

8th International Conference & Exhibition
on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media

Languages & The Media

October 6 – 8, 2010

Hotel InterContinental, Berlin

New Media – New Contexts
New Translator Profiles?

Post Conference Report

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THE EVENT

Languages & The Media 2010, the 8th International Conference and Exhibition on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media, took place at Berlin's Hotel InterContinental from October 6th – 8th, 2010. An international audience of more than two hundred and eighty participants from thirty-four countries gathered at the conference.

The Steering Committee included **Mary Carroll** (Titelbild Subtitling and Translation GmbH), Germany, **Jorge Díaz Cintas** (Imperial College London), UK, **Yves Gambier** (University of Turku), Finland, and **Minako O'Hagan** (Dublin City University), Ireland.

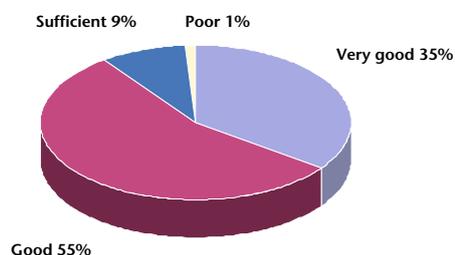
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference agenda was created through a selection process involving both a public call for proposals and in-depth research of the international media sector. The agenda encompassed forty-seven presentations, four panels and twelve sessions covering twelve diverse topics.

Sixty-seven speakers from seventeen countries gave lectures on their fields of expertise.



Overall Conference Programme

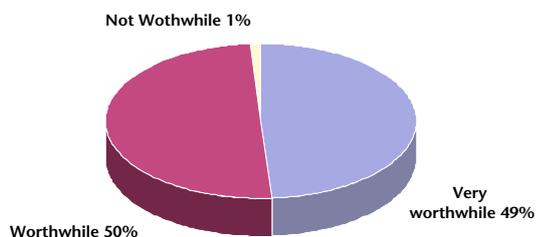


PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Prior to the event on Wednesday, October 6th, 2010, five workshops were held. International experts shared their experiences through best-practices and practical knowledge. The topics of these hands-on sessions included:

- **Audio Description: The Visual Made Verbal**
Joel Snyder, Audio Description Associates; American Council of the Blind, USA
- **An Asset-Based Approach to Video Game Translation: Onscreen Text and Dialogues**
Gianna Tarquini, Italy
- **Voice Translation: A New Translator Profile**
Carlo Eugeni, Intersteno, Italy, & Angelo Paglino, FBL, Italy
- **Online Resources for Audiovisual Translators (and Tutors)**
Jorge Diaz-Cintas, Imperial College, UK, & Andrés García, Imperial College, UK
- **On the Importance of Sound**
Josélia Neves, Instituto Politécnico de Leiria, Portugal

Overall Evaluation



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CONFERENCE AGENDA

FIRST CONFERENCE DAY

The welcome message was delivered by Yves Gambier from the University of Turku, Finland. The opening panel discussion, entitled “Technological Support of AV Media Translation including Subtitling and Dubbing”, focused on some of the key issues addressed by the conference - quality, costs and speed in the field of audiovisual translation – and set the tone for the subsequent days of the conference. In their contributions, the panellists shed light on the options, possibilities, challenges and risks affecting translators in an increasingly technical environment.

The panel was chaired by **Aljoscha Burchardt**, German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI GmbH), Germany. Panellists included **Mary Carroll** from Titelbild Subtitling and Translation GmbH, Germany, **Hans Uszkoreit**, German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI GmbH), Germany, **Josef van Genabith**, Centre for Next Generation Localisation (CNGL), Ireland, **Hanna Klimek**, European Commission, Luxembourg, and **Yota Georgakopoulou**, European Captioning Institute (ECI), UK.

Are we too late or well ahead of time? Aljoscha Burchardt began the discussion with this rhetorical question, referring to the debates which have taken place in recent years and which have been inspired by and which inspired the Language & The Media 2008 conference. The growing demand for more languages, an increase in the volume of material which needs to be translated as well as new technical developments are leading to new working profiles and giving rise to new challenges for today’s translators.



Mary Carroll pointed out the main issue: “Best quality under certain conditions for a reasonable price”. Although new technologies are already being used, the growing “dehumanisation of translation” is a thread that was articulated by the audience regarding the latest trends in AV translation. This led to a hot debate: What about the quality of human translation? What about the market? What about price pressure? **Yota Georgakopoulou** gave an insight into the client’s point of view. Like the other panellist, she saw the risks of cost and time pressures. But why shouldn’t we embrace new technologies? **Georgakopoulou** encouraged the audience to take an active part in the development of technologies, allowing us to decide for ourselves what is actually useful. **Hanna Klimek**, who represents the European Commission, encouraged participation in research in this field and called for people to listen to voices from all corners: demands from industry clients, the fears of the freelancer and translation agencies.



