

What is this thing called *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*?

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Abstract

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We are proud to present the first issue of the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*. Launching this new journal would not have been possible without the hard work of the Editorial Board members, much appreciated contributions from the Authors and support from ESIST and Scientific Board members. Audiovisual translation has come of age as a discipline in its own right and we strongly believe that it deserves a journal that is dedicated to this very specific field. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* wishes to serve as an international forum and reference point for high-quality, innovative and in-depth research in all avenues of audiovisual translation studies.

Key words: Journal of Audiovisual Translation, JAT, audiovisual translation, media accessibility, dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, surtitling, audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, translation studies

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Audiovisual translation (AVT) has come of age as a discipline in its own right (cf. Chaume in this volume). There is a great deal of evidence to back this claim, dissemination of research being one of them. From the inception of the Languages and the Media conference series back in the 1990s and the subsequent launching of Media for All in 2005, the last couple of decades have seen the proliferation of conferences dedicated to AVT in many countries around the globe. With ever more consumer groups asking for, and getting, their due right to media accessibility (MA), research in that field has skyrocketed as well, with subfields such as audio description and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) taking pride of place. This growth in the volume of research has been matched increasingly by a frustration among scholars at not having any dedicated outlet in which to publish the written accounts of their studies. Instead, AVT and MA research has been published in many journals and books in neighbouring fields, such as the parent disciplines translation studies and media studies, but also in disability studies and many more. This is hardly surprising, as AVT is basically interdisciplinarity incarnate. However, a mature field of research deserves its own outlet, and that is the rationale for creating this very journal. AVT, including MA, can now finally claim that it has reached full maturity, with a steady supply of conferences, books and now also a journal that is dedicated to this very specific field.

There have been discussions about starting a journal dedicated to AVT for many years. Under the editorship of Henrik Gottlieb, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* (now *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*) has been an early patron of the field, with many special issues and articles on various aspect of AVT. A number of other translation studies journals, such as *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, have also been frequent outlets for papers on AVT, and will continue to be so. The first concrete steps to establishing a dedicated journal for AVT were taken a few years ago within the Board of the Association for Studies in Screen Translation, ESIST, when Elena Di Giovanni and Jan Pedersen started approaching publishers and evaluating different formulas. The idea was to have a dedicated journal that was supported by, but scientifically independent from, the association. The initial proposal was to go with an established and influential publisher, and a deal was negotiated along those lines with one of the leading international publishers known in translation studies circles. The ESIST General Meeting turned down the proposal, however, and a decision was made that the new journal should be free, open access and available online. And that is how JAT was born: the world's first free, open access, online, double blind peer-reviewed journal dedicated to AVT. The journal is supported financially by ESIST, but independent from the association.

The JAT editorial team is headed by Anna Jankowska, who is Editor-in-Chief. The rest of the team is made up by the Editorial Board, which consists of accomplished scholars in the field of AVT: Elena Di Giovanni, Jan-Louis Kruger, Jan Pedersen, Nina Reviere and Pablo Romero-Fresco. JAT has a very distinguished scientific board made up of 28 established scholars and industry experts from all continents except Antarctica. The journal also has an extensive list of reviewers which is constantly updated, as an essential component of our scientific endeavour.

For this inaugural issue all articles and other texts have been commissioned by the editorial board, but they have all been subject to a double-blind peer review, in line with one of the journal's main tenets. We wanted the inaugural issue to reflect the state of the art for AVT, including MA, and to that end we contacted established leaders in the various subfields and asked them for contributions. The result is a heady mixture of overview articles, case studies, contributions on methodology, reflections on AVT and MA practice, theoretical discussions, an interview and even a letter to young AVT scholars. These contributions fulfil the contrasting roles of strengthening the nature of AVT as a mature field and, at the same time, questioning a static conception of this nature. Far from being a problem, this shows that AVT is not only strong, but also alive. Thus, while some contributions show evidence of the current maturity of AVT and the vibrancy of its core modalities as they adapt to ever-changing technological developments, others point to new avenues of research and practice (such as the notion of integrated access) and pose challenging questions about the complex relationship between AVT and MA and the need to embrace neighbouring areas of knowledge that may be more related to MA than translation studies.

This collection of articles is impressive in its scope and serves the purpose of displaying the diversity of the field, and also of providing a somewhat unconventional look at our discipline. We felt justified in giving our authors this poetic license in this inaugural issue, as it marks the beginning of something great and uncharted. Our subsequent issues will remain true to the pioneering work signalled in many of these contributions, although we will settle into a more traditional scientific style of publications in future issues as we strive to become a respected presence on the landscape of scholarly journals.

Agnieszka Szarkowska and Piotr Wasylczyk's contribution is an overview of the questions most often raised in AVT research. Their article sketches helpful answers to these questions and should be useful for any new researcher in the field, as they tackle issues ranging from research methodology to publishing.

