Torralba Miralles, Gloria et al. La traducción para la subtitulación en España: mapa de convenciones. Universitat Jaume I Publicacions, 2019, 243 pp., ISBN 978-84-17429-97-3

Over the last few decades, the new ways in which audiences access media have contributed to the proliferation of subtitling publications. On the one hand, there are handbooks outlining the different types of subtitles, as well as the techniques and norms involved in their creation (BBC, 2018; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007; Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998; Karamitroglou, 1998; among many others). On the other hand, a number of empirical studies have been conducted on the reception of subtitles across audiences, which validate the norms described in subtitling handbooks and the conventions followed in the audiovisual translation industry (Doherty & Kruger, 2018; Krejtz, Szarkowska, & Krejtz, 2013; Perego, Del Missier, Porta, & Mosconi, 2010; among others). All these publications provide valuable information not only for subtitling trainers and researchers, but also for professional subtitlers. Nevertheless, a topic that has not been explored as much is the similarities and differences between the norms found in handbooks and tested in research studies, and the guidelines developed and used by localisation companies specialised in subtitling for specific territories. With that in mind, the main goal of *La traducción para la subtitulación en España: mapa de convenciones* [Translating for Subtitling in Spain: A Chart of Conventions] is contributing to filling this gap.

The book under review is a recent publication by Universitat Jaume I, written in Spanish, which aims to offer a snapshot of the conventions used for interlingual subtitles by the main localisation companies specialised in subtitling in Spain. To do that, an online questionnaire was distributed to localisation companies in Spain as a means to gather information on their subtitling practices. This 10-chapter volume can be divided into three parts. The first two chapters explain the design of the study and provide a general introduction to the art of subtitling. The next seven chapters analyse the results of each section of the online questionnaire and the last chapter focuses on how new technologies are shifting the way subtitles are created. Two annexes are included at the end of the book: images of the online questionnaire and a guide to the freeware Subtitle Edit (version 3.5.7).

The book is the result of the joint efforts of ten researchers. Each of them has carried out the analysis of a specific section of the online questionnaire, offering practical considerations on the findings. Throughout the book, the reader will appreciate the descriptive approach taken by the authors: they do not assess whether the conventions applied by subtitling companies are right or wrong; instead, they focus their attention on an

empirical mapping of the subtitling practices in the audiovisual translation industry.

In Chapter 1, *La investigación en las convenciones de la subtitulación* [Research on subtitling standards], Irene de Higes Andino provides a detailed summary of the research project conducted for the publication of this book. This research project, funded by the Universitat Jaume I, was carried out between 2011 and 2013. The author explains that the project stemmed from the reports given by students during their internships at localisation companies specialised in subtitling. These students, from the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the Universitat Jaume I, mentioned similarities and differences between the companies' guidelines and the subtitling norms taught during their degree. In an effort to gain a better understanding on the subject at hand, an online questionnaire was sent to the main localisation companies specialised in subtitling in Spain. De Higes Andino describes the design of the questionnaire and its different sections, as well as the experimental methodology used to analyse the data, based on a cross-checking of data between the theoretical norms for subtitling and the results from the questionnaire. Although the 35 subtitling companies that participated in the study did not complete every section of the questionnaire, the author points out that the analysis makes use of the full set of collected data, on the grounds that a collection of subsamples can still provide valuable information as a whole. Likewise, the author underlines that the reader might notice some missing information gaps on current areas of research, due to the fact that this study was conducted between 2011 and 2013. According to De Higes Andino, the results of the project are still up-to-date, as groundbreaking changes in subtitling have not been fully implemented in the audiovisual translation industry and subtitles created for television and cinema still strongly resemble those created on celluloid in the early days of sound film. More details on this last point —such as concrete examples and references that demonstrate that no significant changes have come to pass to data— could have contributed to making her arguments more convincing to the readers, nonetheless.

In Chapter 2, *La traducción para la subtitulación* [Translation for subtitling], Beatriz Cerezo Merchán provides an overview of the theory of subtitling, including subtitle layout, as well as orthotypographical and spotting norms described in handbooks. She also mentions the workflow that localisation companies follow to create subtitles. This overview offers useful information to understand the design of the online questionnaire and is also helpful for audiences that are not particularly familiar with subtitling. At the end of the chapter, some insightful considerations are presented on the

evolution of subtitling norms over time and how professional subtitlers and theorists can influence each other.

Chapter 3, *El perfil de las empresas de subtitulación: agentes y materiales* [Profile of subtitling companies: actors and materials], marks the beginning of the analysis of the data gathered from the online questionnaire. The author, Julio de los Reyes Lozano, analyses the findings from the section related to the professional environment of subtitling, describing each stage of the subtitling workflow. This chapter offers visibility to future subtitlers about the professional opportunities in the subtitling industry in Spain, explaining the types of roles that they can aspire to as freelancers and in-house staff. De Los Reyes Lozano also highlights that dialogue lists and spotting lists are the most common source materials provided to subtitlers. It would have been interesting, however, to include a question on the quality of these materials and to find out whether it is common to use pre-spotted versions, considering the tight deadlines for subtitling projects.

Ana Tamayo Masero discusses the technical aspects of subtitles in Chapter 4, *Forma del subtítulo y segmentación* [Subtitling layout and segmentation]. The author analyses the findings from the online questionnaire regarding the most common technical aspects of subtitles (e.g. number of characters per line, font and size), as well as subtitle segmentation (the way lines are split in the same subtitle and across subtitles). Tamayo Masero makes an interesting observation on the need to establish an active collaboration between localisation companies specialised in subtitling and universities to align these technical conventions.

