A Connected History of Audiovisual Translation: Elements for Consideration

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Abstract

Why do we need a history of audiovisual translation? The elements of such a history cannot be tackled without any context, especially outside of a history of cinema, understood both as an art made of techniques and a business. And what kind of history do we need? We try here to define the conditions and resources for a connected and comparative history and deal with a few methodological challenges.

Introduction

The aim of this article is twofold: firstly, to answer the question of why a "connected" history of audiovisual translation (AVT) is desirable, and, secondly, to point out the methodological challenges that such a history would present. Its goal is neither to report on a current project nor to present an empirical case study. It is the culmination, sustained by various data, of our thoughts and reflections on the pressing need to write a coherent history of AVT. For the time being, many of these sources and resources are scattered. After an initial short presentation of the rapid changes in cinema, we offer some elements to consider for the writing of this history. We then deal with some of the potential methodological challenges – what are the conditions and means for a connected and comparative history of AVT? By way of illustration, we refer to diverse local situations in France, the U.K. the U.S., and China, in order to shed light on the possibilities and

pitfalls of writing such a history. Our purpose is to underscore the international/ global dimension of this history – by reviving an earlier tradition of when cinema, both as an art and a business, was a universal practice.

1. 120 years of innovation

Underlying this goal of reflecting on the need to write a history of AVT are two major elements which should be taken into consideration from the start: the celebration of 100 years of cinema, and the impact of technology. Both are addressed in the following section.

1.1 100-year anniversary

Questions on the very survival of cinema were posed relatively early on after the début of digital technology. Would it survive in and after the digital era? In a 1998 interview, Jean-Luc Godard wondered why the first 100 years of cinema were being celebrated (in 1995) while nothing similar was done for painting, dancing, literature or any other arts. Was this centennial anniversary a sign of its possible death? Several changes were noticeable. Originally, cinema had been a public event with a large screen. However, now films were being watched on smaller screens (TV, laptop and smartphone) by individual viewers in the metro, at the airport, on the train, etc.[1] In addition to this change in reception settings, since 1993 (with *Jurassic Park* directed by Steven Spielberg) images (dinosaurs in that case) were being created by computer. Indeed, film has been considered a landmark in the development of computer-generated imagery and animatronic visual effects (with effects first introduced by Disney for the film *Mary Poppins*, released in 1964 and followed by four sequels in 1997, 2001, 2015 and 2018). With robots, 3D effects, and virtual reality, viewers were no longer in front of a screen (as if a screen was being formed between viewers and fiction) but rather immersed in the films. Today, the relationship between viewers and cinema continues to change, justifying Godard's concern about the possible death of this seventh art. Viewers have

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[1]Some scholars also insist on TV as a vehicle of social connection and national cohesion – the exact opposite of what Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon (sometimes referred to with the acronym GAFA) have helped bring about: individualization and social fragmentation.

also become impatient: a shot was on average 12 seconds in length in 1930, while today it is a mere 2 ½ seconds. This acceleration in speed (both the shot and the cutting) very often means less dialogue. The spectator is at the heart of the action, immersed in it, dazzled by it, and unable to accept overly long passages. For example, the first five minutes of *Nattvardsgästerna* (Winter Light in English) by Ingmar Bergman (1963), which begins with a church service, would be unthinkable today, as would a film such as *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967). The change in viewer perception and reception is magnified by the layout of some new cinema theatres, for instance those with 270° projection (Screen X) or with vibrating seats synchronized with what is happening on the screen (4DX).

Since the end of the 1980s, the digital revolution has been transforming not only the way we depict realities but also our belief and trust in this depiction. When everything can be calculated by algorithms, cinema is no longer a matter of framing, editing, lighting and moving the camera. From this perspective, it is easy to understand why we need a history of AVT, one that is integrated with the history of cinema. From cinema as a public event, which allowed audiences to identify themselves, to cinema as a technical product, distanced from the "real" and enjoyed by individual viewers on their phones, the change is so radical that one can indeed talk about the possible death of cinema – a death, however, which does not signify the end of film.

1.2 From technically analogue to digital

The effects of globalization, digitalization and social media have been analysed and discussed in a wealth of articles and books, from Castells in 1996, through Cronin in 2003 and 2013 to Zuckerman and Lanier, both in 2013. A few key dates are enough for us to recall the rapid technological changes and rapid increase in the number of services over the past 30 years:

- 1975: Microsoft; 1983: Microsoft Word; 1989: Windows (U.S.)
- 1980s: Minitel (France)
- January 1984: First MacIntosh (Apple) (U.S.)
- 1989: World Wide Web, released to the public in August 1991

- 1995: Yahoo (star of the time!); End of 1995: USB (memory stick)
- May 1998: MP3 (First standard in digital music)
- Sept. 1998: Google (U.S.)
- 1999: Alibaba (China); 2000: Baidu (China)
- 2000: Millennium bug; 2001: Internet bubble/dot-com bubble
- 2004: Facebook; 2005: YouTube; 2006: Vkontakt (Russia); 2009: WhatsApp
- 2010: Instagram; 2011: WeChat (China), Snapchat (U.S.)

New technology (platform or service) has always arrived with a promise of "progress," that society would be freer and more transparent, egalitarian and prosperous. In 1849, Victor Hugo had already prophesied "the electric wire of concord" which would "encompass the globe;" before 1914, Jack London celebrated cinema as "the messenger of universal education." In recent years, many journalists and other public figures have acclaimed a new future conditioned by Internet, robotics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – with a belief that AI would eventually outstrip human intelligence. While it is true that information technology has transformed our relationship with objects, goods and jobs, as well as our connections to people, it has not done so without tensions and contradictions. The messianic spirit of the digital revolution is sometimes addictive, rendering us sightless and voiceless.

Likewise, technology has changed cinema, first from mechanical to analogue (1920s-1990s), and then from analogue to digital (1990s-today) The origin of cinema is in fact a convergence of different inventions and techniques that cannot really be attached to a single name. Again, a few dates and events serve to underscore this rapid evolution:

- Between 1833 and 1895, several techniques and instruments were developed, e.g. chronophotography, alongside the phenakistoscope, kinetoscope, phonoscope, kinetograph, and cinemascope.
- A first public show took place in October 1892 in the form of an animated cartoon, and not a moving picture.
- In February 1895 the brothers Lumière patented their *cinématographe* (both a recording camera and a film projector) and in December the first public

projection (lasting about 30 minutes) was organized in Paris. Their first films were shot in March 1895 (Barnier 2010).

- From 1895 onwards, on both sides of the Atlantic, the struggle to file new patents and create new devices continued in unstoppable competition. The talkies emerged around 1927-1930, with world distribution after World War II. In 1993, the "cultural exception" was introduced in GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations.

- From the beginning of the new millennium, the change from analogue to digital started having an impact on all aspects of movie-making: script-writing, shooting, sound production, editing, stunts, recreation of style/housing/clothing, make-up, distribution, projection (from 70 mm film projectors to Cinemascope, Panavision, IMAX, digital projectors)… and AVT.

The AVT landscape has now been transformed from a dominant dual landscape of dubbing and subtitling to one much more diversified. Today, an AV product can be subtitled for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, live subtitled, surtitled, audio-described, interpreted (consecutively, simultaneously or with a sign language), or translated online by fans. In addition, thematic TV channels (e.g. history, sports, finance, cartoons), video-streaming, video and TV on demand, podcasting and watching film on a mobile phone are modifying the meaning of broadcasting and the usual concepts of audience. New demands, needs and formats, e.g. very short films lasting only a few minutes, are emerging. The type of AV products has expanded from feature films and TV programmes to TV series, animations and cartoons, documentaries, news, edutainments, commercials, corporate video, educational lectures, and so on. Fundamentally, two quite different processes are at work. On one hand, technology offers a better and more versatile range of services and programmes. The diverse array of TV channels, through cable and satellites and via relay and networking (Pay TV, trans-border and local TV, etc.), marks the end of a centralized media model (mass media) from broadcasting to narrowcasting. On the other hand, the world audience is increasingly global, due to videos on YouTube and films on the Internet. Furthermore, the role played by users and consumers in the

production and circulation of information and AV items has expanded, as have the opportunities to provide for translation.

