Audiovisual translator training

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Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) training was not incorporated into higher education translator training curricula until just over twenty years ago. Until then, professionals were trained in the workplace, outside educational institutions (Martínez Sierra 2008). This was primarily the case because of ever changing market needs, which required translators to learn new skills with urgency, but also because universities lacked the capacity to offer suitable training to cater for those emerging needs (Díaz Cintas 2008a: 3–4).

It is difficult to put a date on when and where the first courses were taught, but it would be safe to state that teaching in this area dates back to the late 1980s and 1990s. According to Gottlieb (1992: 161), the Université de Lille was the only institution offering courses in dubbing and subtitling in the late 1980s. This was followed by the University of Copenhagen (Københavns Universitet), which began delivering a subtitling course in the academic year 1990–1991. Since then, training in AVT has quickly found its way into university curricula, as a growing number of countries have felt the need to train future audiovisual translators. As part of this boom of audiovisual translation training, the original courses—focusing almost exclusively on inter-lingual subtitling—have become gradually complemented by others dealing with various AVT modes, such as dubbing, voice-over, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), audio description (AD) for the blind, and video game translation—and even more recent developments such as respeaking.

Although a growing body of literature devoted to different aspects of this dynamically evolving discipline is already available, the teaching and assessment of the different types of audiovisual translation has received limited attention. Indeed, most of the studies published to date have focused on curricular structures, in particular institutions; the didactic potential of intra-lingual and inter-lingual subtitles in the learning of foreign languages; the teaching of subtitling and, to a lesser extent, the teaching of dubbing (Díaz Cintas 2008a: 3).

The consolidation of translation and interpreting as a professional and academic discipline, constant changes in the profession, and the transition towards new educational models that many countries are undergoing (Kim 2012: 106) have brought along renewed concerns over the suitability of current translation training practices. In the field of AVT, this has
paved the way for the publication of studies with a more analytical approach to different aspects pertaining to AVT curricular design. These include Chaume (2003a), Santamaria (2003) and Matamala (2006) on the importance of new technologies in AVT training; Bartrina and Espasa (2003, 2005), Martínez Sierra (2008, 2012), and Díaz Cintas (2008b) on training methodologies in AVT; and Mayoral (2001), Moreno (2003), Chaume (2003b), Sponholz (2003), Díaz Cintas et al. (2006) and Cerezo Merchán (2012) on a wider range of curricular aspects related to the teaching and learning of AVT.

Audiovisual translators perform a wide range of tasks every day; these include, to name but a few, translating, dealing with technical issues relating to spotting/synchronization, proofreading translations, digitizing and encoding audiovisual material, dealing with other professionals, etc. Courses on any audiovisual translation mode should therefore seek to expose students to this wide array of tasks to differing degrees, depending on the level of specialization and the duration of their programme of study or the availability of specialized software, to mention but only a number of relevant parameters. In order to ensure that trainees in audiovisual translation develop the skills and competences required to gain professional proficiency, it is essential to design specialized curricula around specific learning objectives and competences, consider various teaching and learning approaches, ensure the availability of suitable contents and resources, design effective tasks, and identify reliable assessment methods.

Based on extant literature on translation and AVT training, this chapter will first present relevant pedagogical and methodological approaches to translation training that have influenced the way we understand AVT teaching and learning today. Next, it will draw on well-established curricular design models (Kelly 2005, Hurtado Albir 2015) to address selected key aspects of AVT training, namely audiovisual translator competences, content design, resources, tasks and assessment methods.

**Pedagogical and methodological approaches to translation and AVT training**

For a long time, trainers assumed that students learned to translate by imitating the teacher’s model translation, often without being provided with any guidance on how to produce their translations (Kelly 2010: 389). During the last few decades, however, various pedagogical approaches to translation training have emerged, including the objective-based approach (Delisle 1980), the early profession- and learner-centred approach (Nord 1991), the process-centred approach (Gile 1995), the cognitive and psycholinguistic approaches (Kiraly 1995 and others), the situational approach (Vienne 1994, Gouadec 2003), the task-based approach (Hurtado Albir 1999, González Davies 2003, 2004), the induction-deduction-abduction approach (Robinson 1997, 2003), and the socio-constructive approach (Kiraly 2000, Kelly 2010)—which is currently endorsed by most translator training specialists. Competence-based training has gained significant ground in recent years. This model, which has its foundations in cognitive constructivist and socio-constructivist learning theories, is the logical continuation of objective-based learning and, as its very name signals, revolves around the notion of translation competence (Hurtado Albir 2015: 261).

