an important concept in Confucian values. After its purchase by Paramount, the film was renamed *Song of China*. The intention was to show that it was a film about China, rather than to reflect the exact meaning of the film title. Paramount adapted the Chinese version of *Tianlun* to meet the taste and expectations of the American audience. It changed the tragic ending into a happy ending and reduced the film to half its time. Intertitles like "Father" and "my dear father" in Chinese were translated into "my noble father" or "honourable father" to indicate that filial piety was emphasized in Chinese society.

Indirect sources are reports by different agents through their memoirs and life stories, of their retrospective and subjective perceptions of what they did. They also include all kinds of epitexts (Genette 1987, 1997) mediating the AV work to the viewers, which are disseminated through newspapers, magazines, journals, marketing material and the Internet. They include, for instance, film reviews, film criticisms, interviews with film

directors, actors and translators, correspondence, webpages, blogs, video-clips, trailers, posters, flyers, leaflets in DVDs, censorship reports, etc. All these epitexts tease out and complement the information as it is shaped by editors, distributors and viewers. In a way, they “package”, accompany and introduce an AV product before it is watched, influencing viewer expectations, their decision on whether to go to the cinema or select a TV programme, and their reception of the work.

For research on the translation of early cinema in China, film reviews posted in newspapers and journals also provide valuable information. As noted earlier (section 5.3), when foreign films were screened in China at the start of the 20th century, they were often shown with interpreting or with subtitles projected on a neighbouring screen. These translations of film contents are often lost. However, the advertisements for the films in Chinese newspapers such as *Shanghai News* and *Ta Kung Pao* can still be found. UFA, a German film company producing and distributing films from 1917 to 1945, had quite a strong presence in China. The translations of the titles of the German films they screened were, like most foreign films, extremely domesticated. The translation of films in the advertisements reflected the taste of moviegoers at the time.

6.2 Archives and databases

The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF, Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film) has been dedicated to preserving and providing access to the world’s film heritage since 1938.⁷ With 89 active members and 77 active associates in 75 countries, it is the single most important global network of cinematheques and film archives. It has several databases: the *International Index to Film Periodicals* (1972 to today) with approximately 12,000 new references added every year, the *International Index to TV Periodicals* (1979 to 2000), and *Treasures from the Film Archives*, with information on over 53,000 silent films, fiction and non-fiction.

Besides the FIAF, there are also several centres with press packs and files, and sometimes a picture library. They include the Fonds Rondel, the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal (Paris), the BIFI/Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Institut Lumière (Lyon), the Film Museum

⁷ For more information on FIAF and its databases, see <https://www.fiafnet.org/>.

(Amsterdam), the Library of Congress (Washington), and the Museum of Modern Art (New York), among others.

Journals and newspapers also contain old and new relevant information on AVT. Some examples in English are *Film Daily*, *The Moving Picture World* and *Variety*, and in French, the *Cinématographie française*, *Le Film*, *Cinéa-ciné pour tous*, *Cinémagazine*, *Cinéma*, *Ciné-Miroir*, *Ciné-Revue*, *l'Illustration*, *La revue du Cinéma*, and *L'écran traduit* (launched online in 2013).

Finally, not to be omitted are some research databases and projects such as the rich database *Women Film Pioneers Project* at Columbia University, where silent-era female producers, directors, script writers, camera operators, costume designers and title writers are studied (with women sometimes using gender neutral or masculine pseudonyms, see footnote 4) (<https://wfpp.cdrs.columbia.edu>), and the Vitaphone Project (www.vitaphoneproject.com). The latter has been running since 1992 and focuses on the soundtrack discs that accompanied some early 1927-1930 talkie shorts and features.

These two examples send the clear signal that a history of AVT cannot ignore analyses carried out in film history.

Yearbooks of cinemas likewise provide useful information about film translation. The earliest yearbook of Chinese cinema was written by Cheng Shuren and was published in 1927. Included within are the names of the translators of foreign films, Chinese films and recordings of their translations, as well as the distributors for foreign films in China.

Editing pieces of archives on AVT, translation procedures and decision-making, as well as translators and their networks, is not an easy task. Potentially of use are film archives, restored and remastered films, the personal papers of translators, correspondence with distributors, contracts, diaries, records of TV broadcasters, official files of AVT companies and censorship reports. While the low profile of adapters in most countries is a challenging reality, some material is to be found: for example, the memoirs of Nina Kagansky (1995),⁸ who was the manager of Titra Film (1965-1990), founded by her father in 1933.

⁸ The memoirs report on technical innovations and translation practices. Published at the author's expense, the book has had a limited distribution.