History does not start and end in the past. Current changes are being shaped by previous practices. Although subtitling has not changed (or very little) in terms of its conventions over the past decades, this does not imply that subtitlers have always subtitled in the same way, with no impact from an ideological context on decisions as to what and how to subtitle (see note 10) or without regard to existing technology (subtitling software, translation memory systems and machine translation). What is remarkable about the past 120 years of cinema is that all the technical innovations, even the most minute, have modified the industrial production line. For instance, the size and the number of punched holes in the film, the length of the shot, the foot of the camera (stable or moving), the dolly, the change from wooden to metal cameras, sound recording, lighting, the use of colours – all these technical changes (see section 3.1) between the beginning of the 1900s and the 1990s have transformed the cinema industry. This is true not only for the way films are produced but also for film genres and the power relations that exist between producers and film directors. Today, digitisation speeds up the convergence between production and distribution, with Netflix the latest new economic model in the industry, imposing itself in just about 10 years. In 2007, Netflix allowed people to watch programmes on the Web; in 2013, the company began to finance content (e.g. *House of Cards*) and in 2016, it launched its first platform by subscription. These changes incurred alterations in certain usages and habits, such as schedules arranged by TV channels, timing organised by film distributors, binge watching, and binge racing.

2. The rapid emergence of cinema as an art and an industry

2.1 An international popular art

Before the talkies, silent movies were practically considered as universal: pictures were seen as easily interpreted, irrespective of the cultural background of viewers. In effect, film directors such as Sergei Eisenstein, John Ford, Karl Vidor, Friedrich Murnau, Jean Renoir, Charlie Chaplin and René Clair were opposed to the incorporation of languages in film due to their belief in the so-called global comprehension of images and thus feasibility of wordless internationalisation during the silent era. For David W. Griffith,

Abel Gance, Carl Dryer, Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles and Roberto Rossellini, cinema was considered to be a universal art – prior to when the history of cinema took its national turn after World War II.

Disputes and theories about what constitutes "art" and how one should classify different arts are rather common in different cultural spheres, for example with the nine muses of Ancient Greece and the six arts in China from the time of the Zhou Dynasty (11th-3rd BC). In modern times, thinkers like Kant (1790) and Hegel (1820) lectured on the aesthetics and classification of the arts. It would be irrelevant here to discuss these controversies in any detail. Suffice to say that as early as 1911 the Italian writer Ricciotto Canudo was the first to promote cinema as the sixth art, combining the arts based on time (music and poetry) and on space (architecture, sculpture and painting) (Dotoli 1999). A decade later, in 1923, he published the *Manifesto of the Seventh Art*, which was supported by Guillaume Apollinaire, Abel Gance, Vladimir Mayakovski, and Vsevolod Meyerhold, followed soon after by the French film director, screen writer and film critic Louis Delluc (1890-1924) and the surrealists.

In other words, in a period of just a few years, cinema came to be acknowledged as a popular art form with public shows, and as entertainment for the masses. It was characterized in relation to drama and differentiated from theatre, especially during the silent era. It became international very quickly. This internationalization was due partly to inventors from the U.S. (e.g. John Carbutt with celluloid; Thomas Edison; Woodville Latham), Great Britain (e.g. William Kennedy-Laurie Dickson), France (e.g. Charles-Emile Reynaud; Louis and Auguste Lumière) and Germany (Max and Eugen Skladanowsky) competing about the same time to launch cinema as a motion picture industry; the first film studio was built in 1897. It was also partly because after only a few short years (1895-1897) films could be shot and shown to audiences around the world (Rittaud-Hutinet 1985). These film showings extended from Melbourne to Helsinki,[2] Kyoto to Liverpool, and Baku to Moscow.[3] One year after its invention by the Lumière

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[2] We have documented that the first cinema showing in Finland took place in Helsinki on June 28, 1896.
[3] DVD, 2015, edited by the Institut Lumière, Lyon (France): *Lumière! Le Cinématographe 1895-1905*, with a selection of 114 "views" of around 50 seconds each, shot in France and in different countries, demonstrates how tracking, perspective, composition, plan, depth of field – and some film genres – have been invented.

brothers, film was also introduced into China, soon enjoying great popularity among Chinese audiences. In 1926, the number of foreign films in China was estimated at around 450 (Patterson 1927, 48). In 1933, 355 out of 431 foreign films were from Hollywood (Anonymous 1935, 17), a proportion which increased to 328 out of 367 in 1936 (Guo 1937, 55). Watching foreign films became an important form of entertainment for urban citizens in Beijing, Shanghai, and elsewhere during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Movies – black and white, several minutes long and without recorded sound – had become the most popular visual art in only a decade, in stark contrast to other arts which had long been in place, and often only for the elite occupying positions of power (the Church, royalty, aristocrats, etc.).

In the development of cinema, competition had always been fierce between the U.S. and the U.K., France, Germany and Italy. During the First World War, a complex transition took place in the film industry. The exhibition of films changed from short one-reel programmes to feature films; cinema theatres became larger and techniques in shooting and lighting improved. In different countries, such as the U.S., U.K., Italy and Denmark, the need for wartime propaganda also boosted the industry. In the U.S., Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) were a success, and Hollywood started imposing a new style, mainly between 1917 and 1960.

The arrival of the sound era (Barnier 2002) was rather swift, at least in the U.S., where in less than two years (1927-1929) Hollywood became almost all-talkie, with several competing sound systems soon to be standardized. The changeover was slower in other parts of the world, for reasons that were economic (the Great Depression of the 1930s overwhelmed small studios) and/or cultural. In China and Japan, silent films co-existed successfully with sound well into the 1930s.

Before the beginning of what is often called the "Golden Age of Hollywood" (1930s-1940s), all countries had to make a decision regarding translation, as cinema was no longer a "universal" language.

2.2 Options and policies for AVT

How and why is any particular dominant mode selected and adopted by any given society? For instance, how did Soviet cinema adopt a language policy from the silent era to the talkies that ranged from subtitling to voiceover and interpreting? The question is inherently complex and grounded in local histories. More systematic studies are still needed to investigate the diverse motivations that underlie national AVT policies. More research is needed as well on the different factors contributing to decisions on preferred modes of AVT on certain territories, in addition to feedback from target viewers about available AVT modes in the past. (On China, see Jin 2018.)

Very early on (1934), subtitling and dubbing were proposed oppositionally, though with different claims (Cornu 2014, 201-207), and with lasting controversies still prevalent today. It is not always clear why one mode has been favoured over another. Both modes imply language status, financial investments and a power struggle, almost as if there were an exchange rate between cost and national culture. While selection between the two modes of AVT was determined by various factors, the process was not necessarily rapid or permanent (Norwell-Smith and Ricci 1998; Trumpbour 2002). For instance, the long and hard competition between France and Hollywood explains the hesitation in deciding between the two modes that took place in France for over two decades (Danan 1991; 1994; 1996; Barnier and Moine 2002). Most people (in Europe at least) have a general sense of "dubbing countries" (traditionally French, German, Italian and Spanish-speaking countries) versus "subtitling countries" (such as Greece, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries) and "voiceover countries" (Russia and Poland), but the real picture has never been that simple, then or now. Such a facile classification, now outdated, ignores the situation of TV channels, DVD and Internet, the changes in broadcast technology, and the current market pressure for a simultaneous release of AV products across multiple territories. One relevant feature of the AVT landscape is that most "subtitling countries" use a so-called "lesser-used language," whereas most of the "dubbing countries" have both an "international" language (French, German, Spanish, etc.) and a bigger audience. However, today's digital technology blurs this opposition. The reasons for choosing dubbing within dictatorial and repressive regimes have been well documented; they hinge mainly on cultural, ideological, economic, and pragmatic factors (Gutiérrez Lanza 1999; Rabadán 2000; Doherty 2013; Mereu Keating 2016). Be that as it may, one reason is still

often neglected: the high percentage of illiteracy of the population. How can one offer subtitling to viewers who are unable, or barely, to read? The debate over dubbing has raised different issues related to the body and to space (how does one preserve the organic body/voice unit of the actor?), to the quality of the target language (notwithstanding whether the soundtrack was produced in Paris, Berlin or Los Angeles), and to manipulation of the dialogues (see, e.g., in France and Italy [1947-1967] www.italiataglia.it). Whether these concerns have dealt with the credited origin (production) or the final effect (reception), all the arguments merge into the dominant ideology of the time.

In sum, the history of AVT runs in parallel with the following areas:

- Political history (including the role of censorship) (see Merkle 2018; and on censorship and cinema in France with a focus on 1945-1975, see Garreau 2009; Montagne 2007; Vezyroglou 2014; and Hervé 2015);
- Language policy (including questions on the relationship between language status and choice of AVT mode, the past and current roles of AVT in promoting or reviving a language minority, and the impact of English on the international exchange of films, TV programmes and series) (see O'Sullivan 2016);
- Legal history (including issues of copyright law, accessibility, and European Union regulations for the media); and
- Technology/media history (including consideration of the materiality of translation, a rather new topic in translation studies) (see Littau 2011).