As for methodological approaches, the main two models covered in the literature are the task- and project-based approaches. Also driven by constructivist principles, these approaches did not garner much consensus in the beginning. While specialists like Hurtado Albir (1999) favoured tasks as the basic organizational unit in the design of pedagogical materials, Kiraly (2000) endorsed the ‘publishable translation project’ for the same
purposes. Over the years, however, González Davies (2004) and Hurtado Albir (2015) have stood up for eclectic approaches in which tasks and projects are combined. These new approaches involve the use of guided tasks, where the teacher’s role is still essential at the beginning of the learning process; tasks are then followed by project-based work, where the teacher no longer occupies a central role. Following this approach, Hurtado Albir (2015: 263–264) advocates structuring the curriculum as a series of teaching units, each of which consists of preparatory tasks and a final task/project, informed by the relevant competences and learning objectives, contents, and assessment methods set for the course unit in question.

The small body of literature on audiovisual translation training that is currently available is primarily informed by the competence-based model, as will be elaborated in the next section. In terms of methodological approaches to audiovisual translator training, most specialists follow the task- and project-based approaches. A wide array of tasks and projects to be used in the AVT training classroom are proposed, for example, by Agost et al. (1999), Bartrina and Espasa (2003, 2005), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), Pereira and Lorenzo (2007), Díaz Cintas (2008b), Chaume (2012), Franco et al. (2010), Romero-Fresco (2011) and Martínez Sierra (2012).

**The audiovisual translator’s competences**

According to the competence-based training model, the first step in the curricular design process is to set the objectives that are to be achieved. If we want to train professional audiovisual translators, the logical starting point is to identify the competences that make up the professional profile of translators of audiovisual texts.

The concept of translator competence has been defined as ‘the underlying system of knowledge, abilities and attitudes required to be able to translate’ (PACTE 2003). Hurtado Albir (1999, 2015), Mayoral (2001), Pym (2003), PACTE (2005), Kelly (2005), Kearns (2006), Göpferich (2009) or Kiraly (2013) have written about this notion, the interplay between competences and their respective constitutive sub-competences, and the development/acquisition of competences in formal educational settings. Specifically, Hurtado Albir’s (2015) classification of translator training competences, which represents the first operationalization of PACTE’s (2003) translation competence model, includes:

- methodological and strategic competences: applying the methodological principles and strategies required to work through the translation process effectively;
- contrastive competences: differentiating between the two working languages and monitoring any instance of mutual interference;
- extralinguistic competences: mobilizing encyclopaedic, bicultural and thematic knowledge to solve translation problems;
- occupational competences: performing successfully in the translation labour market;
- instrumental competences: managing documentary resources and an array of tools to solve problems;
- translation problem-solving competences: using optimal strategies to solve translation problems in different textual genres.

However, it should be noted that competence-based training does not only take into account specific (or discipline-related) competences, but also other skills required by the wider social
context. In this sense, general (or transversal) competences, which apply to all disciplines, also play an essential role. The **Tuning Educational Structures in Europe Project** (González and Wagenaar 2003) identifies three types of general competences:

- instrumental competences, which encompass, among others, analysis and synthesis, information management, organization and planning, decision-making, problem-solving, IT skills;
- interpersonal competences, which include, but are not limited to, (self-)criticism skills, ethical behaviour, interpersonal skills, appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism, capacity for teamwork;
- systematic competences, which involve learning, creativity, working independently or project management, among others.

