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Pérez-González, L. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues*. Routledge: London. 356 p.

Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues is a timely contribution to the continuing debate regarding the status of audiovisual translation within the broader field of translation studies. Long placed in the periphery, today, audiovisual translation claims its place as “a scholarly area of research in its own right” (Díaz Cintas, 2009, quoted on p. 91). Still, it remains a young and wide-ranging field that is struggling to progress from an “evolving conceptual network”—as stated in the title of Chapter 1—to an established discipline in its own right. With this volume, Luis Pérez-González ushers in a new stage in this development. In the introduction, he expresses the hope that the volume offers “a semblance of an integration of the vast territory formed by the sum of distinct modes of audiovisual transfer, and engender synergies (...)” (p. 2). Indeed, this work successfully brings together the diverse theories and methods around which audiovisual translation has developed, but in the same breath it exposes remaining gaps and challenges for the future.

The book consists of eight chapters grouped into three parts: part I entitled “Disciplinary and industrial foundations” (Chapters 1 to 3), part II entitled “Theoretical and methodological perspectives” (Chapters 4 and 5) and part III entitled “New directions” (Chapters 6 to 8). The first chapter, “Mapping an evolving conceptual network”, introduces the reader to the widening scope of audiovisual translation and lays the foundation for the remainder of the book. It discusses relevant terminology, major concepts and the main modalities of audiovisual translation that are covered in the subsequent chapters: subtitling, revoicing (including lip-synchronized dubbing, voice-over, narration, free commentary and simultaneous interpreting) and assistive forms of audiovisual translation (subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, respaking and audio description).

In Chapter 2, “Audiovisual translation as a site of representational practice”, the author adopts a historical perspective and provides interesting background information to the question “why AVT [audiovisual translation] is done the way we have been doing it since it was first engineered” (p. 27). The chapter describes how artistic, political and industrial developments in the film industry (with a focus on American cinema) have shaped translation practices and conventions. In the 20th century, commissioners of audiovisual translations managed to impose homogenizing mediation strategies and established what Pérez-González calls the traditional or representational approach to audiovisual translation.

Chapter 3, “Audiovisual translation as a site of interventionist practice”, turns to the future and explains how in the 21st century the media industry is being challenged by the advent of digital technology and by new

models of media production, consumption and distribution. These developments inevitably change the face of audiovisual translation practices as well and have given rise to new interventionist practices that overlap with or replace traditional forms of (audiovisual) translation. “Consumers-turned-producers” actively participate in the production and distribution of translations. The chapter introduces key concepts and the creation of cybercultures. These are relevant evolutions since “audiovisual translation has become a fluid and decentralized arena of unprecedented accessibility and diversity” (p. 84) as a result of these developments, further complicating its already widening scope.

Part II of the volume shifts the emphasis from practice- and industry-related issues to theoretical and methodological issues of audiovisual-translation research. It considers the question whether the methodological and theoretical foundations of audiovisual-translation studies are significant and robust enough to support Díaz-Cintas’s contention that audiovisual translation has become a fully-fledged discipline in its own right.

Chapter 4, “Audiovisual translation models”, samples the theoretical frameworks that have most informed research in audiovisual translation so far. There has been a lack of systematic theorization in the field and many translation models have been imported from adjacent disciplines. This chapter divides this diverse theoretical foundation into three groups: (1) process models (informed by psycholinguistic, cognitive and neurolinguistic approaches), (2) comparative models (contrasting source text and target text according to shift-based or corpus-driven approaches) and (3) causal models (e.g., systems and norm based approaches). Each section provides concrete examples of the models discussed.

Chapter 5, “Research methods in audiovisual translation”, outlines the field’s most productive research methods: conceptual research, observational research, interactionist research and documentary methods. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of empirical methods and reception-orientated research, as Pérez-González feels that these can help the discipline most in moving forward. The methods are illustrated with detailed discussions of well-chosen examples that demonstrate the diversity, benefits and drawbacks of the methods.

Part III, “New Directions”, discusses two topics that are bound to shape the future development of the discipline. Chapter 6, “Multimodality”, elaborates on the concept of multimodality, which is fast becoming one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in audiovisual translation. The merit of this framework lies in the fact that the framework treats audiovisual products as semiotic wholes and does not prioritize language over other semiotic modes, such as image and sound. The chapter defines the main concepts of multimodality (i.e., medium, mode, core mode, medial variant and sub-mode) and concludes with an overview of related research methods, namely multimodal transcription and multimodal corpus studies. This chapter is one of the most informative in the volume since the

polysemiotic nature of multimodal texts is or should be at the core of audio-visual translation research. Nevertheless, “attempts to operationalize the application of multimodal theory in audiovisual translation have been few and far between” (p. 3). This chapter is an excellent introduction to the concepts and challenges of this framework.

Chapter 7, “Self-mediation”, builds on the discussion in Chapter 3 regarding the advent of digital media. It discusses the concept of translation as self-mediation: when amateur translators become involved in the translation-production and distribution process. It discusses the types of self-mediating practices that are emerging and how they can influence the production and translation of commercial media content, now and in the future.

Chapter 8, “Lead the way”, adopts a hands-on approach and offers guidance to early-career scholars or professionals developing a research project. It gives practical and straightforward advice on general aspects of research design, on the formulation of research questions and on hypotheses and domain-specific methodological considerations. It concludes with specific advice for students working on practical dissertations. The final section of the book contains a glossary of key terms.

The author has carefully considered the formatting and layout of this textbook. Each chapter opens with a brief chapter summary, followed by a reference to an introductory video that can be consulted on the companion website. In the running text, grey “breakout boxes” provide additional information that substantiate, illustrate or further develop claims. Each chapter concludes with a series of stimulating follow-up questions and a selection of core references. Throughout the book, selected examples of relevant research projects are dealt with in great detail, accompanied – where necessary – by tables and figures that outline the research aims and results (e.g., p. 111 or p. 144). This format makes the book particularly attractive to students and instructors, who can easily find additional sources of information that deal with issues beyond the ones dealt with in each chapter. A minor regret is that the many digressions, information boxes and figures sometimes break the flow of the running text. The rather dense and highly academic writing style might pose an additional challenge to students or non-native speakers of English.

The main strength of *Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues* is that it succeeds in overcoming the fragmentation that characterizes the literature on audiovisual translation and that it offers a balanced and sophisticated account of current and future trends. As a result, it targets more experienced researchers and professionals as well. The author combines a strong emphasis on theoretical issues and methodological rigour, with detailed background information on translation practice and industry. The result is a robust and challenging account (of the domain of audiovisual translation) that highlights (possible) convergences between different threads of research. A consequence of such an all-inclusive approach is that the author has necessarily prioritized certain topics over others. The focus

lies on mainly subtitling and dubbing practices while smaller sub-domains, such as media accessibility, audiovisual translation in the theatre and during live events or in museums are dealt with in much less detail. However, readers are guided towards more information on such individual forms of translation in the core reference sections at the end of each chapter and through the comprehensive companion website.

In conclusion, this volume is an invaluable resource for readers looking to reflect on the past, present and future of the discipline of audiovisual translation as a whole and it provides an excellent starting point for scholars and graduate students looking for inspiration and, in particular, for theoretical and methodological grounding for their projects. *Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues* offers plenty of food for thought and contributes significantly to the further development of the theoretical and methodological rigour with which audiovisual translation will be able to strengthen its status as a scholarly area in its own right.

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