A dialogue-style contribution stars one of the most experienced scholars in both AVT and TS, Yves Gambier, in conversation with Haina Jin. This text provides wonderful insights into the history of AVT in China in terms of its role in cross-cultural communication, industrial development and social integration. The overview touches on the role of AVT in the export of Chinese media, in access to foreign media in China and, importantly, in providing access to ethnic minority languages.

To give a historical perspective, Frederic Chaume's overview of AVT focuses on four methodological turns brought about in the field by digital technology and what that has meant for producers, distributors and consumers of audiovisual products, namely the descriptive, the cultural, the sociological and the cognitive turns in AVT. His article provides a convincing bridge between AVT and TS while also signalling important new avenues that will inevitably open up as this field continues to grow.

As a good example of how AVT research is not only interdisciplinary but also international, Elisa Perego's article on cross-national research sets the tone for serious engagement with interdisciplinary research on a global scale. Tapping into this methodology, already applied in fields such as sociology, political science, geography and economics, Perego shows the benefits and potential of cross-national research to AVT and MA, particularly in areas like reception studies.

One of the core modalities of AVT, subtitling, is discussed in Jan Pedersen's article. Working from a norm perspective, the article shows how subtitling has developed and evolved over time, following landmark developments in technology and globalisation. The article reaches the state of the art of subtitling norm development as it investigates the guidelines of international giant Netflix and shows how the development has gone from being local to being truly global.

Maria Pavesi's article focuses on the analysis of dubbing language. The focus on the verbal code alone has been criticised, but that does not mean that everything has been said and done when it comes to linguistic analysis. This article investigates the linguistic component of the multimodal complex for reasons of feasibility, autonomy of the object of investigation and social impact, and it sketches new ways forward.

But AVT is not only about film and television. Carme Mangiron shows how localisation in the game industry – which is much bigger than the film industry in terms of revenues – is in dire need of further academic investigation, as well as more attention from the industry. She identifies the “burning issues” that require specific scrutiny, as game localisation is finding its place in relation to neighbouring and parent disciplines.

Anna Matamala and Pilar Orero present one of the ways in which research results can be transferred to the industry and to society. They take us through the process of creating international standards, especially in the field of accessibility, present the international standardisation bodies and discuss the main challenges faced by researchers involved in this process.

Elena Di Giovanni's article in participatory accessibility illustrates just how far AVT has come in catering for inclusive design, but also in co-developing content with the users creatively. Her case study on the creation of AD for live theatre with blind, sighted, and partially sighted children provides an inspiring example of a new age in media accessibility.

Louise Fryer's article on integrated audio description shows just how far this MA mode has come since its inception. She shows how we are moving away from the detrimental practice of always having MA and AVT entering the production process as an afterthought. In line with the notion of accessible filmmaking, theatre directors and producers are now taking a greater interest in making their work accessible to audience members with sensory impairments, and this article shows how this affects norms and stakeholders.

Pablo Romero-Fresco takes the idea of integrated MA even further in his article, where he supports a wide view of MA that encompasses both people with and without disabilities who need access to audiovisual content. Using two emerging areas (interlingual respeaking and accessible filmmaking) as an example, he makes a distinction between access to content and access to creation. The latter enables persons with sensory disabilities to create audiovisual products and can provide a more inclusive and empathetic audiovisual experience than the current model of MA.

Gian Maria Greco's article goes beyond MA and charts the emerging field of accessibility studies. This is the field concerned with the investigation of accessibility processes and phenomena, but also with the design, implementation and evaluation of accessibility-based or accessibility-oriented methodologies. The article discusses the origins of this field and also tries to define its place in relation to MA and the great benefits that can be reaped from studies in this new and exciting field.

These are the articles and other contributions to be found in the inaugural issue of the world's first journal dedicated to AVT. Admittedly, there are many topics and subfields missing from this issue, but that just means that there is so much more to come in the upcoming issues. JAT is scheduled to appear twice a year, typically with one general content issue and one special issue. If you are working in the field of AVT, including MA, and want to be part of expanding and developing the content of the journal, you can submit your manuscripts continuously throughout the year. Our first regular issue is scheduled to appear in June 2019 and we have already received many fascinating manuscripts for it, which are now being peer reviewed. We look forward to bringing you many years of reading JAT issues filled to the brim with AVT articles of the highest quality. Now: read on, MacDuff!