Various scholars have explored the relevance of this concept to audiovisual translator training, and attempted to gauge how/whether these differ from the (sub)competence(s) that apply in other fields of translation involving primarily the mediation of written texts (Kovačić 1998, James 1998, Klerkx 1998, Carroll 1998, Gambier 2001, Zabalbeascoa 1997, 2000, 2001; Agost et al. 1999, Bartrina 2001, Espasa 2001, Izard 2001, Chaume 2003b, Díaz Cintas 2006, 2008a; Matamala 2008, Neves 2008, Granell 2011, Cerezo Merchán 2012). Drawing on Hurtado Albir’s (2015) translation competence model, the audiovisual translation competences identified by these scholars can be synthesized under the following headings:

- contrastive competences, which encompass (1) exhaustive knowledge of the target language—spelling, phonetic, morphological, syntactic and lexical dimensions; and (2) mastery of the source language—i.e. excellent written and oral comprehension, knowledge of colloquial varieties, dialects;
- extralinguistic competences, including (1) good knowledge of the cultures involved in the translation process; (2) exhaustive knowledge of the specific characteristics of the target audience; (3) film knowledge; (4) theatre knowledge; (5) familiarity with the language of film and visual semiotics; and (6) familiarity with various features of different audiovisual texts/genres;
- methodological and strategic competences, such as (1) theoretical knowledge of one or several AVT modes; (2) knowledge of software localization; (3) mastery of voicing techniques; (4) mastery of sign language techniques; (5) mastery of techniques to visualize text and image simultaneously; (6) capacity of synthesis—i.e. familiarity with techniques to streamline texts; (7) capacity to use creative language resources; (8) capacity to analyze various genres and reproduce their discursive features (e.g. false orality); (9) mastery of synchronization techniques, use of symbols and time-codes for dubbing and voice-over; and (10) mastery of synchronization and spotting techniques for subtitling;
- instrumental competences involve (1) mastery of AVT software—subtitling, dubbing, audio-description software, etc.; (2) mastery of specific software to digitize, codify and convert audiovisual files; (3) mastery of speech recognition programs; and (4) mastery of strategies to retrieve information and other resources;
- translation problem-solving competences, including (1) knowledge of translation strategies and techniques to translate different audiovisual genres; and (2) capacity to manage AVT projects (developing and organizing team projects).
It should be acknowledged that some of these competences could be listed under more than one of Hurtado Albir’s (2015: 262) categories, as they are usually developed in combination with other competences. Also, it is worth noting that some of these competences are common to all forms of audiovisual translation, while others are more central to specific types.

**Contents design**

As Kelly (2010: 91) states, once the course learning objectives are set and these have been mapped on to the relevant competences, designers should proceed to plan the course content and structure. This involves dividing the course into units and sequencing the course contents.

Given the practical nature of audiovisual translation, the benefits of inductive teaching and learning approaches—in which a brief theoretical introduction at the beginning of the unit gives way to analytical and practical translation tasks, both inside and outside the classroom—are obvious. Indeed, there is widespread consensus that they encourage deeper learning (Díaz Cintas 2008a: 92). However, trainers should not overlook the fact that there will be differences in individual approaches to learning within any group of students—hence the need ‘not to adopt one single strategy for all activities, and to adopt a flexible approach allowing different learners to apply their own personal styles’ (Kelly 2005: 114). This can be, as proposed by Gentzler (2003: 13), best achieved by setting up an open-structured learning environment where ‘theory, descriptive research, practice, and training productively interact with each other’.

Díaz Cintas (2008a: 92) suggests structuring the contents of a subtitling course around the following four dimensions: general considerations, technical considerations, linguistic considerations, and professional considerations. With some minor changes, this might be a valid template to structure the contents for any AVT course, since it allows for the development of the various AVT-specific competences presented above. For example, as part of the courses it offers to companies interested in receiving AVT training, the TRAMA research group at Universitat Jaume I (Spain) suggests a range of contents that can then be structured into units according to specific training needs and their associated objectives and tasks. Contents are suggested for different AVT modes:

