

Multimedia, Multilingua: Multiple Challenges

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(Multi) Media Translation: Concepts, practices, and research

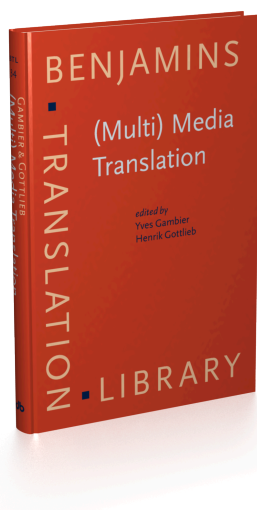
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MULTIMEDIA, MULTILINGUA: MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

1. Language and the Screen

Globalization, in many ways a cliché, does have some pretty direct implications for us all, as modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is changing a large part of our daily lives. At the same time, communication itself becomes a product in the international marketplace. For these two reasons, language practices – and, most of all, those related to language transfer – are gaining importance these years and increasingly affect the circulation of knowledge, the development of cultural identities, etc. We see it in the mass media, in business, wherever people work and interact. Language competence plays a more and more important role through reading text on TV/video/computer screens, through the reception of online (Internet) and offline (CD-ROM) products. Computerized work stations, production based on data processing, dissemination of information on the Web, identification of groups (firms, associations) use both verbal language and other semiotic systems. Convergence between media, telecommunications and ICT keeps increasing the multimedial, or polysemiotic, nature of electronic communication.

A great many studies have been done about the impact of technology on democratic decisions, public administration, work, business, services (educational and training services, social and health care, access to information and culture). But very few have considered the impact of technology on our command of (foreign) languages, or the effects that our (lack of) linguistic skills have on technology, even though modern communications technology implies multilingualism, yet at the same time paves the way for the development of a *lingua franca*.

The challenges are not only industrial, political, social, administrative, juridical, ethical; they are also cultural and linguistic. Change in technology is always faster than change in our behaviour, as supply in technology is often ahead of consumer demand.

With all these concerns in mind, two international forums were recently organized. This volume is a collection of selected contributions from these two events. The Misano Seminar on *Multimedia & Translation*, held near

Rimini (September 26-27, 1997) was structured around four thematic sessions, with contributions from more than 20 specialists. The two-day Berlin conference (October 15-16, 1998) presented parallel sessions and two panel discussions, the key issue being *Quality and Standards in Audiovisual Language Transfer*.

The present volume contains the edited results of some of the presentations and debates. Altogether the two events had nearly 350 participants from both private and public sectors, including scholars, professional translators and interpreters, postgraduate students, decision-makers on language adaptation from the media, producers, manufacturers of language technology and tools, distributors, etc.

The 26 contributions are arranged in order to constitute, as far as possible, a structured and cohesive whole, yet some overlapping could not be avoided. In what follows, we would like to present a general perspective.

2. Concepts

Thoughts on language in the media are of quite recent origin. Since 1995, the number of conferences and other fora dealing with language transfer in TV, radio, cinema and video has increased, and yet, if you consult Journals like *Communication and the Media Studies*, *Gazette – The International Journal for Communication Studies*, *Communication Research*, *Discourse and Society*, *European Journal of Communication*, *Media, Culture and Society*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, *New Media & Society*, and catalogues of different collections focusing on the media from publishing houses like Sage, John Libbey / University of Luton Press, etc., the feeling is that specialized studies are rather restricted. There are many monographs, essays, directories about media production in a free market economy, media distribution, media effects on children, stereotypes, violence, etc., the audience, history and future of the media, rights and their regulation and control authorities, media policy, but practically nothing about the media as one of the essential elements in forming cultural and linguistic identities. Multimedia localization also seems to be out of the hands of professional and academic circles usually dealing with translation.

In addition, audiovisual and multimedia translation do not rule out terminological misunderstanding. As a case in point, even a simple term as 'subtitler' may be ambiguous. This is due to the different division of labour found at different subtitling companies and TV channels: the tasks of translating, editing and subtitle cueing might be done by two people (translator + technician) or by just one (translator = subtitler).

It is also easy to notice the great diversity of expectations and representations related to the concept of translation, hence the different labels existing today in some professional fields: localization, language transfer,

adaptation, editing, revision, documentation management, co-authoring, technical writing, multilingual text creation and design, versioning, language mediation, language-service provision, language management, proofreading, copywriting, language consultancy, etc. There are at least two reasons for this: "translation" remains synonymous with transcoding, word for word, while the concept of "text" is no longer seen as a string of sentences, partly because language is seen as being integrated with images, sounds, graphics, etc. (see section 5). This double explanation shows how the concepts of translation and the translator's world are generally considered archaic.