Josef van Genabith took the opposite view to most of the freelancers. As an advocate of advanced technologies, he suggested using and developing Statistical Machine Translation (SMT). SMT could be a huge help in terms of the working process already mentioned: speed, cost and quality. At this point in the debate, even more participants voiced their opinions: What about quality? We still need human translators, subtitlers and localisers to “teach” machines the differences in the meaning of words, specific vocabulary and appropriate phrasing. Another important point is the change of working processes and working profiles. In an extreme scenario, the translator no longer translates but simply post-edits the results of machine translation. According to the audience, this was “Not really satisfying”.

COMMENT

A massive thank you to you for another successful L&M conference. Thoroughly enjoyable and made some great contacts and got plenty of new ideas for our work for the next two years.

Mark Harrison (SPEAKER), MTV Networks, UK



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As mentioned previously, in facing these new challenges the panellist agreed that freelancers, in-house translators as well as the clients themselves should enter into dialogue and discuss their specific needs. The issue of technical demands in particular and their integration into working processes has to be discussed. The message of the panellist was, be pro-active and help to develop technologies that can help you in your daily working process, use them to work quickly, adequately and creatively. "Are we too late or well ahead of time?" Let's see what the future holds.

The first conference day covered a wide variety of topics and subjects, such as New Media, training and the accessibility of media for the deaf and hard-of-hearing as well as the visually impaired. In two sessions chaired by **Jorge Diaz-Cintas** from Imperial College London, UK, and **Bernd Benecke** of the Bayerischer Rundfunk, Germany, media access, technical challenges and quality issues were examined. The day closed with a panel discussion on the topic of "DTV4ALL: The Reception of SDH in Europe", led by

COMMENT

Excellent atmosphere, very conducive to informal exchange of ideas. The organisation was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed the 2 days. Thank you.

Laura McLoughlin (SPEAKER), National University of Ireland, Ireland

Federico Spoletti, SUB-TI, UK. Based on a unique questionnaire from different European countries, the use of subtitles for the hard-of-hearing and deaf was presented and discussed. Participants were given an overview of the current situation by **Pablo Romero-Fresco**, Roehampton University, UK, **Henrik Gottlieb**, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, **Carlo Eugeni**, Intersteno, Italy, **Agnieszka Szarkowska**, University of Warsaw, Poland, and **Verónica Arnáiz Uzquiza**, Universidad de Valladolid / Grup de Recerca Transmedia Catalonia, Spain.

The numerous sessions during the day addressed questions from participants, while the evening reception was an opportunity to continue the discussions and also to socialise with colleagues from thirty-four countries.

SECOND CONFERENCE DAY

The second conference day began with a **panel discussion** on the "Role and Status of the AV Translator" chaired by **Mary Carroll**, Titelbild Subtitling and Translation GmbH, Germany. The first day's discussion of the use of technologies and their influence on costs, quality and speed was followed up in the morning of the second day. In their presentations, international representatives focused on the actual situation in different countries as well as on structural changes.

Today's translator seldom works in-house or directly with clients but is often part of a larger production network. **Kristiina Abdallah** from the University of Eastern Finland gave an insight into the quality of production networks from the subcontracting translator's viewpoint. Based on her empirical analysis and personal experience, she suggested that some translators suffered from quality-related ethical stress. These challenges should be integrated into translator training, according to Abdallah.

Frederikke Amalie Bodil Foss and **Mathias Larsen**, both from the Danish Union of Subtitlers in Denmark, focused on the modern media translator in a user-generated world and the quality demands of a new generation. On the one hand, young media users are prepared to accept YouTube's subtitling feature as well as the output of Google Translate. On the other hand, when they are on the lookout for something more substantial, they demand higher quality. Bodil Foss and Larsen are sceptical of automatic translations, which merely provide the gist of a text. **Estelle Renard** & **Florence Curet** from ATAA (Association



PARTICIPANT STATEMENTS

Very good for networking.

Some really interesting sessions, especially in the parallel sessions.

The topics which are being discussed are very interesting & important for all of us translators, subtitlers....!



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COMMENT

Yes! It was a great event for me and I took full advantage of it, especially as this was my first time to attend a conference on Languages and the media. I learnt a lot from the Conference, especially as the participants and the speakers and chairpersons of the sessions and panels came from different countries. I intend to attend Languages and Media 2012 conference. I say Bravo! to all of you who put in all of your time, money and talents to ensure the success of the conference. I really found the conference more than worthwhile and very interesting. However, I do think that more Africans should be encouraged to attend these types of conferences because they will learn a lot from them.

