1. Translation for dubbing

1.0 Preliminary discussion

(a) Do you see dubbing as a question of translation or adaptation? What are the reasons for your opinion?
(b) Make a list of situations in which dubbed audiovisual texts are consumed in your country. How are cartoons translated in your country?
(c) Does dubbing give you a sense of access, of immediacy, or does it feel like a transfer?
(d) Do you associate dubbing with oppressive and totalitarian regimes? Or do you rather consider it to be a question of choice and audience preferences?
(e) Do you prefer dubbing or subtitling, or do you have no preference? Give reasons for your choice.
(f) Have you noticed a shift from subtitling to dubbing—or vice versa—in your country?

Dubbing is one of the major modes of screen or audiovisual translation carried out all over the world. This first chapter proposes a definition, presents a discussion on where dubbing fits into the field of audiovisual translation, gives an overview of dubbing in different parts of the world, and, finally, an outline of some acknowledged quality standards in this audiovisual translation mode.

1.1 Definition

Dubbing is a type of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) (see §1.2) mainly used in Europe (Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey, etc.), the Americas (Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, etc., although mostly on TV); in some Asian countries (China, Japan, Korea) and some North African countries. Technically, it consists of replacing the original track of a film’s (or any audiovisual text) source language dialogues with another track on which translated dialogues have been recorded in the target language. The remaining tracks are left untouched (the soundtrack—including both music and special effects—and the images). The term revocing is also sometimes used as a synonym for dubbing, but revocing also includes intralingual post synchronization, i.e., when the original film dialogues are subsequently recoreded in a studio in the same language to prevent noise and interference when filming on location. However, when revocing is used as a synonym for dubbing or interlingual post synchronization, the term includes all revocing types (dubbing itself, partial dubbing, narration or voice-over, etc.).

Dubbing is one of the oldest modes of audiovisual translation. Its origins can be traced back to the late 1920s, when the need first arose to transfer the new
sound films to other languages and countries. Multilingual movies (see §1.4) were initially introduced as a solution, but were later abandoned because of the high production costs involved, and their unpopularity with foreign audiences who wanted to see the original actors and actresses on screen rather than their local counterparts. Subtitling also fell out of favour in some countries due to factors such as low literacy levels, linguistic chauvinism and reluctance to learn new languages in countries where major languages were spoken, or where there was a solid financial basis to meet the high costs of dubbing.

The circumstances were therefore ripe for sound engineers to invent and improve a kind of voicing known as dubbing. Although the first dubblings were technically poor and met with a very icy reception, dubbing voices—voice talents—gradually became more credible, lip-syncing improved and translators and dialogue writers began to produce convincing scripts. These scripts ideally had to meet all the demands of the different synchronization types (see §4.1.1, §4.1.2 and §4.1.3), but still created the illusion of original dialogues (for an extensive review of the history of dubbing and audiovisual translation see Izard 1992 and 2001; Ivarssoon 2002; Díaz Cintas 2003; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007; and Chaume 2004a and 2010).

Almost a century later, dubbing is more widespread than ever: cartoons for younger children are dubbed all over the world; even countries that have historically resisted dubbing like Portugal, Denmark and Norway are beginning to dub some teen TV series and films (teen pics) (Chorão 2012; Tveit 2009); in Russia, dubbing is gradually replacing the once predominant voice-over mode; South American soap operas are also now dubbed in Greece, and some Turkish and South American soap operas are dubbed in the Maghreb. Dubbing has also moved into other complex audiovisual translation modes: in videogame localization, especially in blockbusters, dialogues are usually dubbed; some commercials are dubbed even in traditional subtitling countries; fandombing is becoming internationally popular; DVDs may include dubblings into traditional subtitling languages; dubbing is also used to teach foreign languages, and so forth. It seems that in the new world of à-la-carte services, audiences can now actively choose their preferred audiovisual mode, product and platform, wherever they want.

1.2 Dubbing as a type of Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual Translation is an academic concept that is slowly penetrating both the old and new sound and image post-production markets, where the term— not the audiovisual transfer practices themselves— was previously unknown. The same term is now used in most European languages, especially since the turn of the new century: traducción audiovisual, traduction audiovisuelle, traduzione audiovisiva, audiovisuelles Übersetzen, etc. This reflects a clear acceptance of the term, at least in academic circles, after years of tentative provisional terms such as cinematographic translation, film translation, translation for TV, screen translation, subordinated translation, media translation, or multimedia transla-
tion (see Chaume 2004a, for an extensive review of the evolution of this concept). It is a generic term, as opposed to written and oral translation; in other words, it does not fall into the same set as legal translation, scientific translation, medical translation, literary translation, and the like, since audiovisual texts can cover any of the subjects dealt with by the different specialized translation fields.

AVT is an academic umbrella term that covers both well-established and ground-breaking linguistic and semiotic transfers of audiovisual texts (Kretschmer, 2011). Some related professional practices such as advertising translation, comic translation or videogame localization have recently joined this large set of audiovisual transfer modes and have been incorporated into the multimedia translation world.

Dubbing is just one way to translate audiovisual texts. Subtitling is the other major audiovisual translation mode and it is used in many more countries all over the world (see Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007, the most comprehensive volume on subtitling to date). New kinds of subtitling, like surtitling (or superstitling) for the opera and theatre, and respeaking through speech recognition (see the ground-breaking volume by Romero Fresco 2011) are penetrating the new audiovisual translation market. Subtitles' oldest relatives, however, were intertitles, or title cards (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007:26), which, according to these authors, were a piece of filmed, printed text that appeared between the scenes of silent movies.

