

FROM AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION TO MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY

Universiteit Antwerpen

AUDIO-DESCRIPTION AND AUDIO-SUBTITLING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Aline Remael  
AUSIT Conference  
Sydney  
1-3 December 2012

Today's programme

- I. Introduction: The language of Europe is translation
- II. Topics in Translation Studies
- III. From Audiovisual Translation to Media Accessibility
- IV. Audio-description
- V. Audio-description with audio-subtitling
- VI. Concluding thoughts

© artesis 2012 | 2

I. INTRODUCTION

Can you find Belgium?  
If size matters ... why am I here?

© artesis 2012 | 3

I. INTRODUCTION

© artesis 2012 | 4

I. INTRODUCTION

The languages originally spoken in Belgium (°1830)

© artesis 2012 | 5

I. INTRODUCTION

- Dutch, German & French – plus many other “unofficial” languages
- A situation familiar to “monolingual” Australia?

© artesis 2012 | 6

## I. INTRODUCTION



But then again ...

Umberto Eco:

**The Language of Europe is Translation**

©artesis 2012 | 7

## II. Topics in Translation Studies



Topics AUSIT conference

Many similarities  
Many similar concerns

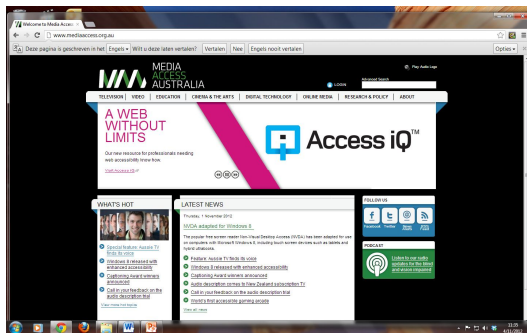
Topics EST conference

Globalisation, Diversification,  
Automation, Interdisciplinarity...

Audiovisual Translation  
Media accessibility

©artesis 2012 | 8

Leading the way in good practice...  
What about research?



©artesis 2012 | 9

## II. TOPICS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES



Europe & Worldwide:

- Expansion & diversification of the concept of 'translation'
- Evolution of training: diversification AND specialization (EMT/EMCI)
- Evolution of Translation Studies as an academic discipline
- and the challenges it faces : interdisciplinarity & collaboration

©artesis 2012 | 10

## II. TOPICS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES



EST Newsletter May 2012 "Hot Topics"

"TS is probably spread out across a wider spectrum of scientific approaches and techniques than most disciplines, which reflects the breadth of the spectrum of topics and research questions it addresses." (Daniel Gile)

©artesis 2012 | 11

## II. TOPICS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES



Increased interdisciplinarity:

- AVT from periphery to the centre of TS
- Perception of media accessibility issues as a form audiovisual translation
- Inclusion of (some forms of ) media accessibility in translator training programmes and translation studies research
- Research projects encouraging collaboration industry – universities

How did this come about?

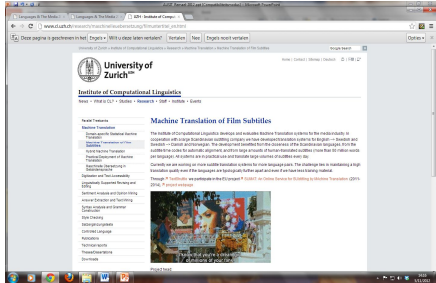
©artesis 2012 | 12

### III. FROM AVT TO MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY



#### Recent developments (1):

- Links with fast developing technologies  
[http://www.cl.uzh.ch/research/maschinelleubersetzung/filmuntertitel\\_en.html](http://www.cl.uzh.ch/research/maschinelleubersetzung/filmuntertitel_en.html)



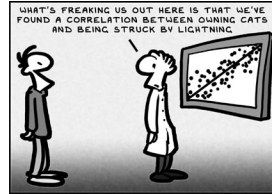
© artesis 2012 | 13

### III. FROM AVT TO MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY



#### Recent developments (2):

- Multiplication of platforms – user diversification & demands
- Interdisciplinary links
- Need for more research



Even if some practitioners are sceptical about 'theory'

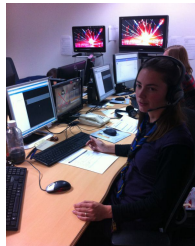
© artesis 2012 | 14

### III. FROM AVT TO MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY



#### Examples of "hybrid" forms:

- Audio-description with audio-subtitling
- Live subtitling with speech recognition



