

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND AUDIOVISUAL
TRANSLATION STUDIES: A CONCEPTUAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY OF
THE LANGUAGE OF SUBTITLES

(Linguística sistêmico-funcional e estudos de tradução
áudio visual: uma base conceitual do estudo
da linguagem de legendas)

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Abstract: *The present article contemplates two complementary dimensions, namely: (i) Audiovisual Translation Studies; and (ii) Linguistic studies giving direct attention to the language of subtitling to put forward a theoretical basis for studies focusing on The Language of Subtitles. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides theoretical tools to allow for a language-based understanding of the meaning making resources of subtitling on the basis of text analysis. It is argued that this complementarity allows for fruitful comparison and contrast of texts in a translational relationship in that it provides categories for describing similarities and differences emerging from investigations of the choices made in spoken texts translated into written language in subtitles. Investigations carried out along these lines may lead to insights in terms of the construals existent in source and target texts in order to understand the choices made in the realization of the texts.*

Key-words: *Audiovisual Translation Studies; Systemic Functional Linguistics, Metafunctions; Subtitles.*

Resumo: *O presente artigo contempla duas abordagens complementares: (i) Estudos da Tradução Audiovisual; e (ii) Estudos linguísticos que dão atenção direta a linguagem das legendas para propor uma base teórica para estudos com enfoque na Linguagem de Legendas. A Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional (LSF) contribui com ferramentas teóricas para possibilitar o entendimento baseado em linguagem dos recursos para construção de significados nas legendas com base em análise textual. Discute-se que esta complementariedade permite a comparação e o contraste de textos em relação tradutória sendo que tal teoria fornece categorias para a descrição das semelhanças e diferenças emergentes a partir de investigações das escolhas feitas nos textos falados e escritos. Investigações conduzidas nessas linhas podem levar a percepções em termos das construções existentes nos textos de partida e textos de chegada a fim de entender a motivação das escolhas linguísticas feitas nos textos.*

Palavras-chave: *Estudos da Tradução Audiovisual; Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional; Metafunções; Legendagem.*

INTRODUCTION

When I investigated subtitled films for the first time, I took a political stance and focused on the investigation of the treatment given to culture-bound terms present in the subtitles of *Cidade de Deus* (2001) and *Boyz 'N the Hood* (1991), in the context of the language pair – Portuguese/English in both directions. The research was carried out within the theoretical framework of the interface between Translation Studies (TS) and Cultural Studies (CS). The analysis originated from the hypotheses that (i) cultural elements tend to be represented or many times misrepresented in subtitles, depending on the direction of the translation, and (ii) the treatment given to culture-bound terms inevitably affects the way the two cultures involved are represented. The concepts of *domestication/foreignisation* (Venutti, 1995), the concept of *cultural representation* (Hall, 1997), and the concept of *abusive subtitling* (Nornes, 1999) were explored so as to reveal a process of exclusion of culture-bound terms, which were not present in the subtitles of the Brazilian film. Other studies in the area of subtitling have explored different aspects, such as: (i) the audiovisual environment present in subtitling and how these aspects influence the rendering of the written text (Nobre, 2002); (ii) how technical aspects involved in the activity of translating films and TV programs call for reductions and omissions due to laboratory demands and broadcasting station censorship (Luyken et al. 1991 and Dries 1995); (iii) audience and linguistic matters due to the need of presenting the spectator with a faithful translation of the original text in a synchronous delivery to fit lip movements of the source utterances (ibid.); (iv) the position of the subtitler as a potential culture planner which points to the ways the subtitler needs to obey the norms of a given market and consequently erasing signs of differences both at the linguistic level as well as aspects beyond language, i.e. cultural ones (Medeiros, 2003).