Revoicing modes include experiments in partial dubbing, used to dub the leading characters of a film (normally a male voice for a male character, and a female voice for a female or child character, although sometimes a child's voice was used to dub child characters), whereas the remaining secondary characters were voice-over (Hendricks 1984). Voice-over is another type of revoicing, where the original source language track of an audiovisual text is overlapped with another track on which translated dialogues in the target language are recorded, such that both tracks can be heard simultaneously. Normally the translation is heard a few seconds after the original voices, which are heard at a much lower volume. Voice-over is the most common mode of AVT used to revoice documentaries, interviews, advertorials – advertisements in the form of an editorial – and infomercials in western countries. In some other countries, especially in Eastern Europe, it is also used to revoice fiction films and TV series. Voice-over is also called Gavrilov dubbing in Russia, named after one of the most famous Russian dubbers; it is also known as single-voice translation, especially in Poland (jednoglosówka, but also szeptanka or whispering and wersja lektorska, wersja z lektorem, i.e., version with reader), where only one voice (called the lektor, or reader) is used for all the characters in a film. It is also used in Bulgaria and Mongolia. Voice-over is not necessarily a kind of revoicing. It is also "the voice communicating unseen on an audio track used in radio, television, film, multimedia, or the business world" (Wright and Lallo 2009), but this is a broader definition of the term, related to the voice talents' industry. Narration is simply a kind of voice-over, where the translation has been summarized. Free-commentary is a variation of voice-over and dubbing, where a comedian
manipulates the translation for humoristic purposes and adds jokes or funny comments, either dubbed or voiced-over. This mode includes the popular Goblin translations, which are Russian parodies of awkward translations presented in the Russian film market, where characters speak quite differently from their original counterparts – for example, in the translation of The Lord of the Rings (Peter Jackson 2001, 2002 and 2003) trilogy. Simultaneous interpreting in film festivals is another AVT mode, although it is much less common nowadays due to the new technological advances that allow translations to be made available quickly. For an extensive review of AVT types, see Luyken et al. 1991; Gambier 2000; Díaz Cintas 2003; Chaume 2004a; Bartoll 2008 – who suggests up to thirteen AVT types, although his classification is somewhat controversial – and Hernández Bartolomé and Mendjile 2005, who propose seventeen types.

Fortunately, accessibility has also been embraced by the field of AVT, and subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing (SDH), audiodescription for the blind and the partially sighted (AD), audiosubtitling (the reading aloud of subtitles and of the audiodescription script for blind audiences), and sign language translation are now gradually being integrated into our daily consumption of audiovisual texts.

Access to the Internet has brought us more democratic choices in the way we consume audiovisual texts. The availability of new technologies has turned amateur dubbing and subtitling into a reality. Fansubbing (sometimes subbing) is the domestic subtitling by fans of TV series, films or cartoons (especially anime) before they are released in the fans' country (see Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007:26). A parallel definition can be given of fandubbing (usually spelled fundubbing, especially when the dubbing is done for humoristic purposes), domestic dubblings of trailers and cartoons that have not yet reached the fans' country.

In spite of the illegal status of this activity, fans download clips and use computer dubbing programs (Windows Movie Maker, DubIt, Divace Lite and Divace Solo, Video Rewrite, VirtualDub, Pinnacle Systems, etc. – see Martí Ferriol 2009 –, many of which are freely available on the Internet) to erase the original soundtrack and record their alternative soundtrack using their own voices and a microphone. They translate the dialogues and record them, matching the translation with the screen actors' mouths. The results are far from professional, since just one person interprets all the characters and voices, and the soundtrack is lost altogether (special effects and songs), but they are not intended to be professional. Fandubs are made by fans for fans – and, sometimes, for fun with comical effects – in an attempt to overcome the linguistic barriers of the original texts and to popularize products with a limited distribution in the target language.

Finally, new devices and new genres demand new complex modes of audiovisual translation, usually a combination of pre-existing formats (i.e. dubbing + subtitling, etc.). Dubbing and subtitling are gradually being incorporated into videogame localization, although with notable differences from conventional dubbing and subtitling (Granell, 2010). Commercials and infocommercials may also be dubbed and subtitled. Webtoons are usually dubbed, whereas webinars – workshops or lectures delivered over the web – and instructional videos tend to be voice-over. However, all these new genres can be partially dubbed and partially subtitled, or dubbed and subtitled at the same time. Comic books and
scenarios (Ferrer 2005) share many features of AVT, the most notable being that they are both considered to be subordinated translation (Mayoral et al. 1988), or a translation that has to be rendered by respecting meanings primarily conveyed by images – for example, the translation has to fit into the space of the comic’s original balloons.

In summary, all these ways of translating audiovisual texts can be classified into two broad categories: revoicing and subtitling, i.e., either the text is somehow revoiced, or it is somehow subitled. The following tables summarize AVT modes according to this idea:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revoicing</th>
<th>Subtitling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dubbing</td>
<td>1. Conventional subtitling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partial dubbing</td>
<td>2. Interleaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Voice-over (including narration)</td>
<td>3. Respeaking (live subtitling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Free commentary (including Goblin translation)</td>
<td>4. Subtitling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Simultaneous (and consecutive) interpreting</td>
<td>5. Subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Audiodescription for the blind and the partially sighted</td>
<td>6. Fansubbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Audiosubtitling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Fandubbing (including fandubbing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.1. Audiovisual translation types**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Videogames</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional videos and webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercials and infomercials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webtoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic books and scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(the list is intentionally left open to new genres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.2. New audiovisual genres using a combination of traditional AVT types**

Some other modes are described in the literature, but they are not strictly AVT types. For example, multilingual broadcasting, per se, cannot be considered a new AVT type, since it does not refer to a new mode, but to the broadcasting of an audiovisual text in many different translated modes (dubbed, subitled, subitled for the deaf, etc.). Neither can the translation of film scripts be considered an AVT type per se, since the translating process is not audiovisual | neither the source text [ST] nor the target text [TT] are audiovisual. |
1.3. The global dubbing map

1.3.1 Europe

To date, the AVT literature has established a rather simplistic distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries. This classification (available on the web, for example at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubbing_%28filmmaking%29) distinguishes dubbing countries (for instance, France) from subtitling countries (like Norway), based on the way films and TV series are most commonly watched. The European map is usually divided into four sections:

- Dubbing countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine.
- Subtitling countries: Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, among many others.
- Voice-over countries: Poland (TV), Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania.
- Dubbing and subtitling countries (countries that use both AVT modes): Belgium (dubbing in Wallonia and subtitling in Flanders), or Bulgaria (TV series are dubbed, whereas films are usually subtitled, and some other programmes are voiced-over by at least four actors).

