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# Audiovisual Translation from Criticism to Popularisation: Reflections on how to Make Academic Research on AVT ‘Translational’.

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## *Abstract*

*This paper confronts the issue of linking up academic research on audiovisual translation with its effects both on real life and on development and change in the field, identifying two issues to be addressed in order for AVT research to feed into practice and attain a social impact: the necessity to come to a full understanding of the needs and demands of the whole range of actors involved in the process, whose mutual communication should be promoted using all means; and the need to identify strategies capable of both fostering research in its present form and popularising it with the aim of disseminating its results.*

*The first, theoretical section of the paper discusses the importance of encouraging networks and research partnerships between academia and the professional sector. In comparison to similar research in the social sciences and to research in other areas of the translation spectrum, a fair amount of collaboration already exists in the AVT field, at least amongst some of the actors involved in the process. However, the impact of research would certainly be wider if the existing cooperation were to become even more significant.*

*The second, more practical section proposes an action plan to kick start the implementation process for the changes identified as desirable: improving AVT outreach and engaging with the non-experts more productively, making results more directly useful to them. Stages 1 and 2 of the action plan focus on the targets of developing a common language and identifying the practical effects of audiovisual translation research. Stage 3 concentrates on how the results of research could be made accessible to the public at large, also providing a starting point to both optimize third mission portfolios and identify criteria for development and implementation of third mission indicators and metrics in Universities hosting Departments with the suitable AVT competences.*

## **1. Introduction**

This paper sets out to reflect on the question ‘How can academic research on audiovisual translation feed into practice and encourage

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both development and change?’ This question is crucial for the development of meaningful research that can be of true value to the entire community involved in the audiovisual translation process.

However, attempts to answer it have been scarce as they rest on two challenging (and intertwined) issues:

1. fully understanding the needs and the expectations of the many different actors involved in the process and encouraging communication amongst them;
2. devising strategies aimed not only at boosting the already existing research, but above all at popularising and disseminating its results.

This paper aims to address these delicate issues with a view to the advancement of research in the social sciences generally and also in the specific field of AVT. It comprises two sections: the first, more theoretical one is subdivided into two subsections presenting a series of reflections both on the importance of encouraging networks and research partnerships between academia and the professional sector, and on the fact that a fair amount of collaboration does in fact already exist. However, as the latter has not proved to be sufficient for yielding more profitable results, the way ahead probably lies in the more widespread dissemination of research findings. The second, more practical section will propose an action plan aimed at offering a handful of suggestions on how to kick start the implementation process for the improvements and changes identified as desirable in the previous section.

## **2. Making research in AVT ‘translational’: Reflections on how to increase the social impact of academic research**

In some scientific areas, such as medicine for instance, a third alternative paradigm has recently emerged between the dichotomous ends of pure and applied research and has grown into a separate research field: translational research (see, for example, Woolf 2008; Pomeroy and Sanfilippo 2015), i.e. scientific research that aims to make findings from basic research instantly useful for practical applications. Thus, translational medicine attempts to turn laboratory experiments into new treatments and clinical trials into everyday practice.

This section will consider how this paradigm may be fruitfully applied to research on audiovisual translation in order to make it ‘translational’ and increase its social impact. Firstly, we focus on how

this research currently seems to affect the surrounding community and on how this may be achieved to a more significant degree in the near future if properly channelled. Then, an action plan is devised in the following section with a view to improving its outreach by engaging with the non-experts, i.e. the public at large. As the primary purpose of this is to provide them with a resource and make its results useful to them, the issues identified in points (1) and (2) of the Introduction will now be analysed in greater detail.

#### Issue 1: Understanding stakeholders' needs and expectations:

One of the two issues hinted at above in addressing the question of how to channel academic research on audiovisual translation into practice is:

- understanding the needs and the expectations of the many different actors involved in the audiovisual translation process.

