# Is audiovisual translation putting the concept of translation up against the ropes?

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## ABSTRACT

The imposing reality of audiovisual translation has long challenged the concept of 'equivalence' and has put this notion against the ropes almost from the very first moments of its creation. Furthermore, the advent of new tendencies in audiovisual consumption, accompanied by a variety of localization practices, challenges the traditional concept of 'translation' as we know it. This article reviews which characteristics of audiovisual translation have called into question the very essence of translation, as it has been traditionally understood. After an explanation of new practices mainly created by the new audiences or prosumers, a list of concepts and terms that try to give account to this new reality is discussed, among them localisation, transadaptation, adaptation, transcreation and transmedia narratives, as well as remakes and format licensing. Conclusions call for a new concept of equivalence that also embraces new types of relations between original and target texts, such as iconic and narrative equivalence.

## KEYWORDS

Localisation, adaptation, transcreation, transadaptation, equivalence.

## 1. Localisation, audiovisual translation and media adaptation: a new scenario challenging the old concepts of equivalence

> The multimodal or semiotic nature of AVT once led scholars to question if AVT was indeed a form of translation. The view of AVT as a form of 'constrained' translation, in which the other sign systems over-determine the translator's contribution, stimulated such considerations. [...] Today, however, the discussion may need to be revisited. [...] The current inundation of text production modes and the ubiquity of image and/or sound in texts have made it virtually impossible to adhere to such a limited concept of translation. [...] It is difficult to predict if the trend towards expanding the concept of translation to encompass this diversification will prevail over the opposite trend, that of introducing new terms (such as localisation, technical communication and multimedia localisation (cf. supra)) that aim to reduce translation to one link within a larger communication chain. This will depend not only on the decisions of scholars and university policies, but also on politico-economic developments that determine the translation market (Remael 2010: 15).

Nowadays the term 'localisation' encompasses both consolidated as well as new groundbreaking interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic 'audiovisual translation' practices, namely dubbing, subtitling, surtitling, respeaking, audiosubtitling, voice-over and partial dubbing, simultaneous interpreting in film festivals, free-commentary, subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, audio description for the blind and visually-impaired, fansubbing and fandubbing (Chaume 2013). These audiovisual translation modes can be subdivided into two main macro-modes: captioning and revoicing. The captioning modes entail the addition of text onto or next to the screen, in both interlingual and intralingual cases of transposition. The revoicing modes entail the addition of a spoken voice in the same or in a different language, be it recorded or live, depending on the mode; the original

soundtrack of the source language dialogues can either be deleted (dubbing) or left in place (voice-over); alternatively, a new voice can be added to an existing soundtrack: pre-recorded in the case of audio described AV contents for the blind and visually impaired, live in the case of film simultaneous interpretation or audio description for the theatre. In other words, the audiovisual text is either captioned or revoiced.

However, localisation is an all-inclusive term which also embraces any type of 'media adaptation,' such as format licensing, adaptations, transcreations and remakes, hence the concept of translation interpreted in its widest sense. A significant quantity of audiovisual content, measured in terms of hours, is localised daily, and at an incredibly fast pace. This, together with the wider and better choice available to the audience, has led to a growing diversity in audiovisual content consumption and in the use of different translation practices.

The advent of new tendencies in audiovisual consumption, accompanied by a variety of localisation practices challenges the traditional concept of translation as we know it. During these past twenty years, a number of scholars in the field of Translation Studies have been referring to Derrida while refusing the notion of equivalence as a unit of measure to determine quality in translation, a notion which, to date, had strongly predominated translation theory, didactic training and assessment. In *The Ear of the Other* ([1982] 1985), Derrida declares that the pre-existence of an original text should not be taken for granted, since it is the translation that brings the updated version to light. Hence, it seems more appropriate to say that, in any target culture, the translation of a text is the first to appear; this version then leads towards the original which is, furthermore, conditioned by the way it has been interpreted. Derrida values the translation over the original text, in that it actually enables the original to survive; it is not to be considered a mere reproduction or copy. Classical theories of translation "present the flaws, the inconsistencies, the *losses* as mere accidents that basically do not alter the coherence of the system" (Carreres 2005: 234). Contrarily, Derrida insists on dropping terms such as *loss* or *inadequacy,* since they tend to qualify the translation process as one which devalues. Instead, he encourages an approach which re-evaluates translation as a source of new meanings (Jordà Mathiasen 2016).

Since the end of the twentieth century, Descriptive Translation Studies have also moulded the way in which the notion of equivalence has been understood throughout history. In this paradigm, equivalence is no longer either formal correspondence to the source text ("formal equivalence"), or "dynamic equivalence" of effect or "communicative translation" (Nida and Taber 1974; Newmark 1981 and 1988, respectively), but equivalence to target culture norms, whether they are norms leading to formal equivalence, norms leading to dynamic equivalence or norms leading to the shaping of a new domestic product that is more or less far removed from its original counterpart, as is the case with fundubs, gag dubbing, funny

ADs or free-commentary, not to mention other kinds of adaptations and remakes, as we shall see below.