However, this classification is somewhat outdated. On the one hand, it is biased and based on clichés, and on the other hand, technology and new audiences have changed the landscape entirely. The following facts refute these clichés:

1. Cartoons — especially those for younger children — are dubbed all over the world, even in subtitling countries. Most countries therefore either do their own dubbing or they buy dubbings in their language (or even in a pivot or relay language, e.g., French dubbings are consumed in North-African countries).

2. In so-called dubbing countries, many cinema houses show subtitled films on a daily basis. In many large cities, the same film can be seen in both its subtitled and dubbed versions, and other films, especially art films, are simply subtitled. For example, in Valencia, a Spanish city of barely one million inhabitants, in a random week (28 November to 4 December, 2008), 63 different films were shown in cinemas and film clubs, of which 31 were subtitled (49.2%), 22 were dubbed (34.9%) and 10 were Spanish productions or co-productions (15.8%). Is Spain still a dubbing country? It is true that dubbed films bring the money into the box-office, and that the same dubbed film can be seen in many cinemas, unlike subtitled films. And it is also true that a quick glance at the TV listings seems to suggest that it still is a dubbing country. But these figures show that dubbing countries are also watching a significant amount of subtitled cinema.

1.3.2 Asia

Asian countries are currently using their own...
3. In so-called subtitling countries, dubbing is beginning to find its place. In Greece, some Mexican TV series such as *Rubi, La Usurpadora*, and American teen series such as *Hannah Montana* and *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody* are dubbed, as are some Turkish soap operas. In Portugal, paradoxically, there are many more dubbed than subtitled programmes on TV (Chorão 2012). In Norway and Denmark, dubbing is tentatively being used for teen pics (Yvet 2009).

4. In so-called voice-over countries, times are also changing. Whereas Russia seems to be turning to dubbing, Poland is giving way to subtitling but also opinion polls seem to favour dubbing (Chmiel 2010), while both retain voice-over in translated TV programmes.

5. Some TV channels, such as MTV, are voicing-over some teen programmes in dubbing countries as an experiment to introduce voice-over into fiction programmes and also as a way to significantly reduce the high costs involved in dubbing. Breaking the canon (fiction is dubbed on TV in western dubbing countries) can constitute either a commercial failure, or an innovative, fashionable trend.

6. The DVD has also notably changed this landscape. DVDs and Blu-rays offer audiences the possibility to choose how they watch a film. Options include dubbed and/or subtitled versions, into one or various languages, or even dubbed into one language and subtitled into another. The world is moving towards audiovisual tailor-made services. In the near future, it seems we will all be able to choose how, when, and where we watch a film (or any audiovisual text), as well as selecting our language and audiovisual translation preferences.

7. Digital broadcasting also enables audiovisual texts to be used in many different ways. Like DVDs, digital broadcasting allows the spectator to choose from various linguistic options in both audio and subtitling menus.

The AVT landscape is no longer black and white. The distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries has become blurred. Former dubbing countries now have significant subtitling industries and have witnessed the growth of their voice-over market. In turn, audiences in former subtitling countries are becoming more used to dubbing, and former voice-over countries are moving towards dubbing and subtitling. The important question for audiences is that the single option of either dubbing or subtitling or voice-over should give way to a variety of audiovisual texts that might be dubbed, subtitled, voice-over, subtitled for the deaf, audiodescribed for the blind. The more options we have, the better for the consolidation of a freer, multilingual, and diverse audience.

1.3.2 Asia

Asian countries with major languages and great economic potential also dub. China dubs into Mandarin Chinese, and Thailand, Japan and Korea also dub into their own languages. However, it is difficult to distinguish between dubbing and
subtitling countries, since the audiovisual landscape is rather more complex. Korea is a subtitling country, but dubbing is also a fact on TV (Lee 2009:30).

China has a long tradition of dubbing foreign films into Mandarin Chinese from 1949 (Qian 2009:13), a tradition which, as in Europe, started in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Popular TV series from the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Japan have been dubbed since the 1970s. The cast of voice talents and dubbing directors and assistants is acknowledged in the credits of a dubbed film. Companies rush to get the dubbing done so that the film can be released quickly before the pirate versions are ready. In the last few decades, however, cinemas have also begun showing subtitled versions, especially in the bigger cities on the east and south coasts. In Hong Kong, foreign television programmes other than those in English and Mandarin are dubbed into Cantonese. Japanese programmes, including anime, are also dubbed into Cantonese. English and Chinese Mandarin programmes are generally shown in their original language with subtitles. In Singapore, TV programmes are shown in all four official languages: English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Korean and Japanese dramas, and also Chinese programmes shot in other Chinese languages, may also be dubbed into Mandarin and English.

In Japan, the dubbing industry began in the 1950s. Foreign television programmes and movies were the first to be dubbed into Japanese for TV. Nowadays, audiences can choose between dubbed or subtitled versions on DVDs and Blu-rays. Films may even have more than one dubbing, depending on which TV station will air the programme.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, only South American soap operas are dubbed into Indonesian and Malay, respectively, although a recent subtitling trend has emerged in Malaysia. Korean and Japanese films are dubbed into Mandarin with Malay subtitles on TV, whereas Cantonese, Mandarin, Tamil and Hindi programmes are broadcast with Malay subtitles. Cartoons and anime are also dubbed as in the rest of the world. In Indonesia, unlike Malaysia, English cartoons are usually dubbed, except on some cable TV channels. Feature animations may be either dubbed or subtitled, depending on the TV channel.