Whatever the label, it is realized that translation is not a simple transfer from one language to another, but a complex process, a set of activities including at least such basics as review, layout, respect for writing and punctuation conventions, converting currencies and ways of giving time, dates and addresses, minding legal, fiscal and security regulations, etc. In short, the new labels for translation jobs make explicit why clients have to pay what they are asked to pay.

In connection with these designations, several important questions have to be raised. Two at least have to be borne in mind: how to get a better idea of the translation market and predict the needs of tomorrow if we do not have reliable data due to lack of consensus on the definition of supply and demand? What competencies must future translators be trained in, and how can curricula be adapted accordingly? These questions were implicit at the Misano and Berlin conferences.

The last terminological hesitation: how do we define "media"? In professional and academic contexts, the notion of screen translation has for a long time been synonymous with subtitling and dubbing; but it also covers voice-over, narration, simultaneous interpreting and surtitling. To what extent can we integrate the discussion concerning radio, TV, DVD (Digital versatile disk) and the Internet?

Is convergence a problem in the perspective of translation and Translation Studies? Is surtitling an opera similar to localizing software? Is interpreting in a TV studio like translating a CD-ROM?

In Translation Studies, texts with pictures have for a long time been ignored. K.Reiss (1971: *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik*. München: Hueber, p. 34) was the first to our knowledge to draw attention to the "audio-medial" texts which have been written to be spoken or sung, for instance, political speeches, lectures, songs, opera libretti. Later in 1984 (with H.Vermeer: *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, p. 211), Reiss replaced the term by "multi-medial" in order to include texts such as comics which have visual but not acoustic elements.

"Multimedia", nowadays a buzzword, was first associated with teaching (slides, TV, video) and underground art forms, but then its importance

increased with computers and the Internet. In the same way, "audiovisual" has for a long time been limited to training and education, for methods using pictures and sounds. Its meaning has gradually changed, more and more often referring to cinema and TV screens. In fact, multimedia communication is ubiquitous in daily life. We exploit multiple sensory systems or modes of communication including vision, audition, and touch. Aren't all "texts" such polysemiotic multi-signs? Booklets, prospectuses, magazines, children's books, ads, all combine verbal utterances, images, drawings; they play with typography and layout. Hence, the new ambiguity: sometimes drama and opera translation are placed together with the translation of films and TV programmes, while translation or localization for Web or CD-ROM media is forgotten; sometimes all polysemiotic documents (including spoken and written natural language, graphics, non-speech audio, maps, animation, etc.) are considered to be multimedia. Without a doubt there is a certain confusion here between media in a *stricto sensu* meaning (TV, cinema, computer) and codes such as verbal and visual codes. However, screen translation (film, domestic and corporate video, TV programmes), translation for and on the Net, translation of offline products and services might come under the same umbrella of "multimedia translation". Indeed, with audiovisual and multimedia texts, the borders are blurred between centre and periphery in terms of production and reception, between public and private sectors in terms of organization, between distance and proximity in terms of space, between live and pre-recorded in terms of broadcasting, between reality and fiction in terms of reference, between written and oral in terms of code, between verbal and non-verbal in terms of systems of signs. The new media literacy results from ubiquity, portability, flexibility, and interconnection of the media. Interactivity is also a key word, with various degrees depending on whether you are dealing with TV, CD-ROM, or the Internet: the consumers' behaviour is not really the same in front of each type of screen. The use of TV is rather family-oriented, while the use of the computer is rather individual.

In addition to their multimodal dimension, audiovisual and multimedia translation typically have these four features in common:

(1) Teamwork is crucial, whether simultaneous and non-linear, or cumulative, as for instance in drama translation, in which the commissioner, the publisher, the translator, the director and the actors take the floor successively.

(2) Translators often work with intermediate "texts" (scenarios, scripts, drafts), which tends to defy the traditional dichotomy between source and target text. The work is mostly done in order to produce and broadcast products with a limited lifespan. In this case, translators do not refine a static text to be used or distributed over many years for a local market.

(3) Criteria applied to audiovisual and multimedia translation are comprehensibility (the logic of structuring and reading hypertexts is not the logic of a conventional "text"), accessibility and usability. The function of these texts

prevails over the quality of their legibility, over their acceptability, too often limited to language norms. The new media compel us to review the roles of written and oral language as well as the established view on translation, where error analysis is no longer the only relevant criterion for evaluation.