Therefore, Chesterman's "relation norm," focusing on equivalence and fidelity between source text and target text, uttered in these terms: "A translator should act in such a way that an appropriate relation of relevant similarity is established and maintained between the source text and the target text" (1997: 69) is no longer always a valid predictable norm in the field of AVT, i.e. it should not be taken for granted in this new scenario where the relation between source and target texts is not always one of formal or dynamic correspondence (equivalence of form and equivalence of effect).

Audiovisual translation has strongly contributed to the creation of a new scenario where equivalence can take on a new third meaning, i.e. the creation of a new target product that is in some way related to the original but not necessarily in terms of formal equivalence or dynamic equivalence. In audiovisual translation, transcreation norms enable a Japanese dish, such as Om-rice (omelette with rice), to be turned into pancakes, and chopsticks into forks, as far as both visuals and text are concerned (Chaume 2016). At the same time, an 'omelette' can become a 'pie,' for example, in the Spanish dubbed version (Chaume 2014), due to mandatory lip synchronisation in dubbing; both the terms 'omelette' and 'pie' contain a bilabial consonant, which, in the translated version, has to be maintained and placed accordingly, especially in the case of a close-up shot.

This new scenario also implies pondering on which materials were — in the past — and are — now — selected for translation. If we were to adapt Marco's (2010) classification, we could say that there are three ways to build audiovisual cultural capital: either a) our domestic audiovisual classic and cult movies, TV series and cartoons can be watched and reinterpreted once again, remade, and even extended (transmedia narratives), thus giving them added value each time they are consumed; b) the target culture can incorporate canonical audiovisual products drawn from foreign cultures, usually via translation, thus giving them the status of canonical texts; or c) the target culture can produce domestic audiovisual texts imitating, incorporating, adapting foreign models (such as adaptations, transmedia extensions, TV franchises, transnational remakes, etc), or otherwise can produce enhanced forms of translation that would, at first, constitute a modern peripheral way to consume foreign texts, to then eventually find its place in the target culture, thus enriching its cultural audiovisual capital.

There are new 'places' which could popularise, or in a way, consecrate, these new modern ways of increasing a specific target audiovisual capital. Reference websites, social networks, VoD platforms, etc. host the procreation of new norms and values that are spread more easily and faster than ever before. Aesthetic evolutions are a sign of modernity, and despite them being unstable, some of them have a strong impact on audiences and

may also have an impact on canonical domestic products and canonical translated products (professional dubbings or subtitlings, for example). An interesting contemporary trend can be observed in the new dubbings into English that Netflix is currently broadcasting.

Selecting the materials to be translated is the first step towards setting up new values and norms. In the past, distributors decided what to broadcast, what to sell to TV stations and what not to sell or distribute. Now, fansubbers and fandubbers decide what to subtitle and what to dub; they do so by simply accessing the web and searching for new products, or otherwise, products which are deemed worthy and which perhaps already have a status in their community. Therefore, the *habitus* can be changed and has, in fact, changed.

Creative subtitles are a proof of this change of habitus (see https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/blog/2014-10-tvx2014-short-paper-enhancing-subtitles for a sample of creative subtitles).

And more interestingly, some creative uses also display ideological agendas. For example, in multilingual movies, subtitling other languages (over and above the main language of the film, the so-called L3 languages) in capital letters, or in italics, not only draws the audience's attention towards them, but also makes them come across as strange, as not deserving the same typographical features adopted for the dialogues in the film's main language.

Fandubs — amateur dubbing — and fundubs — gag dubbing— are home-made dubbings of television series, cartoons (particularly the anime genre) and trailers for films that have not yet been released in the target language country or region. Fandubs are usually translated and recorded by fans of the said genres; they download the film texts from the Internet and use a digital sound editing program in order to manipulate or eliminate the soundtrack of the original version, to then insert a newly dubbed track which they record at home using a microphone (Chaume 2013). They are sometimes referred to as *fundubs*, when the main function of the 'creative translation' is parody; another name for them is *gag dubbing*, because of the witty and humorous nature of this type of home-developed dubbing. Likewise, funsubs usually make fun of a scene or character, wrongly translating what he or she says -see, as an example, any popular funsub of *Downfall* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004) on the web.

*Funads* are funny audio descriptions intended to make fun of any scene, described by means of sexual, humoristic or parodist comments, puns and double meanings. Literal video versions, also known as literal music videos, are parodies of official music video clips in which the original lyrics are replaced by others that provide a literal description of the visuals. This technique is normally applied to music videos in which the imagery might seem to lack sense or coherency with the lyrics. More often than not it is

done intralingually, hence, there is no *proper* translation as such, but it can also be done interlingually — as is the case of *My little pony friendship is magic* (Lauren Faust and Hasbro Studios, 2010-2015), which has a fundub and a funsub in Spanish, in addition to the commercial and canonical dubbing. These are clear cases of creative writing for the media, perhaps unstable (still undeveloped) for the time being, but certainly new ways of audiovisual transfer and rewriting.