© artesis 2012 | 15

### III. FROM AVT TO MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY

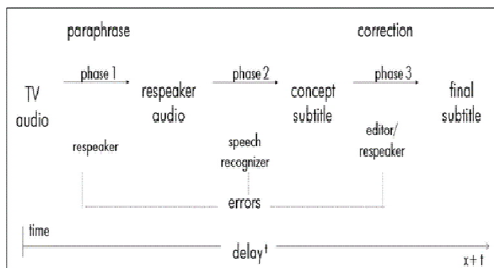


Stages respeaking process at VRT

Flemish public broadcaster

© artesis 2012 | 16

He's having problems with the Czechs  
 He's having problems with the cheques



© artesis 2012 | 17

### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION (WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING)



© artesis 2012 | 18

## AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



What exactly is audio-description?

- A precise and succinct **aural translation** of the visual aspects of a live or filmed performance, exhibition or sporting event for the benefit of visually impaired and blind people.
- The description is **interwoven** into the **silent intervals** between dialogue, **sound effect** or commentary.

(Hyks, 2005: 6)

© artesis 2012 | 19

## AUDIO-SUBTITLING

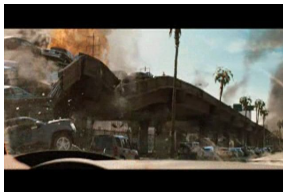


And what is audio-subtitling?

- The **spoken rendering of the written** (projected) subtitles or surtitles with a filmed or live performance.
- Audio-subtitles can be read by a **computerized voice** or by a **'voice talent'** or **'voice actor'**.

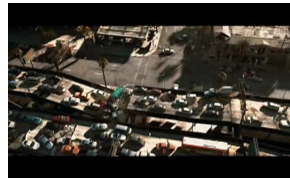
© artesis 2012 | 20

## IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



Challenges: script  
IMAGES into WORDS  
What to describe?

How much to describe?



© artesis 2012 | 21

## IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



When to describe?

© artesis 2012 | 22

## IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



How to describe?

Objectively?

Type of language?  
Complexity?

© artesis 2012 | 23

## IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



Challenges: recording

- Type of voice
- Role of intonation
- Describing or narrating
- Sound mix

© artesis 2012 | 24

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Challenges: the audience

- Heterogeneous
- Not all well-acquainted with AD
- What can they cope with/what do they like?

© artesis 2012 | 25

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Guidelines, training & research in Europe:

- Guidelines remain vague on WHAT, HOW MUCH, HOW
- Training in TS departments & in house but INTUITIVE
- Research is picking up and is VERY DIVERSE

© artesis 2012 | 26

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Research topics within TS in Europe today (1)

- Film narratology (Kruger 2010; Vercauteren 2012)
- Text analysis (Fix 2005).
- Cognitive linguistics (Braun 2011)
- Corpus linguistics (Salway 2007; Reviens fc.)
- Reception research (Chmiel & Mazur 2012)
- Eye-tracking research (Orero & Vilaró 2012)
- Translation of AD (Remael & Vercauteren 2010)

© artesis 2012 | 27

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Research topics in Europe today (2)

- Recording & sound mix (Soundfocus.NI)
- Which voices - artificial voices (SWISSTEXT)
- AD for different contexts (Neves 2012)
- Training in AD and AD research (ARSAD 2013)

© artesis 2012 | 28

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Research topics within TS in Europe today (2)

ARSAD: Advanced Research Seminar on Audio-Description  
Barcelona, March 2013  
ADD LOGO

<http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/arsad/content/2011-seminar>

© artesis 2012 | 29

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



##### Research topics within TS in Europe today (3)



Audio-Description: Life-Long Access for the Blind

<http://www.adlabproject.eu/>

© artesis 2012 | 30

#### IV. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION



Research at Artesis University College



© artesis 2012 | 31

#### V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



© artesis 2012 | 32

#### V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



WHY add audio-subtitling?  
Let's go back here ...



© artesis 2012 | 33

#### V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



AILA congress in Brisbane 2014:



“Our theme ‘**One World, Many Languages**’ highlights the importance of the richness of linguistic diversity and recognises the role that applied linguists have in shaping the ways in which the world responds to this richness.”