The JAT Editorial Team

Biographical notes

Anna Jankowska, PhD, is lecturer and research associate at the Chair for Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland) and visiting scholar at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona within the Mobility Plus program of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (2016-2019). She is member of Intermedia – Audiovisual Translation Research Group and TransMedia Catalonia research groups. Her recent research projects include studies on mobile accessibility and software (AudioMovie – Cinema for All and OpenArt – Modern Art for All), the viability of translating audio description scripts from foreign languages, multiculturalism in audio description, audio description for foreign films and the history of audiovisual translation. She is also the founder and president of the Seventh Sense Foundation which provides access services. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*.

Elena di Giovanni, PhD, is Associate Professor of English Translation at the University of Macerata, Italy. She has a degree in Specialized Translation and a PhD in English and Audiovisual Translation. She has been invited to give lectures and workshops on audiovisual translation and media accessibility at several universities and institutions in Italy (Bergamo, Trieste, Milano, Roma, Palermo, Bari, Bologna, Napoli) and around the world (Valencia, Sevilla, Barcelona, Leeds, Belfast, Berlin, Cairo, Nitra, New York, Shanghai). From 2008 to 2016, she was Visiting Lecturer at Roehampton University, London, MA course in audiovisual translation. From 2014 to 2016, she was Guest Lecturer at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA. Since 2013, she lectures on cinema accessibility at the Venice International Film Festival, within the European Parliament-funded LUX Prize for cinema. In 2012-2013, she was Director of the international MA in Accessibility to Media, Arts and Culture of the University of Macerata. Since November 2016, she is president of ESIST, European association of studies in screen translation (www.esist.org). She has published extensively on audiovisual translation and other areas of translation studies.

Jan-Louis Kruger, PhD, is Head of the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia where he also teaches in AVT. His main research interests include studies on the reception and processing of audiovisual translation products including aspects such as cognitive load, comprehension, attention allocation, and psychological immersion. His current research projects investigate cognitive load in the context of educational subtitling with a view to optimising subtitles as language support in second language environments, as well as the processing of subtitles as dynamic text using eye tracking. Before joining the editorial board of JAT, he was a co-editor of *Perspectives – Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*.

Jan Pedersen was educated at the universities of Stockholm, Copenhagen and Uppsala. He received his Ph.D. from Stockholm University in 2007 and was made an Associate Professor in Translation Studies there in 2015. His dissertation is entitled *Scandinavian Subtitles*, and it is a comparative study of TV subtitling norms in the Scandinavian countries. Jan's research interests include translation studies, translation theory, audiovisual translation, pragmatics and comparative linguistics. He is the former President of the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST), member of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST), founding member of the Nordic Network for Translation Studies (TraNor) and co-editor of *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* and *Benjamins Translation Library*, and former co-editor of *Perspectives – Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*. He is a frequent presenter at international conferences and his publications include the 2011 monograph *Subtitling Norms for Television*, as well as several articles on subtitling, translation and linguistics. He also worked as a television subtitler for many years, subtitling shows like *Late Show with David Letterman*, *the Simpsons* and *Nikolaj og Julie*. Jan is an Associate Professor at Stockholm University, where he holds posts as Deputy Head of the Department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism and as Director of the Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies, where he also researches and teaches audiovisual translation.

Nina Reviere received her Ph.D. at the University of Antwerp (Department of Translators and Interpreters, TricS research group) in the field of Media Accessibility. Her research project involves the development of the first multimodal corpus of Dutch audio descriptions, and applies computer-based techniques from corpus linguistics, multimodal corpus development and Natural Language Processing. She has professional experience as an audiovisual translator, particularly in the theatre and has collaborated with several prominent Flemish theatres, accessibility providers and user organisations. She has experience in academic and professional training (MA courses in interpreting, vocational audio description workshops, training of interns in audio description) and helped develop Flemish guidelines for the audio description of live-events as a member of the Transmedia Benelux Research Group. She has collaborated in the European projects ADLAB, ADLAB PRO and ACT.

Pablo Romero-Fresco, PhD, is a Ramón y Cajal grant holder at Universidade de Vigo (Spain) and Honorary Professor of Translation and Filmmaking at the University of Roehampton (London, UK). He is the editor of *The Reception of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Europe* (2015, Peter Lang) and the author of the books *Subtitling through Speech Recognition: Respeaking* (2012, Routledge) and *Accessible Filmmaking: Integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process* (forthcoming, Routledge). His *Accessible Filmmaking Guide*, written with Louise Fryer, is currently being used by governments, film schools and filmmakers in several countries and he has collaborated with governments, universities, companies and user associations around the world to introduce and improve access to live events for people with hearing loss. He is the leader of the international research group GALMA (Galician Observatory for Media Access), for which he is currently coordinating several international projects on media accessibility and accessible filmmaking, including “ILSA: Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access”, funded by the EU Commission. Pablo is also a filmmaker. His first documentary, *Joining the Dots* (2012), was used by Netflix as well as schools around Europe to raise awareness about audio description.