Active viewers occasionally use gag dubbing in order to recreate fake political speeches held by famous presidents, leaders and people's representatives in order to denounce and sometimes ridicule and deride their agendas. The same process is seen in the realm of fansubbing, where fansubbers ridicule politicians and leaders by creating fake subtitles that either expose their hidden agenda or simply make them sound ludicrous through absurd utterances. This new political use of audiovisual translation is changing the traditional way of localising audiovisual content and is stretching the boundaries of the old notions of equivalence, faithfulness and ethics of translation.

## 2. Characteristics of audiovisual translation that are expanding the borders of the concept of translation

This new scenario, composed by new consumption habits, new devices and technologies, new audiences and new ways to understand translation is not limited to a theoretical description, following Derrida's (see above) and Toury's new approaches. The imposing reality of audiovisual translation has long challenged the concept of equivalence and has put this notion against the ropes almost from the very first moments of its creation. Let us now see which characteristics of audiovisual translation have called into question the very essence of translation, as it has been traditionally understood.

### 2.1. Interlingual and intralingual translation

Jakobson's triad: interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic translation has proved useful in Translation Studies (TS) to not restrict our field of study to linguistic and textual transfers from one language to another. Instead, and despite defining interlingual translation as "translation proper," the author entices TS to embrace new areas of study that had been secluded in the realm of adaptation. What before had been considered deliberate, announced or extended revisitations of prior works (novel into film, just to mention one) are now included in the TS prism, and are observed and analysed as *translations*. However, would everyone agree on considering intralingual translation as translation?

Audiovisual translation can help us answer this question. For instance, in audiovisual translation we can find intralingual adaptations between different dialects belonging to the same language. The market is flooded with commissions asking to retranslate subtitles or dubbings from Latin

American Spanish to European —also called Peninsular or Castillian —Spanish, and the other way round, too. We can also see translations briefs consisting in intralingual translation from Brazilian Portuguese to European Portuguese and vice versa. The same trend can be observed between Flemish and Dutch, Galician and Portuguese, Valencian and Catalan, Serbian and Croatian (and Bosnian and Montenegrin) and in many other settings, where usually two or more countries share the same language, but for political reasons and election votes it is advisable to refer to them as though they were two separate and different languages. In such cases, intralingual translations can be done from scratch, translating the original text while consulting the target text in the close dialect, or simply adapting the nominal and verbal features that differentiate the two language varieties, without consulting the original text. Even in this latter case, both final target texts, i.e. the two translations into the two language varieties will be considered different versions of the same original text, and thus, different translations. Target cultures would accept them as such. Two translations into two varieties of the same language are not the same text. So the term 'translation' does not imply the transfer of a text into just one language variety.

The major breakthrough of Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (SDH) in the realm of Audiovisual Translation leaves no doubt as to whether this kind of necessary and socially-committed form of subtitling is a translation. One could argue that SDH is just a rendering of spoken dialogues in another code, i.e. the same dialogues are transposed from a spoken into a written mode, thus making the same information accessible via two different codes: the linguistic code transferred through the acoustic channel (the dialogues) and the graphic code transferred through the visual channel (the subtitles). However, subtitles and dialogues do not contain the same information. Subtitles are, per se, a summarised version of dialogues, simply because it is not possible to render every linguistic detail uttered in the oral deliveries due to their length, and hence the sheer impossibility to read all that a character is uttering. Subtitles, especially interlingual subtitles, imply reduction by nature. It is considered that one-third of the information uttered in dialogues is lost in interlingual subtitles (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007), because there is no other option if we want to be able to read them.

Once again, we are faced with adaptation. Besides, SDH can also be interlinguistic, and despite not being a common practice, it sometimes features in the AVT market and is clearly a form of translation. But even the more widespread intralingual SDH can be considered a totally new text, one which follows different conventions and norms: not only do the subtitles differ from the original dialogues (there might even be mistakes, explanations, levelling, euphemisation or understatements, etc.), they also encompass the representation of noises (sound effects code), music (musical code), and paralinguistic features (paralinguistic code). Therefore, SDH cannot be considered a sheer rendering of the original dialogues; it

implies a new text, normally written in the same language, which receives and includes information from at least four different codes. This text is very rich in signs, straddling at least four codes of meaning, and emerges as a new text in itself, not just as a reproduction of a prior text.

## 2.2. Intersemiotic translation

Jakobson's third kind of translation, intersemiotic translation, has paved the way for translation theorists to include any kind of semiotic transfer in the realm of TS. In the field of AVT, Audio Description for the Blind and the Visually Impaired (AD) is a clear example of an intersemiotic transfer. Although Jakobson makes reference to a translation from words into images, AD can easily be included and studied in the same category, being a transfer from images to words. Several questions arise here though: a) can one consider a verbal explanation of images as translation? Is it not mere narration?; b) is audio description in museums a real form of translation, or is it, similarly to guided audio tours, just a verbal narration of what one sees?

In the film *Arrival* (Denis Villeneuve 2016), linguist Louise Banks (Amy Adams) is summoned to Montana, by the US Military, to liaise with an alien race known as the *heptapods*. The aliens write using *logograms*: circular glyphs that resemble coffee stains, probably made out of ink. The symbols the heptapods draw are at the same time tantalising and openly foreign. Louise, paradoxically a linguist and not a translator, is engaged to seek communication with the aliens and translate their language into English.