In Thailand, foreign TV programmes are dubbed into Thai, although in the past the original soundtrack was often simultaneously broadcast on the radio. Nowadays cable TV stations broadcast foreign films with subtitles. Cinemas tend to offer both the subtitled version and the dubbed version of English-language movies, whereas in Bangkok, most foreign films are subtitled only, and Thai films are sometimes subtitled into English for an international audience. In Vietnam, foreign-language films and programmes on television are also dubbed into Vietnamese.

In the Philippines, Japanese anime may be dubbed into either Filipino or English. Korean, Mexican, and Chinese TV soap operas, known as Koreanovelas, Mexicanovelas, and Chinovelas, respectively, are also dubbed into Filipino (Taura 2009). As English is also an official language in the Philippines, programmes in English are usually not dubbed, with the exception of some cartoons.

In India and Pakistan, Hollywood films are dubbed into Hindi and Urdu, respectively, language orig and animated movies or Nick of the Indian ever to gain Hindi, but all example, wi Indian carto regional lang re-record th found in cot

1.3.3 The Audiovisual Industry

In America, Canada, and but it is all assumptio a English, suc these, together variation is Buider (Kei anime, whi are dubbed in the Engli tradition. In dubbed into mon in Fr domestc m. Mexico i bing indust and many di foreign prog TV, with onl both subtiti for adult au only offer All films rel American co and TV series film can the AVT modes...
respectively, and into languages such as Tamil and Telugu, although the English language originals are shown in the metropolitan areas. Nevertheless, cartoons and animation TV series are also dubbed from English into Hindi, like Teletubbies or Noddy (Katan 2010:12). Although Hollywood films only take a thin slice of the Indian film market at present, the big US studios are working harder than ever to gain more market share. Their latest strategy is to dub not only into Hindi, but also to release films dubbed in regional languages. Spider-Man 3, for example, was also dubbed into Bhojpuri, a language spoken in northern India. Indian cartoons, which are originally made in Hindi, are often now dubbed into regional languages as well. In Pakistan, film companies produce Punjabi films and re-record them in Urdu. This product, known as a double version film, is often found in countries with two or more official languages.

1.3.3 The Americas

In America, a distinction has to be made between the United States of America, Canada, and all the other countries. The USA has an important dubbing industry, but it is all geared to export, as it is a subtitling country in terms of domestic consumption; a few British films shot in regional accents are dubbed into American English, such as Trainspotting (Danny Boyle 1996) or Kes (Ken Loach 1969), but these, together with some Japanese horror films, are the exception. Another variation is the redubbing of some British children’s shows – such as Bob the Builder (Keith Chapman 1998) – with American voice talents, and indeed Japanese anime, which may be both dubbed and subtitled into English on DVDs. Films are dubbed for export to dubbing countries. In Canada, subtitling predominates in the English-speaking regions, whereas Quebec follows the French dubbing tradition. In French-speaking Canada, cinemas also show films that have been dubbed into French in Europe, whereas dubbings made in Quebec are not common in France: films dubbed in Canada are usually redubbed in France for the domestic market.

Mexico is a subtitling country, with a long, deep-rooted tradition in the dubbing industry. Cartoons and foreign programmes on broadcast TV are dubbed, and many dubbings are made for the DVD industry, especially for export. In Brazil, foreign programmes are always dubbed into Brazilian Portuguese on broadcast TV, with only a few exceptions. Films shown in cinemas are generally offered in both subtitled and dubbed versions, although subtitling is the preferred format for adult audiences, while dubbing is favoured for children’s films. Pay TV commonly offers both dubbed and subtitled movies, but subtitling predominates. All films released on DVD usually feature both dubbing and subtitling. South American countries generally tend to follow this trend and watch dubbed films and TV series on television, while films are subtitled for the big screen. The same film can therefore be seen with subtitles in a cinema and dubbed on TV. The two AVT modes exist side by side without any conflict.
1.3.4 Africa

Africa is a subtitled continent. However, some signs of change can now be seen. North African countries have traditionally watched French dubbings of Western films, especially Hollywood productions, usually imported directly from French film distributors. They also dub cartoons. Since the 1980s, dubbed series and movies for children in Modern Standard Arabic have become a popular choice among most TV channels, cinemas and VHS/DVD stores. Dubbed films are generally shown in Arab countries with a strong tradition of dubbing (mainly Syria, Lebanon and Jordan), but interestingly, some TV soap operas are now also being dubbed, and meeting with huge success in terms of TV viewer numbers. Not only have South American soap operas been dubbed into Modern Standard Arabic, but popular Turkish TV soap operas have also gained very high audience ratings.

1.3.5 Oceania

With the exception of cartoons, dubbing is practically unknown across the vast English-speaking continent of Oceania. New Zealand, however, has recently launched its Maori Television Service, which has dubbed animated films, such as Watership Down, into Maori. Likewise, some TV ads produced in foreign countries are dubbed, even in cases where the original is from another English-speaking country.

1.4. History of dubbing

The history of dubbing necessarily runs parallel to the history of cinema. However, although the literature on the history of cinema is extensive, very little has been written on the history of dubbing and AVT in general. From a historical analysis perspective, interest for the translation researcher begins with the introduction of written language on screen in silent movies to accompany the iconic representation of images.

It is at this point that translation becomes essential to the full understanding of filmic narration. The silent movies' potential as a kind of universal visual Esperanto faded long before the advent of the talkies, since from their inception intertitles were inserted between film scenes, written in the language of the film producers. These intertitles helped to develop the plot. Given the astounding popularity of cinema, film directors were obsessed with reaching larger and more widespread audiences, and consequently they needed to shorten plot developments, accelerate the events, and tell more in a shorter time, since filming every movement of the screen actors was indeed a tedious activity in those early days.

For these reasons, written texts appeared shortly after the birth of cinema as a complement to the visual narration. Written language helped audiences understand the temporal, spatial and narrative ellipses that were necessary to
condense the story into a few minutes. Initially, the use of language was strictly limited to just a few intertitles, which, significantly, were called ‘subtitles’ at that time, and later renamed intertitles with the advent of the talkies. Intertitles were translated in different ways (see Chaume 2010 for a detailed review), the first form of AVT that we know.

