

# Analysis of Fixed Language in the Subtitled Documentary Film on "The Real Da Vinci Code"

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## Abstract

This paper is based on the assumption that audiovisual translation performs a social and cultural function over its viewers, thus still justifying studies that focus on linguistic issues. This is particularly striking for the reading literacy in countries such as Portugal, which are traditionally subtitled countries, even if dubbing and voice-over are also occasionally used, particularly in the case of documentaries and children's programmes. Reading habits may often be restricted to the reading of subtitles. This substitution emphasises the need for considerable care with subtitles in order to make them appear as fluent and natural – fulfilling norms of 'idiomaticity' – that would read like a source language text or domesticated, and not like a translation of a source text, not foreignised. From the analysis of a limited sample of fixed expressions and their translation in the subtitled of a documentary film called "The Real Da Vinci Code", it was possible to gather data that indicate that these expressions are as common in general language as in specialised languages, namely within the audiovisual context and the informative genre, i.e. documentary films. Finally, it was possible to identify a logical relation between the visual, sound and linguistic elements of a documentary, since their interaction strengthens the semiotic value of the fixed expressions.

**Keywords:** Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling, Documentary Films, Idiomaticity, Set Phrases.

## Introduction

This paper intends to briefly discuss the theoretical framework of Translation Studies (TS), specifically Audiovisual Translation (AVT), an area that has gone through several ordeals in order to be acknowledged as an autonomous field within TS, mainly due to research conducted by numerous scholars. Since then, AVT has had to strive to expand to less traditional areas, apart from subtitling and revoicing, such as audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, among others.

Nonetheless, this paper focuses on one of these mainstream AVT modes, which is interlingual subtitling, particularly relevant in Portugal, traditionally a subtitled country. This conscious choice was done at the time of the Portuguese dictatorship (between 1926 and 1974), as a means to prevent less educated people from having access to culture in general, namely cinema. Paradoxically, subtitling is considered to be a means of foreignising audiovisual products and, in Spain, the opposite option was made, making it a dubbing country.

The case study to be presented here is centred on the documentary film "The Real Da Vinci Code" (Kashaf Chaudhey, 2005: en), a particularly long documentary based on Dan Brown's best-seller "The Da Vinci Code". Instances of fixed language used throughout the first 20 minutes will be analysed contrastively, i.e. English original versus Portuguese translation, and commented on. It is also our purpose to attempt to identify whether they consist of collocations or idiomatic expressions.

## Brief overview of Audiovisual Translation

At the early stages of development of TS, this discipline was based on the idea that translation consisted of a process of language transfer, which initially excluded AVT from its realm. Gottlieb (1997: 87) states that "the pre-1980 concept of translation limited its scope to 'premeditated writing' [and] translation of dialog was accepted only when (...) not heard". However, with research conducted by scholars throughout the last decades, such as Gambier, Gottlieb, Diaz-Cintas and Orero, it came to be regarded as part of this field of knowledge.

Luyken (1991: 153-155) argues that, although AVT is a form of translation, it differs from other types of translation in some important aspects. To begin with, the message that is to be transferred from one language into other(s) is expressed by everything within the screen, namely the image, the acting, the sound and the language, which means that the linguistic transfer will only replace the message and thus cannot change any of those other meaningful components. Secondly, audiovisual language transfer is unable to use resources like those from other translation forms, such as "explanatory footnotes, asterisks or asides" (Luyken 1991: 154), but, at the same time, it should be complete in such a way as to be understood, despite deleting things from the original. Thirdly, the text transferred is shorter than the original, "a mere fraction of the original dialog" (Luyken, 1991: 154), forcing translators to drastically abridge the text. Finally, audiovisual translators also have to integrate editorial skills concerning omissions or additions of information and condensation of the original.