2.3 Questions of history

What kind of framework for writing a history of AVT should be envisioned? In addition to the common issues associated with historiography, such as assumptions, presuppositions, periodization, space division, type of narration, terminology (or metalanguage), many other questions remain open (D'hulst 2010). An initial set of questions of relevance, which are applicable to specific historic periods and areas and/or forms of AVT, can serve as guidance.

- Who were the translators?
- What AV products have been translated, or have not? Why or why not?
- Where and how did the translations circulate, and how were they distributed?
- Which authorities were supportive of the translated films and TV programmes, and the translators and other agents (adapters, dubbing actors, audio-describers, etc.)?
- How were the translations made, standardized, accepted and made accessible?
- Were there time-periods and particular conditions when certain types of AVT were more easily produced and made available?
- What were the effects and repercussions of the AV translations? (Zanotti 2018, 134-135)

Over the past few years, the history of AVT has clearly attracted the attention of AVT translators, scholars, film historians and archivists, prompting at least three important events. A first conference in Lausanne took place in April 2013 and focused on the "History and Theory of Translation Practices in Cinema and other Media." It was accompanied by a special issue of *Décadrages*[4] on dubbing and voices in cinema, mainly from 1927 to 1931, in Québec, France and Switzerland. The second event was a panel organized for the August 2013 Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) in Germersheim, Germany. It was one of the first public discussions on "AVT from the past to the future," with most panellists tackling the early days of subtitling and dubbing in their respective geographical areas (U.K., Sweden, Palestine, Flanders, Italy, Spain and Poland). A majority of these speakers met again at a third event, held in London in May 2015, dedicated to the themes of "development, reception and preservation of screen translation." [5]

In line with these discussions and in addition to the questions formulated earlier, there are other possible avenues of research. The list below is indicative but not exhaustive:

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[4] Spring 2013. *Décadrages*. (23–24).
[5] Two detailed reports on this conference have been published: one in French in 2015 (*1895,* Journal of the French Association for Research on History of Cinema 77, 171-175) and another in English in 2016 (*Journal of Film Preservation* 94, 25-31). Both are available online.

- How quickly did dubbing and subtitling develop in different countries? How can the technical changes (for example, for recording voices) and the development of dubbing be correlated?

- How did producers, distributors and audiences respond to the evolution of AVT? For instance, what was the significance of dubbed versions throughout the 1930s, the 1960s, and the 2000s, in any given society? What was the impact of subtitling on viewers in terms of their understanding and remembering a film?

- What kind of evidence is available on early titling practices in the absence of saved subtitles? How to analyse a translation when dubbing and the reshooting of scenes are mixed together, as in "multilinguals"? What are the relevant sources for an AVT history?

- To what extent can subtitling practices of the past, when norms and conventions were not yet established, and those of today, when software allows for precise spotting, be compared? Can translators and working conditions be identified according to time-periods, countries, or technical support?

- How reliable are the film reviews and surveys of the 1930s as materials for a history of AVT? In other words, how do we read these sources without being anachronistic?

- What copies should be used as examples, especially when a film has been restored? How can foreign versions of films held in the archives be detected or recognized? What are the digital challenges and opportunities with regard to AV archives? Does the information in DVDs always provide properly contextualized data of translated films?

- How can we map the history of AVT worldwide? Are the research methods used by film historians, film archive curators, translation studies scholars and AV translators comparable?

Individually, all these questions could potentially become the subject of different research projects. An important preliminary step would need to address the issue of which historical framework is best suited for eliciting and explaining their respective answers. History can be approached in different ways. A macro perspective, for example, could be

developed through the prisms of nationalism, modernity, Marxism, or (post)colonialism. Such a macro-perspective, however, is a gamble: structures, processes and agents risk being reduced to general statements and being considered through causal determinism. A micro-history approach is also possible (Munday 2014; Wakabayashi 2018a), by observing the implications and effects of a specific subject of investigation, in this case the different modes of AVT. A study of the agency involved could furthermore highlight the links between the socio-cultural constraints of the work and the beliefs, values and representations of the groups or individuals implicated.

A history of AVT could also be comparative (Valdeón 2018), with scholars comparing, for instance, the use of subtitling in different societies during the same time-period and exploring the effects and consequences of its use. They could also compare the role of (self-) censorship in the production and reception of translated films under different political regimes.

A third approach, and one we would like to promote with this article, is one of a "connected history" (Wakabayashi 2018b). Since cinema and AVT have both developed rapidly worldwide, with the internationalisation of media (including AVT companies) speeding up and boosting contacts and exchanges in the AV industry, a transnational history (through data, concepts, methods) could well be adopted. This type of history historicizes certain analytical categories (e.g. nation, global, local, East, West, tradition, modernity, etc.) and transcends national borders, even when scholars tend to describe their respective domestic usages and habits: Italians have focused on Italian dubbing, Catalans on Catalan subtitling, etc. The concern shown for setting up (European) guidelines and standards in subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing or audio-description exemplifies how researchers seek to overcome national borders. A connected history that is created by multiplying the sources and following the "subalterns" (a frequent status of AV translators) could provide new insights and new perspectives on the dissemination of cultures, sciences and different types of knowledge.

3. Correlating technical innovations and AVT for a connected history

One of the first elements to be taken into account for the writing of a connected history is the impact of technologies. Technology has not only sped up the development of cinema

everywhere; it has also offered, directly or indirectly, solutions for dealing with a wide diversity of languages.

3.1. 1895- around 1930: cinema is neither mute nor silent

Initially, cinema was but a stream of fixed pictures (the illusion being that they move in the brain). In the history of cinema, translation has always been a challenge. Silent movies (1895-1927/1930) were not entirely silent (Slide 1978; Bowser 1994; Musser 1994). There were sounds (piano music, sound effects), translated intertitles (which provided a mechanism for censorship and domestication, see Nornes 2007, 91-108), and oral input from a narrator behind a curtain who read the intertitles (for the illiterate), telling the story and making comments, not unlike a prompter in a theatre. This narrator was known by several names: *bonimenteur* in French (Lacasse 2000), *benhsi* [orator] and then *setsumeishi* [explainers] in Japanese (Dym 2003), *byensa* in Korean, *spieler* in American English, and *dilmaj* in Persian. He (or she) was part of the mediation between the film and the audience in a live collective performance (Hansen 1991; Doherty 1999). Sometimes, the narrator or lecturer (Lacasse 1998; 2006; 2012) would supplement the dramatic illusion on screen by dramatizing a kind of dialogue. Reading and improvising were performative activities, adding to the codified gestures and facial expressions of the actors (Boillat 2007). In China, the earliest record of screening foreign films with a Chinese narrator appears in the *Game Newspaper* in 1897 (Anonymous 1897), wherein an account is given of American films watched as explained by a Chinese narrator. In 1915, a narration service was included in the opening advertisement of a cinema in Shanghai to attract an audience (Anonymous 1935). In cinemas in Guangzhou, narrators like those in Japan would not only explain the plot clearly but also add interesting comments (Liang 1927). Narration services were often provided in Chinese cinemas to help the audience understand foreign films. Commentators-performers continued to be employed beyond the time of the silent era, for instance for Soviet films in the 1920s-1930s (Youngblood 1980; Pozner 2004), in Iran up to the 1940s (Zhirafar 2014), and in Japan and other parts of Asia (Nornes 2007, 110, 118, 132-137). A similar practice is also the case today in some African countries, for example, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania where Nollywood films (from Nigeria) are live

interpreted with a kind of vocal addition. These "vee-jays" (video-jockeys or VJs) are popular figures.