One of the ways intertitles were translated was through ‘simultaneous interpreting’ in the cinema itself. This was usually done by the pianist – generally a man – or another man working alongside the pianist, although the resulting oral translation was not always what we would consider as orthodox translation today. These translations went beyond the bounds of linguistic and cultural transfer into the realm of dramatic art, since what these men actually did was to interpret the film, add new information, make use of stagy intonation and even pre-empt the plot. This phenomenon can also be observed in Japan and, later, in Thailand. The binshi were Japanese performers who provided live narration for silent films – Japanese or otherwise – who stood at the side of the screen and introduced and related the story to the audience. Borrowing from the theatre, the binshi often spoke for the characters on-screen and played multiple roles (Viviani 2011:69-70). This tradition was also adopted in Taiwan and Korea and may be at the root of Russian voice-over.

When the talkies (sound films) came onto the scene, it prompted one of AVT’s most popular formats: dubbing. The first full-length sound film is often claimed to be The Jazz Singer (Al Johnson 1927), shown on 6 October 1927, in New York City, with a mixture of intertitles and some spoken dialogues. Although there had been previous attempts to incorporate sound into movies, The Jazz Singer opened up a new era in the history of cinema, and subsequently, in the history of AVT. In 1928, Warner released the first full talkie, The Lights of New York (Bryan Foy 1928).

The transition to sound film was met with fierce hostility from the cinema industry. Actors were not prepared to act with sound, since they had been trained to exaggerate their performances to compensate for their lack of a voice. Film directors thought sound would destroy cinema as an artistic representation, as posited in the now-famous historic manifesto published by Eisenstein, Alexandrov and Pudovkin in the review Close Up, in October 1928, entitled The Sound Film: A Statement from USSR. These renowned film directors warned that sound would put an end to the era of universal Esperanto that the iconographic language of silent movies represented. Other film producers, such as Louis B. Mayer (Metro Goldwyn Mayer), did not take such a hard-line stance against the talkies, but were so convinced that cinema’s huge popularity would ensure the acceptance of English as the universal language, that the first Metro films were exported without any subtitles or dubbing. This naive ethnocentric utopia was, however, soon swept away by the realization that translation was an essential reality. As early as 1923, David W. Griffith noted that only 5% of the world’s population then spoke English and rhetorically wondered why he had to lose 95% of his potential audience.

The first large-scale attempt to translate audiovisual texts consisted of producing versions of North American films subtitled into German, French and
Spanish. However, the major issue facing the film industry was that at that time — the early 1930s — millions of cinema-goers could not read. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands quickly accepted the subtitling mode, given their high levels of literacy, and also the low cost of subtitles compared to dubbing. In 1928, two engineers from Paramount Pictures managed to record a synchronized dialogue matching the lips of onscreen characters in the film *Beggars of Life* (William A. Wellman 1928), and months later in their first all-talker, *Interference* (Roy Pomeroy 1928). The commercial potential of this new AVT mode was immediately recognized. In 1929, Radio Pictures dubbed the film *Rio Rita* (Luther Reed 1929) into German, French and Spanish. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, United Artists, Paramount Pictures and 20th Century Fox immediately followed suit with their productions.

The noticeably low quality of the first dubbings, together with artistic and aesthetic objections to the separation of face and voice, led to a strong adverse reaction to these first attempts. The advent of sound in films made audiences question the credibility and verisimilitude of cinema, its potential as a creative art and its relationship with the public. Incipient dubbings into Spanish were even more shocking since the language used for the dubbing was the so-called *neutral Spanish*, an artificial dialect that combined features from the major Spanish dialects, particularly American localisms. Neutral Spanish was promoted as a way of producing a version for the entire Spanish-speaking world that would not favour one dialect over another and thus prevent rejection by some regions. In Spain, The Disney classics were still dubbed into this artificial dialect until as late as the 1980s. The Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America are considered as one single territory for distribution of programmes in the TV market; this is why foreign programmes are still dubbed into a Neutral Spanish in this area.

At this time, a new production system came onto the scene, known as *multilingual movies* or double versions. This system consisted of shooting a film in various languages at a time, either simultaneously or very shortly afterwards. The same film director tended to work on all the versions, although this was not always the case. Different actors were used, except in certain famous cases, such as the now-classic films starring Stanley Laurel and Oliver Hardy, or Buster Keaton. These actors enthusiastically learned their translated dialogues by heart and recited them with a distinctive accent that made their films even more comical. Their success was such that, years after, in dubbings of later Laurel and Hardy films — longer films with much more dialogue — voice talents in some dubbing countries made every effort to imitate their English accents.

*Blaze o' Glory* (George Crone & Renaud Hoffman 1929) provides a good example of a multilingual movie, in which actors repeated each spoken word and engineers replicated every movement of the original camera. Within the space of a year, most producers had assembled a production team in the major dubbing languages. In order to reduce the costs of this process, multilingual movies were transferred to Joinville, north of Paris, in 1931. However, audiences in dubbing countries were more inclined to watch dubbed North American films starring famous Hollywood names, rather than the multilingual versions that used the services of second-class actors and actresses.
Technical advances quickly helped consolidate this new AVT mode. Edwin Hoping invented post-synchronization to dub actors and actresses whose voices were considered an obstacle to their reaching international artist status. Jakob Karol applied this technique to substitute original dialogues with others recorded in the target language. Dubbing companies began translating and recording films in foreign languages, and with the advent of various soundtracks in the same film, dubbing became an easy and convenient way to export films abroad. Dubbed voices were recorded onto a new track, which was later synchronized with the track containing the images and the music and effects track (known as the ‘M & E’ track). The universal promise of cinema, heralded by the silent movies and later forgotten with the advent of sound, was revitalized with dubbing.