Though it may seem paradoxical, such needs and expectations are not, as yet, always fully clear to all academics (nor properly taken into account by them). Despite now focusing mostly on descriptive rather than prescriptive aspects of Translation Studies, some scholars still choose to linger along the branch of pure research as sketched by Holmes (Holmes 1988 [1972]; Toury 1995). They discuss (often specialised) (micro-)aspects of the translation activity, into which they delve with a punctilious attention to detail, shedding light on the production and interpretation stages of translation in newer, more informative ways than ever before.

However, they often fail to take into due account the process as a whole, let alone consider the legitimate expectations of most end users. In short, although the practical application of research seems to be acquiring greater importance in some countries, many researchers still appear to lose sight of the fact that the move from a theoretical position to tangible practice is not only long overdue but must necessarily generate benefits for the whole community involved and bring about widespread social change.

As Díaz Cintas states: "The tension between theoretical and applied approaches is a constant in the relationship between university and industry. It is a situation that arises not only in the case of translation, but is also encountered in other fields of learning." (2004: n.p.).

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In relation to the specific field of AVT, Díaz Cintas emphasises some academics' 'elitist' interest in film research only, while other audiovisual programmes are virtually ignored. This focus on films is doubly elitist, Díaz Cintas continues, as it also seems to concentrate exclusively on 'prestigious' cultural products and, within such products, exclusively on the linguistic dimension (*Ibidem*). Díaz Cintas suggests that:

the solution lies in a symbiosis that accommodates theory, practise [sic] and teaching. It is of little benefit to us or our society to shut ourselves away in an ivory tower and draw up theories with no empirical base, to produce a practical work that has no theoretical base, or to teach processes that have nothing to do with the reality of the workplace and have no solid theory behind them. To gain visibility and to assure the social welfare of translation, we need to join forces and avoid the creation of an unnecessary schism between the three dimensions, each as indispensable as the others. (*Ibidem*)

Writing from the other extreme of the translation process, Sánchez also hopes for "greater co-operation between academic institutions and industry" (2004: 17), though it is worth stressing here that experts from within the profession do seem to recognise that individualism and self-referencing are challenges that need to be addressed in the production stage: "although those working in this process form a team, their work tends to be carried out on an individual basis." (Martínez 2004: 7).

The autoreferentiality of the academic world at large, i.e. its tendency to compulsively refer to itself when it comes to research, is a well-known phenomenon. However, this would appear to happen to a lesser extent in the field of audiovisual translation than elsewhere (probably also due to the nature of the AVT process, which includes aspects that are not strictly linguistic or theory-based); but it is still an undeniable fact, as is clear from the quotations above.

And yet, what is nowadays commonly referred to as cross-fertilisation or cross-pollination, i.e. interactions aimed at knowledge transfer between different communities in order to become mutually beneficial and productive, is obviously a crucial issue; and this has long been a tenet amongst the most enlightened researchers on audiovisual translation. As Denton and Ciampi remind us, "members of the (mostly) dubbing professions have been involved right from the outset in the debate on screen translation in Italy" (2012: 402): "dubbing script writers, dubbing directors and dubbing actors and

more recently subtitling companies” (401) have been a characterising feature of the ‘Forlì conferences’<sup>1</sup> over the years and professionals have also been invited to work side by side with academics in training programmes organised at university level. In an exchange of invitations which reveals the deeply-felt need for mutual knowledge and expertise-sharing, professionals have then asked academics to intervene in conferences organised for the market. Di Fortunato and Paolinelli (1996), for example, collect the proceedings of one such conference. Moreover, these two authors have also produced book-length accounts on the topic of AVT, considered from the different perspectives of participants belonging to different professions within the field (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005). Nor can the useful role of AIDAC (Associazione Italiana Dialoghisti Adattatori Cinetelevisivi/Italian Association of Cinema and TV Dialoguists and Adapters) be underestimated, particularly in view of its production of an online newsletter, which regularly shares reviews of dubbed films foregrounding the characteristic features of the actual dubbing process. Italy being a dubbing rather than a subtitling country, the focus has understandably been mostly on dubbing. Finally, to open up a wider perspective, it is also worth mentioning the valuable function of the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST), which operates at an international level thanks to the members it has attracted from all over the world.