- **dubbing**: general considerations on dubbing, the dubbing process, text segmentation (takes), symbols, types of synchronization, orality, software and tools and professional aspects;
- **voice-over**: general considerations on voice-over, text segmentation (takes), symbols, types of synchronization, orality, vulnerable translation, audiovisual genres characteristics, software and tools and professional aspects;
- **subtitling**: general considerations on subtitling, the process of subtitling, types of subtitles, spotting and speed of subtitles, subtitle formatting and segmentation, text reduction: strategies to synthesize information, ortho-typographic conventions, subtitling with templates, freeware and professional aspects;
- **audio description (AD)**: general considerations on AD, visually impaired viewers, relevant legislation and industry standards, description of images, description of sounds, description of on-screen text, audio introduction, AD styles, AD scripts, and professional aspects;
- **subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing (SDH)**: general considerations on SDH, hearing impaired viewers, relevant legislation and industry standards, subtitle formatting and positioning, speed of subtitles, linguistic code, identification
of characters, paralinguistic code (emotions and sounds), sound effects, music and songs, freeware, and professional aspects;

- video games: introduction to video game localization, video game market and industry, the process of video game localization, localization of video game components, translation of cinematic and audio elements, translation of on-screen text and textual graphics, web and multimedia localization, accessibility and video games, quality control assurance, and use of software.

Resources

Identifying and acquiring material, technical or human resources is essential to run any training programme (Kelly, 2010: 91). Due to length restrictions on this paper, only those resources relating to software and audiovisual material will be considered here:

- As freeware subtitling software (e.g. JACOsub, Aegisub or Subtitle Workshop) has become more ubiquitous, universities no longer need to buy expensive subtitling applications. An alternative to freeware involves using demo or low-cost versions of professional software (e.g. FAB, Spot or WinCAPS) that is made available to academic institutions at lower prices. Depending on the level of specialization of the course, the former option might suffice, as most applications follow the same principles (Kelly 2005: 75).

- As for dubbing (and, more widely, voice-over and AD), securing the relevant technical equipment and software is much more difficult (Chaume 2012: 43). Universities are normally reluctant to invest large sums of money in fully equipped dubbing booths, for example. Freeware applications such as Windows Movie Maker allow students to (1) gain a full understanding of the dubbing process by cancelling out the original soundtrack and recording their own translations on a new soundtrack; and (2) establish whether their dubbed dialogue is completely synchronized with and matches the original actors’ mouth movements. The lack of low cost applications to systematize dubbing tasks has prompted some institutions to develop their own software. For instance, two programs called Dubbing and Dubbing2, based on Windows Movie Maker, have been developed at Universitat de Vic (Spain). Likewise, the research group TRAMA (Universitat Jaume I, Spain) has developed a template for Microsoft Word that runs with macros and allows formatting an audiovisual text in takes (Cerezo Merchán et al. 2016).

- As far as video game localization is concerned, the availability of dedicated software is a minor problem, as most translators work with text files, tables and spreadsheets (using, for instance, Microsoft Office or OpenOffice tools), commercial translation memories, such as SDL Trados, or free translation memories, such as Omega T.

In addition to programs that are of particular relevance to specific AVT modes, it is also necessary to make use of software applications that enable more general tasks, such as digitizing or encoding audiovisual material, merging videos and subtitle/voice files, or converting video formats (Cerezo Merchán 2012: 149).

In terms of the materials used in AVT training, specialists prioritize the use of real materials that expose students to the translation problems that they will deal with when they enter the job market (Chaume 2003b: 296). Although it has been traditionally difficult to access source language audiovisual texts (i.e. scripts, films, cartoons, series, documentaries, etc.), the advent of digitization and growing ubiquity of the Internet has made this aspect of the training process easier to manage. Trainers are now often able to use TV box sets equipped
with hard drives to record programmes from terrestrial and digital TV channels, as well as software to copy and digitize DVD contents.

Some of the most common materials used in audiovisual translation training include audiovisual programmes, scripts and dialogue lists, templates, translations made for a different AVT mode (that can be used, for example, to convert dubbed dialogue into subtitles) or a different medium (subtitles for the cinema to be adapted to the requirements of the DVD format), localization kits, help tutorials, glossaries, and translation memories, to name but a few (Cerezo Merchán 2012: 151). As for audiovisual genres, some of the most commonly translated in the industry and, therefore, also in AVT training settings are movies, TV series, cartoons and documentaries (Chaume 2003b: 297).