Even though AVT involves a considerable degree of adaptation of the original texts to the audiovisual means of communication, it has to be accepted as a field of translation studies. This idea of adaptation has been embodied by Gambier's (2003) concept of *transadaptation*, which intends to go beyond the dichotomy between literal and free translation, translation and adaptation, and takes audience into account. This concept means that translating in the audiovisual context has nothing to do with word-for-

word transfer, but comprehends: "a set of strategies that might include summarizing, paraphrasing, etc. (...) [as well as] taking into consideration the genre, the film-maker's style, the needs and expectations of viewers (...) and the multimodality of audiovisual communication" (Gambier in Gambier, 2003: 178).

According to Orero (2004: vii), there is another question to elaborate on:

the unsettled terminology of AVT (...) A step further would be to agree on a generic name to define the multiple and different modes of translation when the audio (radio), the audio and the visual (screen), or the written, the audio and the visual (multimedia) channels are the source text. (Orero, 2004: vii)

This terminological unsettledness that Orero (2001: vii) refers to is quite clear in the abundance of terms used to refer to the audiovisual field: *traducción subordinada* or constrained translation (Tilford, 1982; Fawcett, 1983; Mayoral, 1984; Rabadán, 1991; Díaz-Cintas, 1998; Lorenzo & Pereira, 2000 and 2001); film translation (Snell-Hornby, 1988); film and TV translation (Delabastita, 1989); screen translation (Mason, 1989); media translation (Eguiluz, 1994); film communication (Lecuona, 1994); *traducción fílmica* (Díaz-Cintas, 1997); audiovisual translation (Luyken, 1991; Dries, 1995; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997; Baker, 1998); (multi)media translation (Gambier & Gottlieb, 2001).

AVT is then regarded as the designation encompassing "all translations – or multisemiotic transfer – for production or postproduction in any media or format, and also new areas of media accessibility" (Orero, 2004: viii). A year before Orero, in 2003, Gambier (2003: 172-177) had divided AVT into dominant/mainstream and challenging types, the former including interlingual subtitling, dubbing, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, voice over, free commentary, sight translation and multilingual production (like doubled versions and remakes), whereas the latter consisting of script translation, surtitling, intralingual translation, real-time subtitling and audio description. However, this organisation into challenging and mainstream is no longer up to date, simply because most of the challenging modes are already part of the mainstream activities within the realm of AVT, namely intralingual subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or audio description.

Because of its complexity and multisemiotic wealth, research in AVT may "draw on a variety of (...) methodologies – from polysystem theory, psycholinguistics, cultural studies, critical discourse analysis, relevance theory, as well as functional approaches to translation" (Gambier in Gambier, 2003: 183), attempting to tackle concepts such as those of text, meaning, norms, equivalence, manipulation or acceptability.

The present paper focuses on the concept of text and within this a linguistic topic – instances of fixed language. Notwithstanding, these issues often give rise to a great deal of criticism within AVT, mirrored

in the words of Gambier that considers it "a misuse of time" if it is to be compared to other much more "interesting" and "useful" research. Nonetheless, we must not forget that in a traditionally subtitled country, such as Portugal, "the power of the written word" is of the utmost importance, especially ever since the *Estado Novo* (the Portuguese dictatorship).

This is even more striking if one thinks of the importance of subtitling for the development of reading habits and literacy in a population with an unusual reading deficit. It is also worth mentioning that the Portuguese illiteracy rate has varied considerably according to the National Census, surveys conducted by Statistics Portugal, the government body that collects official data. Therefore, in 1970, 25.7% of the Portuguese were considered illiterate, a percentage that has decreased considerably since then, and in 2011, only 5.2% of illiterates, the lowest number so far. Finally, until quite recently, there was rather limited research done in AVT in Portugal, when compared to that of other European countries, which also makes the need for Portuguese research even more significant.

## AVT types: subtitling

Interpersonal communication has always been based on verbal signs, non-verbal gestures and images. After the invention of the printing press the written word became dominant and, with the development of literacy, it achieved paramount importance. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was rivalled by the radio and motion pictures (Gottlieb, 1997: 49).