In addition to narration, the use of intertitles has also been a part of AVT history. China is a case in point. From the earliest stages of the Chinese film industry, Chinese filmmakers have ambitiously screened Chinese films not only for domestic audiences but also for international audiences. The earliest extant Chinese film, *Laborer's Love* (*Lagong zhi aiqing*, also known as *Romance of a Fruit Peddler*, Zheng Zhengqiu 1922), has bilingual intertitles throughout the film. For most films made in the 1920s and early 1930s bilingual intertitles were added by Chinese film companies. Some examples are *The Pearl Necklace* (*yi chuan zhenzhu*, Zheng Zhengqiu 1922), *Don't Change Your Husband* (*Qinghai zhongwen*, Li Zeyuan 1928), *The Orphan of the Storm* (*Xuezhong guchu*, Zhang Huimin 1929) and *The Peach Girl* (*Taohua qixieji*, Bo Wancang 1931). A small number of extant Chinese films which were screened abroad have foreign language intertitles that were added by overseas exhibitors. They include, for example, the French intertitles in *The Rose of Pushui* (*Xi xiang ji*, a.k.a *Romance of the Western Chamber*, Hou Yao 1927) and the bilingual (Chinese and Norwegian) intertitles in *The Cave of the Silken Web* (*Pan si dong,* Dan Duyu 1927). However, in 1931 and 1933, in order to promote the national language and prohibit the excessive use of foreign languages in China, the Nationalist government repeatedly issued decrees forbidding the inclusion of English intertitles in prints of Chinese films intended for domestic consumption. Following these decrees, Chinese film companies no longer added bilingual intertitles into Chinese films when screened in China. An English translation was only added for overseas screenings.

Other technical changes had an impact on cinema and AVT in many different places and at more or less the same time. A few examples are noteworthy. For instance, the square-shaped picture became a rectangular frame with a limited number of punched holes. Shots were initially very short. Originally less than a minute, they increased to 4 and even up to 20 minutes. This lengthening of the shots had an effect on narration and editing. Also, cinema makers shot with two cameras. The existence of two copies created a problem for the link shots. Materially, cameras were first made of wood and later of metal. They were heavy and noisy, and placed in a sound-proofed booth. The evolution in equipment increasingly differentiated the concepts of time/space between cinema and

theatre, the latter having served as a model for a long time in movie-making. The viewfinder of a camera and camera lens also made it possible to shoot close-ups of people and items, and to frame them differently. Finally, the camera dolly (a camera on a trolley on rails) allowed for long takes and sequence shots. All of these developments inspired new genres, such as musicals. At the same time, they would have tangible repercussions on subtitling practices.

Prior to sound-film issues, there were discussions on editing and other matters. Worthy of mention is the work of Sergei Eisenstein, 1898-1946 ("montage sequence"), director of *Strike* (1925), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *October* (1927) and *The General Line* (1929); Dziga Vertov, 1896-1954, author of short documentaries that ushered in the *cinéma verité* (with a portable camera, 1929) and director of *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929); and Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970). Exposure, fast/slow motion, and types of cuts were among the themes that would interest Formalist film theory. From the 1940s, the focus shifted to editing and the producer rather than editing and the film director. Again, as for the types of shot, editing would have consequences on AVT.

The years 1920-1950 brought many experiments and tests with the technicolour camera, a device perfected during the 1915-1932 period. In the 1920s, the first movies coloured on black and white films appeared, with gradual utilization of three colours: red, green, and blue. In the mid-1930s, the possibility of smell was added to that of colour in films, and three-dimensional cinema was on the way. With the availability of the electrical camera, the use of 24 frames per second became possible. The inventiveness of these first decades of cinema justifies how the problems of languages could be rapidly solved during the 1920s-1930s.

3.2 The transition to the talkies
Short shots and music, optical effects (fades, dissolves, split screen, multiple exposure, etc.), and work on lighting increased the role of the editor and post-production team. A few other dates should be recalled here before a discussion on talkies, as certain events would transform cinema. Between 1958 and 1962, direct cinema lays the groundwork for the documentary genre. In 1960, Jean Rouch would shoot *Chronicle of a summer.* It was followed in 1965 by *Don't look back*, a film about Bob Dylan's concert tour in England.

In 1959, the first outdoor film took place with Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de souffle.* In 1967, with a cableless camera, he again innovated by using the still-celebrated long-sideways tracking in *Weekend*. From 1975 onwards, use of the Steadicam (a brand of camera stabilizer) would allow the operator to move along any surface, absorbing any vibration, bumps or shakes. And last but not least, in 1993, the first computer-made movie came to the screen with *Jurassic Park.*

As for experience with sound, the situation was rather unfortunate for a long time (Eyman 1997). How to effectively trace the complexity and turbulence that characterised the transition to sound when it was more meandering than linear? For example, how to link the Frenchman Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville (1817-1879), inventor of the earliest known sound recording device called the Phonotaugraph patented in 1857, with Rudolf Koenig (1832-1901), German tradesman and physicist concerned with acoustics, and the American Thomas Edison (1847-1931), known for his phonograph (1857)? Other twists and turns of history abound. Initially, sound-recording machinery was heavy or unreliable. The first public exhibition of projected sound films appeared in Paris in 1900, but these were never made commercially practical. Around 1908, the new invention of the Chronomegaphone (compressed air in a pneumatic amplifier) materialized. In 1926, the Warner brothers made their mark. After having founded a distribution company in 1904 in Pennsylvania and a studio in Hollywood in 1918, they had financial problems and needed to find a solution to avoid bankruptcy. In 1925 they were the pioneers of synchronized sound, and by 1926 they had established the Vitaphone. Sound was recorded on a disc but the problem of its synchronization with pictures was not yet solved. Nonetheless, this analogical sound-on-disc system became profitable and was widely used as soundtrack separately from the pictures. In August 1926, *Don Juan*, directed by Alan Crosland, became the first film to use Vitaphone sound effects with a synchronized musical arrangement (no spoken dialogue). Although it did not get a warm reception in New York among the aesthetes, it did please the audience.

The transition from silent films to the talkies is commonly marked by *The Jazz Singer*, shown in New York on the 6th of October 1927 (Geduld 1975). It is important to remember that at that time, cinema was a commercial success almost everywhere in the

world.[6] So, when this musical film based on a theatre play, *The Jazz Singer*, directed by Alan Crosland and produced by Warner Brothers, was released with lip-synchronous singing and speech, it was a public success. Its success was partly due to the main character being played by Al Jolson (1886-1950), a white man caricatured as a black person ("blackface" was then a common racist practice) and one of the most popular American stars of the 1920s,[7] especially in radio. It was also partly because viewers could not believe their ears, that the actor was really singing in ragtime style with his dynamic voice heard live. Al Jolson starred in a series of successful musical films throughout the 1930s. In short, prior to talking, cinema was singing, as if songs were a necessary step in the transformation of the seventh art.

If the success of *The Jazz Singer* signalled the end of the silent motion picture era, it was not immediately apparent. Movie theatres had yet to be converted to sound. The first sound film in France was *L'eau du Nil* (Marcel Vandal, 1928), but it was almost a failure. The first true speaking film was a French-German co-production (1930), with two versions: *La nuit est à nous* and *Die Nacht gehört uns* (Icart 1988). The thriller drama film *Blackmail* (Hitchcock, 1929) is supposedly the last film shot both as a silent film (to be released for theatres not equipped for sound) and as a sound film. It became the first British sound feature film.

The first 100% talking film was the crime drama *Lights of New York* in 1928. By mid-1929, Hollywood was almost exclusively producing sound films; by the end of 1930, it was also true in much of Western Europe. *The Artist* (2011), by Michel Hazanavicius, stands out as a pastiche of a silent film that showed elements of transition to the talkies. *Singin' in the rain* (1952), a depiction of Hollywood in the late 1920s with three main stars (including Gene Kelly), portrayed a progression from silent films to talkies as well. The transition was not always easy. Chaplin exemplifies one director who suffered from

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[6]We must also remember that cinema was not a male business only. A set of four recently published DVDs (Lobster Films 2018), *Les pionnières du cinéma*, highlights the work of women. They focus on the period between 1895 and 1930, with references to Alice Guy (France) who shot more than 200 short films and founded the Studios Solax in the U.S. where she worked from 1907 to 1922; Lois Weber (U.S.) who was the first woman to be admitted into the Motion Picture Directors Association in 1917; Mable Normand (U.S.) who directed Chaplin during his early years; Marie Epstein (France); Karin Swanström (Sweden); Germaine Dulac (France); Mary Pickford (U.S.); Jeanne Roques or Musidora (France), etc.

[7]It was more beneficial to have stars from the music-hall come to the cinema than to hire expensive cinema stars, and to have a musical arrangement rather than pay for a large orchestra of 25 or more musicians.

the change, hesitating to use a soundtrack since he was so well known for his pantomime (How does one give a voice to the Tramp?). He directed *City Lights* (1931) as a mute but sound film, recording a musical score he had composed himself. The film was popular and a financial success. However, for several years, Chaplin was undecided as to whether to make pictures with dialogue or to remain "old-fashioned." His next films (*Modern Times*, 1936 and *The Great Dictator*, 1940), which took time to be produced, had sound effects but almost no speaking.