Ensuring a sound pedagogical progression when sequencing materials is paramount. For instance, scripts, dialogue lists or templates are normally used at the beginning of the training process. Subsequent, more demanding tasks can be carried out without these materials, so that students also have to put in practice their aural comprehension skills. Progression is also important in selecting the audiovisual genres to be used at any given point. AVT courses are not structured in terms of the topic or the field to which the chosen texts belong; in other words, such courses do not necessarily move from thematically simpler to more complex texts, as is often the case in scientific or legal translation. Instead, trainers make sequencing decisions on the basis of the semiotic make-up of the genres at stake (Chaume 2003b: 296). In the case of dubbing, Chaume (2003b: 297–298) proposes the following progression based on the semiotic make-up of the texts: documentaries, cartoons, TV series and movies. In the same vein, Martínez Sierra (2012: 141) proposes the sequencing of learning materials in the dubbing process featured in Table 29.1.

Tasks

As outlined above, AVT specialists have embraced task- and project-based approaches and presented different activities that can be carried out as part of a course encompassing one or more AVT modes. Generally, these tend to be structured around four different phases, according to the type and level of competence to be acquired and developed by students.

Table 29.1 Suggested sequencing of course materials in dubbing courses (Martínez Sierra 2012: 141).

|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less (–)</th>
<th>More (+)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic complexity (lexicon, syntax, style)</td>
<td>Presence of (specific) intertextual references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of (specific) cultural references</td>
<td>Visual synchronization requirements (especially for lip-sync—need for synchronization)</td>
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Phase 1: Introduction to AVT and/or different AVT modes

A general starting point for any AVT course is to help students to develop their declarative knowledge about AVT and/or different AVT modes, as well as some field-specific knowledge, so that they can situate AVT within translation studies; compare different AVT modes; look into the distinctive features, requirements and historical aspects of different AVT modes; focus on the semiotics of audiovisual texts and the priorities and constraints that apply in audiovisual translation, etc. Methodological and strategic competences, together with extralinguistic competences, are therefore crucial at this stage. Typical tasks to practise these competences include reading support texts, organizing debates, analyzing parallel source and target audiovisual texts, and completing questionnaires.

As examples of tasks used to develop these competences in the context of a subtitling course, Díaz Cintas (2008a: 93) cites the following: reading introductory papers or watching introductory videos on subtitling, analyzing different audiovisual products (series, cartoons, news, documentaries, etc.), exploring how a given product has been subtitled for different media (TV, DVD, cinema), and comparing different kinds of subtitles (by fans or professionals, for inter-lingual vs. deaf and hard of hearing audiences).

Phase 2: Pre-translation practice in AVT

During the second phase of any AVT course, students continue to develop their declarative knowledge on the linguistic and technical constraints and conventions at play in each AVT mode. This declarative knowledge should always be developed in combination with procedural knowledge. Indeed, students should be gradually exposed to pre-translation and translation tasks requiring the deployment of basic translation and methodological strategies. Contrastive, instrumental, methodological and strategic competences are activated at this stage through (1) tasks involving the acquisition of various types of knowledge—as illustrated in the previous section; (2) preparatory activities for the translation of texts; and (3) translations. Preparatory tasks may involve the analysis of source texts made up of one or several semiotic codes; reflecting on translation commissions; carrying out gist/extended translations; the student’s familiarization with relevant translation software applications; conducting documentary and terminological searches; carrying out comparative translation analyses to identify correct solutions and errors; and revising translations. Translation tasks, sequenced along a continuum of growing difficulty, should aim to simulate professional working conditions.

Chaume (2012: 64–65; 79–80) proposes a number of pre-translation tasks in dubbing course units. These include developing students’ familiarity with the use of conventions and symbols that signal various forms of dubbing synchrony; the translation of dialogue and its segmentation into takes that reflect the underpinning audiovisual narrative; inserting dubbing symbols within the translated dialogue; and recording translated dialogue using freeware applications to monitor the degree of lip-synchronization with the original conversation that students have managed to achieve.