The fact that the heptapods' text is non-linear –there is no beginning, middle or end in their figures– plays a prominent role in the plot. It illustrates the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, i.e. that the language we use influences the way we see the world. The film seems to emphasize the fact that the aliens have a different vision of reality because they use a different language from that of human beings.

In the film we see examples of translations from extraterrestrial incomprehensible black drawings into English and vice versa, from English into that invented iconographic and symbolic language. No one would question the fact that the scenes where the linguist and the heptapodes interchange information are examples of translation. Indeed, this is the aim of the encounters between the woman, the rest of the troop and the heptapodes. The US Army intends to discover the nature and reason of the heptapodes' visit on earth, and most of all, if they are a menace to humanity. Therefore, a translation is needed (see some examples at imdb.com, in the Photogallery section).

The audience can hardly hear the sounds that the heptapods emit while moving or uttering their dialogues, and they are hardly seen distinctively, since they appear behind a glass or screen in the middle of a foggy or watery

atmosphere. Thus, the film obliges the viewer to switch back to a primitive state of affairs, to a pre-semiotic scenario not yet contaminated by semiotic traffic. And precisely in that primitive (or future) setting, translation is needed, and it is of vital importance in the plot of this film. Translation emerges as the only solution to overcome a communication challenge posed by a set of codified images on the one hand and human language on the other. Intersemiotic translation is therefore a label that highlights solely the difference between meaning codes, but not the intrinsic and powerful proprieties of translation, as a human tool and prime vehicle capable of overcoming communication challenges of any kind.

In Translation Studies, "museum translation usually refers to the study of interlingual transmission of texts in museum exhibitions, with a set of source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs) as data" (Liao 2017: 47). Museum translation does not necessarily refer to a particular format: for instance, it can be oral, as in the recorded spoken commentaries provided by audio tours or audio guides accessed through handheld devices. However, information can also be included in promotional material accessed through various media: recorded voices can be heard collectively via loudspeakers in some rooms, bilingual phone lines can be activated to attract people from other nationalities, etc. Leaflets, books and any kind of written information about the museum and its belongings would be samples of written translations, either intralingual or interlingual. According to Liao (2017: 57) the first studies in museum translation:

> adopted decontextualised approaches by solely examining linguistic features in texts, but later studies have begun to engage with the multimodal exhibition space, the cultural-historical background of exhibition themes, the responses of museum visitors, the ethical role and ideological stance of museum institutions, and multilingual and immigrant societies.

The multimodal exhibition space, the multimodal nature of the objects, the multimodal possibilities that translation can offer to contribute towards the divulgation of art and heritage, turn this activity into an intersemiotic practice worth being taken into account in audiovisual translation. Multimodal exchange is undoubtedly another form of translation.

Sign Languages (SL) are complete and complex languages that use conventional signs expressed by hand movements combined with facial expressions and body postures. They are the primary languages of many deaf people, and one of the several communication options used by the hard-of-hearing, but also by non-impaired persons wishing to communicate with the aurally-impaired.

In Audiovisual Translation, SL is used in TV news programmes, normally live, but it can also be recorded. Stone explains the two possible ways in which SL is used in TV programmes and also warns the reader that the

translation may not be a faithful translation of the source text. As he (2007: 76) sets out:

> The Deaf T/Is [Translators/Interpreters] aim to use the English autocue interpretively (Gutt 1998), such that they are not creating a 'faithful' TL, but rather a TL that is optimally relevant to the Deaf audience. This involves including information that will have appeared either earlier during the week (for news week review programmes) or earlier in the broadcast (for news headlines).

Therefore, on the one hand, on TV we have the translation of a linguistic code into a visual code, consisting in facial gestures, postures and mainly hand signs, but on the other, that translation is identified as something other than a faithful translation, i.e. the information in the script is usually understood and represented in a way that is pragmatically understood by the audience, thus adding, deleting or changing whatever is necessary to achieve this goal. As Stone acknowledges (2007: 77): "In some instances the implicatures that are constructed within the BSL text are different from the implicatures of the English text."

Sign languages are considered to be languages per se in many countries and have the same status as natural languages from a legal point of view – though its use is not implemented in the media except for some scarce TV news and programmes. Now, our concern, in this context, lies in the type of transfer carried out between a natural language and a sign language. It is obviously one of an intersemiotic nature, and not an interlingual one; interlingual, perhaps, from a legislative point of view, but intersemiotic from a multimodal perspective. A sign language is a set of codified hand and body movements and facial expressions, shared by a community; it is then a conventionalised *code*. And, as such, its translation into a natural language is of an intersemiotic nature, and is legally recognised in those contexts where it has been implemented, like in the Brazilian *Guia para produções audiovisuais acessíveis* (Sylvia Bahiense Naves, Carla Mauch, Soraya Ferreira Alves and Vera Lúcia Santiago Araújo, 2016) from the Ministério da Cultura, where we can read that the window dedicated to show a sign language interpreter:

> É o espaço destinado à **tradução** entre uma língua de sinais e outra língua oral ou entre duas línguas de sinais, feita por Tradutor e Intérprete de Língua de Sinais (TILS), na qual o conteúdo de uma produção audiovisual é traduzido num quadro reservado, preferencialmente, no canto inferior esquerdo da tela, exibido simultaneamente à programação. (2016: 15, emphasis added)

## 2.3. Transadaptation

In her doctoral thesis, Neves (2005) proposes a new term that goes beyond the traditional concept of translation, a term that could encompass all AVT modes known to date. The author stresses the need for a new term that is able to account for the necessary issues addressed in subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing.