Lum Suzanne Ayonghe (SPEAKER), University of Buea, Cameroon



des Traducteurs Adaptateurs de l'Audiovisuel) gave an insight into the situation of translators in France, which is similar to that in Finland.

Anna-Maija Ihander from Finland focused on the audiovisual translator's situation in Finland, explaining that although the demand for AV translators has grown with the explosion in television channels as a result of the digital breakthrough, the salaries offered by agencies have plummeted.

The general opinion of the panel was that as long as prices continue to drop, there is a real danger that AV translation will become a field which nobody respects or wants to build a career on, where most of the work is done by underpaid and overworked students before moving on to more lucrative endeavours.



"United we are strong". The panellist and audience agreed that now more than ever there is a need to join forces and unite in order to make a step forward. This involves pro-active involvement in changes as well as entering into a dialogue with translation agencies, multinationals, political stakeholders and translators. People can help each other with translation dilemmas and discuss their work and the state of the industry, and also chat about other things and get to know each other.

Following the opening panel, the second conference day included further sessions on topics such as the latest tools and innovative formats of language transfer, new aspects in the fields of dubbing, subtitling and audio description, as well as issues of quality management.



One constant theme running through the conference was how to achieve a balance between cost and quality in the production process and customer needs. Whether technology is a help or hindrance was also part of the discussion. Alexander Gerber, chairperson of the final panel discussion of Languages & The Media, asked "Is technology a threat?" The panel discussion entitled "Production and Distribution of AV Media: New Channels and Technologies" involved **Boris Groth**, Fraunhofer Verbund (IuK), **Matthias Müntefering**, Deutsche Synchron GmbH, and **Thomas Schildhauer**, Institute of Electronic Business e.V., Germany. The panellists discussed automation and its results as well as quality standards using crowd sourcing. The final discussion focused in particular on changing job profiles. New technologies and social media still have much to offer in terms of usage, benefits and opportunities. The panel agreed that the next important step would involve focusing on training and education; people should be trained how to use the new tools to achieve a balance between high quality and adequate working conditions. Translators have to adapt their profiles and develop new skills.



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ESIST AWARD

Courage and passion are the cornerstones of new developments and pioneering change. For the first time at Languages & The Media, the ESIST (European Association for Studies in Screen Translation) Award was conferred to a pioneer of AV translation: **Jan Ivarsson**, one of the founding members of ESIST and a long-time member of the Advisory Committee of Languages & The Media. Jan Ivarsson was born in Sweden in 1931. Sweden was one of the first countries to use subtitles as the principle method of making foreign language films accessible on television. Ivarsson studied literature, Scandinavian languages and English at Uppsala University in Sweden, where he also developed a passion for drama and theatre. He taught in Germany, France and Sweden. In 1978 his "life as a subtitler began", as Mary Carroll put it in her presentation. He was instrumental in introducing a new, computerised time code-based subtitling system at SVT, "something quite revolutionary at that time". His book "Subtitling for the Media – A Handbook of an Art" was the first of its kind and "certainly gave inspiration to many budding subtitlers, including myself, who were very happy to find guidelines on subtitling and a lot of sound, practical advice about this rather poor relative of translation studies," said Carroll. The award recognises Jan Ivarsson's lifelong contribution to audiovisual translation. This year's prize of a beautiful glass bird by Finnish glass artist Oiva Toikka was sponsored by Dansk Video Tekst, headed by another pioneer in the field of audiovisual subtitling, Ib Lindberg.

CONCLUSION

Over two days, the conference addressed the question of the changing needs and profiles of translators in a society in flux. "New Media – New Contexts – New Translator Profiles?" was the main topic. Speakers and participants raised a wealth of questions and shared their experiences on the issues of providing accessibility, guaranteeing quality and dealing with time and cost pressures. Numerous sessions during this year's conference addressed new technologies and changing working profiles.

The conference again tackled areas such as quality standards for translation, dubbing, subtitling and media access for the hard-of-hearing and visually impaired. Subtitling as well as audio description geared towards enabling media access for the deaf and hard-of-hearing as well as blind and partially sighted audiences is one element of audiovisual translation which was part of the conference. Media experts also provided an insight into the localisation of media content as well as technological innovations in machine translation.

EXHIBITORS

The conference was accompanied by a parallel exhibition that featured the following companies:

- EZTitles Development Studio Ltd.
- Nuance Communications Germany GmbH
- Screen Subtitling Systems
- SysMedia
- TITELBILD

Furthermore Sub-Ti supported the conference as a sponsor.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 2012
Hotel InterContinental, Berlin



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