

AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION FOR TELEVISION IN ROMANIA. AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract: The present paper represents a first approach in the field and deals with the description of language transfer methods used for television productions in Romania. According to the preference in audiovisual translation in Europe, Romania is considered a subtitling country. Despite this general preference, other language transfer methods such as dubbing, voice-over, and sign language are also used. The focus of the article deals with a more comprehensive overview of the AVT in television production in Romania. The paper offers a brief analysis of the variety and distribution of AVT based on empirical data.

Keywords: AVT, audiovisual translation, subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, television, AVT in Romania.

1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is a continuously growing market in present days due to the development of media and audiovisual communication. In Europe, AVT has a rich and complex tradition and it is subject to continuous changes determined by the national and supranational regulations concerning the access of the audiences to the audiovisual productions. These factors determined modifications in the use AVT modalities in European countries. They determined, for example, the use in traditional *dubbing countries* such as Spain of the subtitling for hard of hearing and hearing impaired at on a large scale in television productions. On the other hand, we can observe in the last two decades that dubbing is also present as an AVT modality for television in traditionally considered *subtitling countries*. We can state, based on these observations that *technical advances, legislation, and accessibility* are important factors that may

change the traditional view on the AVT for television which is determined to evolve and becomes more composite by the presence of various modalities of language transfer for TV productions.

In Romania, AVT for television is based in a long tradition which begins with the foundation of Televiziunea Română (TVR) in 1956 and always stated preference for subtitling. Despite this preference, since the beginning of the Romanian television the subtitling was not the only AVT modality used for the linguistic transfer as we will describe further on.

Language transfer practices in Romanian television are very little known and documented. The current paper aims to contribute to fill in the gap in the study of AVT for television in Romania, providing an empiric description of the AVT modalities used for television in Romania. The main objective is to provide a comprehensive inventory of AVT modalities and their context of use on the screen and eventually mention their tendencies of development.

The current paper represents a first approach to the description of audiovisual translation in Romania and will be followed by other studies illustrating various aspects of the use of the AVT in Romania. This will allow researchers, translators, and students to have a better perspective on the AVT environment in Romania and will provide a more comprehensive approach of the complexity of the language transfer methods in a so-called *subtitling country*.

2. General Panorama of AVT

It is generally accepted that the audiovisual translation in Europe, despite the use of almost all its modalities in all European countries, shows clear preference for one of them. Different factors such as *politics*, *economy*, and *audience habits* determined the preponderant use of one specific AVT modality in each country (Nootens: 1986; Baker: 1989, 75; Gottlieb: 1989, 244; Dries: 1994/1995, 36; Ballester Casado: 2001; Diaz-Cintas: 2001). Following these criteria AVT scholars stated that in Western European countries there is a strong preference for the *dubbing*, in Eastern European countries the *subtitling* is the most important AVT modality, and in a number of Central European countries prevails the *voice-over* (Gottlieb: 1989; Safar et al: 2011).

According to Safar (2011) AVT for television in Europe, there are 15 *subtitling countries*, 10 *dubbing countries*, 5 *voice-over countries*, 2 *source language countries*, and one country where both of modalities are preferred in different regions¹.

On the other hand, scholars (Luyken: 1991: 188; Díaz-Cintas: 2004: 50; Pedersen: 2011, 8) also stated that the early distinction between *source language countries* *subtitling countries*, *dubbing countries*, and *voice-over countries* are not so strict and represent just the traditional main AVT modality. In practice, the situation may be slightly different since the AVT modalities become more and more complex and many different factors influence the choice of AVT modalities in one country, such as *genre*, *audience*, *politics*, *finance*, and *tradition* (Pedersen: 2011, 8). Nevertheless AVT scholars continue to refer to *subtitling countries* or *dubbing countries* using this distinction in order to individualise a country or a group of countries in opposition to another group. In the present article, we will give a broader connotation to the terms *subtitling country*, *dubbing country*, and *voiceover country* on a broader meaning that describes a traditional language transfer method for the television used as main AVT modality at national level in a country. Nonetheless we will take into consideration the modern perspective on AVT trends which may provide very valuable insight for a more comprehensive description of the use AVT methods employed in television within one country.