Important as these studies and dimensions that they explore are – multimodal, technological, and ideological forces at play in subtitling – they, with the very few exceptions, have tended to overlook the linguistic dimension of the subtitles as a focus of research per se. In such studies, exploration of the language of the subtitles is ancillary to the main concern of the research, which leaves the linguistic complexity inherent in the activity of subtitling undiscussed and in need of *direct*, as opposed to *indirect*, attention in the context of TS. This need for direct attention to the linguistic complexity of subtitles becomes evident when one considers

the array of linguistic issues subtitling involves; to name but a few, matters of register variation and its complexity in rendering spoken language in the written mode; technical constraints bearing upon lexical choices; and the relationship of language as a semiotic system with other dimensions partaking of subtitling as a meaning making activity (e.g. medium concerns related to visual signs and audio aspects).

The study of subtitling of foreign language films has now developed into an important area of research within the general field of multi-media translation (Taylor, 1999). Among the many semiotic modalities operating in a multimodal text (linguistic, acoustic, visual, etc.), this article will focus on one aspect in particular, namely the language of film dialogue. To discuss the issue of language inherent in translating for subtitles, this paper draws upon Halliday's (1992) view of translation as a "meaning-making activity", a "guided creation of meaning", in which I will put forward a theoretical basis for studies focusing on the Language of Subtitles with particular attention given to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which informs the study attending to the language of translation.

2. THE ACTIVITY OF SUBTITLING AND AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION STUDIES

2.1. *The activity of subtitling*

In studying subtitles, similarities and differences in relation to other kinds of written translation merit a closer look. The activity of subtitling tends to be a more complex form of translation when compared to other forms of translation of written texts. Translating from the oral to the written mode inside a semiotic environment, in which other signs contribute to the meaning making, necessarily entails awareness of the relationship of the subtitles to other factors. Some of the complexities involved in the act of subtitling include time, space and voice overlapping constraints (Luyken, et al., 1991), all of which cannot be ignored in the process of translating [subtitling] and need to be taken into account. Some characteristics of the activity of subtitling are discussed below with a view to clarifying the existing distinction as regards the type of subtitling, technical issues that permeate the activity of subtitling, the autonomy of the subtitler, and the issue of subtitling for videotapes and subtitling for the cinema.

In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Gottlieb (2005), discussing subtitling states regarding TV and video translation, states that it is possible to categorize the world into four audiovisual translation blocks: (i) *Source language* countries, known as subtitled countries, which tend to import a very small amount of films (typically English-speaking countries); (ii) *Dubbing* countries, known as target language countries, which tend to replace the source dialogues with oral target material, (typically non-English speaking European countries); (iii) *Voice-over* countries, known as target language countries, which tend towards the replacement of the spoken source dialogue with target language interpretation while the original soundtrack is turned down (e.g. Russia and Poland); and (iv) *Subtitling* countries, also known as target language countries, which tend to allow for the listening of the spoken source dialogues and present the translated version in written material, synchronizing the translated text with the source dialogue (e.g. Brazil and Argentina). Since the present paper focuses solely on subtitling procedures, block (iv) is the one providing the material for this discussion, with a focus on the Brazilian context.

In this context, and in order to approach subtitles linguistically, some distinctions have to be addressed. To begin with, the distinction between two types of subtitling: interlingual and intralingual subtitling. While the former is aimed at non-native language users, resulting in the change of languages, the latter is meant for the deaf and hard-of-hearing audience members, resulting in the change of mode but not of language. However, interlingual and intralingual subtitling have similar characteristics, in the sense that spoken dialogue is translated into the written mode.

On the basis of technical issues inbuilt in the production of subtitles, two distinctions are made: (i) Open subtitles: including cinema subtitles and interlingual television subtitles, and which are inserted into the film through a chemical, optical or laser process, thus being an inherent part of the television picture; and (ii) Closed subtitles: including closed-caption and teletext, and which are available to the spectator via an optional device present in remote-controls for TV sets making it possible for the viewer to choose a different version of the same programme simultaneously (Gottlieb, 2005). As regards the technical process of subtitling, this work deals exclusively with open subtitles since the subtitles being referred to here are the non-optional physical part of the films. As regards the types of subtitling, video translation is aimed at non-native language users;

therefore, this work deals exclusively with the translation of foreign films to the video format, or, in more technical terms, *interlingual video subtitling*.