As for the possible areas of practical academic intervention within the specific subsector of research on subtitling, Díaz Cintas mentions “Studies on the reception of subtitles to establish the appropriate reading speed, the easiest conventions, etc.” (*Ibidem*) and again, making reference to Italy, the issue of target audience perception is a research aspect in which Forlì academics have always excelled. Researchers at Forlì have in fact also attempted to recreate actual working conditions in the training courses they have organised over the years, especially in their Master’s degree course in Screen Translation, which also offers, for example, ‘hands on’ practice in

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<sup>1</sup> The Dipartimento di Studi Interdisciplinari in Traduzione, Lingue e Culture/Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Languages, Translation and Cultures (SITLeC), University of Bologna at Forlì has a strong tradition of studies on AVT. In addition to running a postgraduate course in Screen Translation, it has collected, over the years, an electronic body of audiovisual material and transcripts of film dialogues and subtitles and organised widely known international conferences on AVT (for example, *Between Word and Image: Updating Research in Screen Translation* in 2005).

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audio-description and respeaking for the visually or acoustically impaired.

Summing up:

- the encouragement of networks and research partnerships between academia and the professional sector is undoubtedly one of the keys to promote communication and cross-pollination amongst the different actors in the audiovisual translation process;
- and yet, despite a fair amount of collaboration already happening, something is still missing if such partnerships are to work more fruitfully.

Issue 2: Devising strategies aimed not only at boosting already existing research, but above all at popularising and disseminating its results. The way ahead.

The missing ‘something’ may be the capacity to fully understand the average person’s needs in relation to audiovisual translation as well as the inability to assimilate academic and professional contributions due to a lack of ‘proficiency’ in the other’s jargon.

This paper argues that the most effective way to translate research findings into practical improvements and end-user benefits may be the full recognition that research on audiovisual translation can offer social trickle-down effects through a detailed analysis of the audience’s real needs and expectations. Furthermore, the gradual popularisation of audiovisual translation criticism is undoubtedly crucial to ensuring its dissemination amongst all the stakeholders and, consequently, cross-pollination.

The dignity of translation as an autonomous text, valid in itself and endowed with its own characteristics has been fully recognised (in line with the general direction of Translation Studies ever since the 1970s); however, many translation scholars have pointed out that it is also crucial to develop a form of criticism specific to it (e.g. Mattioli 1996: 193)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> “Fra i compiti attuali della traduttologia si impone con particolare urgenza quello di delineare e sviluppare una critica specifica della traduzione. Ricuperata ormai nella sua pienezza l'importanza della traduzione e sottratta alla condizione di inferiorità, di subordinazione al testo originale, riconosciuta alla traduzione la dignità di testo autonomo con sue caratteristiche specifiche, è particolarmente importante proporsi il problema della critica delle traduzioni, considerandolo come uno dei generi della critica. Se si riconosce alla traduzione una specificità è ovvio che le compete una critica specifica. A me sembra che nello sviluppo straordinario della traduttologia cui stiamo

Despite its existence in the form of judgements on the quality of translated texts from the seventeenth century on (Berman 1995), translation criticism has not undergone the same development as what we commonly refer to as literary criticism, i.e. criticism of source texts. In actual fact it is barely existent (Osimo 2004) and therefore still in search of *dignification* (Berman 1995). This gap may be linked to the widespread lack of status of the translated text as such, which also raises crucial educational issues:

The marginality of translation even reaches educational institutions, where we witness a scandalous contradiction: on the one hand, an utter dependence on translated texts in curricula and research; on the other hand, a general tendency, in both teaching and publications, to elide the status of translated texts as translated, to treat them as texts originally written in the translating language. When students see that translation is not simple communication, but an appropriation of the foreign text to serve domestic purposes, they can come to question the appropriative movements in their own encounters with foreign cultures. (Venuti 1996: 328).