This term is a blend word, *transadaptation*, thus highlighting its potential to encompass all types of translation as well as adaptation, thus allowing translation theory to go beyond the usual translation dichotomies such as literal versus free translation, translation versus adaptation, etc. Gambier also calls the translation spectrum under AVT *transadaptation*. The author explains that all the new modes of translation "have blurred the traditional borders between translation and interpreting, and between written and oral codes" (2003: 178). Furthermore, Neves (2005) considers this new term as capable of involving target audiences more directly due to the wide diversity amongst them. For instance, not only do diverse audiences belong to different socio-cultural and socio-linguistic backgrounds and expectations, but they might also suffer from different physical impairments, such as the blind and visually impaired and the deaf and hard of hearing. In addition to this, the chosen term allows for the possibility of catering for different age groups, like children and adults, and sub-groups among them.

In the field of dubbing, Pruys (2009) describes the dubbed version of a film as independent and autonomous, while highlighting the fact that original and dubbed texts are rarely equivalent in terms of content and form. Rather, they are two *variations* on the same topic. That is the reason why this form of translation has also been labelled transadaptation or *re-creation* (Leppihalme 1997: 100).

Alongside with dubbing and audio description, funsubs, fundubs, and funads, as well as samples of free-commentaries, simultaneous interpreting in film festivals, and even more so videogame localisation, can also fall under this new term. However, since all AVT modes can be labelled as examples of transadaptation, this can end up being yet another fruitless synonym for audiovisual translation, simply a much more consolidated term in a discipline that caters for all media transfers. In any case, the mere need felt to coin a new term already is undeniable proof of the limits of the old concept of translation.

## 2.4. Localisation

Localisation in this article is understood as an umbrella term encompassing all kinds of audiovisual translation and all kinds of media adaptation. However, this term probably derives from the adaptation of software products (Esselink 2000), referring only to the complex process of "taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language where it will be used and sold)" (Esselink 2000: 3).

Bernal-Merino (2015: 84-85) explains that this term has always gone hand in hand with others like internationalisation and globalisation. In the case of videogames, it has been used to describe the process following the internationalization of a game, which consists in designing "products in origin that could easily accommodate the requisites and tastes of potential importing countries." In the field of videogame localisation (VGLOC) once

the product has been internationalised it can be localised, i.e. linguistically, legally, technically, artistically and culturally adapted to each and every target culture. In fact, the process of VGLOC encompasses the adaptation of all game assets, not only at a linguistic level, but also at legal, cultural and functional levels, so that the product may maintain its essence when transferred to another culture. Thus, both its gameplay and its playability must be respected for the new foreign user. In this complex process of localisation, a fundamental step is the adaptation of on-screen text, via subtitling, and the adaptation of audio assets, especially the ones belonging to cinematic scenes. In sum, VGLOC includes the translation of different assets: resources (menus, etc.), on-screen text and captions, textual graphics, cinematic and acoustic assets, written text (instructions, text on the box), the game webpage and the help menu (Granell, Mangiron and Vidal 2015).

Localisation is, then, a term that can fall under the concept of domestication, a type of translation that mostly takes into account the target culture and recipients, as well as the commercial success of the game; this requires total consent on behalf of the industry to adapt every single component that may, in the least, hinder comprehension or playability.

However, as discussed above with respect to other terms, the problem lies once more in the concept of translation. Zabalbeascoa (2012: 196) complains about the fact that the success of the term localisation has been due to a narrow and purist notion of translation, one that does not reflect the reality of intercultural, interlinguistic and intersemiotic communication. If translation were still to be understood as a process of literal transfer (refer to Martínez Sierra 2017, for a detailed discussion on literal translation as both a method and strategy), then, of course, other terms would be required to cater for all these new processes taking place in the world of audiovisual translation. But no one currently doubts that the term translation has widened its boundaries sufficiently to encompass these types of domesticating transfers. Dynamic equivalence and communicative translation, terms discussed above, are not the only ones that apply to the process of VGLOC; a broader notion of translation, like the one used today in TS, too describes the processes taking part in VGLOC. Bernal-Merino (2015: 88) concludes stating that "it would be inaccurate to use it [game localization] within Translation Studies to refer solely to text translation since it also refers to non-linguistic activities" and recommends the use of "linguistic game localisation" when only the process of linguistic translation is being referred to. He states that the definitions of the term localisation are not used to the detriment of the term translation, in other words, the term translation still includes the technical, legal, cultural and linguistic adaptation needed in the process of VGLOC. Localisation simply brings those non-linguistic processes to the front, and that is the reason for the coinage of this new term. However, those and some other non-linguistic processes also appear in the new AVT modes discussed above, and are by

no means to be considered property rights of VGLOC or of software localisation. Audiovisual translation, ranging from dubbing to audio description, fansubbing to free-commentaries, also includes a process of domestication and constant adaptation of non-linguistic issues.