<http://www.aila2014.com/>

© artesis 2012 | 34

#### V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



- We are living in a **multilingual world** and in multilingual “nations”
- **Multilingualism pervades society** and its cultural artefacts



- **Increased multilingualism in film**
- Increased circulation of productions in “other” languages (LOTE)

© artesis 2012 | 35

#### V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



Films opt for multilingualism for various reasons:

- Realism
- Narratological issues
- Ideological issues
- Financial backing
- International appeal

(see also Diaz Cintas 2011)

© artesis 2012 | 36

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



- Audio-description renders images accessible
- It works in interaction with the film dialogues
- What if the dialogues are (partly) in another language?
- They will be dubbed or subtitled
- Subtitles are not accessible for blind people

© artesis 2012 | 37

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING

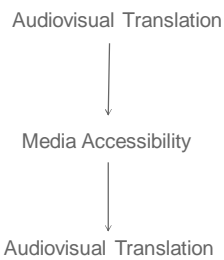


Example: *Oorlogswinter*



© artesis 2012 | 38

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



© artesis 2012 | 39

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



Current research projects with the usual suspects in Flanders



© artesis 2012 | 40

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



What are the issues:

Analysis of a short excerpt from *Oorlogswinter*

© artesis 2012 | 41

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



Film Dialogue	AD	Back translation
Lia: Beleefd blijven Michiel. Daarmee kom je 't verst.		Do remain polite Michiel. That always works out best.
	<i>Lia klopt op de deur. De soldaat die open doet, knikt hen beleefd toe</i>	Lia knocks on the door. The soldier who answers it, nods at them politely.
Goedemorgen, ik (möchte) zou graag (bitte) mijn echtgenoot willen spreken. Van Beusekom.		Good morning. I (möchte/'d like to) (bitte/please) talk to my husband. Van Beusekom
Es tut mir leid/Het spijt me, ik kan u niet toelaten.		Es tut mir leid/I'm sorry, I can't let you in

© artesis 2012 | 42

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



However, many questions arise:

- Voice-over recording: German and Dutch mix
- Subtitles are shorter than dialogues
- Interaction between AD and audio-subtitling?
- Reading or acting?
- Rewriting the subtitles or not?
- How many voices are required?
- Which option is most accessible : more or less?
- How much does all this cost ?

© artesis 2012 | 43

## V. AUDIO-DESCRIPTION WITH AUDIO-SUBTITLING



Another example  
Non-fiction: different variables



© artesis 2012 | 44

## VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



© artesis 2012 | 45

Thank you for your attention

Bedankt voor uw aandacht

Questions?



© artesis 2012 | 46

## References



- Braun, S. (2011). Creating cohesion in audio-description. *Meta* 56:3, 645-662.
- Chmiel, A. & Mazur, I. (2012). AD reception research: Some methodological considerations. In E. Perego (Ed.), *Emerging Topics in Translation: Audio Description* (pp. 57-80). Trieste: EUT.
- Diaz Cintas, J. (2011). Dealing with multilingual films in audiovisual translation. In W. Pöckl, (et al., Eds.) *Translation, Sprachvariation, Mehrsprachigkeit* (pp. 215-233). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Fix, U. (2005) (Ed.). *Hörfilm. Bildkompensation durch Sprache*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt.
- Hyks, Veronica (2005). Audio description and translation – Two related but different skills. *Translating Today* 4, 6-8.
- Neves, J. (2012). Multi-sensory approaches to (audio) describing art. *MONTI4*, 277-294.
- Orero, P. & Vilaró, A. (2012). Eye tracking analysis of minor details in films for audio description. *MONTI* 4, 295-320.
- Remael, A. & Vercauteren, G. (2010). The translation of recorded audiodescription from English into Dutch. *Perspectives. Studies in Translatology* 18:3, 155-172.
- Salway, A. (2007). A corpus-based analysis of audio description. In J. Diaz Cintas, P. Orero & A. Remael (Eds.), *Media for All. Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description, and Sign Language* (pp. 151-174). Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi.
- Kruger, J-L (2010). Audio narration: re-narrativising film. *Perspectives. Studies in Translatology* 18:3, 231-249.
- Vercauteren, G. (2012). Narratological approach to content selection in audio description. Towards a strategy for the description of narratological time. *MONTI4*, 207-232.

© artesis 2012 | 47