The choice of archives and subsequent detective work depend, of course, on specific research interests. In many cases, archives are not organised according to translators or types of AVT. And, if they are accessible, they are not kept in a form which is helpful for researchers. Moreover, some archives have disappeared. The celluloid used until the 1950s was highly flammable and degraded easily after 70 years. The acetate films that were introduced in the film industry as early as 1934 created acids when they were exposed to heat and moisture, so they deteriorated rapidly. It is said that virtually all the foreign films distributed in Japan before World War II were consumed by the National Film Centre fire in the 1970s. The film stock of the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin (1935-1945) was either destroyed or seized by the Soviet Army. Martin Scorsese has claimed that 80% of U.S. silent films have vanished. But films can also be rediscovered. A copy of *The Cave of the Silken Web* (*Pan si dong*, Dan Duyu 1927) was found in the archives of the National Library in Norway in 2013 (Liu 2014, 109). The newly rediscovered film has both Chinese and Norwegian intertitles as it was screened in a theatre called the Colosseum in Oslo for six nights in January 1929. The newly found Norwegian version has a Norwegian translation superimposed on the original Chinese ones. When compared, the translator was found not only to have interpreted freely but also added humorous comments in parentheses (Anckarman 2014, 28-36).

Where does one find the necessary archives? In addition to places already mentioned, other places include the Archives françaises du film (within the CNC/Centre National du Cinéma, Paris),⁹ the Fonds AV of the National AV Institute/ Institut national de l'AV (Paris), the Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé (Paris), the British Film Institute/BFI and the London Screen Archives (London), the Danish Film Institute (Copenhagen), the Museo Nazionale del Cinema (Torino), the George Eastman House Museum (Rochester, New York), the National Film Preservation Board and Foundation, and the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS) (both under the auspices of the Library of the Congress in Washington), as well as the IASA (International Association of Sound and AV Archives).

⁹ In the Archives, 1636 feature-length films have been saved out of the 2467 films produced in France between 1936 and 1953.

If digital and cloud technologies now provide access to unprecedented quantities of AV products and their translations, the data from the pre-digital era of AVT remain limited. Access to old films and TV programmes is one of the main challenges for research. The archives may be available in libraries, cinemas and museums but not necessarily with the required equipment or in the right formats.

6.3 *Electronic corpora*

Corpus-based studies have increased in popularity in translation studies over the past 20 years (Laviosa 2013). AVT presents a situation that is rather different. Many of the principles and problems are those common to all corpora (general or specialised, mono- or bi/multi-lingual, written or spoken or multimodal): representativeness (to what extent is the corpus representative of a certain kind of data – text-type/film genre, author/film director, period of time, etc.?), exhaustiveness (is the corpus made of printed, published/distributed, indexed, signed documents, with all the necessary bibliographical data/credits?), characterization (what elements are included or excluded in the corpus with regard to languages, length (full texts/films, samples, excerpts), timeframe (synchronic/diachronic), and level of expertise (popular or art films, documentaries, etc.)). In terms of AVT specificity, corpora are also rather scarce because of certain additional difficulties:

- Films and TV series require considerable electronic storage capacity to be saved and retrieved. To date, there is no corpus of translated TV programmes,¹⁰ apart from news and series. To our knowledge, Salway (2007) is the only exception: he set up a small corpus of audio-description scripts used on television and established a frequency list of certain words and phrases occurring in relation to characters' appearances, emotional states, locations and interpersonal interactions.
- Due to copyright issues, producers are reluctant to give explicit permission to use full movies for research. So it is difficult, for instance, to create a parallel corpus

¹⁰ It is worth mentioning here the *Journal of European Television History and Culture* (online) and some of its issues: 2 (3), 2013: European TV memories; 3 (5), 2014: TV histories in (post)socialist Europe; 4 (7), 2015: Archaeologies of tele-visions and -realities; and 5 (9), 2016: TV formats and format research: Theory, methodology, history and new developments.

(films in an A language and translated films in a B language and/or originals in B and translations in A) or a comparable corpus (films of the same genre in the same language, translated or not).

- Multimodality demands a complex tool in order to transcribe and analyse a film. To select only the soundtrack (the verbal component) is to drastically cut a product made of several sign systems (sound effects, prosody, facial expressions, body movements, interpersonal distance, etc.).
- To analyse a film out of its context of production, distribution and reception limits studies to certain descriptive and comparative approaches.

Romero-Fresco (2006; 2009) has created a parallel corpus to compare the American TV series *Friends* and their dubbed versions in Spanish, and a subsequent comparable corpus of those versions with the Spanish sitcom *Site Vidas*, which features similar settings, plots and protagonists. Pavesi (2005; 2009) and Freddi (2009) have also carried out corpus-driven research in AVT, analysing different linguistic categories. The Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue (PCFD) is composed of three sub-corpora of transcriptions which include the transcriptions of 24 films shot in British and American English, transcriptions of the dubbed Italian versions of English originals, and transcriptions of six original Italian films comparable, in terms of genres and public success, to their British and U.S. counterparts. Most of the works derived from the PCFD (2009-2019) are pragmatic and based on linguistic markers. The contrastive approach, combining both source- and target-oriented perspectives, uncovers structural features of the dubbed language and spoken Italian. Although the results offer better knowledge of the formal and textual conventions of film dialogues, they ignore the multi-semiotic dimension of films.