Concerning the technical aspects of subtitling, Amaral¹ (2001) explains that there is a distinction between the production of subtitling for videotapes and for cinema audiences. One of them relates to the length of the subtitles on videotapes (up to 2 lines and 30 characters) and in the cinema format (up to 2 lines, but 36 characters). The other difference refers to the autonomy of the translator/subtitler with regard to his/her choices in the final decision of what gets translated or what does not get translated. Such an area is controversial in that it is one of the most crucial aspects between cinema and videotapes subtitling, since it is not the work of the subtitler alone that goes onto the screen. Amaral (*ibid.*) states that in the cinema the translator is free to make his/her final decisions, whereas the opposite occurs with videotape subtitling. More specifically, in videotape subtitling, the subtitler is restricted by distributors' norms. The distributor decides what is to be kept and what is left untranslated, and the subtitler has to follow this decision. Examples of untranslated items are trademarks and swear words that tend to be avoided, and the structure follows traditional grammar. Additionally, a reviser oversees the subtitler's 'finished' work, i.e. the laboratory's team of revisers and quality control groups check the work of the subtitler and are free to make any final adjustments to the translation.

In this context, it follows that the subtitler for videotapes has to deal with a much wider set of technical and other constraints set by the laboratory's regulations and by quality control groups. Therefore, video subtitlers are not the only force working on the production of subtitles, so they are not the only ones responsible for them. Accordingly, they should not be the target of critiques in studies focusing on the language of subtitles, which should take these issues into consideration when interpreting the product of subtitles.

Due to the complexities involved in subtitling, subtitles are open to investigation from different perspectives, ranging from technicalities to

1. All references to Amaral's comments are taken from Medeiros's PhD work (2003, Appendix B2). Monika Peceguero do Amaral has provided Medeiros's work with information about the production of subtitles for cinema and video in the Brazilian context. The interviewee is a professional subtitler in Brazil with 20 years experience.

audience demands. It may be said that in such a working environment, theory has not yet gained its place. However, if theoretical work can be included in the field, theoretical awareness may bring about a level of self-reflexivity, empowering subtitlers to understand their role in the construction of new texts.

2.2. The interdisciplinarity of audiovisual translation studies

Although Translation Studies (TS) has been around for many decades now – Holmes' article entitled "*The name and nature of Translation Studies*" (1972/1988/2000) envisaged the area as a disciplinary field on its own – it is only recently that Audiovisual Translation Studies (AVTS) has been established as an area of study in the field. In fact, the field of film translation was largely neglected as an object of investigation by TS scholars up until the 1990's (Delabastita, 1990). As Fawcett (1997) shows, mapping what had been carried out on *film translation* in the previous 25 years indicated that while there were around one hundred papers on dubbing and subtitling, only 15 published articles were found in journals on translation studies.

More recently, scholars from TS have been giving more theoretical and methodological attention to subtitling practices, and from a variety of perspectives. One illustration is a paper by Gottlieb (1992, reported by Fawcett, 1997), where the author observes the strategies used by spectators when watching subtitled films. The most relevant aspect of his study was the proposal of categories for the product of subtitles. Other studies deal with the European subtitling and dubbing system alone, for example, Luyken et al's (1991) article entitled *Overcoming language barriers on television* and Dries' (1995) work entitled *Dubbing and subtitling – Guidelines for production and distribution*. Another paper mentioned in Fawcett's mapping is that of De Linde & Kay (1999), wherein the authors brilliantly define subtitling as one of the methods of translating dialogue by going both from the spoken to the written mode and simultaneously from one language/culture into another. Although they describe intralingual subtitling focusing on deaf and the hard-of-hearing, the concepts and categories that can be drawn from their work can be extended to cover work in other forms of subtitling, such as interlingual subtitling.

The studies cited above attest to the establishment of AVTS; however, researchers have approached translations for films and TV programs by emphasizing the description of technicalities and defending certain translation practices by those who are engaged in the activity of translating professionally, as well as the audiovisual environment present in subtitling (Nobre, 2002). However important, these studies are reductive in the sense that they treat subtitling with a partiality which, some may say, does not do justice to the complexities involved in the activity and description of subtitling. In this sense, studies on AVTS have given peripheral attention to the interdisciplinarity that inevitably surrounds subtitling, excluding, for example, the observation of linguistic factors underlying the understanding of the lexical relations existent between the ST and TT of the audiovisual material.