Dubbing, both as a technological invention and as an AVT mode, therefore predated the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s. In countries that have suffered, or continue to suffer, under a totalitarian regime, dubbing is still undeservedly tainted with fascist associations. The reasons for this must be traced back to Italian and German National Socialism, later copied in Japan and Spain. First Mussolini, and then Hitler, understood that the huge number of North American films shown in Italian and German cinemas represented a major threat to their national identities, since the screening of these films was accompanied by the penetration of their language, culture and way of thinking. In 1930, Mussolini issued a decree of language protection, which was later extended in 1933 (5 October). Fascist governments, like the Spanish and the German regimes, greeted this measure with enthusiasm and adopted it in their own countries some years later (Germany, the Reich Film Law, 1934, and the Enabling Act, 1936; Spain, Act of 23 April 1941). These laws restricted the number of films that could be shown in these countries and enforced the dubbing of all foreign films into their respective target languages (Katan 2010:11).

Until the mid 1940s, all foreign films were dubbed in Spain, Germany, France and Italy. Dubbing a film turned it into a national domesticated product. The economic potential of these countries enabled them to choose this more expensive AVT mode. These factors should be taken into account in the frequently futile debate over the pros and cons of dubbing and subtitling, generally simplified to subjective and pseudo-intellectual arguments.

Without minimizing the fascist agenda in consolidating dubbing in some of these countries – dictators considered dubbing to be the ideal mechanism of keeping evil ideologies outside their borders, which wouldn’t be the case in subtitling – we cannot ignore the fact that dubbing predates these regimes, that the population in most of these countries had low levels of literacy, that these countries had a dominant language, and that they had the economic power to meet the cost of dubbing. Dubbing became firmly established in these countries for these reasons and factors. Obviously, dubbing was not the only way films could be translated. The former Soviet countries opted for voice-over of fiction audiovisual texts; countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands, the Flemish part of Belgium, or the former Yugoslavian countries, chose subtitling as a cheaper and easier way to translate audiovisual texts.
Nowadays, digital technology has fortunately helped to push aside the debate surrounding these AVT modes. Digital technology means work can be done faster and more precisely than before. As well as speeding up the process, it has reduced costs, by providing multiple recording tracks and software applications to manipulate recorded voices and sounds. It also allows simple sound or pronunciation defects to be easily corrected. But above all, it means that dubbing, subtitles, voice-overs, accessible versions and new AVT types of the same film can be produced in many languages, so that spectators decide how and when they want to watch the film. Digital technology represents a major step forward for audiences, turning mass media into tailor-made personal media.

1.5. Quality standards

Texts are subject to certain rules or genre conventions within a specific culture and time. In any text, the absence of an expected element may be received by the reader as a negative mechanism. The lack of synchronization in dubbed films or TV series in a tradition in which synchrony is normative or regulated, for instance, may turn a product into a commercial failure. Lotman (1982:125) refers to this concept with the term 'minus-mechanism', although particularly in relation to literary texts—for example, the absence of rhyme in a genre where it would conventionally be present. In the same way, the macro-genre of audiovisual texts also has a specific canon. Translated audiovisual genres (films, television series, cartoons or documentaries) should follow certain specific conventions that help audiences to recognize them, and watch them in a particular way, thereby maximizing their success.

A break with convention or canon and the absence of predictable elements do not necessarily lead to a breakdown in communication (see the example of MTV in §1.3.1); they may represent an innovation in the genre, which might succeed or fail completely, depending on the historical conditions affecting the audience. However, these departures have certain limits that we will attempt to define in this section.

From the perspective of synchrony, we will now examine the predominant elements of dubbed fictional works in the audiovisual landscape at the beginning of the 21st century.

Certain questions may be posed from the receiver's point of view: What does the audience expect from a dubbed audiovisual product? What type of dischrony (Fodor 1976:80) or lack of synchrony is most negatively and less tolerated by the audience (minus-mechanisms)? What will the viewer overlook? What is the biggest hurdle to accurate audience reception of the message? The answers to these questions will inform the translator of the prevailing norms in audiovisual translation and in dubbing particularly, and even condition his or her priorities when producing a translation. Once the norms in a given target culture and at a given moment in time have been identified, they must then be compared to prescriptive quality standards—such as defined by corporations, professionals, and conversation.
sionals, and guidelines — to verify whether they meet those quality standards, or simply conform to roughly consolidated historical conventions.

In the field of subtitling, Díaz Cintas (2003) devoted the whole of his excellent comprehensive manual on subtitling to a proposal for quality standards in this field of audiovisual translation, taking as his starting point respect for an ideal receiver. The European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST) has also been working extensively on proposals for a normative set of quality standards for subtitling, one of which was approved in 1998. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) compile a set of possible quality standards including those set by the ESIST.

Against this background, this section offers some ideas as an initial tentative proposal for quality standards in dubbing. However, it is not easy to reach a consensus on a list of quality standards, since they will inevitably be subjective. A particular dubbing may work well for some and be a failure for others. No empirical evidence has shown what a good dubbing is. Might it just be that one man’s meat is another man’s poison? If we are to set a list of quality standards without empirical evidence, we must adopt the perspective of an ideal viewer, an abstraction that simplifies our proposal, although future research should focus on different viewer groups, as suggested by Mayoral (2001) when he refers to the factors that an audience design should take into account: its heterogeneity, the passing of time, etc.

What we can come to some agreement about, nonetheless, is a set of standards that must be carefully followed in dubbing, certain priorities that must be taken into account in a standard dubbing with the concept of the ideal receiver in mind. These priorities can be grouped into the following broad areas.