Common practices on how localisation companies specialised in subtitling apply orthotypographical conventions are discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Gloria Torralba Miralles, author of Chapter 5, *Criterios ortotipográficos: signos de puntuación* [Orthotypographical guidelines: punctuation marks], explains the findings on punctuation marks and highlights the need to standardise orthotypography in subtitling due to the lack of consensus on this dimension of the practice. Laura Mejías-Climent analyses other orthotypographical aspects used in subtitling (such as the use of italics, symbols and abbreviations, among others) in Chapter 6, *Convenciones ortotipográficas: otros tratamientos* [Orthotypographic guidelines: other marks]. To understand this lack of consensus and cover the extensive variety of orthotypographical marks, a total of 63 questions were asked to participants. Unfortunately, the low number of answers in this section (only 21 out of the 35 participants responded) does not allow for solid conclusions to be drawn on how companies apply orthotypographical standards to subtitling. Nevertheless, the selection gives a comprehensive overview of the orthotypographical marks professionals need to consider

when subtitling. Both authors conclude that the use of orthotypographical marks vary depending on the client.

Chapter 7, *La síntesis de la información en la subtitulación* [Information synthesis in subtitling], by Juan José Martínez Sierra, examines the mechanisms used by companies to synthesise information in subtitles. Three sets of questions were asked about the elements that can be omitted when creating subtitles, including a comprehensive list of sentence elements (e.g. vocatives, adverbs, adjectives, etc.). In addition, an open question asked participants to mention more types of omissions and a third question explored omissions when using a template. It would have been interesting to include an explanation and references on how this list was established, in the event that readers would like to further explore this topic. Martínez Sierra concludes that subtitlers generally tend to omit elements that are not essential and can be understood through the auditory and visual channels, although omission of passages depends on each project.

In Chapter 8, *El proceso de pautado, la sincronización y la velocidad de lectura* [Spotting, synchronisation and reading speed in subtitling], José Luis Martí Ferriol evaluates the results from three paramount aspects in the creation of subtitles: spotting, synchronisation and reading speed. He devotes part of the chapter to explaining the calculation macro that he developed for subtitle reading speed, in the belief that it explains the interconnection between these three elements. In this regard, further clarification on the link between the macro and the mapping of subtitling conventions would have given timely insight to the readers, as it remains unclear why the macro was included in this research project. From the analysis of the results, it seems that no conclusion can be drawn on trends or norms regarding spotting, synchronisation or reading speed. Nonetheless, the author highlights that students will need to be trained in such a way as to be able to adapt to the clients' requirements and the changes taking place in the audiovisual translation industry market (style guides for new digital platforms, subtitling in the cloud, etc.).

The development of technology and how it has contributed to subtitling is discussed in Chapter 9, *TIC, TAV, SUBS.: Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación* [IT, AVT, SUBS: Information Technology], by Ximo Granell. This chapter fills in the gaps on the limited research conducted on the impact of technology on subtitling by investigating how localisation companies specialised in subtitling use new technologies to create and deliver subtitles. Specifically, the analysis revolves around technology used to execute tasks such as audiovisual translation, formatting, burning, encoding, and terminology management, among others. The results

can provide insight to subtitling students and professional subtitlers on how companies use tools in the subtitling process.

The last chapter, *Mirando hacia el futuro* [Looking ahead to the future], by Frederic Chaume, presents three recent changes that are influencing the ways in which subtitled content is produced and distributed, namely machine translation and translation memories; translation on the cloud; and video-on-demand platforms. Chaume fleshes out how these changes can shape subtitle practices, encouraging further research to continue mapping subtitling conventions. This final chapter brings the perfect ending to this research project, inspiring students, professional subtitlers and researchers to reflect on the importance of subtitling conventions and to keep updating them according to the current digital times.

In short, this book fills a gap in audiovisual translation research by mapping the subtitling conventions used in localisation companies in Spain. It gives visibility to the workflow, agents and tools involved in the creation of subtitles and can prove to be a useful resource not only for subtitlers-to-be, but also for trainers, researchers and professionals alike. Each chapter covers specific and pertinent aspects on how companies apply subtitling conventions, following a logical sequence that guides the reader in the subtitling creation journey. One of the few weaknesses of this research project is the inconsistent number of responses gathered from each section of the online questionnaire, which does not allow for significant and clear findings to be drawn, as some questions received more answers than others. This could be due not only to the considerable length of the questionnaire, but also to the lack of specific incentives given to the companies to answer it. I wonder if other strategies and methodologies could be explored in future studies, such as interviews, monetary compensation or even "research stays" in the companies, where the researcher would agree to work in exchange for gathering information for research purposes. Another aspect that could have made the book more accessible to Spanish readers is the translation of English quotes. In fact, authors used direct quotes in English to support their interpretation in several occasions, assuming that the reader speaks fluent English.

In conclusion, *La traducción para la subtitulación en España: mapa de convenciones* is an insightful project that capitalises on making industry-informed conventions more accessible to anyone interested in or working with subtitles in Spain. It can be a source of inspiration for other researchers to expand this study and explore further elements and more agents involved in the process, such as freelancers, accessibility experts, translation providers and Software as a Service (SaaS) companies. Furthermore, this

book has the potential to encourage other countries to map their conventions and to open dialogue on the topic at an international level.

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