Of course, progress on the soundtrack did not come to a stop in 1926-1927 with the Vitaphone. In 1930-1931, the Moviola system allowed for the synchronization of separate tracks: voice, music, and effects. Between 1922 and 1955, the use of optical sound (Movietone Sound System) spread, and in 1954, thanks to pillotone, synchronization signals were recorded by analogue audio recorder, with sound and pictures recorded separately. Finally, a hallmark of the late 1980s is the adoption of a timecode by the film industry.

In short, the talkies were largely accepted between 1926 and 1930 (Walker 1986).[8] The development of soundtrack and the presence of foreign languages in films had deep implications on the film industry, with changes taking place in the shooting of script, in narration, in the way of directing, and in framing (O'Brien 2005; O'Sullivan 2011). Because cinema had been perceived right from the very start both as an art and as a business, the issue of languages was raised very quickly. How and where would one export if audiences did not understand the original language of the film? (Vasey 1997) The question of languages amplified the territorialisation of cinema (Rossholm 2006). They also seriously endangered the U.S. cinema's world market, which by 1929 had generated 35-40% of major studio profits (Thompson 1985, 164). Everywhere, and in less than a decade, the film industry had to cope with languages.

3.3 Strategies for coping with languages

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[8] In this section, our presentation focuses mainly on the Western history of cinema and AVT. See, for instance, Chomenstowski (2014) on how Soviet cinema adopted a certain language policy from the silent era to the talkies, from subtitling to voice-over, and Razlogova (2014) on how interpreting was also used, especially during film festivals.

Concerning language, there were several more or less co-existing options for satisfying the emerging demands (Crafton 1998; Nornes 2007, 123-154; O'Sullivan & Cornu 2019a, 2019b).

For instance, film directors made second versions of actors performing in their own language, sometimes including different shots in order to better target a certain audience. This practice anticipated the current one of final cuts, which are adapted to specific viewers. Barnier (2004) discusses the various practices of film directors, script-writers, and actors of multilinguals, as well as the reception of these multiple versions, providing descriptions of the comedies, thrillers, dramas and Westerns shot in French in the U.S. between 1919 and 1935 (2004, 215–262). In fact, multilinguals were mostly of American origin (Ďurovičová 1992) but were made in other countries and in one or several other languages. At the beginning, in particular after 1929, multi-language versions (MLV or LVs) or foreign-language versions (FLVs) were shot in the same setting, in the U.S. or Great Britain, with local actors from France (e.g. Maurice Chevalier, Charles Boyer), Germany (e.g. Marlene Dietrich), Sweden (e.g. Greta Garbo) and Italy, etc. The first MLV was *Atlantic*, shot in London, in November 1929, in English, German and French. Famous films such as *Blue Angel* (Von Sternberg 1930), *Dracula* (Browning 1931) and *Three penny opera* (Pabst 1931) were shot in two or three languages (mainly English, French, German and Spanish). Language differences and translation were concealed in the accumulated monolingual versions. Due to the costs of producing so many different similar versions, the shooting was outsourced, with Hollywood building studios in Germany (Studio Babelsberg in Berlin, see Wahl 2009, 2016), France (Joinville), Italy (Rome), England, etc. These multilingual versions (especially between 1929 and 1932, but 1935 for German films) were expensive and a commercial failure. Nonetheless, during 1930-1931, 84 films were produced as multilinguals by major U.S. studios, of which 22 were in French. It was clear that a new strategy was needed – and possible. It took the form of post-synchronisation, despite the recurring problem of voices.

Multiple monolingual versions and multilingualism in films were two different strategies that aimed to solve the language "problems" in cinema. Multilingual films, as frequent as they are today (performed in several languages), are not entirely new in the history of cinema. From *Allô! Berlin? Ici Paris! Hallo Berlin? Hier Spricht Paris!* (Duvivier 1931-

1932) to *Film Socialisme* (Godard 2010), cinema has repeatedly been able to represent language diversity, language contact and conflict, and language identity, and to depict translators and interpreters as characters, completely opposite to the cliché that Hollywood would create only a monolingual universe (Cronin 2008).

The 1930s saw the emergence of dubbing (Cornu 2014, 91–133, 177–220). From 1931 on, linguistic challenges were no longer taken up by production companies but instead by distribution firms and importing countries (Higson and Maltby 1999). Opting for dubbing was motivated by protectionist, financial and technical incentives. The original equipment for dubbing featured only a soundtrack with conglomerated voices, music and effects. In 1930-1931 the multitrack Moviola system enabled the separate tracks to be synchronized. However, this technical tool did not mitigate the controversy underway. In the 1930s, studios and distributors quickly discovered that dubbing could accommodate chauvinistic audiences, and for far less money than the MLVs. Riots took place in Paris, Prague, Budapest and Milan against the use of foreign tongues on the screen, particularly English and German. Violence, intolerance and fascism were also on the rise in several European countries, and Mussolini's Italy, Franco's Spain and Hitler's Germany were quick to implement legislation requiring dubbing – foreign language cinema was viewed as "a pernicious vehicle" that affected local language development and contradicted "national traditions" (see section 2.2). For the Chinese market, experimentation with dubbing was carried out by American film companies, Soviet film companies, and Chinese individuals. MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, an American media company founded in 1924) released *Tarzan's New York Adventure* (Richard Thorpe 1942) with a Chinese dub (Guan 1946); Sovexportfilm dubbed *Zoya* (Lev Arnshtam 1944) (Khoo and Metzger 2009, 81); and Wang Wentao and Chinese students in Italy experimented with dubbing *A Song to Remember* (Charles Vidor 1945) into Chinese, which was screened in October 4, 1947 in Shanghai (Anonymous 1947). When *Tarzan's New York Adventure* (1942) was released in China by MGM with a Chinese film dub, deep concerns regarding the Chinese film industry appeared in film reviews because Hollywood films could be watched by the Chinese audience without a language barrier, which would threaten the development of the Chinese film industry (Guan 1946).

Subtitling was also experimented with both in and after the 1930s, prior to its later codification in following decades. As with many different aspects of the history of cinema and AVT, it is not possible to attribute only one name to the invention and development of subtitling. The evidential sources for early titling practices are various, making the need for a connected and comparative history more compelling. Naturally, historians have tended to prioritize their own domestic inventors. The first film to be subtitled in Great Britain was *Kameradschaft,* in January 1932, with around 80 subtitles.[9] The first subtitlers (not necessarily translators or adapters) into French, Dutch, German and Japanese were brought to the major U.S. studios at the beginning of the 1930s. They had to cope with various problems, among them the length and position of the subtitles, the size of the fonts, and their synchronization with pictures. In China, cinemas first printed Chinese subtitles on the film but later used projectors to show Chinese subtitles for foreign films on a neighbouring screen. The latter was less complicated and made it easier to correct mistakes but often distracted the audience's attention from the main screen. In 1926, the inclusion of subtitles in film became a selling point for the screening of *The Veil of Happiness* (*Le voile du bonheur,* Albert Capellani, 1910). These two methods coexisted in China until the end of the 1940s.

The technical evolution of subtitling in cinema has been slow (Cornu 2014, 223-283). Between the 1930s and 1945, two techniques were dominant, with some variations here and there: thermal subtitles (superimposed after heating) and chemical subtitles, the form most frequently used until the end of the 1980s. In 1933, a patent for chemical subtitles was registered both in Sweden and in Switzerland for a method to permanently engrave subtitles on silver film. Two French companies controlled this market: Titrafilms, launched in Paris in 1933 but rapidly gaining a foothold in the Belgian, Dutch, American and Brazilian markets, and Cinétitres (1958). In France, until 1956 to 1957, dialogue was first translated and then spotted, a process which was subsequently reversed (cueing before translating) later. In the 1980s, two new systems appeared: laser subtitling, which gradually replaced chemical and optical subtitling in Europe and Asia during the 1990s,

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[9] Before World War II, subtitlers were said to use between a half and a third of the subtitles provided today for similar films. However, studies on the correlation, over time and across film genres, between the amount of subtitles and the type of verbal manipulation are yet to be carried out.

and electronic subtitling with time codes, very handy for TV, DVD and film festivals. While subtitles were presented in the form of lists (one per reel) between roughly 1930 and 1980, they were saved in files and then on diskettes by the end of the 1980s. Today, they can be transferred by email or a USB memory stick, or integrated within processes carried out on workflow platforms and/or in the cloud (see e.g. OOONA.net).

