

Introduction

In our times of boundless video consumption across national, cultural and linguistic borders, audiovisual translation (AVT), to quote **Frederic Chaume** in the opening interview to this issue of *Cultus*, “is no longer confined to using one mode, but different modes, combined when necessary, fulfilling different needs”. The power of AVT of functioning as a mediating tool between the most diverse linguistic and cultural scenarios is highlighted by Chaume himself and by the rest of the contributions to this edited collection.

Aimed at evaluating the comprehension and appreciation of professional and non-professional subtitles of two popular TV series, **Elena Di Giovanni**’s article – “The Reception of professional and non professional subtitles: Agency, awareness and change” – revisits the concept of audience, at the core of media reception research, and after an assessment of reception studies in the specific domain of AVT, it examines the impact that the ‘guerrilla-type’ practice of non-professional subtitling has had on the industry. The article culminates in the illustration of a reception experiment on a selected sample of viewers in order to assess their appreciation of amateur and professional (Netflix) subtitles, highlighting the complex change which has taken place in society in both the consumption and the creation of non-translated and translated media products.

AVT as a modality of cultural transfer is a concept at the core of the following contribution by **Catalina Jiménez Hurtado** and **Silvia Martínez Martínez**, “The Opera Project”, centred on the illustration of a web portal designed to evaluate and disseminate accessible audiovisual resources pertaining to Spanish culture and heritage. In the framework of the efforts by the European Union to provide citizens with equal access to education, leisure and culture, the Opera Project is aimed at exploiting the resources of multimodal texts to bring new, and thus far disadvantaged, social groups closer to their heritage. The authors’ proposal entails observing communicative barriers in cultural heritage accessibility from an innovative perspective, going one step further with respect to customary strategies

for the visual and audio impaired, by reflecting also on the way that sensory impaired people achieve an aesthetic experience and to what extent translators are able to provide this experience for them.

Another interesting lingua-cultural scenario that has so far received limited attention in AVT is that of product placement. Verbal references to industrial brands and the strategies adopted to translate those which are unknown to the Spanish target culture are investigated by **John D. Sanderson** in his article on “Product placement and screen translation. Transferring references to USA brands unknown to other cultural contexts”. After a historical contextualisation of product placement, a practice which is common in the US film industry but not so widespread elsewhere, and through the illustration of examples from different periods of time, Sanderson discusses the most common strategies used to deal with these sometimes opaque items in the translation for dubbing, in order to transfer the implicatures of unknown brand names mentioned in films and television series to other target cultural contexts.

The way that the transfer of gender stereotypes can be influenced by different cultural perspectives is the theme of **Vincenzo Alfano**’s contribution: “Different gender stereotypes for different subtitles: *Divorce – Italian Style*”. The scholar compares two English subtitled versions of the classic Italian 1961 film by Pietro Germi. Conducting his analysis on the basis of the research framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, Alfano highlights several examples from the two sets of subtitles, which are particularly indicative of the different translation approaches adopted by the US and Italian studios. His investigation clearly shows how the different strategies produce instances of reinforcement of gender stereotypes, as well as other results which point to a different direction and which are duly and also quantitatively illustrated by the scholar.

Also exploring, among other linguistic features, gender issues, related this time to the language of homosexuality, “Language and identity representation in the English subtitles of Almodóvar’s films”, by **Francisco Javier Díaz Pérez**, again chooses the subtitling mode as a privileged site for investigation. As the scholar observes, the Spanish director’s emotionally-charged language is used in his films as a characterisation device and as means to represent identity, conveying geographical, social and gender features which are explored by Díaz Pérez through a series of examples taken from various Almodóvar films. Among the translation strategies analysed in his contribution, the scholar also considers those applied to swearwords, evaluating, within a Descriptive framework, the percentages of occurrences for each item. The differences in the representations of the various features, between source and target texts, are evidence of a complex process of mediation between the two lingua-cultural scenarios, at least as far as the subtitling mode is concerned.

As **Margherita Dore**, the author of the following contribution, states: “The linguistic and cultural peculiarities of *Il divo* have cast doubt on the likelihood of its success outside its country of origin”. Her article, “Subtitling Italian politics and

culture in Paolo Sorrentino's *Il divo*" goes at the heart of the underexplored topic (in AVT) of how language shapes context in politics and how this is represented on screen in both source and target texts. After identifying the film's specific genre, that of Italian *cinema d'impegno*, Dore analyses how the multiple challenges Sorrentino's film poses to its linguistic and cultural transfer have been dealt with when subtitled in English. However, the interest of this particular contribution lies also in the fact that it touches on codes, as well as the purely verbal, that enrich the texture of this particular audiovisual text: the posters used for marketing the film and the use of dynamic captions exploited by the director, for example, are two of the features that would encourage a multimodal analysis, and that are considered by the author in the course of her assessment.

This issue's final contribution, "Translating non-native varieties of English in animated films: The Italian dubbing of *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted*", explores one of the staples of AVT research, the representation and translation of non-standard varieties of English. Its author, **Vincenza Minutella**, does so by analysing a genre which usually resists the dominant strategy of levelling out non-standard varieties which is most common in this type of language transfer: that of comedic cartoons such as the one analysed by Minutella, Dreamwork's *Madagascar 3*. As well as delving into a thorough analysis of suitable examples from dialogue excerpts spoken by non-native English characters, this contribution is enriched by the quotation of personal communications with dubbing professionals, offering an overview of dubbing practices in this specific field. It serves as a precious reminder of the various factors, related to the distribution and marketing strategies of the target versions of audiovisual texts, which influence the process of linguacultural transfer.

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