It can be observed that there is a lack of documentation and research in the field which makes it difficult to carry on a thorough analysis about AVT modalities used in Romania and their distribution in television or cinema. Romania is only mentioned in some short statements in Dries (1994/1995: 36), Díaz-Cintas (2004, 50), and Safar et al (2011: 8) as a *subtitling country*. On national level, the AVT variety is much more complex in Romania due to the fact that, depending on the *genre* and *audience* different AVT modalities are used for the language transfer on the screen.

Therefore, in Romania one can see on television, depending on the genre of TV production, *subtitling*, *dubbing*, *voice-over*, and *sign language*. In what follows we propose a much comprehensive approach on this field which should provide more accurate information about the use of AVT in our country.

¹ It is the case of Belgium where, according to the study coordinated by Safar the TAV preferred for television is subtitling in the Flemish-speaking zones and dubbing in French-speaking zones.

3. Audiovisual Translation for Television in Romania

The history of audiovisual translation in Romania begins with the creation of the Romanian television in 1956. Even if Romania is considered a traditional *subtitling country*, AVT in the Romanian television always consisted of more than one modality of language transfer on the screen. This diversity was a constant characteristic of AVT in Romania since its beginnings until the present days. In time, AVT modalities which were already in use evolved and other new modalities were added, especially with the apparition of commercial television after the Romanian revolution in 1989.

Taking into account the history of Romanian television we can distinguish two main periods of the development of AVT in Romania. The first period 1956-1989 is characterised by the presence of three basic AVT modalities: *subtitling*, *free commentary* and *narration*. These modalities were used for the television productions in foreign languages and their prominence on the screen was not significant since in communist Romania the foreign TV programs were not broadcasted very often. We can also observe that, during this early period, AVT modalities were differentiated. For instance, the movies were always *subtitled*, the live transmissions of foreign sportive events were always supported by *free commentary*, and the cartoons were *narrated*.

After 1989, a series of changes occurred in Romanian television which suggests a new development period. This period is characterised by the establishment of the commercial television, the publication of the first Romanian audiovisual law², and by the diversification of the television productions. In this period, many foreign television productions are broadcasted in Romania. These changes had a significant influence on AVT for television in our country.

In the first place, it is important to mention that the prominence of AVT modalities is recognised by the Romanian audiovisual law³ in 2002. The text of the law no. 504 / 2002 mentions that national televisions may assure the access to their programs for the deaf and hearing impaired, therefore, all televisions may assure *subtitling* or *sign language interpretation* for at list 30 minutes per day. Another important legislative initiative which influenced AVT presence on the TV screen in Romania was the modification, in 2005, of the *law no. 500/2004*

² The first audiovisual law in Romania was published in *Monitorul oficial* in 25.05.1992.

³ The *Law no. 48 approved in May 21, 1992*, the first version of the Romanian audiovisual law doesn't mention any AVT modality. It was subject of many modifications and amendments and eventually mentions AVT modalities.

concerning the *Use of the Romanian in public spaces, public relations, and public institutions*⁴. This law mentions that all texts of general-interest, written or spoken in a foreign language may be translated or adapted into Romanian. This law has been modified in 2015 and consequently, all TV programs broadcasted by national televisions in the minority languages of Romania have to be translated or adapted for the screen.

We can observe in the text of different laws, decisions, and amendments concerning the audiovisual materials broadcasted in Romania that AVT modalities increase in number and complexity. For example, the *Decision no. 220 from February 24, 2011 concerning the Code of regulations of audiovisual content* mentions the *subtitling, the audio-description, and “other modalities allowed by digital technologies”*⁵.

In 2014, a modification of the audiovisual law in Romania completes the landscape of AVT for television making the linguistic transfer on the screen mandatory for regional televisions too⁶. In Romania, the Department of Interethnic Relations of the Romanian Parliament publishes on its webpage⁷ that there are 21 televisions in 9 cities broadcasting TV programs in the languages of the minorities. Thirteen of the mentioned regional televisions are reported to broadcast only in Hungarian and other 8 regional televisions broadcast TV programs in different minority languages such as: German, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Serbian, and Romani. Their commitment to subtitle or adapt into Romanian their programs in minority languages completes the panorama of AVT for television in Romania.