In terms of periodization, Nornes (2007, 177–187) believes that sound-film history can be divided into three epochs of subtitling, even if a specific type is not exclusive to a particular period of cinema. The first epoch occurs in the talkie era. The main goal is to communicate the power of the foreign original as efficiently as possible, remembering that the technique as yet offers no flexibility. The second, and long, epoch is dominated by strategies of domestication. The foreign is to be adapted to the target language and its cultural codes (Nornes here provides several examples from Japan). It is the time of conventional subtitling practices as they are still known today. The last epoch is a critique of dominant ideologies. It is the time of what Nornes calls "abusive subtitling," with titlers keeping close to the original, breaking the current norms and regulations of subtitling, and increasing the visibility of subtitles. They could include, for example, some Japanese television game shows, the practices of fansubbing communities, and the creation of "integrated" subtitles (integrated during the production process, and not after). Simultaneous interpreting was also used for some time as a way to cope with language diversity. In 1939, the top cinemas in Shanghai began to experiment with simultaneous interpretation services while screening foreign films. The first attempt was conducted on the translation of *Return of the Cisco Kid* (Herbert I. Leeds, 1939) by the Grand Theatre in November 4, 1939. The three interpreters, named Nie, Liu and Bao, were female university graduates as well as movie fans. They would watch the films first and become familiar with the English scripts. They would then interpret with ease during the actual screening. They not only interpreted all the dialogues with the right tone, but also gave a brief narration of the plot and introduction of the characters. All were very useful for an audience that did not understand English at all. However, the audience also complained that, "just as the Chinese subtitles are disturbing our vision, simultaneous interpretation disturbs our hearing" (Anonymous 1939). Simultaneous interpreters for films were

known as "Miss Earphone." The practice of simultaneous interpretation in cinemas was popular in Shanghai until 1949.

Another solution to cope with foreign languages in cinema was also developed in the 1930s. Known as the remake, it resembled a kind of appropriation that changed the language and, to a certain extent, the plot (with all its values and assumptions), characters, and cultural context. Whilst during the years 1930-1950, most (but not all) of the remakes were U.S. *films noirs* recontextualised in and for Europe, the process has been reversed since the 1980s, with successful European films being remade in the United States (Mazdon 2000; Verevis 2005; Moine 2007).

To sum up, a number of strategies were used, simultaneously or successively, for the transition from the silent film era to the talkies, at least in the few countries where changes have been documented (U.S. and U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Russia, Japan, China, and others). These changes include intertitles in a foreign or local language, live synchronisation with *bonimenteurs*, partial adaptation of the same film with several versions in different languages, multilinguals shot in different places, dubbing and subtitling, and remakes. What is needed now is to survey other parts of the world where research has either not yet started or has been carried out but is not necessarily easily available.

4. Methodological challenges

As previously mentioned, various resources and methods can be used to map out the history of AVT in different countries (see section 2.3). They include extant films, newspapers and journals, yearbooks, archives, electronic corpora and oral history.

4.1 Direct and indirect sources of information

Although we might live in an era of "datacracy" due to the high volume of big data accumulated, processed and exploited by different platforms and social media, we are far from attaining such a volume as far as a history of AVT is concerned. In fact, what are the sources?

Direct sources comprise intertitled, subtitled and dubbed versions, stocked in film archives and off-air TV recordings. To gain access to them involves practical, logistical

and financial difficulties. For instance, in the 1920s, Chinese cinemas used to print bilingual pamphlets of foreign films with the plots and names of all the people involved in the film's production. The pamphlets acquainted the audience with general information about a film, and many of them still exist today. The translation of film names and synopses reflect the cultural environment and the tastes of moviegoers at the time. Extant films are also valuable resources for research on the history of film translation. Chinese films with bilingual intertitles serve as excellent research material. For example, *Song of China (Tianlun* in Chinese; Fei Mu 1935) was produced by the Lianhua Film Company. When Douglas Maclean, an actor and producer with Paramount travelled to Shanghai, he was attracted by this film and decided to bring it to the U.S. (Kar, Bren and Ho 2004). *Tianlun*, which means "family relationships" in Chinese, is an important concept in Confucian values. After its purchase by Paramount, the film was renamed *Song of China*. The intention was to show that it was a film about China, rather than to reflect the exact meaning of the film title. Paramount adapted the Chinese version of *Tianlun* to meet the taste and expectations of the American audience. It changed the tragic ending into a happy ending and reduced the film to half its time. In the translation of the intertitles, exoticisation was performed. "Seven years later" in Chinese was translated into "seven times the pear tree has come into blossom" to show that Chinese people use a different way of recording time. "Father" and "my dear father" in Chinese were translated into "my noble father" or "honourable father" to indicate that filial piety was emphasized in Chinese society. Translation strategies, the intentions of the translators and the patron and the expectations of the target audience can all be discovered by analysing the translation of the intertitles in *Tianlun*.

Indirect sources constitute the reports by different agents through their memoirs and life stories, of their retrospective and subjective perceptions on what they did. They also include all kinds of epitexts (Genette 1987, 1997) mediating the AV work to the viewers, which are disseminated through newspapers, magazines, journals, marketing material and the Internet. They include, for instance, film reviews, film criticisms, interviews with film directors, actors and translators, correspondence, webpages, blogs, video-clips, trailers, posters, flyers, leaflets in DVDs, censorship reports, etc. All these epitexts tease out and complement the information as it is shaped by editors, distributors and viewers. They add

to the manner in which a film is perceived by the target audiences and the extent to which the outcome may be felt to be part of the recipient culture. In a way, they "package," accompany and introduce an AV product before it is watched, influencing viewer expectations, their decision on whether to go to the cinema or select a TV programme, and their reception of the work. The search for direct and indirect sources is time-consuming and painstaking and demands patient effort. It is a compulsory step before setting up a corpus of data.

For research on the translation of early cinema in China, film reviews posted in newspapers and journals also provide valuable information. When simultaneous interpretation devices were first installed in Shanghai, reviews of their use for watching *Return of The Cisco Kid* appeared in the *Shanghai News (Shen Bao)*, commenting on this new way of film translation. As noted earlier (section 3.3), when foreign films were screened in China at the start of the 20th century, they were often shown with interpretation or with subtitles projected on a neighbouring screen. These translations of film contents are often lost. However, the advertisements for the films in Chinese newspapers can still be found. UFA, a German film company producing and distributing films from 1917 to 1945, had quite a strong presence in China, especially in Shanghai. The translation of the names of the German films they screened was, like most foreign films, extremely domesticated. The most striking features include the use of Chinese images and Chinese values to replace German images and cultural values, the use of four-character Chinese phrases,[10] and catering to the tastes of the newly-emerged urban citizenry. An example is *Yorck* (1924), translated into *Hot Blood and Red Heart* (*rexue danxin*), which would remind a Chinese audience of a Chinese patriot. *Ronny* (1931), too, was translated into *Fairy in a Colourful Dress (nichang xianzi),* which would present the Chinese audience with an image of traditional Chinese beauty. It bears noting that four-character phrases were often used to translate the names of foreign films, no matter how many characters the original titles had, because translators often chose kitsch names for the films in order to attract a larger audience. *Monte Carlo Madness* (1932) was

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[10] Four-character Chinese phrases are idiomatic expressions, which consist of four Chinese characters. Most of them refer to historical, cultural or literary facts. The meaning of this kind of phrase usually goes beyond the sum of the meanings carried by the four characters.

translated into *Spring Waves and Beautiful Shadows (chunbo yanying)*, which sounds like an amorous story in Chinese without any indication of Monte Carlo or madness. The translation of films in the advertisements that appeared in Chinese newspapers such as *Shanghai News* and *Ta Kung Pao* reflected the taste of moviegoers at the time and revealed their openness to foreign cultures.

4.2 Archives and databases

The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF, Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film) has been dedicated to the preservation of and access to the world's film heritage since 1938.[11] With 89 active members (national archives, institutes and museums) and 77 active associates in 75 countries, it is the single most important global network of cinematheques and film archives. It has several databases: the *International Index to Film Periodicals* (1972 to today) with 400,000 article references from more than 360 titles (approximately 12,000 new references are added every year), the *International Index to TV Periodicals* (1979 to 2000), and *Treasures from the Film Archives*, with information on over 53,000 silent films, fiction and non-fiction, from over 112 film archives around the world. The Federation organises a yearly symposium – the theme of the 2013 Congress was *Multiversions* (about multilinguals and to a lesser extent dubbed versions) – and twice a year edits the *Journal of Film Preservation* (JFP), previously entitled (between 1972 and 1993) the *FIAF (Information) Bulletin.*

Besides the FIAF, there are also several centres with press packs and files, and sometimes a picture library. They include, for example, the Fonds Rondel, the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (Paris), the BIFI/Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Institut Lumière (Lyon), the Film Museum (Amsterdam), the Library of Congress (Washington), and the Museum of Modern Art (New York), among others.