An illustration of the benefits of interdisciplinarity can be found in Cattrysse's (1998) study, which gives examples of research at the interface between TS and communication studies, and is "on the basis of concepts like audio-visual and multimedia translation, a plea for linguistic, literary and translation studies" (ibid: 11). In fact, interdisciplinary research may be required to tackle more complex situations, as is the case with subtitling studies, where partial accounts do not tell the whole story. A focus on technical aspects alone can be an impediment for the integration of the strength of established disciplines and for a "a mutual fertilization" among them (Oliveira, 2001); in the same vein, looking at subtitles for linguistic absurdities referred to as a simple matter of transfer of seemingly decontextualized linguistic equivalents from one language into another contributes very little to the growth of the area (Folha de São Paulo, 2003; O Estado de São Paulo, 2003). In my view, once interdisciplinarity is established in subtitling studies, an atmosphere of rich, creative contributions is generated, where the audiovisual product may be investigated through a distinct set of tools which interconnect the areas that underlie the event.

Interdisciplinarity is seen as the involvement or collaborative association of theories, approaches and methods of analysis, including theoretical frameworks and perspectives that will contribute to the analysis of subtitling by providing a reasonable account as regards the advent of a set of translation procedures, as well as the examination of the implications that choices might have for the systemic analysis of metafunctions. Among the

possible interdisciplinary dialogues between TS with a focus on subtitling studies and SFL, the one suggested here adopts the SFL view of language as a socio-semiotic system among other semiotic systems working together in the meaning production². In this context, subtitling is understood as integrating a semiotic environment, which is defined for the purposes of the present paper in the following terms:

The 'semiotic environment of subtitles' is understood as the complex of meaning making resources from different socio-semiotic systems, such as image systems, sound systems and language systems, in which translation has *more* than one semiotic border to cross, particularly in what refers to the rendering of *oral* utterances into their *written* representation.

This definition takes into account the role of all meaning making resources in the semiotic scenario where subtitles occur, while allowing for the methodological decision to dedicate *direct* attention to the rendering of *oral* utterances into their *written* representation. The next subsection presents different linguistic approaches to translation, with a view to presenting the reasons for selecting SFL as the theoretical framework for linguistic descriptions of subtitles.

3. LINGUISTIC STUDIES FOCUSING ON SUBTITLING

In the context of Translation Studies the term 'linguistic approach' is defined by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997: 94; my italics) as "any approach which views translation as *simply* a question of replacing the linguistic units of ST with equivalent TL units without reference to factors such as context or connotation". As Vasconcellos (1997) points out, this definition reduces the so-called 'linguistic approaches' to a monolithic and homogenized theory mistakenly equated with *formal* linguistics. This false equation underlies assumptions of *simplicity* as present in the modifier '*simply*' italicized above, collocated with the segment 'a question of replacing' of linguistic units: being 'simply a question of replacing' of linguistic units is suggestive of a view of translation as substitution and of linguistic approaches as describers of this substitutive operation, views to which I do not subscribe. In fact, as

2. For a discussion of language as a semiotic-system, see for example, Halliday & Matthiessen (1999: 357).

Vasconcellos (1997:21) suggests, when one adopts linguistics as an approach to TS, the researcher needs to define what linguistics is being talked about. This problematization of the expression 'linguistics approach to translation' is also found in Ivir (1996: 151), who claims that "one's view of the role of linguistics in translation (practice and theory) will depend, among other things, on what linguistics is referred to". (p. 151). The linguistics being referred to in this piece of work – Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) – does not see language as a formal system, but as a system of social semiotics that establishes a "close connection between the linguistic system and other semiotic systems" (Butler, 1988: 96). Such a connection is particularly interesting to TS and to the investigation of subtitles in particular, as it allows for the integration of the different factors affecting meaning production as realized in the subtitles, taking into account the environment in which the text is realized.

