CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Sharing knowledge between academia and the industry: Audiovisual translation and accessibility research for practice
Authors	Tuominen, Tiina;Silvester, Hannah
Publication date	2021-12-28
Original Citation	Tuominen, T. and Silvester, H. (2021) 'Sharing Knowledge Between Academia and The Industry: Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility Research for Practice', Journal of Audiovisual Translation (JAT), 4 (3), pp. 1-5. doi: 10.47476/jat.v4i3.2021.231
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	https://jatjournal.org/index.php/jat/article/view/231 - 10.47476/jat.v4i3.2021.231
Rights	© 2021 Silvester & Tuominen. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License. This allows for unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-06 00:58:24
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/12691

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Journal of Audiovisual Translation

Sharing Knowledge Between Academia and The Industry: Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility Research for Practice

Tiina Tuominen✉
University of Turku, Finland

Hannah Silvester✉
University College Cork, Ireland

Citation: Tuominen, T. & Silvester, H. (2021). Sharing Knowledge Between Academia and The Industry: Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility Research for Practice. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation,* *4*(3), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.47476/jat.v4i3.2021.231

Published: December 28, 2021

Copyright: ©2021 Tuominen & Silvester. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License. This allows for unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Abstract

Audiovisual translation and accessibility research have huge potential to transform and improve the work of practitioners in these areas. However, research publications are not necessarily designed to address the practical implications of research, or to be accessible to practitioners outside academia. This special issue is for practitioners, and it aims to demonstrate how research can be useful to them. The research projects presented in the articles serve practical purposes in a variety of ways, from proposing analytical models to aid in selecting translation strategies, to exploring developments in working practices. Vibrant collaboration between all stakeholders in AVT and accessibility could bring benefits to both research and practice. This introduction discusses some of the challenges involved in making such exchanges happen and examines how those challenges could be overcome.

Key words: practitioners, stakeholders, audio description, intralingual subtitling, subtitling, collaboration, knowledge exchange.

✉ tiina.k.tuominen@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0665-6970
✉ hannah.silvester@ucc.ie, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1640-2165

1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation and accessibility have seen a huge growth in research over the past two decades. The findings of these research projects are published in academic journals and books, but these are not always easily accessible to practitioners, or they are not designed to address the practical implications of the research. As Jorge Díaz-Cintas (2020: 216) has pointed out, "Striking a happy balance between [the industry and academia] is of paramount importance to safeguard the well-being of the discipline and the profession." Díaz-Cintas (2020: 216-217) mentions that a great deal of AVT research is informed by the industry, but there has been less activity in the opposite direction. In this special issue, we have encouraged audiovisual translation and accessibility researchers to highlight the practical significance of their work by writing pieces that seek to answer crucial questions related to the work of audiovisual translation and accessibility professionals. This special issue aims to provide an opportunity for practitioners to benefit from the flourishing research in the field, and for researchers to make their cutting edge AVT and accessibility research available and accessible to practitioners. This open access journal, the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, presents the perfect forum for such a project. We hope that this issue will be one of many aiming to promote dialogue between academics and practitioners. In addition to being open access, JAT is taking a number of very welcome steps to address a wider audience, such as introducing lay summaries for all articles, and offering the option to record a video abstract. We are very pleased to publish this special issue in such a venue.

2. This Special Issue

Research can be useful to accessibility and audiovisual translation practitioners in many ways. This is evident from the variety of the articles contained in this special issue.

The first half of the issue is dedicated to accessibility, with two articles focused on audio description and one on intralingual subtitling. The two articles on audio description both apply mental model theory and present analyses of example cases that demonstrate strategies and approaches that audio describers can use in their work. In the first article, **Gert Vercauteren** introduces ideas from mental model theory and cognitive narratology as a way to help describers decide what information to include in their audio description and how to prioritise information when only some of it can be included. In the second article, **María José García Vizcaíno** explores some ways in which characters are described, and how using semantic descriptions may be a helpful strategy in making key features of the characters available to the audience. In addition, the article investigates some potential differences in audio description between different cultures and languages, demonstrating how some aspects of descriptions may be culture-specific and why it is therefore important for describers to consider the local cultural context. Both articles offer thought-provoking insight into audio description practices and provide practical ideas for how to approach a description task.

The third accessibility article, by **Kaisa Vitikainen** and **Maarit Koponen**, presents findings from experiments that tested the usefulness and user-friendliness of new technological tools such as automatic speech recognition in the intralingual subtitling process. The article presents both benefits and drawbacks of technology, and it encourages readers to consider how technology can best be implemented to be useful for practitioners. Furthermore, it serves as a necessary reminder of the fact that different languages are in different positions when it comes to implementing technologies. While the technologies may be quite advanced for major languages, smaller languages may not have equally useful tools available.

The second half of the issue is dedicated to audiovisual translation, and the articles focus predominantly on subtitling. In the first article of the translation section, **Kristijan Nikolić** presents the findings of his survey exploring quality control from the perspective of translators, quality controllers and proofreaders, as well as language service providers and broadcasters. The study offers a glimpse into the different stakeholders' views on quality control practices. On the basis of the survey, Nikolić presents practical recommendations for improving quality control processes. This analysis of the different stakeholders' views can help all parties form a better understanding of the quality control process as a whole and, ideally, help enhance their practices.