Journals and newspapers also contain old and new relevant information on AVT. Some examples in English are the *Film Daily*, *The Moving Picture World* and *Variety,* and in French, the *Cinématographie française, Le Film, Cinéa-ciné pour tous, Cinémagazine,*

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[11] For more information on FIAF and its databases, see https://www.fiafnet.org/.

Cinémonde, Ciné-Miroir, Ciné-Revue, l'Illustration, La revue du Cinéma, and *L'écran traduit* (launched online in 2013).

Archives are located in various places around the world. In addition to those mentioned, others include the Archives françaises du film (within the CNC/Centre National du Cinéma, Paris),[12] the Fonds AV of the National AV Institute/ Institut national de l'AV (Paris), the Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé (Paris), the British Film Institute/BFI (London), the London Screen Archives, the Danish Film Institute (Copenhagen), the Museo Nazionale del Cinema (Torino), the George Eastman House Museum (Rochester, New York), the National Film Preservation Board and Foundation and the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS) (both under the auspices of the Library of the Congress [Washington]), the archives of the FIAF (films) (described earlier) and the FIAT/IFTA (television), as well as the IASA (International Association of Sound and AV Archives).

Finally, not to be omitted as sources of inspiration are some research databases and projects such as the rich database *Women Film Pioneers Project* at Columbia University, where silent-era female producers, directors, script writers, camera operators, costume designers and title writers are studied (with women sometimes using gender neutral or masculine pseudonyms) (see note 6) (https://wfpp.cdrs.columbia.edu), and the Vitaphone Project (www.vitaphoneproejct.com). The latter has been running since 1992 and focuses on the soundtrack discs that accompanied some early 1927-1930 talkie shorts and features (see section 3.2). These two examples send a clear signal that a history of AVT cannot ignore analyses carried out in film history. Also worthy of mention, are two European Union projects: *Preservation towards Storage and Access. Standardised Practices for Audiovisual Contents Archiving in Europe* (Presto-Space, 2004-2008), and ECPA/*European Commission on Preservation and Access* (1994-2008).

Yearbooks of cinemas likewise provide useful information about film translation. The earliest yearbook of Chinese cinema was written by Cheng Shuren and was published in 1927. Included within are the names of the translators of foreign films and Chinese films and recordings of their translations, as well as the distributors for foreign films in China.

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[12] In the Archives, 1636 feature-length films have been saved out of the 2467 films produced in France between 1936 and 1953.

It provides important clues that can unveil translation activities in China during the 1920s.

Other types of archival information also exist. Editing pieces of archives on AVT, translation procedures and decision-making, as well as translators and their networks, is not an easy task. Potentially of use are film archives, restored and remastered films, the personal papers of translators, correspondence with distributors, contracts, diaries, records of TV broadcasters, official files of AVT companies and censorship reports. While the invisibility and low profile of adapters in most countries is a challenging reality, some material is to be found. For example, the memoirs of Nina Kagansky (1995)[13], who was the manager of Titra Film (1965-1990), founded by her father in 1933. The choice of archives and subsequent detective work depend, of course, on specific research interests. In many cases, archives are not organised according to translators or types of AVT. And, if they are accessible, they are not kept in a form which is helpful for researchers. Moreover, some archives have disappeared. The celluloid used until the 1950s was highly flammable and degraded easily after 70 years. The acetate films that were introduced in the film industry as early as 1934 created acids when they were exposed to heat and moisture, so they deteriorated rapidly. It is said that virtually all the foreign films distributed in Japan before World War II burnt in the National Film Centre fire in the 1970s. The film stock of the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin (1935-1945) was either destroyed or seized by the Soviet Army and for a time partly preserved in the State Film Archive of the DDR (East Germany). Martin Scorsese has claimed that 80% of U.S. silent films have vanished. But, films can also be rediscovered. A copy of *The Cave of the Silken Web (Pan si dong*, Dan Duyu 1927), a film which was believed lost, was found in the archives of the National Library in Mo i Rana, Norway in 2013 (Liu 2014, 109). The newly rediscovered film has both Chinese and Norwegian intertitles, as it was screened in a theatre called the Colosseum in Oslo for six nights in January 1929. The newly found Norwegian version has a Norwegian translation superimposed on the original Chinese ones. When compared, the translator was found not only to have

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[13] The memoirs report on technical innovations and translation practices. Published at the author's expense, the book has had a limited distribution, like *Le sous-titrage de films* by Simon Laks (1957). However, Laks has been distributed as a special issue of *L'écran traduit* 1 (2013) and is now available online.

interpreted freely but also to have added humorous comments in parentheses (Anckarman 2014, 28-36). Discoveries of lost films in archives continually shed new light on the translation and overseas travel of Chinese films.

If digital and cloud technologies now provide access to unprecedented quantities of AV products and their translations, the data from the pre-digital era of AVT remain limited. Access to old films and TV programmes is one of the main challenges for research. While the archives in libraries, cinemas and museums may be available, certain equipment and formats are not readily so. Furthermore, restoring and digitalising films are not simple matters, and several questions arise. What should be saved? According to what selection criteria? What versions should be selected (with or without music, censored, choices between different edited versions, etc.)? In a virtuous circle, a history of AVT could help in making these decisions.

4.3 Electronic corpora

Corpus-based studies have increased in translation studies over the past 20 years (Laviosa 2013), dealing with the various problems of setting up a corpus. AVT presents a situation that is rather different, in spite of the principles and many problems in common with all corpora (general or specialised, mono- or bi/multi-lingual, written or spoken or multimodal). Issues in common with other types of corpora include:

- Representativeness: To what extent is the corpus representative of a certain kind of data (text-type/film genre, author/film director, period of time, etc.)?
- Exhaustiveness: Is the corpus made of printed, published/distributed, indexed, signed documents, with all the necessary bibliographical data/credits?
- Characterization: What elements are included (or excluded) in the corpus with regard to languages, length (full texts/films, samples, excerpts), timeframe (synchronic/diachronic), and level of expertise (popular or art films, documentaries, etc.)? The size, coverage, reliability and accessibility of different existing corpora vary widely.

- State or condition: In linguistics and translation studies, scholars have questioned the conditions, criteria, and constraints in place when compiling, computing, annotating, processing, tagging and analysing corpora.

In terms of AVT specificity, corpora are rather scarce because of certain difficulties:

- Films and TV series require a lot of bytes to be saved and retrieved. To date, there is no corpus of translated TV programmes,[14] apart from news and series. To our knowledge, Salway (2007) is the only exception: he set up a small corpus of audio-description scripts used on television and established a frequency list of certain words and phrases occurring in relation to characters' appearances, emotional states, locations and interpersonal interactions.
- Due to copyright, producers are reluctant to give explicit permission to use full movies for research. So it is difficult, for instance, to create a parallel corpus (films in an A language and translated films in a B language and/or originals in a B language and translations in an A language) or a comparable corpus (films of the same genre in the same language, translated or not).
- Multimodality demands a complex tool in order to transcribe and analyse a film. To select only the soundtrack (the verbal component) is to drastically cut a product made of several sign systems (sound effects, prosody, facial expressions, body movements, interpersonal distance, etc.).
- To analyse a film out of its context of production, distribution and reception limits studies to certain descriptive and comparative approaches.