The interface of TS and SFL has been explored in the last decades in both the national and international contexts, as Pagano & Vasconcellos (2005) have shown in their investigation wherein they state that in the 1980's the possibility of the exploration of this 'prolific' interface had been shown by Newmark (1988) in an article in which the analysis of translated texts through the use of tools offered by SFL was discussed. SFL has fed studies in TS since the early 1990's, and can be seen in studies published by international authors such as Van Leuven-Zwart (1989/1990), Hatim and Mason (1990), Bell (1991), Baker (1992), Gallina (1992), Johns (1992), Malkmkjaer (1998), Hale (1997), Zhu (1993) (Fleury, Vasconcellos & Pagano, 2009).

Halliday's influential metafunctional hypothesis has led many researchers to carry out investigations on language pairs that share similar structural characteristics with Portuguese, including languages such as Spanish and Italian. In terms of the language pair English/Spanish, Munday (1998) attempted to propose a more objective apparatus for descriptive studies of the translational behavior by using a systemic functional grammar approach that allows for the comparison of the metafunctions as realized in the ST and its TT counterpart. In the specific case of the study related here, the author investigated the realization of the thematic element of the textual metafunction in Spanish (ST) and English (TT). Munday (*ibid.*) discusses the problem of comparing English and Spanish in terms of SFL since thematic structure seems to be realized somewhat differently in different

languages which allies with Baker's (1992) comment calling attention to the dangers of concentrating on the analysis of textual structures in English and exporting it to other languages. Baker (ibid.) claims that studies of translations which investigate marked and unmarked structures of Theme are important to heighten the awareness of choices made so as to highlight what was chosen to be fronted at the cost of what was not, even if the languages hold different structures of thematization. The question he raises is to what extent the systemic description of English can be used to compare Spanish clauses with the target English ones. The most perceptive issues concerning the differences of thematic realization in respect to Spanish relate to (i) subject pronoun omission; (ii) the not infrequent VS order; and (iii) the different frequency of placement of adjuncts in first position. Munday (1998) concentrates on solving difference (i), which considers ellipsis of Subject as not presenting a thematic shift in the translation, and interpreted adjustments referring to pronoun differences in order to be able to produce comparable results as a means of verifying the extent of markedness in both texts. A relevant aspect that Munday (ibid.) calls attention to is the fact brought up by Delbecque (1988) who discovered that 30% of her corpus was made up of the VS order in Spanish. The results obtained suggest that the character he investigated does not normalize thematic variants in the Spanish ST, and further investigation of the same data has demonstrated shifts in the realization of the other metafunctions, which might be related to pressures of the Context of Culture³, but which were left undiscussed by the author. A valuable contribution for other researchers is the use of his method to verify whether the results Munday (1998) obtained are applicable to the translation process in general and in helpful in drawing implications for future decision making in translating activities.

In the international context, Taylor (2000) investigates the audiovisual material by drawing on the conceptual tools offered by SFL. In one of his articles entitled *The Subtitling of Film: reaching another community* (ibid.), the author analyzes the translation of an Italian film according to the categories proposed by Gottlieb (1992), namely, expansion, paraphrase, transfer, transcription, condensation, and deletion in terms of SFL. He concludes that the "wording remains the crucial factor, both at individual

3. In SFL, the Context of Culture is the environment of the language system, that acts as the meaning potential for texts which are seen as instances of cultural and linguistic systems. (cf. Halliday, 1989)

lexis and clause level” (ibid. 2000: 15), where the ‘transfer’ of ideational meanings alone deprives the audience of the more complete picture of a complex semiotic event. In this sense, he alerts the translator/subtitler to the three ‘essential elements of meaning’ in the construal of subtitles so that the target audience may perceive the written text as not only an ideational, but also an interpersonal and textual whole. However, he says that thematic structure is neglected since it accompanies visual clues as to how the discourse is developing. I would say that this might not be taken as a generalization, since messages are organized so as to guide the listener to the unfolding of the text and the elements chosen as the point of departure of the clause are of the utmost importance and are never random choices (Vasconcellos, 1997).