1.5.1 Acceptable lip-sync

Observance of the onscreen actors’ mouth articulation (lip-sync, see § 4.4) and body movements (kinetic synchrony, see § 4.2), and especially the duration of the original actor’s utterances (isochrony, see § 4.3) is considered a cornerstone of dubbing; in other words, compliance with synchronization norms is mandatory (see Chapter 4). We might therefore say that the thresholds of acceptability are crossed when the length of the translation does not match the duration of the dialogue lines uttered by the screen actor or actress, and in close-ups, extreme close-ups and detailed lip shots, when lip-sync is not respected; or even the meaning of the translation and the meaning of the screen actors’ and actresses’ body movements are in disharmony. However, other lip and kinetic synchronies do not break this tacit agreement, despite Fodor’s insistence in his pioneering 1976 study. In Chapter 4, this issue will be dealt with extensively.

1.5.2 Credible and realistic dialogue lines

The writing of credible and realistic dialogues, in line with the oral registers of the target language, involves going slightly beyond the correct expression of
the source content in the target language, something which is also a desirable general objective in any translation (such as, for example, avoiding structural and lexical caques in the translation). Translation oscillates between two poles: its adequacy in relation to the source text and its acceptability in the target culture (see § 3.2). In the case of translation for dubbing, another key to good dubbing quality is to ensure that the target language sounds realistic, credible, and plausible; i.e., it does not take us away from the storyline. Put another way, it must be acceptable according to the canonical standards (norms) of an audiovisual text translated into the target language. The second threat to the breakdown of so-called suspension of disbelief (i.e., the willingness of the audience to overlook the limitations of the medium) must be overcome by achieving an oral register that can be defined as false spontaneous, prefabricated speech (see Chapter 5 for an extensive discussion on this topic). This is not only an issue in dubbing and subtitling; in film production one of the most widespread criticisms of some films is the artificiality of their dialogues.

Nonetheless, it is quite true that until recent decades academics and linguists had neglected oral register. Perhaps for this reason, television companies have found themselves in a situation where they are publishing guidelines for translators, but also for newscasters and scriptwriters. These guidelines or style sheets deal with how to achieve an acceptable non-spontaneous oral register and to ensure that previously scripted written language sounds as though it had not in fact been written.

1.5.3 Coherence between images and words

The third quality standard can be stated as follows: there should be coherence between what is heard and what is seen, i.e., between words and images, and likewise, between the internal coherence of the plot, on the one hand, and dialogue cohesion, on the other.

It goes without saying that the target text should be coherent not only from the semantic, but also from the iconographic, or visual, point of view. By maintaining the network of underlying conceptual relations in discourse, we can guarantee both fidelity to the content of the source text, and an overall understanding of the target text. Dubbed dialogues may be incoherent not only from a linguistic or semantic perspective, but also from an iconic viewpoint. It is surprising to see how even today, there are still international projects, such as the MUSA Project of the 1990s, which set out to translate film dialogues using automatic translation software. These dialogues are previously transcribed using a voice recognition system. The programme’s creators acknowledge, without a hint of embarrassment, that the automatic translation programme does not take the image into account, and translates the transcribed dialogues without any concern for the relations of coherence and cohesion between dialogue and image.

Remael (2000), Díaz Cintas (2003), and Chaume (2004b) present numerous illustrations of how this coherence is threatened by the constraints at work in dubbing and subtitling. The translator takes the image into account not only as
an analogous component that constrains the translation process, but also as an aid to resolving these restrictions (Martínez Sierra 2008, 2009a).

Adapting to the target language and culture involves a process of producing a target text that is cohesive not only linguistically, but also semantically, i.e. with respect to all sign systems that articulate the text (Chaume 2001). Reduction in subtitling and synchronization in dubbing may force the translator to compromise the degree of cohesion in the target text. Hatim and Mason (1997:78-96) note that in audiovisual translation interpersonal meaning is usually lost: pragmatic features conveyed in pronouns of address, question tags, phatic elements and hesitations, which show politeness, most of them semantically empty, are lost in translation. In the same way, constraints on dubbing and subtitling at times involve sacrificing the grammatical correctness of target text dialogues, which may sound somewhat strange to the receiver. Dubbing directors often insist that the target text should be well written and easily understood, without complications or ambiguities. This norm is so strong that this can happen even when the ST dialogue is purposely – artistically – ambiguous. To a certain extent, we are dealing with the same norm of explicitation put forward by Goris in his study (1993): an attempt to make the target text even more cohesive than the source text, by removing ambiguity and explaining any obscure or difficult-to-understand fragments in the source text.

1.5.4 A loyal translation

The fourth standard is loyalty or fidelity to the source text (a concept challenged in some academic circles today), understood as fidelity to content, form, function, source text effect, or all or any one of the aforementioned, depending on the job in hand. The concept of fidelity has a long tradition in translation theory (Hurtado 1990; Munday 2001). However, it would appear that the shift in interest from the source text to the target culture as a reference point in translation assessment has meant that the notion of fidelity has lost ground in the theoretical panorama of the discipline, or rather, it is understood as fidelity to the norms governing the target system. Whatever the meaning we want to give it, what remains clear is that broadly speaking, the viewer expects to see the same film that the audience sees in the source language; in other words, that the true story be told in terms of content, and on most occasions, of form, function and effect – and with no censorship. Today's audiences will not tolerate phenomena such as political, religious or sexual censorship, which were, lamentably, almost par for the course during Europe's fascist dictatorships. There are still some countries, though, like China, where films containing violence, pornography or religious propaganda are not imported (Qian 2009:17).

Interestingly, thresholds of acceptability can once again be noticed in certain settings which would be considered intolerable in others. While the spectator would not consent to changes in the plot and content of an audiovisual work (as with the astounding case of Mogambo, censored beyond recognition in Spain fifty years ago, but fortunately now retranslated), changes in other areas would be tolerated. These include:
a) acceptance of *linguistic censorship* and self-censorship – practised to a greater or lesser extent by most television stations and dubbing and subtitling companies, as well as by translators themselves

b) *mismatched registers* – translations that, because of the inclusion of lexical and structural calques from the source language, sound nowhere near idiomatic; these are particularly overbearing in productions aimed at the adolescent market

c) the astonishing changes to some film titles

d) and even the semiotic distortions caused by the use in the translation of certain characteristic features of the target culture (*over adaption*) in a typically foreign atmosphere and place.