Besides, the translatological perspective in the case of VGLOC responds to the degree of functionality of the target text, rather than to the degree of faithfulness to the source language, a concept which clearly marries up VGLOC with some AVT modes.

And last but not least, in the process of consumption and enjoyment of most videogames there is a third channel of communication, the tactile channel (Mejías Climent forthcoming), which conveys a normative code that regulates all movements and actions performed by the gamer. This channel is added to both the visual and acoustic channels, which characterise audiovisual translation. The process of playing a game is then performed via three different channels of communication that host different codes, all of which weave the final meaning of the text. The irruption of the tactile channel in the process of communication of these new texts, as well as the breakthrough of a new code, the normative code, that conventionally regulates the rules of the game and the hand and finger movements of the gamer, once more obliges us to widen the concept of translation. The normative code has to be translated, not only in the instructions of the game, but also in the playability of the game, i.e. it interacts with the other semiotic codes (visual and acoustic) and gives the gamer instructions to perform in one way or another. A movement can interact with a beep or with an image, and the three can also interact, making the experience of playing the game better or worse according to the success of the gamers' reactions.

The concept of translation is still very much related to the linguistic transfer of a conventional written text. Maybe expecting it to encompass all the new semiotic layers which shape contemporary audiovisual texts is perhaps too giant and daring a leap. Nevertheless, no other term can explain all these new types of transfers better than the old concept of translation.

## 2.5. Transcreation

Transcreation is an enhanced type of audiovisual translation mode, and is a direct consequence of digitalisation. Katan (2014) proposes an interesting historical review of the term, starting from its first use in Philosophy by Gottfried Leibniz, to Samuel Coleridge's adaptation to Literature, to the more recent use by Purushottam Lal in Translation Studies. In sum, Katan argues that the term comprises both the concept of faithful transmission as well as that of creation.

Transcreation is a combination of globalisation and localisation, a process referred to as glocalisation, a process whereby a global product is moulded in order to meet the needs of local consumers. As Fowler and Chozick

(2007) stated in the Wall Street Journal: "Once, American entertainment companies exporting characters just dubbed them into other languages. But in recent years, Asia has become the testing ground for character reinvention, a process called 'transcreation'." Therefore, as mentioned earlier when discussing the ways to build audiovisual cultural capital, nowadays audiences consume (dubbed and subtitled) foreign products as they are, like blockbusters or videogames, local products belonging to their country in their own target languages, and also adapted products like transcreations, i.e. adaptations of global products which maintain some characteristics of their foreign origin combined with some others drawn from the target culture (Chaume forthcoming). A case in point is the graphic novel *Spider-Man: India* (Sharad Devarajan, Suresh Seetharaman and Jeevan J. Kang 2004), originally published in India by Gotham Entertainment Group in 2004, retelling the story of Marvel Comics' Spider-Man in an Indian setting. In this series, the Indian Spiderman is a humble Indian boy from a remote village, called Pavitr Prabhakar — a phonetic distortion of Peter Parker. The boy wears the well-known Spidey tight suit combined with a traditional loincloth and Indian harem trousers. Nowadays, in an age of transmedia products, Pavitr Prabhakar is playable among other Spiders in the Spider-Man Unlimited video game (Bernal-Merino 2015; Chaume 2016).

Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006: 20) recommend the term 'transcreation' to describe the videogame localisation process, thus opening this debate further:

> Localisers are granted *quasi* absolute freedom to modify, omit, and even add any elements which they deem necessary to bring the game closer to the players and to convey the original feel of gameplay.

Therefore, as we can see, all three terms, translation, localisation and transcreation may correspond to the same reality. Transcreations are all forms of semiotic adaptation and manipulation where some or most — if not all — semiotic layers of the original (audio)visual product are localised, that is, manipulated.

Traditionally, only those signs belonging to the five acoustic codes of the audiovisual text (linguistic, paralinguistic, musical, special effects and sound provenance) have been localised via dubbing/voice-over and subtitling. However, nowadays, images (icons, indices and symbols), lighting, movement (kinesic signs), types of shots, can also be manipulated in order to shape a domesticated product that, allegedly, satisfies a specific target audience (Chaume forthcoming). Examples of transcreation are also found in the localisation of commercials for TV and Internet, as well as in cartoons (Chaume 2016). In fact, in the North-American version of *Doraemon* (Kozo Kusuba, 2005–), an animated TV series about an eponymous robotic cat who travels back in time from the 22$^{nd}$ century to help a pre-teen boy named Nobita Nobi, yen banknotes are transformed into dollar notes, chopsticks into forks, and a medical box into a pizza. Here, transcreation is

used with a strong and vicious political agenda governing intersemiotic translation operations. The show is manipulated in such a way as to replace Japanese cultural and ideological values with Western ones, under the excuse of reaching the American audience more closely.

Transcreation, then, entails a process of intersemiotic translation. Unlike AD or museum translation, images are *translated* into other images, sometimes belonging to the same culture (intraiconic translation), some others belonging to another culture (intericonic translation, be it the target culture or a universal feature belonging to other cultures). Intraiconic and intericonic translations (transcreations) have to be included in this new concept of translation advocated here.

