

IX TAVUA. The audiovisual sociolect

An overview of the 9th Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling of the
University of Alicante

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The 9th Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling of the University of Alicante, the oldest academic event specialized on this matter in Spain, took place from the 19th to the 20th of February 2020 at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Alicante. Organized by the Department of English Philology and the Department of Translation and Interpreting, this edition focused on the study and analysis of sociolects which are developed diachronically by audiovisual translation.

Wednesday 19th

The first plenary speaker, Juan José Martínez Sierra, from the University of Valencia, opened fire with a descriptive panoramic view of the relationship between comedy and sociolects. He addressed the elephant in the room by listing the various descriptions of the term ‘sociolect’ and establishing the thin line that marks the difference between sociolects and idiolects. He stated that practically everything can be studied in the field of comedy, a genre that turns out to be very useful for research. As an example, he analysed a scene from *The*

Simpsons where the contrast between the characters of Sideshow Bob and Snake displays how language varies from a cultured level to a vulgar level. To conclude, he suggested the existence of an audiovisual sociolect based on the fact that the cinematic message is characterized by being a mixed sign where different codes are taken into account.

Afterwards, we could enjoy a panel about dubbing. Fernando Castillo, a professional audiovisual translator, spoke about the transformation that sociolects have suffered in modern films compared to classic films. Orality is a key piece of cinema in general and the dubbing process in particular. In order to replicate its original effect, the translator must reflect the different ways of expressing themselves the characters show depending on the times they were born in. It looks like things have changed for the better in this aspect. María del Mar Ogea and Lara Hidalgo told us about the translation of sexual slang in the Spanish dubbing of the Netflix series *Sex Education*. The most prominent characters of this product are mainly teenagers and, of course, they share their very own sociolect, which is constantly expanding and changing. Their study showed how much this was addressed in the translation with very positive results. Also in this panel, María Pérez L. De Heredia spoke about rewrites and reeditions from an intersemiotic level and Francisca García Luque analysed the French translation of the film *El día de la bestia*, by Álex de la Iglesia, paying special attention to sociolectal variations.

Another of the plenary speakers, Rosa Agust Canós, from the University Jaume I of Castellón, decided to go into models, rules and style books related to sociolects in depth. Based on her personal experience supervising the linguistic section of the Valencian television channel À Punt and relying on practical examples taken from her own work, she was able to exemplify the importance of the main theme of the conference from a more professional point of view.

Later, accessibility took stage thanks to the presentation of María López Rubio & Luz Belenguer regarding subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing and the one by María Pérez L. De Heredia that dealt with audio description. There was an interesting debate about whether we could talk about a proper sociolect present only in audio descriptions due to the particular characteristics of said discipline

To conclude this first day of the conference, Javier Pérez Alarcón explained to the attendees the advantages of being a member of ATRAE, the Association of Audiovisual Translation and Adaptation of Spain.

Thursday 20th

The second day started with the last of the plenary speakers, Quico Rovira-Beleta, renowned audiovisual translator who has worked in more than a thousand popular products, such as *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. The official Spanish translator of Marvel Studios films took center stage to talk about the translation of the language of superheroes. As always, he stressed the importance of documentation in this type of films and stated that you do not need to be a fan of the comics to do a good job translating them, but it helps.

When you work on a film of this genre, you must give each superhero his own linguistic characteristics and keep them when he meets with other superheroes in order to differentiate him from the rest. You must respect the idiolect of the character, understanding that he evolves and adapting his speech accordingly. He expounded the journey in the big screen of some popular heroes such as Iron Man, Captain America or Thor, just to mention some examples. He also mentioned that every time he translates alien beings, he feels like he is creating the sociolect that they use in their home planet.

The following panel starred young investigators. Irene Flores Fuentes presented her investigation about terminology and intertextuality in the translation of the TV series *The Big Bang Theory*, the author of this review talked about the modality of voice-over translation and the challenge it represents when translating sociolects and Lidia Hayes touched on a novel theme: the dubbing of Netflix series into English and the freedom taken by those responsible when they grant different accents to the characters in the language of Shakespeare based on their social class.

Then, we could witness a really interesting section about videogames and subtitling. Ramón Méndez's speech revolved around translation needs in the videogame industry that go beyond the games themselves, while Francisco Pérez Escudero detailed the revision of jargon and slang in the collective project of subtitling the short film *Skin* with students from the University of Alicante for the Elche International Independent Film Festival.

The finishing touch was a round table with José Javier Ávila Cabrera, Carla Botella Tejera and John D. Sanderson about the main topic of the conference, the audiovisual sociolect. José Javier Ávila talked about how the sociolect of characters created by Quentin Tarantino is subtitled in Spanish and reviewed the different film genres that intermingle in the work of this director. Carla Botella suggested that perhaps one could speak of audiovisual intertextuality as

another sociolect with its own rules due to the current importance of the interrelation between multimedia products. Lastly, John D. Sanderson analysed how the Western sociolect has been changing in Spain, creating its own artificial language that was only used in films of this genre. Prefabricated orality was revealed once again as one of the main tools of film dubbing

In conclusion, the 9th Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling of the University of Alicante was an unmissable event for any lover of audiovisual translation and its research. A big thank you to everyone involved. See you at the movies.