Indeed, there are very few tools able to support both the collection and analysis of multimodal corpora. One project of note is the Forlì corpus of Screen Translation or Forlìx1, which operated from 2003 to 2013. The design, creation and transcription of the corpus, and the data retrieved with dedicated query tools, as well as the display of concordances between verbal and AV markers, were reported in two papers published in 2008 by Valentini and by Heiss and Soffritti. Forlìx1 was composed of less than 50

films (Italian, German and French full-length films with complete transcriptions of the dialogues). Since 2013, the project has been developed and enhanced with Forlixt 3.0 (Multimedia Database on Screen Translation).

Another corpus of note is the TRACE project or *TRAducciones CEnsuradas* in Franco's Spain (1939-1976 and after), initiated in 1995. Included in this compiled parallel corpus of theatre plays and novels in English and Spanish is some film material (Merino and Rabadán 2002; Gutiérrez Lanza, 2011).

Despite their limitations and their small sizes, these corpora in AVT are an important step in scholarly efforts to better understand AV texts in their multimodal complexity.¹¹

Automatic indexing of images in AV databases, and artificial intelligence with speech and visual recognition, are advancing rapidly, with the possibility of yielding more refined quantitative and qualitative results and insights for AVT research.

6.4 Oral history

Oral histories are useful for sparking memories and eliciting the perceptions of lay people about their working conditions, environment and daily routines for the purpose of preserving a narrative of historical significance. Oral history recordings need to be stored at a library, in an archive or online, in order to be consulted and interpreted sooner or later by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, town planners, etc. One of the primary reasons for oral history is to conduct and preserve interviews for future use, as done by Pym (2016), who has archived interviews with more than 80 scholars in translation studies on YouTube. The principles and practices of oral history are still debated (Yow 2015), addressing relevant questions such as the validity of oral testimonies, the editing of audio and video recordings, issues of reliability, privacy, subjectivity and the narrators' ways of speaking, etc., all also inherent in life stories as used in sociology, or in autobiographies as produced by some literary translators in Japan or by former film translators (Razlogova 2014).

Oral histories could enrich the study of a micro-history of AVT and present a fuller historical picture. In 2004, and of interest to AVT, the FIAF initiated an oral history

¹¹ See *Perspectives*'s special issue on "Corpus Linguistics and AVT: In Search of an Integrated Approach" (21 [4], 2013).

project to begin recording archivists who had worked with different stakeholders of the film industry. It may soon become urgent to record the memories of film archivists or old cinema attendants, for instance in countries where pioneers are still alive (Treveri Gennari and Sedgwick 2015). In China, the oral and written accounts of dubbing artists such as Su Xiu and Liu Guangning from Shanghai Dubbing Studio have been published in recent years (Su 2014; Liu 2017). In 2005, China Central Television interviewed dozens of translators, dubbing directors and dubbing artists to make a five-episode documentary about the translation of foreign films in the People's Republic of China. These initiatives provide valuable resources for constructing a history of AVT. M. C. Kuo (2018) has also given a detailed and informative account on how Chinese films were translated and disseminated in France

To sum up, the sources and research methods for AVT history are diverse (Zanotti 2018, 146-151). New insights can be gained by combining different data and approaches, by triangulating different kinds of measures and methods (e.g. archival work cross-checked through questionnaires), and by exploring possible convergences between cinema's industrial, technical, and institutional history and a socio-cultural history of its audiences (Maltby & Stokes 2004; Biltreyst and Meers 2018; Hill 2018). This ambitious endeavour demands an interdisciplinary research agenda whereby history, cultural history, sociology, ethnology, social psychology, media and film studies, and translation studies can co-operate in a constant scholarly exchange.

7. Concluding remarks

By pleading for a comparative and connected history (this chapter provides a few elements from the U.S., some European countries and China), we are attempting to recognize the choices, traditions, conventions, rules and factors of change constrained and conditioned both by cultural backgrounds and the universal impact of technology. Such a history would shed light on how economic and technical competition has had political underpinnings and consequences that are not exclusive to any one country at any given time. Since 1895, cinema has been international in scope through its different transformations. Historians can of course speculate and write a virtual or counterfactual history: What would have happened if...? For example, what would cinema be like today

if the brothers Lumière had not sent cameramen abroad in 1895-1896, or if war had not come in 1914-1918 and in 1939-1945, or if silent movies had not come before the talkies, or if Hollywood had not considered film as a business, or if cinema was not used for entertainment, propaganda and popularization...?

It rapidly becomes evident that to write a comparative and connected history of AVT would demand teams of researchers from different disciplines. To set up an international network of scholars today is technically possible, but the agendas of universities, foundations and other financial partners as well as the AVT industry itself differ between countries. Research priorities in the social sciences are quite different. This tension between the need for a network on the one hand and priorities on the other is a challenge and is part of the reason for the slow emergence of a history of AVT.

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