Bernal-Merino (2015: 88-89) argues that the term 'transcreation' nowadays is used by companies who wish to distinguish themselves from traditional translation agencies, as if the latter only offered literal translation services. After a detailed discussion on the term and the authors who have recently used it, he admits that the term transcreation has probably been introduced in VGLOC in order to highlight the fact that the source text is a videogame and not a book. And concludes:

> Despite the currency of the term 'transcreation' in the advertising industry and some sectors in translation seeking a niche in the advertising market, it seems that there is a lack of theoretical grounding to validate this term against the more traditional 'translation'.

## 2.6. Transmedia

Transmedia narrative, also referred to as transmedia storytelling, cross-media seriality, and multiplatform storytelling, is a technique whereby a story is told across multiple platforms and formats, more often than not through the use of current digital technologies, and ideally involving the audience or end users to some extent. In general terms, in conventional transmedia narratives, there is a main story and other sub-stories, the so-called extensions, produced and distributed in other formats and media. Thanks to digitalisation, new active audiences have the possibility to contribute to the extension of a transmedia project, or simply to interact with producers and distributors (or film directors and actors), or also to manipulate audiovisual products.

Transmedia content creates a narrative that expands beyond several media forms: generally, audiovisual (born-digital), multimedia, interactive, episodic, and shaped in multiple formats. Modern transmedia makes use of multiple devices to involve audiences by creating stories that are linked together across different platforms and formats. Every adaptation to each format uses text (linguistic codes), images (iconographic codes), music (musical codes), sound effects (sound codes), puzzles and games to illustrate and enhance the narrative (Pujol Tubau 2015, Ferrer Simó 2016).

Relations of equivalence among all formats, as well as extensions, are established in terms of reproduction of the same semiotic signs and/or main plot, or simply modification of the latter (of repetition of semiotic signs, and undoubtedly also in terms of repetition or slight modification of the main plot). Names of characters, names of places, background history, relations between characters, repetition of icons, music, graphic texts, lighting, special effects, idiolects, some iconic words or phrases, etc. are maintained in all narratives, which, at the same time, extend the main plot and characters, giving birth to new stories and situations. Transmedia narratives also lead scholars to question to what extent these can be considered adaptations or retranslations of the same story in different formats. Extensions not only include intralingual retranslations (any adaptation and extension of the primary story), but also interlingual translations of each product and format; besides, interlingual retranslations can also be produced under the form of a pseudo-translation (Toury 1995). This phenomenon obliges the concept of translation to remove its straightjacket in order to embrace these new narratives and products, which are appearing in the audiovisual world. Extensions can be produced in the same language adopted in the original product, and then translated, or otherwise produced directly in other languages and then, perhaps translated back into the language of the original film. The systemic relations established among all audiovisual products (Baños 2014, 2015), their extensions and translations –whether direct or back translations–, as well as the consideration of any extension as an adaptation or pseudo-translation opens a discussion around a very old term that also overlaps with translation –that of adaptation.

## 2.7. Media adaptation

Bernal-Merino (2015: 93), too, revisits some approaches towards the notion of adaptation adopted by eminent scholars, who in the end, agree that the term is so broad and fuzzy that indeed it can reflect many different realities, ranging from a version of an original play written by Shakespeare to a screenplay version of the same theatrical work. In fact, it can account for some transmedia narratives too, and also for most AVT modes. Adaptation can be used as a synonym for translation, rewriting, transmedia narrative and localisation, and actually, for every term and concept used so far in this article.

But it is true that the salient characteristic of this term is that it is used when changes to the original are easily perceived. This is why Hutcheon (2006: 4) states that "a negative view of adaptation might simply be the product of thwarted expectations on the part of a fan desiring to a beloved adapted text." Again, the notion of fidelity is the key to the discussion and to the definition of adaptation. As in the case of translation, and also the other terms discussed so far, the notion of fidelity is always present in the debate and it is the measuring instrument that in the end evaluates the success of the adaptation. This is why Díaz Cintas (2004: 519) states that in the field of Translation Studies this term has a negative connotation.

Almost forty years ago, Nir (1984) had already considered subtitling as a type of adaptation. All the more reason, then, to consider dubbing a kind of adaptation too, if we take into account the numerous agents involved in manipulating the final product. Chaves (2000) preserves the term adaptation for the different versions of a product in other formats (novel into film, for example), whereas Martínez Sierra (2008: 31), who reviews the concept in the field of AVT, considers adaptation also as a technique used in the process of audiovisual translation, i.e. the technique of adapting a source-text cultural reference towards a target-text cultural reference (or for another well-known source text reference).

Hutcheon (2006: 171) draws a continuum in order to define adaptation. The author places translations on one end, i.e. the end of maximum fidelity towards the original, while placing spin-offs, sequels and prequels, among others, on the other end, thus embracing transmedia extensions in the realm of adaptation.