According to different audiovisual regulations we can state that AVT for television in Romania has been diversified during this second period of AVT evolution when the AVT panorama becomes richer and addresses larger audiences such as, for example, the persons with disabilities.

Concerning the use of the AVT modalities, it can be state that Romanian legislation allows each television to decide the method of language transfer on the screen. Therefore, even if

⁴ For more information, please see <http://lege5.ro/en/Gratuit/gu3dsnbt/legea-nr-500-2004-privind-folosirea-limbii-romane-in-locuri-relatii-si-institutii-publice> and <http://www.senat.ro/legis/PDF%5C2015%5C15L571LG.pdf>

⁵ For more information see: DECIZIE Nr. 220 din 24 februarie 2011 privind Codul de reglementare a conținutului audiovisual <http://www.cna.ro/DECIZIE-Nr-220-din-24-februarie.html>

⁶ Depending on region, in Romania, tregional televisions can broadcast TV productions in the languages of the minorities such as: Hungarian, German, Serbian.

⁷ Guvernul României, Departamentul de relații interetnice: <http://www.dri.gov.ro/1812-2/> (last consulted on 09.05.2016).

subtitling is the most used AVT modality, there are many other modalities used in function of *genre* and *audiences*.

In the following sections of this paper we will discuss the distribution of the AVT modalities used for television in Romania.

3.1. Subtitling for television in Romania

Romania is traditionally categorised as a *subtitling country* due to the fact that its main AVT modality since the beginnings of the Romanian Television in 1956 was the *subtitling*.

During the communist period in 1956-1989 the subtitling was the first choice in the language transfer for television. It was used for *TV series* (*Dallas*; *Bewitched - Ce vrăji a mai făcut nevasta mea*), for *movies* (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Tarzan*, *Dr Jivago*, *Casablanca*, *Indiana Jones*) but also for *documentaries* (*The Undersea World* with Jaques Yves Cousteau 1968-1974⁸), children TV programs (*Gala desenului animat - Viorica Bucur*⁹) children series (*Arabela - 1979-1981*, *Vizitatorii - 1981*), and for *animation movies* (*Aristocats - Pisicile aristocrate*, *Pinocchio*; *Snow White*, *The Jungle Book - Cartea junglei*).

During this period not only the Romanian television but also the technique of subtitling was at the beginning, too. In various interviews, the renowned movie translator Irina Margareta Nistor remembers that at the very beginning, the subtitles were written by hand by a team of graphicicians after a while the subtitles were typewritten (Nistor: 2015).

In this period, as Irina Margareta Nistor mentions in her interviews:

„Totul se facea pe suluri mari, ca niste pergamente, care erau introduse manual de catre persoane special angajate pentru acest lucru. Titrajele se nimereau fie mai sus, fie mai jos pe ecran. (Popan: 2005)

The subtitling was done by translators without previous training in subtitling and this method of linguistic transfer on the screen was considered more an adaptation than a real translation. The workflow was also very stressing due to the fact that the translator had no time to prepare the translation or to document it. Everything was done by hearing without script, without the possibility to repeat the sequences in order to understand better the text, and with very poor translation tools such as a printed dictionary.

⁸ For more information see www.imdb.com.

⁹ According to Viorica Bucur, (see Țonea 2009) *Gala desenului animat* was always subtitled.

During the second period of development of the Romanian television, after 1989 the TV program is extended, it is also more diversified, and increases the amount of foreign TV productions broadcasted by all TV stations in Romania. The *subtitling* is used for language transfer of the *movies, series, and soap operas* but also for *children programs, animation movies, animation series*¹⁰, *documentaries, and news*. Subtitling still continues to be the AVT modality preferred in Romania.