The obvious reference here is to literary translation, but it clearly applies to audiovisual translation as well, particularly to subtitling. One may even say it doubly applies to it, due to the well-known “disdain of literary intelligentsia, who seemed to dismiss film translating and the degree of difficulty involved in it as not worthy of their attention“ (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 17; also quoted in Díaz Cintas 2004: 51). This was the case up to just a few years ago, along with the tendency to view film subtitling as adaptation, and not translation. However, things are gradually changing, as both the growing number of scholarly works on film translation (these examples curiously all appeared in the same year: Bruti 2006, Chiaro 2006, Pavesi 2006, Tortoriello 2006), and Gambier’s arguments in

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assistendo questo aspetto particolare sia uno dei più ricchi di futuro e dei più qualificanti.” [Among the current tasks of traductology, it is incumbent to outline and develop a specific form of translation criticism. The primacy of translation – freed from its condition of inferiority and subordination to the original text - being fully accepted by now, and its dignity as an autonomous text endowed with its own recognised characteristics, it is particularly important to raise the issue of the critique of translations, which should be looked upon as one of the genres of criticism. If specificity is recognised for translation, then it requires a specific form of criticism. It seems to me that, in the extraordinary development of traductology which we are witnessing, this particular aspect may hold the most noteworthy potentialities] (Mattioli 1996: 193, own translation)



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favour of a paradigm shift from adaptation to ‘tradaptation’, seem to reveal (Gambier 2004: 179-180)<sup>3</sup>.

Audiovisual translation criticism is, indeed, far better developed than literary translation criticism, which still mostly relies on reviews, and Gambier’s sharp analysis of the Finnish subtitles of Kaurismäki’s *La vie de bohème* (*Ibidem*) is in itself good evidence of this. The real challenge in this area of translation studies may be to realise that recognition of the existence of an already developed field of audiovisual translation criticism is only the first step in the process of making research on translation ‘translational’, since:

- in most cases the language used in research is not directly accessible to the average end user or even to the professional; and
- academic research is normally made available via channels that do not allow for wide circulation.

The systems used by academia to evaluate research and make decisions about career advances should probably be listed amongst

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<sup>3</sup> “La notion d’accessibilité, centrée sur la situation et divers facteurs de réception, serait d’autant plus importante, on l’a vu, que la notion de texte ‘original’ (priorité ontologique de l’origine) est un leurre, un trompe l’oeil qui fait toujours croire à l’auteur-ité et à la linéarité texte-transfert-sous-titres.

[...]

La chaîne de transformations, aux macro- et micro-niveaux, sous la contrainte des idéologies, des canons esthétiques, des rapports de pouvoir et d’argent entre les agents engagés (producteurs, metteur en scène, distributeur, etc.) n’est pas sans rappeler la traduction perçue comme ‘reformulation’ ou ‘manipulation’ par André Lefevere (1992).

Dans cette perspective et cette dynamique, la pseudopolarité entre traduction (plus dépendante d’un ‘original’) et adaptation (relative autonomie par rapport à cet ‘original’) ne tient plus: il y a circulation textuelle et surtout synergie entre systèmes sémiotiques. D’où la notion proposée de tradaptation cinématographique (ou transadaptation), apte à englober tous les types de transformations.”

[The concept of accessibility, focused on the situation and various factors of reception would be even more important considering that, as we have seen, the notion of the ‘original’ text (ontological priority of origin) is a lure. It is a trompe l’oeil that always believes in the authority and linearity text-transfer-subtitles.

[...]

The chain of transformations at macro and micro levels under the constraint of ideologies, aesthetic canons, power relationships and money between the involved agents (producers, director, distributor, etc.) is reminiscent of the translation perceived as ‘reformulation’ or ‘manipulation’ by André Lefevere (1992).

In this perspective and in this dynamic, the pseudopolarity between translation (more dependent on an ‘original’) and adaptation (relative autonomy from the ‘original’) no longer holds: there is textual circulation and above all synergy between semiotic systems. Hence the notion proposed, film tradaptation (or transadaptation), which can cover all types of transformations] (own translation)

the main obstacles to the integration of research into practice: the quality of each individual researcher's contribution to the scientific community they belong to is, at present, primarily measured against the number of books, refereed and peer-reviewed journal articles produced and the number of citations received in other academic publications. This all favours the further development and progressively wider use of both the specific community's jargon and the theoretical foundations used as references, which risks making academic research overspecialised. As a result, the information is often hardly accessible even to researchers from close areas of study without prior academic preparation. Moreover, only rarely are academic book-length studies and journals made visible to the public at large and they are mostly accessible via payment only; although this may be slowly changing in English-speaking countries, at least for that part of the general public competent in AVT specific jargon. That portion of the AVT public can indeed already benefit from the research (mostly written in English) made available via the open access system of publication, which allows for unrestricted access and re-use of research findings in most areas of knowledge.