(4) Finally, the above characteristics have implications for training, as the gap between universities and professional life is becoming more and more pronounced.

In their own way and from their own experiences, the seven authors of the contributions in Part I (P. Catrysse, A. Remael, S. Viaggio, D. Sánchez-Mesa Martínez, J. Ritter Werner, G. Goethals and K. Wehn) ponder the relationship between media and multimedia, verbal translation and multimedia translation, the links between text, images and sounds, the new models of communication inferred by ICT, the new elements and parameters of translating for the cinema, video, CD-ROM, the Web, etc.

They all point to the necessity of interdisciplinarity. Translation Studies must open up to Communication Studies, Media and Film Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as to Semiotics, Sociology, Anthropology, Information Sciences and Computer Sciences. It is not certain, however, that multimedia translation will become a specialized object of study; to date, we cannot speak of a uniform field of audiovisual and multimedia Translation Studies (see A. Pym).

3. Changing Landscapes

3.1 Transformation of the Audiovisual Market

Different factors are influencing the multilingual AV landscape. Among them, we can consider (I) distribution, (II) digitization and (III) supply of programmes.

(I) The rapid internationalization of distribution alters the trade strategies concerning films and TV programmes. At the same time, majors American film companies (Columbia, Fox, Warner, Disney, MCA/Universal, Paramount, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) have a stronger hold over distribution circuits, either directly in every country, or through mergers and alliances with local distributors. The financial integration between TV broadcasting companies and the film industry, as well as the synergy between broadcasting, cinema releases and video & DVD rentals and sales, make transnational management of AV products and services more and more dependant on communication.

A feature-length film generally follows a rather linear chronology in its distribution: it may be paid for in advance by a television channel, released in cinemas, marketed on VHS and DVD, broadcast on scrambled TV, then on pay-per-view TV, and finally on public TV channels. This chronology in various

distribution circuits is still the subject of hard negotiations between producers, distributors, broadcasters, TV owners, and European authorities (cf. the directive "TV without borders").

(II) Digitization is changing production and broadcasting and speeding up convergence between media, telecommunication and ICT. The volume of programming will increase accordingly. The competitive advantage already lies in ownership of the rights to quality programming. This is changing the relationship between the owners of rights and distributors and leading to vertical integration of the broadcasting industry. Commercial and technical convergence of networks and equipment (PC, TV sets, telephones) does not yet imply convergence of copyrights and regulations. But to what extent are TV viewers and computer users interchangeable? Is the digitized cultural industry leading to language standardization?

(III) A few other technological innovations are worth mentioning here because they are also changing the relationship between cinema, TV and viewers:

- * The Internet with large capacities for storing and showing films and TV programmes. But, for all that, do we have to dream of digitopia?

- * The DVD format is capable of storing up to 8 different soundtracks (the original plus max. seven dubbed versions) plus 32 different sets of subtitles for the same film (*interlingual* subtitles in number of different languages as well as *intralingual* subtitles for different audiences: the deaf and hard of hearing, young viewers, etc.).

Until now, TV production and distribution have very often been seen as simply mass media communication, understood as unilateral, one-way communication – from a single transmitter to all the TV sets receiving the same programme at the same hour. These patterns are frequently also in agreement with the homology taken for granted between a country (territory), a language and a mode of language transfer. Today, AV is more and more marked by relay and networking, with pay-TV, transfrontier television, thematic TV channels, local TV, ethnic TV programmes, all of which have increased thanks to cable and satellite television.

This development towards more precise targets has linguistic consequences: by watching a channel on e.g. history, sports, cartoons or financial affairs, the viewer expects to hear a certain register and terminology, a certain style and rhetoric. Will the fragmentation of audience, analogous to the division between the 'inforich' and the 'infopoor', be defined in sociological and linguistic terms, leading to or reproducing inequalities between age groups, natives and migrants, urban dwellers and rural dwellers? Maybe the development only indicates the end of a centralized model, in challenging the language standard – the viewers changing habits from watching non-specialized channels to favoring specialized ones. The AV media seem to be both a factor of differentiation and a

factor of homogenization. They cease to be exclusively mass communication, hence the difference between broadcasting and narrowcasting because audiences have varying sociolinguistic and terminological expectations.

The effects of the three factors briefly outlined above are enough to show the tensions and contradictions on the AV market, the challenge represented by linguistic and cultural diversity.