During the '90s the Romanian subtitlers were mere translators without special training in the field. In 2004-2005 the Institut Culturel Français in collaboration with Universidad Pompeu Fabra de Barcelona and Université de Toulouse initiated a training course in audiovisual translation for the Romanian professors of the most important universities in Romania, namely Universitatea București, Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” of Cluj-Napoca, Universitatea Timișoara și Universitatea Al.I.Cuza of Iași. During 2 years, 8 romanian professors participated at training sessions in subtitling in Bucarest, Barcelona, and Toulouse. Consequently, in 2006, subtitling classes were introduced in Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and gradually, in the other Romanian universities.

Nevertheless we can state that, nowadays, the most complex training program for AVT is organised by the MA program in Traductology and Terminology at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. It presents the advantage is it offers an EMT MA program and the students receive AVT training during two semesters. Their preparation is completed by the participation in different AVT projects, such as Comenius project Clipflair (clipflair.net) and also by different AVT collaborations with Cluj-Napoca city council and also with the local television. Some of the students also participated as volunteers to various film festivals such as TIFF (tiff.ro/en).

During this period of time, the technologies evolved and the analogic systems were abandoned for the digital systems and the Romanian television had to update its subtitling technologies, too. According to the Irina Nistor (Popan: 2005), the first subtitling electronic system was used in Romanian television only after the anti-communist revolution, in 1992-1993. Nowadays all Romanian television stations use modern digital subtitling systems.

¹⁰ In september 1st, 1998 the chanel Cartoon Network was broadcasted in Romania. All cartoons were broadcasted in original version with subtitles.

3.2. Dubbing for television in Romania

Early studies on audiovisual translation (Nootens: 1986) state that, from the point of view of the audiences, it is very difficult to change the AVT system because for the citizens of one country the AVT system they are used to is the best. The validity of this early statement was demonstrated in 2011, when a member of the Romanian parliament¹¹ proposed a legislative initiative which intended to change the main AVT modality in Romania from *subtitling* to *dubbing*. This legislative initiative has provoked strong opposition and vigorous public debates among the audiences, ATV professionals, artists, and politicians. Largely debated in the media, the legislative initiative was eventually dropped.

The same attitude against dubbing in Romania can be observed in the web forums debates in 2011. For example, a web forum contributor says:

*e o idiotenie sa dublezi audio in romana. nici acum, dupa 10 ani nu i-am iertat ca au tradus cartoon network.*¹²

It's stupid to dub the soundtrack into Romanian. not even now, after 10 years, I didn't forgive them for translating [dubbing] cartoon network. (our translation)

And in his/her opinion it is better if audiences can choose the language and the AVT modality they want to see and hear on the screen, which, in his/her case, was OV with subtitling. Other public feedback regarding the dubbing channels in Romania consisted in a web campaign against the dubbing in Romanian of Cartoon Network, organised in 2009 by a language school in Bucharest¹³.

At the present time the discussion is closed and the Romanian audiences, as they already proved in this situation, didn't change their preference for *subtitling*.

This doesn't mean that dubbing is not used as language transfer on screen in Romania. On the contrary, many TV channels broadcast its programs partially¹⁴ or even completely in Romanian,

¹¹ For more information please see the *Mediafax* news article: *Victor Socaciu vrea ca toate filmele să fie dublate în limba română. Ești de acord cu această inițiativă?* URL <http://www.mediafax.ro/cultura-media/victor-socaciu-vrea-ca-toate-filmele-sa-fie-dublate-in-limba-romana-esti-de-acord-cu-aceasta-initiativa-8237098> and URL: adevarul.ro/news/politica/o-aberatie-legea-dublarii-filmelor-tv-1_50ad901b7c42d5a663975d64/index.html

¹² Forum Softpedia, URL http://forum.softpedia.com/topic/845674-discovery-national-geographic-dublare-sau-subtitrare/page__st__36 (last access 10.05.2016).

¹³ For more information about this topic please see URL <http://www.shakespeare-school.ro/campania-cartoon-network-in-limba-engleza/>

this is the case of many children channels such as *Cartoon Network*, *Jetix*, *Minimax*, *Disney Channel*, *Megamax*, *Boomerang*, *Nickelodeon*, *JimJam*, and *Disney Junior*. For these channels dubbing is the only AVT modality they offer. At present they don't allow Romanian audiences to switch to the original version of the cartoons/movies or to access a subtitled version, both options being deactivated now.