The first cinema projection took place in Paris on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1895 and was conducted by the brothers Lumière, Louis and Auguste. From that moment onwards, the popularity of cinema was overwhelming throughout the world, a purely visual phenomenon (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 53). At the beginning, cinema was considered a universal language, a visual Esperanto. Nevertheless, silent films (though never in absolute silence, because they were accompanied by music and sometimes an orchestra) eventually had to be equipped with what was then called 'subtitles', cardboard signs inserted between scenes of the film (Gottlieb, 1997: 50). In its first meaning, 'subtitle' referred to a secondary title placed after the main title at the beginning of the film (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 59).

Later these got the name of *intertitles* (or 'insert titles'), integrated into the films by means of the Norwegian optical method or the Hungarian chemical method, which were taken to other fringes of Europe. They started off as "being projected by a magic lantern between the parts of the film, when (...) [it] was actually paused" (Karamitroglou, 2000: 7), "using a sciopticon (a kind of slide projector)" (Ivarsson 1992: 23) and later "became an indispensable part of the film, photographed and printed on the film-strip" (Ivarsson, 1995 cit. Karamitroglou, 2000: 7).

Intertitles then consisted of:

una o varias palabras escritas, impresas sobre un fondo opaco y distinto al del espacio escénico de la película, que aparecían entre dos escenas (...) venían impresos en caracteres de color blanco sobre un fondo negro (...) limitándose normalmente a una sola frase [y su] inclusión en el discurso fílmico entrababa el fluir natural de la imagen por lo que los directores se mostraban precavidos a la hora de utilizarlos, siendo la tónica general de una marcada parquedad. (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 54)

The first intertitles appeared in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Edward S. Porter (1903: en). These were what they called "epic titles", titles that provided comments, anticipations (like cataphoras) or identification of time and place, allowing "cinematic description [to be] understandable to the audience" (Gottlieb, 1997: 58) or the rendering of the actors' lines in words: "a good silent film of the usual c. 45 minutes could work splendidly with about 20 titles – some 5% of the amount we would expect in a modern sound film" (Gottlieb, 1997: 58).

Moreover, there were examples of superimposed captions to render displays, such as letters, telegrams, names on doors, and the like. The oldest example of a whole film captioned is the silent film "Mireille" (Ernest Servaès, 1922: fr), in which the titles were placed at the bottom of the screen, actually below the picture, which was reduced for this purpose. (Gottlieb, 1997: 59)

With the appearance of sound films or talkies, intertitles no longer played the same role and the need for cinematographic translation was felt. The issue was which method to use: subtitling or dubbing, or another not very popular method called double versions or audition subtitling. According to Gottlieb (1997: 53), this method "was found in some movie theatres, where the audience could listen to simultaneous or tape-recorded interpreting of the film dialog through small headphones installed at each seat", a sort of modern audio-description for the performing arts, but in this case not specifically for the blind and visually impaired. However, Díaz-Cintas (2001: 58) also speaks of a similar type of "traducción a vista" (or sight translation) of the intertitles of silent movies, a task that was often performed by the pianist or the "maestro de ceremonias", a means to overcome the illiteracy of many viewers. Despite these experiments, an idea remained that a translated film was thought to be "a ruined film", as much as "a dubbed film was an insult to the actors [and] a subtitle version (...) a violation of the picture" (Gottlieb, 1997: 51-52).

After many years experimenting with this technique, the first sound film fully equipped with subtitles was "The Jazz Singer" (Alan Crosland, 1927: en) shown in non-English-speaking countries and, in 1938, the BBC broadcast the German film "Der Student von Prag" (Stellan Rye, Paul Wegener, 1913: de) (Gottlieb 1997: 59). With the development of Hollywood films and their stars, the American producers chose to export their films with subtitled versions in Spanish, French and German, a choice based on the European linguistic fragmentation. For instance, neighbouring countries would have to watch these movies in their "brother's language": the Portuguese would only have access to the Spanish version, the Poles and the Dutch to the

German version, and the Turks and the Greeks to the French version – this Pan-Europeanisation of subtitling was doomed to failure, due to the severe offence to nations (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 60).