A third and probably even more challenging question is that since audiovisual translation is a disciplinary area within the social sciences, it mostly relies on empirical approaches, which are often not looked upon with the same consideration as the experimental ('scientific') methodologies on which the hard sciences are based. A possible way out of this problem, which seriously limits the outreach of research in the social field at present, is to raise the scientific community's awareness of the fact that research in the social field has practical trickle-down effects just like scientific research (see point (b) below); and therefore to encourage the researchers' interaction with the community at large by practically recognising their impact on the real world.

To briefly sum up the assumptions behind the action plan which is about to be presented:

(a) the creation of partnerships amongst different stakeholder groups is a necessary BUT NOT a sufficient condition to make research translational;

(b) such partnerships should aim at:

- clearly identifying the practical trickle-down effects of the specific research area;
- making the different key players develop a common language;
- popularising the results of research.

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This may significantly contribute to making *all* research, not just AVT research, meaningful to all stakeholders. In the next section an attempt is made at fine-tuning such aims to the specific target of the AVT sector, while devising an action plan for the implementation of the changes here proposed.

### **3. Making research in AVT ‘translational’: Devising an action plan**

Stages 1 and 2: Developing a common language; Identifying the ‘practical’ effects of audiovisual translation research

In order to clearly identify the practical effects of research on audiovisual translation and at the same time develop a truly common language, it is first of all necessary to give a voice to those stakeholders who should actually benefit from research. This may be achieved through the organisation of focus groups, i.e. unstructured interviews conducted by trained moderators in which groups of end-users are asked about their perceptions, opinions, expectations, beliefs and attitudes towards audiovisual translation products. The ‘natural’, unstructured pattern of the interview would in itself be a guarantee of the respondents’ freedom of self-expression. Due to their very nature as exploratory instruments of people’s ideas in public settings, focus groups provide more meaningful data to identify aspects of the issues in question than traditional research tools. Unlike highly structured questionnaires<sup>4</sup>, focus groups allow researchers to discover and investigate the diversity of the surveyed participants’ experiences and expectations rather than merely counting the number of participants sharing the same characteristics. Moreover, such groups are an invaluable tool when it comes to ‘producing’ ideas. As Lindlof and Taylor maintain, “the members are stimulated by the ideas and experiences expressed by each other. What occurs is a kind of ‘chaining’ or ‘cascading’ effect; talk links to, or tumbles out of, the topics and expressions preceding it” (2002: 182). This may be the necessary step to creating a meaningful direction for research initiatives: it would help initiate a reflective

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<sup>4</sup> The research on audience reception and perception of which the author of this paper is informed – see, for example, Di Giovanni 2012 a and b and Morettini 2012, respectively – seems to have been carried out in this form.

process at the academic level, aimed at identifying the actual social effects of research, i.e. the effects that are actually perceived as such by those who should benefit from it. Focus groups would help researchers to gain participants' (i.e. insiders') observations and knowledge and, reciprocally, the end users could tap the academics' in-depth knowledge of the environment in order to help those working on audiovisual translation implementation to develop strategies to fine-tune it to real-world needs and thus effectively meet end users' expectations, for example in terms of ease of access.

The additional (probably invaluable) benefit of focus groups is that participants in such events seem to naturally develop a common language to describe similar experiences. This may be regarded as the end users' own 'native' language, which each of them has helped to create in order to make sense of the issue at hand. This 'native' language should then both coalesce and contend with specialised jargon in order to produce first an interlanguage and then, gradually, a proper common language that all stakeholders would feel to be their own.