Translation for dubbing is done today by mere translators or by people trained abroad since in Romania dubbing is not introduced in universities as AVT discipline even if some of the university staff is trained to teach translation for dubbing.

Presented in general as "a new trend", the dubbing for television begins in Romania in the '90 with the Mexican soap opera *Mirada de mujer (Suflet de femeie)*¹⁵. It was actually the only soap opera ever dubbed in Romanian and broadcasted in 1998-1999. Excepting this TV production, *dubbing* continues to develop in Romania and in 2003 the internet users comment on different web forums the fact that, occasionally, Cartoon Network broadcasts animations dubbed in Romanian¹⁶. In the literature and in the media, specialists in the field state that this trend is promoted by American film studios which invest money and support this AVT modality for television¹⁷. This situation is verified by personal empirical observation which confirms that the only entirely dubbed TV productions in Romania can be found on the American channels broadcasted in Romania.

Different dubbing studios are involved in the Romanian dubbing of children movies, animations, and occasionally documentaries. Some of the most frequent mentioned in the literature are the following: BTI Studios (before Zone Studio), Ager Film, Mediavision, Fast Production Film, Nord Media Studio, Empire Video Production, and Audio Design Digital Art¹⁸.

¹⁴ National television and movie channels broadcast sometimes children movies in dubbed version. Sometimes they broadcast the same movie in OV with subtitles.

¹⁵ Dubbed between 1998-1999 by the studios Ager Film, one of the actors involved in the dubbing of the soap opera being Ruxandra Sireteanu (Roth: 2014).

¹⁶ For more information about this topic please see the thread *Cartoon Network a luat-o razna :(...*, on the forum Softpedia, URL <http://forum.computergames.ro/7-generalitati/58645-cartoon-network-luat-o-razna.html?s=f7e7e0f4c9bb10cd628f1d0c7c5a3efe> (last access 10.05.2016).

¹⁷ An example is the article written by Victor Popescu „Dublajul desenelor animate invadează marele ecran” in *Cotidianul*. June 8, 2007 (last access 10.10.2008).

¹⁸ For more information on the dubbing studios in Romania, please go to the professional webpage of the mentioned dubbing studios.

3.3. *Voice-over, Narration and Free Commentary*

In the current section we present three similar AVT modalities widely used in Romanian television before and after 1989. We choose to discuss all three AVT modalities in the same section due to the fact that, in Romania they generate confusion being referred very often as *dubbing*.

For example, in an interview with Irina Margareta Nistor¹⁹, the journalist asks her about the *subtitling* before 1989 and in her answer Irina Margareta Nistor mentions the *dubbing*, nevertheless both are talking about *narration*:

C: *La un moment dat subtitrarea filmelor s-a oprit, cum ați trecut de momentul ăsta?*

IMN: *Desigur că a fost o etapă care s-a încheiat atunci când s-a dat legea audiovizualului, pentru că din momentul acela dublarea intra sub incidența legii. Era în '96. În martie, de ziua mea! Dar tot îmi face plăcere din când în când să mai fac simultane, pe scenă, ca pentru frații Dardenne, pentru că lumea simte nevoia să fac eu chestia asta. (Interview cinemagia.ro)*

This demonstrates that for the Romanian audiences, media, and even for some of the AVT translators, the AVT modalities are reduced to the dichotomy *subtitling-dubbing* and they are not familiar with other AVT modalities and their characteristics. Therefore we consider necessary to make some essential theoretical distinctions based on the literature in the field in order to get things clear.

Dubbing, voice-over, narration, and free commentary are AVT modalities usually referred in the literature as *revoicing* (Karamitroglou: 2000, 6). *Voice-over* is defined by Luyken et al (1991, 80) as:

“Faithful translation of original speech, approximately synchronous delivery, used only in the context of monologs such as an interview response or a series of responses from a single interviewee. The

¹⁹ For more information see the following interview on the webpage of *Cinemagia*, URL <https://www.cinemagia.ro/stiri/irina-margareta-nistor-eram-convinsa-ca-la-paris-pe-strazi-e-o-muzica-21413/> (last access 10.05.2016).

original sound is either reduced entirely or to a low level of audibility.”