Generally speaking, after short experiments with either methods (subtitling and dubbing), France chose to dub films, as well as Spain and Italy, whereas Holland (in 1930), Great Britain (in 1932), Hungary and Sweden began to subtitle extensively. According to Gottlieb (1997: 70), subtitling emerged as a unique form of translation, defined as written, as opposed to spoken in other AVT modes; as additive by adding something to the original; as immediate, in which discourse is presented "in a flowing manner" (*idem*); as synchronous, since the original film and the translation are present simultaneously; and as polymedial, because "two parallel channels are used to convey the total message of the original" (*idem*).

In line with this, Luyken presents the following definition:

Subtitles are condensed written translation of the original dialog which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot to the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialog and are almost always added to the screen at a later date as a post-production activity. (Luyken et al., 1991: 31)

This type of AVT has always presented a number of advantages that explain why a reasonable number of European countries (Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece) chose it over dubbing (Spain, France, Germany) or voice-over (Russia, Poland). This is also clear from the fact that Portuguese or Greek TV channels organised separate departments (RTP and ERT, respectively) for conducting this activity, which have enabled the "speedy and cost-effective production of easy to read subtitles, even at short notice and for complex subject areas" (Luyken et al., 1991: 36).

According to Díaz-Cintas (2001: 49-50), the benefits of subtitling can be summed up in the following way: it is a cheaper and fairly quick job; it respects the integrity of the original dialog; it develops the learning of foreign languages; it helps the development of viewers' reading ability in their mother tongue; it maintains the original voices; it is better for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and for immigrants.

Nevertheless, it also holds a number of disadvantages which are the fact that it "contaminates" the image on screen, leading to the spreading of attention across several aspects, like the image, the written text or the soundtrack; it demands more reduction of the original text because of time and space limitations; it does not allow for the overlapping of dialogs; it is hard to manipulate; if viewers get distracted or lost, they are unable to read the subtitles; it may lead to some disorientation due to the presence of (at least) two linguistic codes (in the case of Belgium, subtitles are presented in both Flemish and French); and linguistic calques may enter the language.

In addition to this, Gottlieb summarises that most

criticisms to subtitling focus on the reduction of the dialog and the interference in the image: it is not only a long series of visual shocks (Marleau, 1982 cit. Gottlieb, 1997: 56), but also "an esthetically unjustified blot on [the picture's] artistic unity" (Reid, 1977 cit. Gottlieb, 1997: 56).

An alternative to subtitling, as mentioned above, is revoicing, which for some authors (such as Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997 or Baker & Hochel in Baker, 1998) is regarded as a general term that encompasses any technique of covering or substituting the original sound by other sounds. Among the most common, there are dubbing and voice-over. Dubbing, on the one hand, is considered to be a revoicing process that demands lip, facial, gestural and visual synchronisation, whereas voice-over, partial dubbing or half-dubbing means that the original sound is reduced to a lower level of audibility and the translation is heard over the source soundtrack (cf. Chaume, 2003; Gambier, 2003).

However, revoicing also bears a set of pros and cons. Among its drawbacks, it should be mentioned that it turns out to be more expensive; it leads to the loss of the original; it is usually more laborious and slow; it intends to be a domesticating product; the voices of the actors can be repetitive; and it must abide lip synchronisation.

Again Gottlieb mentions the following cons: dubbing will always remain an artistic swindle (Ford, 1955 cit. Gottlieb, 1997: 55), as well as a refusal, a negation of culture in its fundamental manifestation, language (Renaud, 1984 cit. Gottlieb, 1997: 55). On the other hand, it enables a less problematic manipulation of dialogs and their overlapping; it is considered more beneficial for children and illiterate; it respects the image on screen, not contaminating it, thus viewers can concentrate solely on the image and sound; it does not need to reduce as much text as in subtitling; it makes use of only one linguistic code and of oral language features; and it might prevent the entrance of linguistic calques (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 49-50).