Taylor (2000), however, is not only interested in the analysis of subtitles, but in the teaching of film translation as well. In 1998, he and a body of researchers from Italy set up a project to help students analyze and translate film and TV texts based on SFL and discourse analysis tools, which became a successful program. One outcome of this successful venture is that the project was incorporated into the CITATAL⁴ project, which is a national project that combines different resources and skills for the development, management and use of language material that are then used to create electronic products (on-line corpora, hypermedia, translation, textual analysis and language acquisition). These electronic products are modularly designed which allows for re-use and dissemination amongst a large number of users and researchers in order to incorporate advances in theoretical and applied research in the fields covered by the project. This new phase has as its main objective the creation of a computer-assisted text analysis module that will allow the student to move from a pre-translated text analysis of an extract of television text to the actual translation, adaptation and subtitling of the text. The texts are analyzed in terms of context of situation, Theme and Rheme, Given and New information, among the other categories put forward by the Hallidayan approach to language in context. The coordinators feel the need to establish a self-access courseware that exploits the significance of adjusting translation to target cultures.

4. Information on the CITATAL national project was retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 23rd, 2010. The URL of the program is: <http://claweb.cla.unipd.it/citatal/english/program.htm>. The four Universities that constitute the working group are: Universita’ degli Studi di Padova; Universita’ degli Studi di Trieste; Universita’ degli Studi di Pavia; Universita’ degli Studi di Pisa.

My aim is to highlight here the interface adopted by Taylor (2000), an interface that sees language as inserted in a social cultural context, where language is used to make meaning on the basis of our experiences of the world and to create and maintain role relations of intimacy, friendship and/or power. The researcher states that these metafunctional elements (interpersonal, ideational and textual) have for some time been acknowledged by screenwriters as crucial to the construal of authentic sounding dialogue. It is in this environment that some of the concerns around subtitles may be pursued, both in terms of what they [the subtitles] say and what they leave unsaid (Taylor, *ibid.*). When adopting the Hallidayan approach to the studies of subtitles, Kovacic (1996) suggests a wide range of strategies available to the translator of subtitles:

Since (in subtitling) we are dealing with language in use, the most appropriate models for such a description would seem to be those provided by functional linguistics, which defines its objective as study of language not as a formal system, but rather as a system of social semiotics, i.e. from the point of view of its function in human societies. (Kovacic, 1996: 298)

SFL is crucially useful in the analysis of the principles underlying the organization of human communication, and more specifically subtitles, due to the fact that it is the meaning that gets translated in the subtitles and not just the wording in the sense that due respect is given to the original text and what the screenwriter intended to convey, even if this is construed through inference or ‘implicature’⁵. Thus, it is important to observe the choices available to the subtitler and the effects that are produced by different subtitling decisions.

In the national context, quite a few studies have approached AVTS, some of which are reviewed here. One such study that merits closer attention is that of Fernandes (1998). In his MA dissertation he explores the notion of context of culture and context of situation investigating the rendering of *The Nightmare before Christmas* and its translated counterpart *O Estranho Mundo de Jack*. The texts were written in English and translated into Brazilian Portuguese (BP), respectively. In his study, Fernandes (*ibid.*) investigated the extent to which generic constraints in the target context of culture could impinge on register variation (context of situation) and, as

5. The term ‘implicature’ is used here in the sense coined by Paul Grice (1989), that is, “it describes the relationship between two statements where the truth of one *suggests* the truth of the other.”

a result, affect the lexicogrammatical choices in the subtitles. His claim is that a different perception of genre in the target context controls the choice of register, which in turn, controls the choices of language in subtitling. The integration of these two more abstract dimensions of meaning into the analysis of source and target texts has helped him to assess both texts in terms of the contexts in which they were produced. This kind of analysis has led the researcher to understand, at the genre level, the 'fuzzy-edged' generic boundaries of the ST and how the TT was commercialized lowering the degree of fuzziness of the ST. As for the register level, the rendered subtitle construed a new tenor affective involvement between audience and translator, that is, the affective involvement between these two parties was increased. The lexical choices in the TT have led to a mitigation of the macabre by means of changes in both propositional and expressive meanings in the subtitles.