For his part, Díaz Cintas (2008a) proposes a range of pre-translation tasks aiming to develop students’ familiarity with basic methodological principles and strategies in the context of a subtitling course. These include improving the punctuation of a set of extant subtitles; correcting badly segmented subtitles; condensing a text by a set percentage or down to a certain number of words or lines; becoming acquainted with subtitled conventions stipulated by different companies; timing and subtitling clips with freeware applications; and writing reflective reports on subtitles carried out by fellow students.
Some interesting examples of pre-translation tasks are those focusing on the analysis of one or several of the semiotic codes deployed in audiovisual texts. According to Neves (2008: 184), watching clips without sound, or listening to dialogue without viewing the film should raise awareness of the importance of sound in SDH courses. Snyder (2008: 192), on the other hand, suggests listening to the soundtrack of a scene (audio only) to gauge the importance of the image in the AD process.

Once the students have used their methodological and strategic competences to address basic technical, linguistic and semiotic difficulties, the focus might be moved on to different translation problems derived from the use of complex terminology, the presence of culturespecific references or language variation (slang, accents or multilingualism), the centrality of humour, or the interplay between the dialogue and the songs featured in the soundtrack. Different types of scenes and genres can be used to tackle these problems separately at this preparatory stage, before several of them are presented as part of the same text. Matamala (2008: 126), for example, proposes tasks to solve the terminological difficulties that typically arise in voice-over projects involving specialized documentaries. Also in the context of voice-over, Matamala (2008: 125) suggests translating various short interviews and documentaries featuring a wide variety of accents and speeds.

**Phase 3: AVT projects**

Translation problem-solving competences, which feature prominently in this stage, are often developed by undertaking extended projects that involve the translation of texts pertaining to various audiovisual genres—normally accompanied by critical or reflective translation reports. According to Neves (2008: 187), projects constitute a stimulating educational strategy that brings together trainees, teachers/researchers, professionals, as well as translation providers and recipients. As far as SDH training is concerned, project work represents a unique opportunity to interact with the d/Deaf, test experimental solutions and secure feedback to improve current practices.

**Phase 4: The profession**

Although professional considerations can be explored at the beginning of the training process, before carrying out any practical translation tasks, students are more likely to assimilate them better once they have carried out practical work on one or various modes of AVT (Díaz Cintas 2008a: 101). Occupational competences are developed at this point, and students acquire declarative knowledge about the audiovisual translators’ working environment, including the project workflow, the professionals involved in it, payment rates, requirements for professional association membership, and copyright restrictions. Chaume (2012: 44–45) suggests the following tasks to develop occupational competences in the context of a dubbing course: identifying dubbing companies and prospective employers, learning how to tailor one’s CV and covering letter for the dubbing industry, providing an estimate for a hypothetical commission, or even gauging the volume of foreign TV content that a given channel has to translate.

**Assessment methods**

The assessment of any teaching and learning process should be aligned with its intended outcomes (Biggs 2003: 99). In competence-based learning approaches, assessment is a
complex activity that encompasses a wide variety of approaches and instruments, beyond
the traditional examinations in which students translate a text and the translation is graded
(Kelly 2010: 92). Assessment can be, therefore, understood in a broad sense, given that tasks
alone allow trainers to gather information on the students’ learning process and acquisition
of competences; identify students’ needs; and improve their teaching competence (Galán-
Mañas and Hurtado Albir 2015: 64).

Assessment proposals tailored for audiovisual translation training that are not restricted
to the evaluation of translations are scarce. Kajzer-Wietrzny and Tymczyńska (2015) and
Granell (2011), writing about the assessment of subtitling, voice-over, AD and video game
localization courses, concur with Kelly (2010) that the development of translation com-
petence is best evaluated through formative assessment; they also agree that summative
assessment should be based on the students’ performance in a number of projects carried
out throughout a given course. However, they also acknowledge that curricular and institu-
tional constraints often make it impossible to do without final examinations. In this context,
it is therefore necessary ‘to think about several assessment itineraries that fit into different
institutional scenarios (i.e. formative assessment such as essay/test-based final examination,
task-based continuous assessment, individual/group work, etc.)’ (Granell 2011: 199).