It therefore remains to define which thresholds of acceptability audiences tolerate, and which they reject. Here perhaps, the reviled concept of *audiovisual genre* has its raison d'être and will be seen as a useful parameter in defining this threshold: certain audiovisual genres allow what would never be acceptable in others – over-adaptation can be found in cartoons more frequently than in art films, lip-sync can be overlooked in cartoons but not so often in films (De Rosa 2010:8), etc.

### 1.5.5 Clear sound quality

Other factors fall outside the control of the translator, the dialogue writer and even the dubbing director. The recording and mixing of the translated dialogues put down by the *dubbing actors and actresses* also seek to achieve a realistic effect and to fulfill the technical and acoustic conventions that characterize the activity of dubbing, which has become conventional over the years. This means that:

- dialogues from the original version must never be heard, not even in the case of a specific paralinguistic feature, such as a cough (when this happens, the spectator notices and is distracted from the film); in a voice-over, however, we do expect to hear the source text, although this should never be louder than the target version;

- dialogues are recorded in soundproof studios (as with the source text dialogues, in a process known as editing or post-synchronization), so their acoustic quality is extremely good, which enables the dialogues to be appropriately received; notably, there is always an absence of noise and interferences in the final recording, so that the sound that reaches the viewer is as clear as possible;

- the volume of the voices is also higher than in normal speech, to facilitate greater comprehension, i.e., there is always a fairly high volume and clear voices with tight articulation;

- certain sound effects such as reverberation are used in cases in which the characters have their backs to the camera or are at a distance, to create the effect of a slight echo, etc.

All of these factors are designed to create a realistic effect and complement the standards for good translation and good *dialogue writing* put forward in §
1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3 and 1.5.4. The translator can do very little to help in this field, although, if s/he works on the text synchrony and dialogue writing, symbols or comments can be added that will help the engineer to apply the right sound effects at the right moment (see Chapter 4 for lists of different national dubbing symbols).

The viewer has been conditioned to accept that s/he is watching a film and that in general, s/he will be listening to voices in stereo and with a clarity alien to real-life situations. Even when characters walk off towards the horizon, we can still hear their voices perfectly and understand what they say. We may be shown a completely dark room, for instance, but the cinematographic illusion has reached the point where, to a great extent, it is accepted that we are able to distinguish the facial features of the characters in the room, and even see their gestures. When we go into the cinema, we know that what we are going to see is not exactly real, but rather the language of film, with its grammatical rules and its own particular logic (the aforementioned suspension of disbelief). Clear sound quality is part of it. In any case, these norms depend on the sound engineer (see Chapter 2) and are outside the translator’s remit, although as conventions, they constitute a further standard of quality in what is understood as good dubbing.

1.5.6 Acting

The final standard includes the performance and dramatization of the dialogues, which is also beyond the control of the translator and the dialogue writer, although the dubbing director and the voice talents have their respective parts to play. By convention, dubbing actors and actresses — voice talents — are required to perform in such a way that they sound neither faked (overacted) nor monotonous (underacted). Overacting is without a doubt one of the factors that also cause the viewer to cross this tolerance threshold we refer to in this section. Voice talents, in their enthusiasm to dramatize the target text dialogues, or perhaps also because of their origins and training in the theatre, sometimes emphasize intonations and pronunciations to such an extent that if we hear a conversation from any big screen or television film, without knowing where the sound is coming from, we immediately know that they are cinema or television dialogues, and not real conversation. Whitman-Linsen explains:

[...] role interpretations are overdone, over dramatic, overladen with emotion. The voices sound phony and theatrical and out of keeping with body expression. Everyday conversations are enacted as if they were dealing with tragic deaths of family members and the outbreak of atomic wars. *People just do not speak like dubbers seem to imagine they do*. Whether aimed at over- or underacting, the criticism is often justified (Whitman-Linsen 1992:47, my emphasis).

Some dubbing countries tend more towards overacting, which is particularly evident in home-produced series. Whatever the case, the dramatization of
the dialogues is not part of the translators’ remit, although they may make an adequate performance more easily achievable by ensuring the oral register is realistic in the dialogues.

There are other theoreticians who agree with the points expressed by Whitman-Linsen above. Ávila (1997) highlights that the viewer expects the dubbed translation to keep to the original (I believe this to be even more patent in the case of subtitling, especially amongst viewers who are familiar with the source language; see the discussion on the concept of vulnerable translation in Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007:55-58), that the same voices should not be overused within the same production and across multiple films, and that good use should be made of technical resources – which, as previously mentioned, fall outside the translator’s brief.

The absence of these conventions, because they are predictable and conventionalized, jeopardizes the accurate transmission of the message, in terms of both information and aesthetics. Indeed, the ultimate aim of dubbing is to create a believable final product that seems real, that tricks us as viewers into thinking we are witnessing a credible story, with easily recognized characters and realistic voices. As voices in the industry state: “Good dubbing today looks like the story was recorded in the language you hear” (Wright and Lallo 2009:219).

### 1.6. Exercises

1.6.1 Find out what percentage of dubbed/subtitled films are shown in the cinemas where you live, or in your nearest big city. First, check the entertainment guide on the web to see how many films are shown in your city in a random week. Count how many of them are dubbed or subtitled, and how many are domestic productions or co-productions. Then calculate the percentage of translated films, either dubbed or subtitled, showing in that week. Consider what might account for the percentage.

1.6.2 Find a fandub on the Internet. What are your impressions? What features do you notice? List them and compare them with professional dubbings. To what audiovisual genre does the fandub belong? Why do you think this particular fandub was done?

1.6.3 Below is a quotation from Whitman-Linsen (1992:13). What do you think of this opinion?

The dubbing industry is notorious for kowtowing to economic expediencies, a wont painfully apparent in the often mediocre results of their work. Quite simply: the faster a film can be dubbed, the cheaper it is. Contenting themselves with low standards of excellence seems a small price to pay for high profits.