The second article in this section is by **Suvi Korpi**, and it offers detailed analysis of how neologisms are used and subtitled in science fiction programmes, a popular genre that can be quite challenging for the translator. Korpi's analysis provides insight into how different translation strategies may affect interpretations of the programme by transforming some features typical of the genre. Such information can be useful for translators of sci-fi programmes contemplating various translation options and seeking a balance between genre conventions and the particularities of the audiovisual medium.

The third article in the audiovisual translation section is written by the editors of this special issue, **Hannah Silvester** and **Tiina Tuominen**. The article sheds light on where the idea for this special issue originated: Silvester and Tuominen discuss how academics could build closer links with practitioners by adopting the concept of public translation studies and by initiating partnerships and interactions on a continuous and reciprocal basis. Their hope is that the ideas presented in the article, and the new community introduced there, will lead to more collaborative relationships among the AVT community and all its stakeholders.

The special issue ends with a practice report by **Alessandro Maestri**. Maestri presents a case study on how audiovisual translation is being used in the public communication efforts of the European Union. This is a novel perspective on audiovisual translation practices, as previous discussions have often revolved around film and television. Maestri's report foregrounds the fact that audiovisual translation also takes place in public institutions that communicate with citizens through audiovisual media. The translation practices of such organisations deserve attention and scrutiny. Maestri's observations could be helpful in implementing similar AVT practices in other organisations that use translated audiovisual materials. From the audiovisual translators' perspective, it is certainly useful

to learn about the practices in these less typical AVT contexts and discover new areas in which audiovisual translators' expertise may be called for.

This collection of articles shows some ways in which academic research can be relevant to practitioners. Research can give them new ideas for their daily work by presenting analytical models and theories that indicate useful strategies, and it can shed light on the consequences that different approaches may have on the product as a whole. Research can also inform practitioners of technological advances and how those advances may be introduced into professional practice. Furthermore, research can provide enlightening accounts of different working contexts and processes, which may give practitioners ideas for how to enhance their own practices, or perhaps even how to find new professional niches. Finally, it may propose new avenues of collaboration. We hope that future publications will continue to see practitioners as a core target audience, so that they will present even more ways in which research can have direct relevance for practice, and work towards making more research accessible outside academia.

3. A Vision for the Future

Editing this special issue has encouraged us to rethink the ways in which academic publications are written and framed. Indeed, writing, editing and reviewing articles with such a broad audience is no easy task. If this dialogue is to continue, it will be necessary to seek feedback from practitioners on how we can improve our practices in this regard. We would like to engage all stakeholders in a discussion on what the academic community can do to better communicate their discoveries to the professional audience. We hope that the articles in this special issue demonstrate how research can benefit practitioners, and how it can improve working practices and stakeholders' experiences in the industry. Creating spaces for the publication of work in this way could in turn foreground the practical relevance of our research and make it more impactful. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of cultural productions in our daily lives, and the increasing success of non-Anglophone productions on Netflix could also lead to a greater interest among non-specialists in the practices and processes that make such productions accessible to more diverse audiences.

Our goal is to facilitate a dialogue that will enrich the industry and academia alike. Through this dialogue, we hope that further avenues for collaboration and community-building can be explored. However, there are significant challenges presented by this. How do we find forums for regular interaction? It will not be easy to identify appropriate spaces and methods through which this interaction can take place, in a way that suits all involved. Online platforms and social media offer an opportunity for such fragmented communities to come together virtually. On the other hand, face-to-face meetings and events are a productive tool for networking and brainstorming, but practical obstacles may make it difficult to meet regularly in person. It may even be difficult to contact the people we would want to include in this community, because individuals who are working without the benefit of a professional community or collegial networks may not be easily reachable via the usual communication channels. Overcoming these barriers takes time and effort. In addition, such

interaction will require commitment. Will all interested parties be able to find the time? If the interaction were not regular, how fruitful could the collaboration be? Given the freelance nature of many audiovisual translators' work, this commitment would also have a financial implication. We have a long way to go, and this special issue is only one contribution to the discussion. We think that open access publishing and addressing research to a broad and diverse audience can be a significant step forward, and we hope that all those interested in AVT and accessibility will find ways to become involved.

4. Publishing in a Pandemic

This special issue was conceived of, written and edited between August 2020 and December 2021. During this time, the COVID-19 pandemic brought travel to a standstill, saw many people working from home, facing new challenges at home and at work, and managing unprecedented workloads. This resulted in challenges for those writing the articles, for us as editors, for JAT's editorial board, and for those asked to review the pieces submitted.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone at JAT for their support and effective collaboration on our special issue. We are grateful that they saw the value in such a theme and worked hard with us to turn the idea into reality. We also want to thank all the reviewers who contributed their time and expertise to this issue during such a challenging period. Their thoughtful and constructive feedback has been invaluable. Finally, and most importantly, we are most grateful to the authors who shared our interest in disseminating research findings to practitioners and wrote about their research in innovative and accessible ways. Now that the issue is published, we hope to hear from the readers. Please let us know what you think of this publication and how we could continue to advance our objective of a closer cooperation between all stakeholders in the AVT and accessibility community.

References

Díaz-Cintas, J. (2020). Audiovisual translation. In E. Angelone, M. Ehrensberger-Dow, & G. Massey (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury companion to language industry studies* (pp. 209–230). Bloomsbury Publishing.