Therefore, subtitling is also an overt type of translation, "retaining the original version" (Gottlieb, 1997: 108) and is *fragmentary*, since it only represents the lexical and syntactic features of the dialog, whereas dubbing is *covert*, by "replacing the entire dialog track" (*idem*), and *integral*, because it does not force the audience to a third cognitive effort of reading, apart from listening and watching. Subtitling can then be regarded as a linguistic practice that consists of offering written text, in the form of subtitles, traditionally at the bottom of a screen, conveying verbal and non-verbal utterances, according to the features of the genre of the audiovisual text (Díaz-Cintas, 2001: 23). It is also regarded as a "kind of simultaneous written interpretation" (Gambier cit. de Linde & Kay, 1999: 2), which Chaume (2003: 18) describes as consisting of the "incorporar text escrit en la llengua meta a la pantalla on s'exhibeix una pel·lícula en versió original, de manera que aquest text en forma de subtítols coincideixca aproximadament amb les intervencions dels actors de la pantalla".

Consequently, subtitles are "transcriptions of film or TV dialog, presented simultaneously on the screen",

along with the image, sound, paralinguistic elements and others, and "usually consist of one or two lines of an average maximum length of 35 characters (...) [being] placed at the bottom of the picture and [that] are either centred or left-aligned" (Gottlieb in Baker, 1998: 245).

It is obvious that these definitions can cover numerous types of subtitling, each with different features and imposing different constraints to translators/subtitlers, which Gambier (in Gambier, 2003: 172-177) listed as being interlingual subtitling, intralingual translation, real-time subtitling and surtitling, though sight translation and multilingual production.

According to Díaz-Cintas (2001: 24-26), subtitling can be divided according to three criteria: formal presentation, linguistic elements and technical aspects. As far as the first one is concerned, there is *traditional subtitling*, either maintaining complete sentences (the so-called *verbatim*) or being condensed, or bilingual (in which each line is devoted to a different language, such as in Belgium); and *simultaneous subtitling*, typical of situations such as a live interview. Linguistically speaking, there is *intralingual subtitling*, on the one hand, designed to satisfy different needs, those of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, needs related to the learning of languages and what Díaz-Cintas calls the "karaoke effect" (connected with the preservation of the original soundtrack, for instance in musicals). On the other hand, one has *interlingual subtitling*, resulting in the translation of an audiovisual "text" from one language to another.

Finally, from the technical point of view, he mentions *open subtitling* and *closed subtitling*, according to which one can have either an end product which is inseparable of the translated subtitles (open subtitling), or the audiovisual text may be accessed only if the viewer wishes to (closed subtitling). In open subtitling, one would be watching a subtitled programme on TV, cinema or video, i.e. with subtitles available to everyone, "forming part of the original film or broadcast" (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 161), "which cannot be switched off at liberty of the viewer" (Carroll, 2004: online). In closed subtitling, "broadcast [is done] separately and [is] accessible (...) by means of teletext" (*idem*), for example the case of subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, the case of DVDs or real-media on the Internet.

Bearing in mind the several types of subtitling and their distinction according to specific criteria, it is worth mentioning Gottlieb's (in Baker, 1998: 245-247) three distinctive features of subtitling, which enable the understanding of some of the constraints involved in the practice of subtitling: the semiotic composition, the time dimension and the pragmatic dimension.