Silva (1998) approaches interlingual subtitling with a view to investigating how Blanche DuBois, the protagonist of the cinematographic version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, is construed in terms of her modeling of her experiences of both internal and external worlds in language. The author draws upon some categories of TRANSITIVITY. Transitivity being the grammatical system that enables the interpretation of the world of experience within the ideational function, which in turn, represents the world through the realization of processes + participants. In Silva's study, Transitivity patterns demonstrated that Blanche DuBois is construed in the ST and (re)construed in the TT as a self-centered character unable to extend her actions, feelings and comments to anyone beyond herself. In terms of the differences found to exist in the ideational profile of the protagonist in the ST and in the subtitles, both systemic differences (those pertaining to the language pair involved) and difference accounted for by seemingly unmotivated selections of ideational meanings realized in the subtitles led to partial changes in the total configuration of the character. The author's main contribution lies in her use of categories from SFL as a tool for the analysis of subtitles in a more systematized way through linguistic description.

In a recent study carried out in the Brazilian context, Feitosa (2009) looks at subtitling with a view to analyzing a corpus comprised of commercial and fan-made subtitles of extracts of ten different horror films in English translated into BP. Based on the categories of technical aspects

of subtitling, reduction, condensation and omission, explicitation, and Method of Development, it investigates the patterns that differentiate commercial from noncommercial subtitles on the basis of the different choices made in the retextualization of the same audiovisual product. Through combining audiovisual translation by exploring the concept of explicitation and the concept of flow of information, the study seeks to propose a new and more powerful version of an automatic analytical tool for the flow of information – a program called CROSF (Código de Rotulação Sistemico Funcional). CROSF is a code “developed through testing several prototypes on a small parallel bilingual corpus” (Feitosa, 2006: 1130) that allows searches and annotation for different combinations of choices selected from the repertoires of the three systems realizing the metafunctions. However, this prototype did not encompass the information unit, and thus a new numeric code to be attached to the already existent CROSF-15 was proposed. The new coding system is named *Epitélio para Fluxo da Informação* (Additional Code for the Flow of Information) (EFI). He concludes that the combination of CROSF-15 and EFI allowed for the identification of the patterns related to the flow of information in the corpus through a comparison of the source text with the subtitles rendered by the professional to those rendered by fans.

The aim of the above section was to show the great interest in the development of AVTS based on SFL analytical tools. The studies reviewed here touch upon issues of different metafunctional structure in translated texts, making clear the need for applying direct attention to linguistic aspects in subtitling and for the need of a theoretical basis for studies focusing on the language of subtitles.

The aspect that I have found to be relevant and in need of discussion – the language of film dialogue – in the context of subtitling constituted the main focus of the present article. I hope I have shown that by unveiling the linguistic choices for analytical purposes, in view of the semiotic potential for meaning making of language as a modeling system of reality(ies) along the lines suggested by SFL, some light has been shed on understanding the need for paying attention to the complexities of subtitling, among which the linguistic aspect is included. Moreover, when ST and TT are compared, it is possible to bring out both similarities and differences among the two or more languages being investigated supported by the knowledge building of how meanings are made and how they may be

similar or different depending on the language by which social role and relationship as well as the representation of the world is construed. In a sense, by doing so, the researcher has sought to increase the awareness of the underlying grammatical systems by using the relevant language units and the functions these units serve in the environment of both texts. In answer to the reasoning pursued here, Baker's (1992) statement fits well in saying that the translator cannot always preserve the structure of the ST due to linguistic, cultural or stylistic reasons; conversely, she argues for the translator to make an effort in order to construe a TT along similar lines as the ST was created by complying with the particularities of each language. This is the reasoning that it is suggested be pursued when investigating the language of film dialogues, namely that the maintenance of the original structures are constrained by the fact that different choices may be made depending on the resources available for each linguistic system.

Recebido em outubro de 2011

Aprovado em dezembro de 2011

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