Last but not least, since focus groups are often used for marketing reasons in the early stages of product development and looked upon as precious tools for discussing and/or testing the potentialities of new products before they are made available to the public, the use of such instruments of investigation in lieu of more traditional ones may help ease communication between academia and industry and increase the opportunities for attracting funding to research.

### Stage 3: Popularising the results of research

AVT criticism could be divided with good approximation into academic and journalistic criticism. Journalistic covers the consumer-oriented reviews that regularly appear in newspapers, magazines and other mass-media recommending certain products rather than others and subtly orient public response and taste. Academic criticism involves the papers and book-length studies informed by theory and published in academic journals/volumes mentioned above. These are commonly labelled as criticism proper when compared and contrasted with reviews, as they entail in-depth analysis and judgement rather than superficial review and market-oriented advice. That is, of course, as far as 'mainstream' criticism is concerned. The upsurge of blogs, forums and websites in general, which are often the lay person's only way to evaluate any AVT product, should also

be mentioned, but that would expand this paper far beyond its original scope.

One way to ensure circularity and cross-pollination in the flux of exchanges between the various stakeholders in the translation process would be the creation of a continuum between these extremes in the form of ‘serious’ (i.e. reliable) popularisations. An example might be reviews. Though they do not contain any explicit references to theory, and consequently do not ‘deserve’ the label of criticism as described above, reviews are actually soundly informed by theory. The problem with existing reviews is that those that can actually be labelled as such mostly tend to ignore the fact that they are dealing with translated products: films are reviewed as if they had been produced in the target language. Audiovisual translation research sometimes only focuses on the linguistic aspect of audiovisual products (Díaz Cintas 2004), while reviews frequently display the opposite weakness. This is often due to newspaper and magazine editors’ uninformed views. There are a few exceptions, which should be encouraged, but they only contain the seeds of developments yet to come.

Take for example the review by Catherine Shoard, Film Editor of *Guardian News and Media*, of *Love is all you need* directed by Susanne Bier. It completely misses the point that the film was produced in a language other than English. The source is actually referred to as a film blog rather than a review, though, which may partly excuse the shortcoming.

By contrast, take the review of the same film by Robbie Collin, which appeared in *The Telegraph*, where there is a proper film review column. The extract which is most interesting for our discussion reads: “That’s no criticism of the Danish director Susanne Bier’s new multilingual romantic comedy, her first film since the melodrama *In a Better World* won her the foreign-language Oscar in 2011”. If only the reviewer had expanded on the ‘multilingual’ aspect of the film, he could have been close to building up the preconditions for producing the type of criticism hinted at above. The reviewer later also adds “The film’s original Danish title, with more than a dash of gallows irony, is *The Bald-Headed Hairdresser*”, but he only goes that far. He could have usefully expanded on this, as well.

It must be said that *The Telegraph* column definitely seems to offer a higher quality product. And – to also open up a window onto journalism outside of Europe – the writing of such critics such as Pauline Kael (*The New Yorker*), James Agee (*The Nation*) and Andrew

Sarris (*The Village Voice*) definitely contributes to blurring the line between popular reviews and criticism proper. It should probably be the task of academics to raise newspaper and magazine editors' awareness of the trickle-down effects of high quality reviews on their readers' level of education and intercultural views. Indeed, academics should 'educate' editors to select reviewers with the right sensitivity and interest as well as hosting academic researchers on a regular basis (as they do with other areas of study such as health, IT and general science, for example). Although well-known mostly only to academics, research notes, are a step in this direction. They are discussion notes aimed at providing food for thought. They introduce novel ideas and/or advance arguments in favour of a specific theory or methodology in academic journals. If these notes were introduced into the more popular type of publications, they may not only prove to be an invaluable storehouse of ideas as they already are in academic journals, but they could also function as a crucial driving force for the cross-pollination of such ideas and the education of the public at large.