Some of the contributions in this volume discuss the current transformations in AV media policy (A. Jäckel, R. Meylaerts) and the alternatives in the different modes of language transfer (P. Zabalbeascoa et al., F. Karamitroglou).

3.2 Some Language Complexities in Multimedia

In a very limited period of time, the World Wide Web has grown into a standard communication medium. Since the first prototype in 1991, the Web has come into use at an amazing pace. But simply having a Web presence does not guarantee that a site will attract visitors. The multitude of available websites decreases the chances of reaching the interested audiences and of achieving the intended communicative effects. The web presence should no longer be the responsibility of only the computer people: it should be treated as an essential and integrated part of a (internal and external) communication policy.

There are quite a lot of books on the technical aspects of website design, but very few have a communications perspective. As if producing communication were not an interactive process, involving designers and users, in which one seeks the best possible solution to a particular communication problem, in order to present information in concise and well-organized terms, according to certain rhetorical conventions and cultural habits. Hardly a webpage goes by without announcing a new language-enabled product or service for business, international communication, or the home-user. Decades of language-processing development are finally maturing, especially in such areas as speech interfaces, smarter search engines, more extensive product multilingualism and Machine Translation (MT). Data and information on the Internet reflect more and more the language diversity of the Net, even if English remains the dominant language.

Along with this increased multilingualism there is an increased need for translation of webpages – to say nothing about auctions of translations on the Net, a way to get better prices with new providers. On the Hyperkoran server, for instance, there are different possibilities: the written illuminated version of the Koran, the sung version, translations in several languages, the phonetic transcript in Latin (in order to sing the Arabic text). A number of firms are ready to transfer their documentation onto Intranets: their information is thus centralized, quickly updated and instantly disseminated. If there is a need for foreign versions,

translating must be equally quick without the translator getting instructions on what needs changing. She/he uses a translation memory system; she/he has to check the coherence between key words to be translated and the related documents; with a new webpage, she/he has to insert the text among vignettes, pictures, icons. The use of free services of online MT is inevitable to speed up the production of contents. World Community Forum, Systran, Easy Translator, Web Translator, Auto Translate and Babelfish are examples of such a service. E-mails and advertisements are being translated in a few minutes.

The language quality of MT text often makes people smile, to put it mildly. However, in spite of the obvious limits of the output, the permanent access and the speed of the work are qualities worth considering.

To easily monitor, identify and align all the content and changes in multilingual websites is an asset: it would be a real pity if localization were taken out of translators' hand for good because of a terminological misunderstanding and because their training would not have been adapted.

What about online software products with their help files and their manuals, and offline products like CD-ROM? The production of the latter is diversified: you have cultural and educational products, encyclopedias, dictionaries and games. The localization/translation of all these products aims to adapt to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the addressees, of the contents dealing with information, arts, training, etc. Contents are both verbal and iconic (a letter box on the roadside, the head of a baseball coach, a drawing of a smiling face, an apple, etc.).

In the case of CD-ROMs, translation also has to respect the norms, conventions and values of the receivers. This includes dubbing, text adaptation, sometimes changes in the pictures and addition of sounds, etc. To localize a CD-ROM with English nursery rhymes implies finding texts consistent with the new context, and recordings if possible without copyrights to be paid. Translating, editing, selecting voices, sound mixing, management of different contracts are all various steps that are better developed together with the "original" and arranged in different files. In all cases, the translator is part of a team made up of technical, artistic, legal, business and field experts. With multimedia, any topic is possible: cooking, Peruvian Indians, biology, heart troubles, Impressionism, Andersen's fairy tales, European children in traffic, etc.

The dichotomy media/multimedia is no longer a sustainable one. It is a pity that this convergence was outside the focus of both the Misano seminar (1997) and the Berlin conference (1998) in discussions of translators' perspectives, their skills, attitudes, routines and training. Hence the brackets around (Multi) in the title of this book: they signal an absence and provide the incentive to examine both entities together.

4. Language Transfer

4.1 Practices

To the three factors already mentioned in section 3.1, we could add the changes in the working conditions of screen translators – changes connected with privatization of TV channels, relocation, development of subcontracting and the emergence of multinational companies in subtitling and dubbing. These conditions are such that nowadays some TV channels prefer to hire freelancers; they are cheaper and not always aware of reruns.

What about quality in language transfer? On the one hand, changes at work tend to deskill specialists, and on the other hand, audiovisual media (especially television) are given a more important role in keeping, transforming and spreading sociolinguistic norms.