(Luyken et al: 1991, 80)

Different scholars such as Orero (2006, 3), Franco (2001: 290), and Kilborn (1993: 648) observe that *voice-over* is well suited in particular TV genres as for example *TV news*, *interviews*, and *documentaries*. Nevertheless it is also used as main AVT modality in countries like Poland and Russia, referred in the literature as *voice-over countries*.

Narration (Franco et al: 2010, 41) states that in the literature often *voice-over*, *narration* and *commentary* are mentioned together without any theoretical distinction which can have negative consequences for the *commentary* and *narration* can be understood as instances of *voice-over* which is not the case. On the other hand Karamitroglou (2000, 6) considers that in the literature the distinction between *voice-over* and *narration* are not clearly set therefore he chooses to discuss these concepts as *voice-over*. In the current paper we agree with the classifications of Luyken (1991) and Franco et al (2010) and consider that *voice-over* and *narration* are distinct AVT modalities.

In the literature, the distinction the scholars operate between *narration* and *voice-over* is very slight. It is general accepted that the *voice-over* refers to the translation of a single speaker (a monologue) in a non-fictional TV genre as for example: *interviews*, *political discourses*, and *documentaries*. *Narration* as AVT modality consists of all the voices in the translation of fictional TV genres such as: *cartoons*.

The third AVT modality, the *free commentary* consists of a type of translation which is not accurate with the original and doesn't take into account the lip synchronisation (Luyken: 1991, 139-140). It is used in general for *documentaries* and *live TV transmissions*. All these AVT modalities are cheap translation methods for they don't require specialised translators, expensive technologies or special facilities. This is the reason why they were constantly used in Romanian television since its beginnings.

Voice-over, *narration*, and *free commentary* are differently used by TV channels in Romania before and after 1989. Their importance and prevalence on the TV screen has also changed in time. In what follows we will describe each of these AVT modalities.

3.3.1. Voice-over for television in Romania

Voice-over, as described in the literature, is present in TV programs before 1989 especially in the translation of non-fictional TV genres such as *TV news*. TV programs such as *Telejurnal* included also a brief section of *International news*. Depending on the audiovisual material transmitted on TV (static image or video with original soundtrack) the TV speaker performed live *voice-over*. An example of voice-over in Romanian television before 1989 can be observed in *Telejurnal* of September 14, 1971²⁰, when Romanian television broadcasts material about the protests of English workers. The declaration of their can be heard in parallel with the voice-over performed by the TV speaker.

After 1989, voice-over continues to be used for non-fictional TV productions. It can be occasionally observed on all Romanian televisions and it is used in the context of the translation of *TV news, interviews, talk shows, political discourses*, and so on. Sometimes, televisions transmit the political discourses together with the simultaneous/consecutive interpretation which creates the impression of *voice-over*. It is the case of the discourse of the president Bill Clinton in 1997²¹ and of the discourse of George Bush in November 2002²².

Nevertheless we can notice a strong tendency in Romanian television channels which seem to prefer the subtitling of the political discourses and declarations in the case of less known languages such as Russian and Chinese. As an example, *Observer TV* news program in 22 October 2016 subtitled the declaration of the Chinese president²³ at a reception in London. The same situation can be observed in *Știri TV* program of Antena3 channel when the declaration of Vladimir Putin²⁴ in the press conference of 9 January 2009 was also subtitled.

3.3.2. Narration for television in Romania

Narration was a very popular AVT modality in Romanian television, especially in the period 1956-1989, when it was often present on TV productions. It is particularly important to highlight that, for the most of the Romanian audiences; *narration* is referred as *dubbing of voice-over* in TV interviews, film festivals, media, and forum discussions about AVT in Romania.

²⁰ For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

²¹ For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

²² For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

²³ For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

²⁴ For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

The characteristics of this AVT modality allow us to insist that we are in the presence of a distinct type of AVT which should not to be taken for *dubbing* or *voice-over*. In Romania, before 1989, foreign TV productions for children were translated using *narration*. As Chira (2009) describes in an interview, in this AVT modality, a translator listened once the video material to be translated and simultaneously registered his/her voice which eventually replaced the original on the TV screen:

Pentru că la începutul anilor '70, tehnica nu era dezvoltată și pentru că dublarea fiecărui desen animat trebuia să aibă în spatele vocii un traducător, se întâmpla ca de multe ori Georgeta Chira să traducă ea însăși desenele din diferite limbi.

