Introduction

This book is aimed at providing comprehensive theoretical and practical information about an audiovisual translation mode which has not attracted the attention of many studies up to now: voice-over, or the translation voice that we hear on top of the translated voice. In our fast-moving technological society, multimedia formats have become extremely important and are being used more often than paper formats. The three most important features of multimedia in general (and of multimedia formats in particular) are their communication format, which is usually digital, their channels, which are audio and visual, and the simultaneity of presentation, which goes beyond the actual realm of multimedia, since we now have multiscreen and interactive products. The plethora of possibilities offered today by digital audiovisual communication makes writing comprehensively on one of the audiovisual translation modalities a risky exercise, since focus may be lost. Hence, special care has been taken and attention has been paid while preparing this book in an attempt to strike a balance between theory and practice. The book has been drafted from our experience in this field as practitioners, as trainers and as researchers. We have taken into consideration the process of translating for voice-over and its reception, the teaching of voice-over and potential topics for investigation. The book has been drafted to serve as a useful manual to students, but also as a point of departure for further research. While writing the book we never lost sight of the need for a comprehensive study of the modality, although we were aware of the difficulty of describing, studying, analysing and reflecting on something as multifaceted as voice-over. Our aim was to write, in as direct a way as possible, about the complex audiovisual translation modality of voice-over, while at the same time being extremely explicit with examples and exercises related to both practice and analysis, which are the basis of an academic manual. We truly hope that our efforts prove to be worthwhile for students, trainers and those who would like to conduct further research into any aspect of revoicing in audiovisual translation.

Chapter 1, Voice-over from Film Studies to Translation Studies, focuses on terminological issues and explains the confusion that has often sur-
rounded a term borrowed from the well-established field of Film Studies and introduced into the more recent field of Translation Studies. After explaining the origins of the term *voice-over*, the chapter clarifies the relationship between voice-over and other audiovisual transfer modes and finally proposes a clear-cut definition.

Chapters 2 and 3, *Voice-over for postproduction (I): Typology and working conditions* and *Voice-over for postproduction (II): The translation process* respectively, deal with voice-over for postproduction, that is, the revoicing of an audiovisual product that has already been edited. After establishing a differentiation between fiction and non-fiction, professional aspects are explained and the characteristics of the source text in terms of speakers and script structure are elucidated. Subsequently, the specific features of the translation process are investigated pointing to the tight relationship between voice-over and the off-screen dubbing of commentaries.

Chapter 4, *Voice-over for production*, explains a completely different approach to voice-over, that is, the revoicing of an audiovisual product that has not yet been finished or completed. In this case, translators generally work without a script and sometimes they even act as journalists, creating totally adapted voice-overs or commentaries.

Chapter 5, *Training in voice-over*, describes two successful courses on voice-over at the MA in Audiovisual Translation at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*: one course is taught in a Barcelona-based programme (www.fti.uab.es/audiovisual) whilst the other course is taught online (www.fti.uab.es/onptav). The course structures as well as the exercises proposed can be used by trainers to devise courses dealing with this neglected, yet innovative, transfer mode.

Chapter 6, *Giving voice to practitioners and academics: a global survey on voice-over*, presents the results of a global survey on voice-over, in which actual practitioners express their opinions on different issues related to voice-over: this survey highlights the various practices and terminology used worldwide and also the need to systematize terms and concepts.

Finally, the book offers a commented bibliography on voice-over, which includes the most relevant academic contributions to this transfer mode.

The aim of this book is not only to offer an overview of the fascinating transfer mode of voice-over but also to provide some ideas for students and trainers. In some cases, it is important to have first-hand experience in order to understand fully the process of translation and the many issues related to this work practice. Voice-over translation offers wide and en-
Introduction

riching opportunities to practise many issues related to other audiovisual translation modalities because it shares features with dubbing, subtitling, audio description, audio subtitling, etc. Since translation exercises are bound to language pairs, we have devised exercises taking some generic documentation as our point of departure. This documentation can then be adapted to any language combination. The book is highly practical and we hope to transmit the enthusiasm that we have for the subject matter to those who have not been captured by it yet.

Barcelona, 4 May 2009

Preface to second edition

Unlike writing airport bestsellers, writing academic books tend to be unglamorous and the idea of a second edition is always very detached from the author. Having said this, when we had the first the idea of writing a book on voice-over translation we knew our book would be popular. The second edition of this book goes to confirm our original belief, and it goes to show how voice-over is an interesting translation mode.

This new edition has tried to put right some mistakes found in the first edition, and it has also updated some information. In recent years voice-over has expanded greatly, and with the new and merging translation modalities more possibilities are available and unexplored. We could have included them in this book, but it would have been a new book, and we were only requested to produce a second edition. This leaves many research avenues open for investigation and future study. We would like to thank our editors Martina Räber and Benjamin Fröhlich from Peter Lang. Their encouragement and enthusiasm are most appreciated.

This second edition is dedicated again to José, Xavi and Marcel, and this time we add with gratitude and love.