As far as assessment criteria are concerned, Díaz Cintas (2001) and Kruger (2008)
have published proposals for the assessment of subtitles. Although there are some differ-
ences between these models, they all provide sets of criteria based on the equally weighed
assessment of linguistic and technical aspects. Following Brondeel (1994: 29), Díaz
Cintas (2001: 41) distinguishes three assessment dimensions: (1) the informative dimen-
sion, pertaining to the completeness of information transfer, omission of information,
or impact of such omissions, among other issues; (2) the semantic dimension, regarding
the transfer of meaning and source text nuances; and (3) the communicative dimension,
concerning the shift from an oral to a written medium. He also suggests incorporating
an ortho-typographic dimension and a syntactic dimension—focusing on the preserva-
tion of coherence between the constitutive lines of a single subtitle and across individual
subtitles. For his part, Kruger (2008: 85) also brings into the equation the assessment of
translation and/or editing skills, subtitle segmentation, grammar, spelling and punctuation.
As far as the technical parameters are concerned, Díaz Cintas (2001: 41) suggests assess-
ing time coding, synchronization, formatting and line breaks, while Kruger (2008: 85)
proposes cueing (duration and rhythm) and subtitle division.

Kajzer-Wietrzny and Tymczyńska (2015) examine various sets of market standards
reported in the literature and proceed to develop detailed evaluation criteria for the grading
of voice-over, subtitling and AD postgraduate exams in their institution. Under the heading
of ‘information transfer and language’, they propose criteria to assess the choice of (1) con-
tent and translation strategies—i.e. selection of relevant information and skilful application
of translation techniques in voice-over; careful observation and selection of relevant informa-
tion, effective sequencing of information, appropriate inter-semiotic transfer strategies
in audio description; selection of relevant information and skilful application of translation
strategies in subtitling; and (2) linguistic means of expression—such as natural, concise
and dynamic sentences; grammatical, semantic and pragmatic correctness, etc. in voice-
over and subtitling; and precise, neutral and objective language, appropriate register, etc. in
audio description. Under the heading of ‘technical aspects’, they include (1) formatting—
i.e. correct spelling and punctuation, avoidance of consonant clusters, unpleasant sounds,
unintended rhymes, transparent layout with clear directions for voice talent and time codes
in voice-over and audio description; appropriate use of italics and capitalization, line breaks
and number of lines and characters per line, in subtitling; and (2) synchronization—such as reading out with proper synchronization, intonation, and pronunciation when recording translations for voice-over and audio description; and temporal synchrony with characters’ utterances, and appropriate duration audio adjusted to reading speed in subtitling.

Although they try to go beyond the evaluation of translation errors, and also gauge the students’ attainment and deployment of specific translation competences, these assessment models illustrate what Waddington (2000: 233) calls ‘analytical translation assessment methods’, and hence differ from ‘holistic translation assessment methods’. Studies such as Galán-Mañas and Hurtado Albir (2015) on assessment methods and instruments in general translator training courses, or De Higes Andino and Cerezo Merchán (in press) on assessment instruments in SDH training represent an application of this holistic method, as they link assessment tasks and competences. These authors advocate the use of a wide variety of instruments and tasks—including texts to translate, questionnaires, reflective diaries, reports, translation process recordings, student portfolio, and rubrics—to assess the learning process and the specific competences developed throughout the process. There is a lack of holistic studies proposing indicators and performance levels to assess audiovisual translation competences and linking them to translation assessment tasks, so the development of this strand of research in audiovisual translator training would be greatly beneficial.

Conclusions

This chapter has delivered an overview of recent literature on AVT training, surveyed current pedagogical and methodological approaches in this field of translational practice, and critiqued various aspects that lie at the heart of curricular design processes, such as competences, contents, resources, tasks and assessment. The importance of designing curricula informed by relevant competence-based models has been highlighted, and the benefits of translation task- and project-based approaches that allow for the integrated development of general and specific competences have been explored in some depth.

Further reading


Díaz Cintas, J. (ed.) (2008) The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. This collection is regarded as the first volume to focus exclusively on AVT training. It aims to offer AVT trainers a set of tools, ideas and activities for different AVT modes.

competence-based translator training. It features examples of translator training courses enabling the development and acquisition of competences, and highlights the need for new assessment methods under this training framework.


**Related topics**

30 Audiovisual translation in language teaching and learning
32 Technologization of audiovisual translation

**References**