"Prima oară am fost luată pe nepregătite să dublez un serial animat, pentru că a trebuit să înlocuiesc o colegă. Am intrat în studio în direct și a trebuit să lecturez la prima vedere. Aveam căști, filmul de desen animat care rula în fața mea, țin minte că era unul american, iar când auzeam în căști începuturile replicilor, trebuia imediat să le traduc în română și să le adaptez pe moment, astfel încât să nu fie replicile mele prea lungi sau prea scurte, ci bine legate de cele originale?, povestește Chira pentru Antena3.ro. (interview with Georgeta Chira 2009)

The translators had no special training in audiovisual translation, the criteria for their selection being their ability and motivation to work in such a difficult and stressful context. The possibilities to properly document the translation were also scarce²⁵.

At the time, there were just a few AVT translators in Romania and, due to the fact that they were performing a live translation on the screen, their voice was familiar to Romanian audiences. The names of the AVT translators such as Georgeta Chira²⁶ were famous in Romania because the Romanian audiences were familiar with their voices.

Not only the cartoons were narrated. The most important aspect of *narration* appears in Romania in the '80s and is related with the contraband of "capitalist" movies in the communist

²⁵ Nistor also mentions in one of her interviews that sometimes they had a dictionary.

²⁶ Georgeta Chira provided the *narration* for cartoons such as *Aventuri din pădurea verde* for the Romanian Television between 1973-2004.

Romania. As Irina Margareta Nistor²⁷ explains in many interviews, the translation of the occidental movies was a huge illegal operation²⁸ which allowed the access of the Romanian audiences to officially forbidden movies. As for the cartoons, we are talking about a fictional genre translated entirely by a single voice therefore, in this case too, we are talking about *narration*.

After 1989 the *narration* continued to be used for a while but only for the animation series. Mihai Cabel is a famous TV *narrator* of the most popular animation series of the '90s such as: *Țestoasele Ninja, Denver, ultimul dinosaur, Sandy Bell, Sailor Moon, Ștrumfii, Mighty Mouse, Aventurierii spațiului*, and so on. After this *narration* disappears as AVT modality and is replaced in television by *dubbing* or *subtitling*.

3.3.3. Free commentary for television in Romania

The *free commentary* is an AVT modality that was used in Romanian television before 1989 and still continues to be used today. Since we are talking about a very permissive type of AVT, generally used for non-fictional TV genres, we can observe it is especially used in *documentaries* and *live TV transmission*.

Before 1989, the Romanian television used *free commentary* as AVT for international news, where the information translated and edited into Romanian explained the static images and the video materials TVR broadcasted during the news program. For example, during the *Jurnal* of 14 of September 1971²⁹, the TV speaker provides the free commentary to different international news such as the debate around the admission of Qatar in NATO, the visit of the Afghanistan president in Moscow, an impressive traffic accident in Cheshire, and so on.

Free commentary was also used in order to outline the international visits of Nicolae Ceaușescu in different countries. When we see the video material it is clear that the guest country provides a protocol video with the most important aspects of the visit, then, in Romanian television the text was added. Such a video is *Film dedicat Vizitei Tovarășului Nicolae Ceaușescu în țări din Asia* broadcasted by the Romanian television in 1978. Also different sportive events were commented too. In the '70s, gymnastics was a very popular sport in

²⁷ Audiovisual translator works for Romanian television since 1980. She also narrated more than 3000 movies on VHS until 1996. In the present times she works as a dubbing translator.

²⁸ The AVT translator affirms she has translated approximately 3000 movies on VHS.

²⁹ For more information see the section *Filmography* of this paper.