According to the *semiotic composition*, translated texts can be either monosemiotic or polysemiotic, whether they use only one channel of communication, which translators control, or they use other channels of communication, such as the visual and the auditory, which will influence translators' job. In addition, polysemiotic texts can be isosemiotic if the translation uses the original channel, or diasemiotic if the translation results from a combination of different

channels, which occurs in the case of subtitling. Consequently, in subtitling one has to work with four simultaneous channels: the verbal auditory channel (dialog, background voices, lyrics); the non-verbal auditory channel (music, natural sounds, sound effects); the verbal visual channel (titles, written signs on the screen); and the non-verbal visual channel (picture composition and flow). This means that every decision made by the translators/subtitlers will affect the end product in any of these four channels, which is especially relevant in intralingual subtitling. (Gottlieb in Baker, 1998: 245-247)

Concerning the *time dimension*, it is worth remembering that subtitling is dependent on the "time for production of the original", the "time for presentation of the original" and the "time for presentation of the translation", making it a type of synchronous translation, because it is in synchrony with the original, as well as of contemporaneous translation, since it is connected with the original in terms of time and space. (Gottlieb in Baker, 1998: 245-247)

Finally, regarding the *pragmatic dimension*, since "intentions and effects are more important than isolated lexical elements" which make up an audiovisual "text", translators/subtitlers will have to ensure that considerable dialog restriction and concision are achieved, involving intersemiotic and intrasemiotic conciseness, so as to avoid redundancy of information that is given by facial expressions, tone of voice, the rhythm of music and sound effects. (Gottlieb in Baker, 1998: 245-247)

Furthermore, there is a number of parameters that need to be taken into account in subtitling, according to Karamitroglou (1998):

- the spatial parameter or layout – position on the screen; number of lines; text positioning; number of characters per line; typeface and distribution; font colour and background;
- the temporal parameter or duration – maximum duration of a full two-line subtitle; minimum and maximum duration of a full single-line subtitle; leading-in time; lagging-out time; time between two consecutive subtitles; overlay, add-ons and cumulative text; camera takes/cuts;
- the typographic parameter – punctuation and letter case;
- the target text editing – subtitle segmentation and line length; spoken utterances; omissions and changes; retaining original elements; acronyms, apostrophes, numerals and symbols; rendering dialects, taboo words and culture-specific linguistic elements.

To conclude, the focus of this paper is interlingual subtitling, which refers to the type of transadaptation of a so-called 'source text', a post-production script (when there is one) associated to what happens on screen, into a set of (usually) two-line 'target text', with (normally) 34 to 40 characters each, that is to be presented to viewers (most often) at the bottom of the screen every four or every six seconds while an audiovisual product is being broadcast. More than the idea of transferring, restricting, reducing or adapting,

one should retain the concept of transadaptation, which involves the already-mentioned temporal constraints, the conciseness of information and the relationship established between the spoken and the written codes, and "allows to go beyond the usual dichotomy [between] literal/free translation or translation/adaptation" (in Gambier, 2003: 178-199).

### A word about audiovisual genres

It is obvious that genres are also dependent on and influenced by the society in which they appear – they accomplish a function and possess a pragmatic validity. Their function is to organise the diversity of the discourse spaces and their validity comes forth as a way to organise text into different discourses according to pragmatic, enunciative, syntactic and semantic criteria. Agost (in Duro, 2001: 237-238) claims that the audiovisual text is the concept used for understanding the different discourse practices in the audiovisual context and when one talks about television, the basic unit of broadcasting and the concrete manifestation of a specific genre is the program.

From Duro's viewpoint (2001: 239-241), there is a number of criteria for classifying *audiovisual genres*, of which one is the mode (these texts make use of visual and linguistic codes), the other the scope of use (television, cinema, video or computer) and, at last, the function of the specific program (the predominant communicative intention, which for some authors, such as Nord (1991) or Bathia (1993), determine both the genre and their internal structure). The majority of programmes achieve one of these functions: telling fictional stories; informing about facts and real events; acting upon viewers so as to change their habits, attitudes or behaviours; entertaining and maintaining contact with the spectators.