Yesterday, language standards were defined by literature, school, the press. Is this the case today with the audiovisual media? Screens have changed the hierarchy between genres (comics, programme for children, documentary, science fiction, horror) which are no longer "minor". But are they really the place and power source of linguistic standardization? True, because of their omnipresence, they do help bring about certain linguistic changes.

In this perspective, quality has to be defined in the transfer process, in relation to translators' rights and duties, and in the final product. Several papers, especially in Berlin 1998, have emphasized this problem. E. Gummerus and C. Paro have stressed that quality in subtitling has an organizational aspect which implies strong cooperation between various decision-makers and employees. This conception has consequences for the recruiting of freelance subtitlers, on-the-job training and work results. We share the concern of F. Mueller: wherever we are, in Finland or in Australia, the way we select translators has implications for what is written on the screen, what the editor and reviewer will have to do. H. James wonders about quality control when you have to meet a client's expectations. Obviously this control should be linked with the linguistic role the TV channel is willing to play. Subtitling might be done in a conventional way (H.R. Morgan), or in real time (C. den Boer), or in special conditions like during a public performance (see surtitling opera by L. Dewolf); the fact remains that several quality parameters can be defined. The translator aims to make subtitling or surtitling legible, acceptable and as precise as possible. This means that she/he has to take into consideration her/his working situation, the available tools (is there access to the dialogue list? Cf. J. Diaz Cintas), the functions of language in the audiovisual media (for instance, according to the genre) and the conditions of reception (age, level of education, reading habits of the viewers).

Among the features of an optimum quality in subtitling worth

mentioning are spatiotemporal features (fonts, position and the length of the two lines on the screen) and textual features (division into semantic and syntactic coherent units; language register; etc.). Between these sets of features, (good) subtitle punctuation establishes a certain rhythm in reading and makes immediate processing and comprehension of the subtitles easier (cf. C. Cerón). The viewer's comfort is the result of the legibility and readability of the subtitles.

Quality requirements for simultaneous interpreting in a TV studio have different criteria, partly because the communication situation and the audience expectations are different (cf. B. Alexieva, G. Mack).

4.2 Empirical Research

Subtitling has been under systematic investigation for rather a short time. Research methodology is still uncertain; problems are sometimes difficult to work out; explanations are groped for in the dark. A. Assis Rosa shares her original thoughts on the role of oral code and oralization in writing subtitles. It is not only a difference of register; more radically, the question is how to represent an oral code within the written one and to find out why in subtitling there is a reluctance to insert oral features. Here one might raise the question of standard vs. non-standard varieties in subtitles and, implicitly, the question of the translator's and the commissioner's attitudes towards the language to be used on the screen. The same has to be asked about foreign-language influence (cf. H. Gottlieb on Anglicisms in Danish).

Subtitling *La haine* forces one to take a stand on how young people talk, their slang, since such or such a translation decision will have socio-political and socio-linguistic implications (cf. A. Jäckel). To better understand these implications, we must know the financial effects of a film, the reactions from different audiences with their own values. Nor can the cultural references be transferred in a mechanical way, even though the time-and-space constraints limit the strategies available to the subtitler (as demonstrated between Polish and French by T. Tomaszewicz).

One last effect of subtitling that we want to mention here has been largely neglected so far: its impact on language acquisition (cf. M. van den Poel & G. d'Ydewalle) and on maintaining language competence. A survey conducted in 1997 has shown that 75% of TV viewers of BBC World watch the channel to improve their English. Those responsible for broadcasting at F3 and TV5 (in French), and TV4 (in Swedish), to give just a few examples, have understood this function of intralingual subtitles. Intra- and interlingual subtitling does play a major role in strengthening reading skills. We are reading TV!

5. (Multi)Media Translation and Translation Studies

The electronic media with their polysemiotic codes somehow disturb the established world of translation and the discipline of Translation Studies. How should translators' organizations, for instance, classify subtitles? They hardly belong in the field of "technical translation", "literary translation", or "conference interpreting"? In (subtitling) countries like Holland and Denmark, screen translators now have their own organizations. But what about localizers of computer games and technical software? This question may already be irrelevant since localizers tend to identify with the computer industry rather than with their role as language professionals.