Romero-Fresco (2006; 2009) has created a parallel corpus to compare the American TV series *Friends* and their dubbed versions in Spanish, and a subsequent comparable corpus of those versions with the Spanish sitcom *Site Vidas*, which features similar settings, plots and protagonists. Pavesi (2005; 2009a) and Freddi (2009) have also carried out

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[14]It is worth mentioning here the *Journal of European Television History and Culture* (online) and some of its issues: 2 (3), 2013: European TV memories; 3 (5), 2014: TV histories in (post)socialist Europe; 4 (7), 2015: Archaeologies of tele-visions and -realities; and 5 (9), 2016: TV formats and format research: Theory, methodology, history and new developments.

corpus-driven research in AVT. From this perspective, it is possible to analyse different linguistic categories. They include, for instance, the more or less formulaic expressions in greetings (e.g. hi, hey, good morning), leave-takings (e.g. bye, see you, I must go), vocatives (e.g. darling, Mr President), introductory formulae (e.g. nice to meet you, my name is…, it's me – in phone calls), small talk with a phatic function (e.g. good to see you), speech acts (such as thanking, promising, apologising), directives or how to order, request, threat and make a statement, and interjections (swear words, onomatopoeias). The Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue (PCFD) is composed of three sub-corpora of transcriptions which include the transcriptions of 24 films shot in British and American English, transcriptions of the dubbed Italian versions of English originals, and transcriptions of six original Italian films comparable, in terms of genres and public success, to their British and U.S. counterparts. Most of the works derived from the PCFD (Bruti 2009; Pavesi 2000b; Freddi and Pavesi 2009; Freddi 2013) are pragmatic and based on linguistic markers, with a focus on certain verbs such as "listen," *senti, ascolta*, etc. The contrastive approach, combining both source- and target-oriented perspectives, uncovers structural features of the dubbed language and spoken Italian. Although results offer better knowledge of the formal and textual conventions of film dialogues, they ignore the multi-semiotic dimension of films. While the identification of certain idiosyncratic linguistic features does help to automate the production of translation (audio-described narrations, dubbed dialogues, etc.), it does not sensitise students, professionals and scholars to the role of multimodal elements (verbal and non-verbal components together) in contextualising and guiding the interpretation of a film, and thus in selecting translation strategies.

Indeed, there are very few tools able to support both the collection and analysis of multimodal corpora. A history of AVT could shed light on the different parameters needed. One project of note is the Forlì corpus of Screen Translation or Forlixt 1, which operated from 2003 to 2013, when the main designer of the corpus left the university. The design, creation and transcription of the corpus, and the data retrieved with dedicated query tools, as well as the display of concordances between verbal and AV markers, were reported in two papers published in 2008. Valentini (2008) defines a methodology for comparing the original and dubbed versions of Italian and German films by looking at

body language, prosodic elements and discourse markers. Heiss and Soffritti (2008) consider linguistic information along with iconic, aural and situational details. Forlixt 1 was composed of less than 50 films (Italian, German and French full-length films with complete transcriptions of the dialogues). Since 2013, the project has been developed and enhanced with Forlixt 3.0 (Multimedia Database on Screen Translation), thanks in particular to the work of Gianna Tarquini.

Another corpus of reference is the TRACE project or *TRAducciones CEnsuradas* [TRAnslations CEnsured] in Franco's Spain (1939-1976 and after), initiated in 1995. Included in this compiled parallel corpus of theatre plays and novels in English and Spanish is some film material. In 1941, Franco passed a law declaring that Castilian was the sole language of translation and that all films had to be dubbed (Guttiérez Lanza 1999; 2000; 2011a; 2011b). The aim of this corpus is not to analyse the films as such but to demonstrate the effects of censorship on the production and distribution of cultural works and the "chain process" between massive film dubbing, the interlingual translation of fiction and the cloning of the new narrative model in Spanish, particularly through pseudo-translations (Merino and Rabadán 2002). In other words, it investigates how dubbed films have had an impact on Spanish literature, how "popular" fiction has influenced "high" literature, and how film audiences have changed readership.

Despite their limitations and their small sizes, the corpora in AVT are an important step in scholarly efforts to better understand AV texts in their multimodal complexity.[15] Automatic indexation of images in AV databases, and artificial intelligence with speech and visual recognition, are advancing quickly, with the possibility of yielding more refined quantitative and qualitative results and insights for AVT research.

4.4 Oral history

Last but not least, a few words on oral history as a method are pertinent. Oral histories are useful for sparking memories and eliciting perceptions of lay people about their working conditions, environment and daily routines for the purpose of preserving a narrative of historical significance. Oral history recordings need to be stored at a library,

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[15] See *Perspectives*'s special issue on "Corpus Linguistics and AVT: In Search of an Integrated Approach" (21 [4], 2013).

in an archive or online, in order to be consulted and interpreted sooner or later by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, town planners, etc. In translation studies, retrospective interviews (McDonough Dolmaya 2015) have been used to inform on some of the biographical profiles of translators and publishers of popular literature (Ben-Ari 2008), on the interpretation process (Takeda 2010), and on the role and formation of interpreters in a given socio-historical context (Torikai 2009). One of the primary reasons for oral history is to conduct and preserve interviews for future use, as done by Pym (2016), who has archived on YouTube the interviews with more than 80 scholars in translation studies. The principles and practices of oral history are still debated (Yow 2015), addressing relevant questions. Do all the interviews (especially online ones) follow oral history best practices? How do they differ from oral histories? How reliable are oral testimonies? Should audio and video recordings be edited? Issues of reliability, privacy, subjectivity and the narrators' ways of speaking are also inherent in life stories as used in sociology, or in autobiographies as produced by some literary translators in Japan (sometimes better known than writers) or by former film translators (Razlogova 2014). In 2004, and of interest to AVT, the FIAF initiated an oral history project to begin recording archivists who had worked with different stakeholders of the film industry. It may soon become urgent to record the memories of film archivists or old cinema attendants, for instance in countries where pioneers are still alive (Treveri Gennari and Sedgwick 2015). In China, oral histories could enrich the study of a micro-history of AVT and present a fuller historical picture. The oral and written accounts of dubbing artists such as Su Xiu and Liu Guangning from Shanghai Dubbing Studio have been published in recent years (Su 2014; Liu 2017). Marie Claire Kuo (2018) has also given a detailed and informative account on how Chinese films were translated and disseminated in France. In 2005, China Central Television interviewed dozens of translators, dubbing directors and dubbing artists to make a five-episode documentary about the translation of foreign films in the People's Republic of China. These initiatives provide valuable resources for constructing a history of AVT.

To sum up, the sources and research methods for AVT history are diverse (Zanotti 2018, 146-151). New insights can be gained by combining different data and approaches, by triangulating different kinds of measures and methods (e.g. archival work cross-checked

through questionnaires), and by exploring the possible convergences between cinema's industrial, technical, and institutional history and a socio-cultural history of its audiences (Maltby & Stokes 2004; Biltereyst and Meers 2018; Hill 2018). This ambitious endeavour is challenging and demands an interdisciplinary research agenda whereby history, cultural history, sociology, ethnology, social psychology, media and film studies, and translation studies can co-operate in a constant scholarly exchange. A critical, reflexive attitude on the production of knowledge, including our way of forming and understanding the past and without forgetting the roles played by media literacy and diverse film experiences at schools, is essential.

Concluding remarks

To write a history of translation means to also discuss a basic question: What do we mean when we talk about translation? There is no consensus on the answer. Writing a history of AVT could imply a similar kind of questioning. Indeed, some scholars sometimes refuse to accord the status of translation to subtitling and reject intralingual translation (e.g. subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, intralingual subtitling for language learners, live subtitling and audio-description) as not forming part of translation studies. However, over the past 90 years or so, most of the work on AVT has consisted of subtitling, dubbing, voice-overs and simultaneous interpreting, namely interlingual translation (between at least two languages). Clearly, the film industry was confronted with a new international market (and its diversity of languages) and faced rapid changes in technical tools and devices. As such, the question of "translation" can neither be rhetorical or purely conceptual.

By pleading for a comparative and connected history (this article provides a few elements from the U.S., some European countries and China), we are attempting to recognize the choices, traditions, conventions, rules and factors of change constrained and conditioned both by cultural backgrounds and the universal impact of technology. In other words, we are trying to explore the continuities, intermittent intersections and cross-fertilization that occur in the history of AVT, as well as its dislocations and deviations. Such a history would shed light on how economic and technical competition has had political underpinnings and consequences that are not exclusive to any one country at any given

time. Since 1895, cinema has been international in scope through its different transformations. Historians can of course speculate and write a virtual or counterfactual history: What would have happened if…? For example, what would cinema be today if the brothers Lumière had not sent cameramen abroad in 1895-1896, or if war had not come in 1914-1918 and in 1939-1945, or if silent movies had not come before the talkies, or if Hollywood had not considered film as a business, or if cinema was not used for entertainment, propaganda and popularization…?

It rapidly becomes evident that to write a comparative and connected history of AVT demands teams of researchers from different disciplines. To set up an international network of scholars today is technically possible, but the agendas of universities, foundations and other financial partners as well as the AVT industry itself differ between countries. Research priorities in the social sciences are quite different. This tension between the need for a network on the one hand and priorities on the other is a challenge and is part of the reason for the slow emergence of a history of AVT.

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