

**SÁNCHEZ-MOMPEÁN, SOFÍA. THE PROSODY OF DUBBED SPEECH. BEYOND THE CHARACTER'S WORDS. CHAM, SWITZERLAND, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2020, 250 PP., ISBN 978-3-030-35520-3**

*The Prosody of Dubbed Speech. Beyond the Character's Words* is undoubtedly an essential research monograph for scholars and practitioners that work in audiovisual translation (AVT) and dubbing in particular. It is written in flowing prose and is a very compelling read. Indeed, it offers a holistic analysis of an underexplored topic: the prosody of the language of dubbing. Dubbing is one of the most common modes of revoicing, so research has recently flourished in areas such as user reception (Matamala, 2017; Perego et al., 2018; Di Giovanni, 2018), eye-tracking (Romero-Fresco, 2020), censorship (Zanotti, 2016; Martínez Sierra, 2017; Díaz Cintas, 2018), multilingualism (De Higes-Andino, 2014; Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer, 2014; Dore, 2019), and fandubbing (Chaume, 2013; Baños, 2019a), among others. The prosody of dubbed speech, however, called for well-planned and methodologically strong studies as other researchers such as Pavesi (2013), Pérez-González (2014) and Bruti and Zanotti (2017) had already pointed out. Hence the need for this book.

The book boasts a systematic research framework that combines two disciplines, AVT and Linguistics, or, more specifically and as the author herself highlights, dubbing and prosody. This constructive integration of disciplines results in interesting insights into the non-verbal features that complement and characterise the verbal content of dubbed speech. To yield such insights, the book addresses three main questions throughout four chapters: what the main features of dubbing are at the prosodic level, whether the characters' attitude is conveyed by the prosody of dubbed speech, and to what extent dubbed prosody is (un)natural. The four chapters are accompanied by a very engaging introduction and a neat and comprehensive conclusion that make for gripping reading.

In Chapter 1, "Introduction: Unhiding the Art", the research framework of dubbing is reviewed carefully by referencing some of the most representative researchers in dubbing studies. The chapter emphasises the research opportunities on the prosodic features of dubbing. This introduction reveals one of the key aspects of Sánchez-Mompeán's research: the fact that the prosodic level of speech gathers not only universal but also language-specific features of language (Hirst et al., 2001). Such traits can be classified, according to the author's proposal, into five prosodic correlates: intonation,

loudness, tempo, rhythmicality and speech tension, which, in turn, will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2, “Dubbing and Prosody at the Interface”, discusses the implications of prosody for the language of dubbing. The chapter begins with an in-depth description of the dubbing process, including the different steps and agents involved in this professional practice. To continue with “the shackles” of dubbing, its main characteristics are presented, always focusing on their direct correlation with prosody. These features are synchronisation, the artificial language of dubbing or *dubbese*, voice talent characterisations, intertextuality, and humour. All of these are fundamental not only for linguistic translation but also for voice actors, since the five features are closely linked to and dependent on prosody. A thorough overview of dubbing is offered by incorporating a systematic review of its history since the first dubbed musical film in 1929, *Rio Rita* (Luther Reed, 1929). A concise and inspiring reference to the recent concept of accessible filmmaking is also made to foreground its benefits for pre-synchronisation dubbing. The second section of chapter 2 is devoted to the characteristics of prosody, presented in descending order considering their closeness to linguistic content. These are intonation, loudness, tempo, rhythmicality, and speech tension. Finally, the intersection between the characteristics of dubbing and those of prosody are explored to posit that prosody needs to be accounted for in the process of dubbing. It affects not only the acting performance but also the ultimate translation and representation of paralinguistic features. This is accomplished by comparing the prosody of dubbed and natural speech, analysing characters’ attitudes transmitted by their speech, and discussing the (un)naturalness of dubbed prosody.

Chapter 3, “Prosodically Speaking in Dubbing”, constitutes the core of the book by empirically illustrating the ideas presented in the previous sections. The author proposes a model of analysis that accounts for the features of dubbed prosody, their attitudinal behaviour and their (un)naturalness, by considering the semiotic and multimodal features of audiovisual content. The proposal consists of a descriptive corpus-based analysis encompassing source and target texts in which comparisons are established and certain tendencies are identified focusing on the five traits of prosody introduced in previous chapters. The bilingual parallel corpus comprises 12 episodes of the popular North-American sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* (Carter Bays and Craig Thomas, 2005–2014). The corpus includes 720 selected utterances, 360 in English and 360 in Spanish. Certain features therein are identified as recurrent and thus contribute to giving the prosodic level of *dubbese* a particular dis(similarity) to spontaneous speech. Results are meticulously explained in terms of dubbed intonation, loudness, tempo,

rhythmicality and tension, and the author fleshes out the recurring patterns found in such aspects. The level of agreement, certainty and intensity identified in both the source and the target texts when conveying attitudinal meaning is also described. Chapter 3 closes with a discussion on the naturalness of dubbed prosody, which is placed Halfway along the continuum of linguistic expression proposed by Baños and Chaume (2009), with written text at one end of the pole and oral at the other. This paves the way for discussing the concept of *dubbitis*: the characteristic melody of dubbed renditions, as defined by the author, as opposed to *dubbese* or the language of dubbing.

Chapter 4, “Translating Beyond Words”, centres on prosodic features and how they work across different cultures and languages. The author posits that translators must be aware of the need to re-direct translation decisions towards the most appropriate linguistic selection and prosodic rendition in order to convey meaning in the most efficient way. This is closely linked to the discussion presented in Chapter 5, “Pitch Perfect”, which delves into audience reception and how viewers resort to what is known as suspension of (prosodic) disbelief (Romero-Fresco, 2020). Although reception studies seem necessary to support such discussion empirically, the author presents a well-supported reflection on the processes that the audience activate to achieve the necessary balance of the (un)natural features of dubbing and enjoy dubbed products. Heterogeneous conventions across countries are also discussed, as well as the importance of incorporating artistic and prosodic aspects of dubbing into curricula. The chapter brings voice talents to the fore by analysing the statements made by ten dubbing actors in a questionnaire. The actors provide insights into their experience in dubbing performance including aspects such as dubbing practices in the studio, required skills, and actors’ attitudes towards the intricacies of dubbing.

This monograph sheds light on how the prosody of dubbed speech complements the linguistic content of utterances. This work contributes towards raising awareness of how prosody works across different languages and cultures, and how it should be factored into reproducing meaning and its implications in dubbed products. Performances transcend words, and, as such, practitioners, including any stakeholders involved in the dubbing process such as translators or voice actors, have to be aware of prosody and its importance. This also makes it essential for researchers to continue exploring the (un)naturalness of dubbed speech at the prosodic level, including descriptive but also empirical research, with the latter extending to reception studies. The model of analysis offered by Sánchez-Mompeán seems to be an enriching research tool to investigate how prosody works in dubbing and how prosody could be enhanced in the future. The empirical

results open up new research avenues, and the detailed bibliography compiled by the author will surely help readers undertake future research in this field. The much-needed study of prosody in dubbing makes this a one-of-a-kind, must-read book. This is an essential reference for practitioners, researchers and students interested in the intricacies of the language of dubbing and its particular prosody.

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