Romania and Romanian television broadcasted very often the Olympics and other international sportive events where with Romanian participation. One of the most iconic live transmissions in sport history is the moment when Nadia Comaneci obtained the perfect 10 in Montreal, in 1979. Planetary events broadcasted by Romanian television live were also accompanied by free commentary. It was the case of the Moon landing mission of Apollo 11, broadcasted by Romanian television in July 1969. The free commentary in Romanian was provided by Andrei Bacalu, Romanian doctor and journalist who remembers:

"Prezența mea în studioul 4 al TVR, în acea zi de iulie 1969, a fost rodul hazardului. Eram pe atunci medic la Topoloveni și mă ocupam și de traduceri simultane de filme la vizionările protipendadei comuniste, mai apoi la congrese științifice. La o filmare a televiziunii am cunoscut o reporteră care m-a invitat să colaborez la tv și, din vorbă în vorbă, am ajuns la lansarea lui Apollo 11" (Aldea: 2011)

Since 1965, free commentary was also used in documentaries broadcasted by Romanian television. A well-known TV program, *Tele-enciclopedia* which uses free commentary since its beginnings in 21 may 1965, seems to be the most long-lasting TV programs in Romanian television. It is still broadcasted by the Romanian television in the same format as before 1989. According to TVR (www.tvr.ro), many scientific consultants were involved in the selection, translation and adaptation of the specialised texts as *free comentary* for *Tele-enciclopedia* here we mention notable reporters: Harald Alexandrescu, Octavian Paler, Răzvan Theodorescu, Alexandru Marinescu, and Ion Frunzetti.

This iconic program has also its “voices”. The Romanian audiences are very familiar with the actors Mariana Zaharescu, Sanda Țăranu, Traian Stănescu, Ion Caramitru, Adela Mărculescu, Lucia Mureșan, Dinu Ianculescu, Silviu Stănculescu, Irina Petrescu, Mihai-Gruia Sandu, Florian Pittiș, Carmen Movileanu, and Mircea Neacșa.

Even if TVR celebrated 50 year of *Tele-enciclopedia*, the program continues to be in the top of the preferences of Romanian audiences.

4. Language of signs for television in Romania

A more recent AVT modality introduced in Romanian broadcasting is the language of signs. It consists in the simultaneous interpretations of TV programs for the hard of hearing and hearing impaired people.

Following the UE model, Romania modified in 2014 the audiovisual law (Law no 103/2014³⁰) and stated that the hard of hearing and hearing impaired people have access to the audiovisual media. Therefore, since 9 October 2014, all national televisions in Romania may assure daily simultaneous interpretation for the language of signs during at least 30 minutes. These televisions can choose to interpret different TV programs such as: news, political and/or economy debates. They will also subtitle and interpret by the language of signs, entirely or partially, all the programs considered of major importance.

All the programs interpreted by the language of signs will be visibly indicated by the presence on screen of the warning text “*Atenție! Emisiune dedicată și persoanelor cu deficiențe de auz*” accompanied by static and easy readable sign.

5. Conclusions

As we can notice, the scholars who stated that audiovisual translation is actually a puzzle of diverse translation modalities are right. In Romania, a subtitling country, there are so many AVT modalities televisions use since 1956.

Even if the Romanian audiences, as we already illustrated with opinions published in the internet forums, will always prefer *subtitling*, other many AVT modalities will be also present on the screen depending of TV genre, audiences, and money.

For now, we can state that in Romania, in addition to *subtitling*, we can also notice *dubbing*, *voice-over*, *narration*, *free-commentary*, and *language of signs interpretation*. Not all of them are unanimously accepted by the audiences but, they have an important role in bringing a message in the Romanian homes.

Compared with other televisions there are also some AVT modalities which are absent from Romanian televisions, namely *respeaking* and *audio-description* but, we are sure that, with the

³⁰ For more information, please see http://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/LEGEA_AUDIOVIZUALULUI_CU_MODIFICARI_SI_COMPLETARI_DIN_2014.pdf

continuous development of the Romanian television, with the continuous development of the legal framework, more and more AVT modalities will be implemented in Romania too.

As we said in the introduction of our paper, this is just a first approach on the AVT in Romania. We think we outlined the main aspects of the AVT in our country and we think that the present material will provide essential information for audiovisual researchers and translation students.

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