I would now like to consider what shape this prospective popularised audiovisual translation criticism may take. To do so, I will make a quick reference to Thompson and Bordwell's work, which emphasises the advantages of close reading, of frame-by-frame attention to detail. Thompson informs us that "(t)he possibility of using short clips as illustrations in an article or book is very promising, especially once electronic textbooks get past the trial stages" (2012). She convincingly argues that digital technologies currently allow us to engage in a direct form of criticism which bypasses traditional written criticism:

Video essays analysing films are still a new format but show great potential. Their usefulness will depend on how the issue of copyright plays out. At this point, I'm hopeful that showing clips as part of an analytical study will become established as fair use, as clearly it should be. Being able to use moving images complete with sound as well as still frames from films will be an extraordinarily useful tool. (*Ibidem*)

Advancing an argument through pieces of video content rather than via written essays may indeed prove to be a more effective form of audiovisual translation criticism, if nothing else because it uses the very structure and language of film to discuss this issue. This means adopting an approach that "involves an alignment of the process and

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the content of learning” as a form of loop input (Woodward 2003: 301).

#### **4. Pulling the threads together**

This paper has attempted to address the issue of linking up academic research on audiovisual translation with its effects both on real life and on development and change in the field.

The starting point has been that, in order to attain a social impact and be of value to the entire community participating in the AVT process as a whole, from production to consumption, two issues should be addressed before any other: the necessity to come to a full understanding of the needs and demands of the whole range of actors, whose mutual communication should be promoted using all means; and the need to identify strategies capable of both fostering research in its present form and popularising it with the aim of disseminating its results.

Focusing on such issues, in comparison to similar research in the social sciences and to research in other areas of the translation spectrum, AVT research already shows a good degree of communication, cooperation and influence at least amongst some of the actors involved in the process, and on the community at large. However, its impact would certainly be wider if the existing cooperation, properly channelled, were to become even more significant in the near future. To this end, I suggest three stages of action to show how, in practice, research on AVT may improve its outreach and engage with the non-experts more productively, and make its results more directly useful to them. Stages 1 and 2 focus on the targets of developing a common language and identifying the practical effects of audiovisual translation research. Stage 3 concentrates on how the results of research could be made accessible to the public at large. One question naturally emerges: would end users actually appreciate and/or consult the type of ‘serious’ popularisations identified and discussed? While, of course, only reception analysis would provide an answer, it is evident that the ability to reach out and attract the public holds considerable weight in this process.

## 5. A starting point to implement third mission Portfolios

A 2012 European Green Paper released by the E3M committee is encouraging Universities throughout Europe “to develop research that is more focused on social needs” and that will “engage with the societal need for lifelong-learning more generally” (E3M 2012: 7). The aim is clearly to both raise academics’ awareness of their crucial role of guide and also to encourage their action towards a beneficial impact on society. The ability to build on the third academic mission (or public engagement) of Universities has been introduced as a specific requisite in the Quality Assessment Research inventory of many countries. It relates to specific interactions between the University and the community; to the University’s ability to both take the public’s concerns and aspirations into account, and to develop and improve services to empower the community.

As the 2012 Green Paper warns, “[t]he time when Universities could assume that they will be funded, no questions asked, is long past” (E3M 2012: 5). The document explains that the third mission is simply shorthand for trying to assess the ways in which Universities respond to societal needs, apart from its traditional role in providing academic scholarship and mainstream teaching. Yet, the Green Paper does concede that academics will struggle to identify ways to respond to the third mission: “engaged as they are with what they perceive as the noble pursuits of education and research”, they are often used “to see themselves as somehow apart from the societies that host them; a very different posture from the intentions of their founders” (*Ibidem*).

To help academics identify possible actions, the Paper suggests trying to answer such questions as “How is the university’s expertise used to extend the education of non-traditional learner groups? [...] How does the University exploit, in the service of society, the fact that it constitutes a large group (typically thousands) of fit, creative and intelligent people in one academic community, who could contribute in the local community, but also nationally and internationally, to problem solving and development on a massive scale“ (E3M 2012: 9). The Action Plan sketched in this paper may provide a starting point to both optimize third mission portfolios and identify criteria for development and implementation of third mission indicators and metrics (E3M 2012: 17) in Universities hosting Departments with the suitable AVT competences.



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