Remakes are, of course, considered to be proper adaptations, even more so transnational remakes, which are already considered not "a unitary one-way process of cultural homogenisation but rather as an interstitial process through which cultures borrow from and interact with one another" (Perkins and Verevis 2015: 677). Remakes, as well as any kind of format adaptation, are understood as global cultural borrowings, thus being given a new status that goes way beyond the commercial logic that motivates and entices their creation. They, in fact, call this process 'cultural translation,' using the term translation and enhancing its cultural component, in order to define the transfer process of a transnational remake.

## 3. Conclusions

In the end, and placing focus only on the terminological issues tackled here, it seems that it can all be summarised by stating that this is an open battle among schools of thought within academia, and also between academia and the industry. The question is which term is the hypernym that encompasses the rest. And also which terms are simply unnecessary synonyms for such a long described reality. Academic circles in Translation Studies prefer the term translation (Pym 2003; Zabalbeascoa 2012; Bernal-Merino 2015), as this term should not be simply understood as a linguistic transfer of a text. As discussed above, since the notion of dynamic equivalence has been coined by Nida, translation has not been understood as a simple linguistic transfer. Also, since at least the early eighties of last century, Skopostheorie has enhanced the idea that translation is not subjugated by the source text, but is conditioned by the overall purpose or function that the translation needs to achieve in the target culture, as well as by the relations with the client and the translation brief.

Koskinen (1994: 459) explains this in a clear and unambiguous way: Translation is not the same text as the source text, but it is not a different

text either. The translation owes its existence to the original, but the original, likewise, needs the translation to survive, so writer, reader and translator are constantly transforming the text. This last thought implies that all forms of adaptation are, in fact, translations, and also that all AVT modes clearly are translations, despite the extent of adaptation required to suit the target culture norms and expectations. Therefore, in dubbing, for example, where distributors — and not translators — choose the titles of most blockbusters, where dialogue writers modify the text submitted by the translator, where dubbing directors apply further changes and even add text where there was nothing in the original (hence the Italian dubbing symbol, *sul muto*, or SM), where even actors and actresses can add further changes, not to mention, of course, proofreaders in the quality control departments, as some scholars have revealed — particularly those tackling the concept of genetic analysis (Richart 2013; Zanotti 2014) — we can still speak of translation, and do not need the term adaptation to reflect a reality dominated by constant and collective change. The dubbed text is not the same as the source text, but it is not a different text either, as Koskinen would argue. In subtitling, which is considered a type of vulnerable translation (Díaz Cintas 2004) subject to the ruthless judgment of the audience, at least one-third of the original dialogues are lost and as Martí Ferriol (2010) demonstrated, we can find as many domesticated (adapted) translation strategies there as we can find in a dubbing script. The same can be said of the rest of AVT modes, especially, the most creative ones, and nowadays, the ones created by the new active audiences or prosumers.

What is maybe urgent in TS is the need to revisit the concepts of equivalence and the concept of translation itself. The new concept of equivalence has to go far beyond the one of dynamic equivalence, which, in its own way, went far beyond the one of formal equivalence, which equals translation to linguistic transfer. However, the term dynamic equivalence is not broad enough to embrace all adaptation phenomena (format adaptations, transnational remakes), nor new audiovisual translation modes that create equivalence at different levels (funsubs, fundubs, funads, literal video versions, etc.). Neither formal nor dynamic (i.e. functional) equivalence explain these new types of transfers, but maybe iconic equivalence, maybe heterofunctional equivalence (humorous, political, etc.), or maybe a new kind of equivalence shifting the power from distributors to ordinary people can give account of these new moves. Though a new definition of translation that, once and for all, is able to extinguish the concept of equivalence, would be too daring and too far removed from reality. Therefore, the new concept should include both formal equivalence (in AVT, for example, the rough translation commissioned for dubbing, or many fansubs), dynamic equivalence (the final translation for dubbing, most subtitled works, etc.) and a kind of *iconic equivalence*, which would include other AVT modes discussed above (for example, AD, but also gag dubbings, funsubs, etc.) and maybe a fourth one of *narrative equivalence*, which would account for different kinds of adaptation (format licensing, for example).

This new interpretation of translation and equivalence, which goes far beyond the one discussed to date, raises new questions that will require further research: Is the classification of types of translation, proposed by some authors (Hurtado 2001, to mention just one), still valid? Has AVT changed that classification? Where do we place fundubs, funny audio descriptions, literal video versions, free-commentaries, museum translation, format adaptations and transnational remakes, etc.? Is it possible to set a new catalogue of translation strategies, according to the ones observed in these new modes?

Modern theories have pushed translation beyond the concept of equivalence, which has always referred to the source text. Nobody has so far convincingly demonstrated where the borders of translation lie. The concept of translation is in constant fluctuation (Zabalbeascoa 2012: 191) and –like norms– its definition depends on space and time. Translation theory now freely admits that translators do more than simply produce equivalent texts. Descriptive Translation Studies have set out to prove this and have been doing so for a few decades. Audiovisual Translation is not a translation mode that escapes the canonical notion of translation, so if something fails to depict the reality of AVT it is, then, translation theory. In conclusion, as Zabalbeascoa states, Translation Studies as a discipline will be condemned if it is not able to accept as its object of study all possible ways of rewriting (Zabalbeascoa 2012: 197).

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