Within Translation Studies, the media force us to reformulate certain questions and to redefine certain concepts which have for a long time been taken for granted. For instance, the concepts of "text" and "meaning". With a film or a webpage, "meaning" is not generated by verbal signs only: it is based on the totality of verbal utterances and non-verbal signs (pictures, sounds, music, non-verbal elements, graphics, graphic design, colours, etc.). "Text" usually calls for a well-ordered sequence of sentences, a regular structure, referring to a specific genre; sometimes the "text" comes with a certain language standard: you don't write the way you speak. On TV and computer screens, there are dialogue lines or fluid discourse (hypertext), fragmented on the surface, the coherence being established through the context: visual and sound elements are not cosmetic features of embellishment but constitutive parts of the meaning. Hyperlinks on the webpage are there so that verbal utterances function with pictures, maps, tables, dictionaries and other websites. The organization of data, information, sentences, in relation to users' assumed knowledge, and to other parts of the film or the site, compels the reader to question the role of language in the media, and urges the translator to wonder about translating strategies (expansion, substitution, omission, explication, etc.) Instead of the term "text" one may prefer "document" in these situations where various semiotic systems subordinated to each other in different ways are combined: the verbal (written or oral) sometimes dominates, sometimes plays a minor role. The media communication therefore alters a number of representations, a number of well-established norms, most of them coming from the literary tradition.

Ways of reading are changing as well. Reading with constant monitoring gives way to fragmented reading: the viewer jumps from the subtitles to the picture, from one subtitle to another, both running at a different speed. The Netsurfer jumps from one part of the website to another, without caring about the possible linear order of elements. Thus, the effort to understand is no longer focused on only one system of signs, on only one logic. These performative and multimodal dimensions affect translating (multi)media. For this type of translation, Reception Studies are not only to be understood as in literary theory; they

have to include such neuro-physiological and psycho-linguistic components as perception and comprehension of image-sound-word compounds. Reading subtitles on a screen is not identical to reading plain text. Another transformation: (multi)media translation working with "intermediate texts" (see section 2) alters not only the usual central position of "text", but also the central position of the interpretive authorities. Making a video or a website of a part of the Bible (cf. G. Goethals, J.R. Werner) is to displace the central authority of the written text as the source of biblical truth, to challenge the conventional concept of Scriptural authority (Sacred texts) and to give rise to a new set of interpretive authorities.

The different modes of language transfer in audiovisual media and localization in multimedia make it clear that translation does not end with "text" but with delivery. This dynamic view of translation forces us to consider the multisemiotic dimension of multinational communication of today, to take into consideration the various parameters and constraints which determine the (multi)media production.

To what extent is the concept of (multi)media translation relevant to Translation Studies?

- * It reveals the complexities and challenges of all types of communication and highlights the necessary functions of any translation.

- * It establishes certain ways of viewing language, of dealing with verbal code, of considering the relationship between verbal and other semiotic systems in order to focus more on cultural and communicative aspects rather than solely on language and text.

- * It forces us to rethink concepts like "original" "meaning", "faithfulness", "acceptability", "readability", "usability" – concepts which involve consideration of source text/culture(s), the medium, communication models, distribution channels, the ability of the audience to participate in the reconstruction of meaning. The different shifts of paradigm brought about by new media involve the interpretive process, the authority of a written text, the role of functional equivalence, and the addressing of an audience – to give just some examples.

- * It shatters the very notion of translation, to which a consensual definition has never been tied. Translation has now come into contact with other activities such as technical writing, editing and so on (see section 2).

- * It changes the work of translating and revising, for a long time submitted to written language standards, "textual" conventions.

- * It leads us to take a fresh look at the translator's competencies and practices, at the ways of recruiting and testing, and hence at training methodology.

In spite of the many contributions presented in this volume, research in (multi)media translation remains difficult (cf. A. Pym), for lack of appropriate

theoretical frames and methodological tools. Until today, this research has not been confronted, for instance, by relevance theory, polysystemic approach, critical discourse analysis (so useful in Media Studies) or cognitive psychology. Does it cover too many different modes (subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, interpreting, localization, etc.)? Does it call for too many disciplines, like Film and Media Studies, Semiotics, Cultural Studies? Is it a new field of study with a new profile of experts or an umbrella framework for scholars from various specialized disciplines? Is it a trick to surpass the absence or the loss of prestige in translation research?

These questions remain open. But we trust that the 26 contributions will give a fair picture of what is going on.

6. Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to all the participants who have contributed to the debate. Those present in Misano will remember the Assisi earthquake at the beginning of our seminar – maybe a sign that in the near future (multi)media will shake up the work of all translators and the field of Translation Studies.

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