Although any text, audiovisual or not, can have more than one function, it is possible to divide audiovisual texts into four chief macro-genres: dramatic, informative, advertising or entertaining genres. The *dramatic genre* comprehends narrative (films, TV series, soap operas, TV movies or cartoons), descriptive (documentary or philosophical films) or expressive texts (televized theatre or opera, musicals), while the *informative* one includes documentaries, reality-shows, programs about social life, interviews, debates, weather forecast or DIY programs. On the other hand, the *advertising genre* is characterised by its mainly educational purpose, combined with the conversational and the expository, such as institutional campaigns, election campaigns, among others. Finally, the *entertaining genre* encompasses a more heterogeneous group, namely the narrative (social chronicles, sports emissions), the conversational (contests), the expressive (humorous or musical programs), the predictive (horoscope) or the educational (gymnastics program) types.

Apart from the function, it is of the utmost importance to consider also the mode, which allows for the distinction between those genres that are more oral and spontaneous and those that are more

written and deliberate, and the tone that measures the attitude of the enunciators and their enunciative distance, distinguishing the documentary sub-genre from the reality-show, for instance. Nevertheless, this classification cannot be understood as a closed one, because of the speed at which new audiovisual formats are showing up.

### Fixed Language

In terms of the verbal or linguistic dimension of the audiovisual genre, one should take into account the lexical knowledge of a language, which implies not only the knowledge of morphemes, simple and compound words and their respective meanings, but also of a number of fixed or set phrases, which are non-compositional (Vilela, 1994: 9-11). Their importance derives from the fact that they are extremely common in any natural language and represent their wealth, paradoxically more metaphorical and figurative than literal.

It is worth mentioning that "PEOPLE SPEAK IN SET PHRASES – rather than in separate words; hence the importance of set phrases" (Mel'čuk, 1998: 23), which is emphasised further by the fact that phrases in any language "outnumber words roughly ten to one" (*idem*: 24).

Generally speaking, these expressions tend to reach a certain degree of frozenness or syntactic irregularity, not normally allowing other combinations and preventing the order of their parts from being changed. Additionally, they frequently break the combination rules derived from semantic properties, possessing syntactic and semantic features of their own. Therefore, they must be understood as whole units with specific meanings and restrictions to their occurrence (Fromkin & Rodman, 1993: 197-198).

Although the existence of a certain degree of frozenness in language is a common characteristic of phraseological expressions, it does not necessarily imply idiomaticity. In the words of Iriarte Sanromán (2001: 25), the more or less fixed expressions of a language are generally known as phrases and they correspond to specific sequences learnt by heart, lexicalised phrases or lexical combinatory patterns. This range of combinations is then understood by speakers as words, including everything in the spectrum from collocations to idiomatic expressions (*idem*: 28)

Mel'čuk (1995: 175) states that a set phrase can be replaced by another synonymous lexical expression and its signifier is understood out of the sum of all the signifiers. On the other hand, restricted lexical combinations can be divided into pragmatic phrasemes or pragmatemes and semantic phrasemes, the latter also encompassing full phrasemes or idiomatic expressions, semi-phrasemes or collocations and quasi-phrasemes. Semantic phrasemes are the combination of two or more lexemes, in which the overall meaning is different from the sum of their meanings, thus non-compositional. The meaning in a semantic phraseme is freely chosen, because it is not

imposed by the situation, contrary to what occurs with pragmatic phrasemes. The lexical selection of their meaning is partially or totally limited, even if it may be a regular construction in morphological and syntactic terms (Mel'čuk, 1995: 181).

On the one hand, full phrasemes are characterised by a group of features: they are semantically non-compositional and coherent (their elements are mutually required); they resist formal variation; they can be ambiguous and bring about problems when they are to be approached in light of linguistic models. The meaning of full phrasemes is represented as 'AB' = 'C'. On the other hand, the meaning of semi-phrasemes does not match the sum of the meanings of their elements, which are not freely selected. Because of this, they are not free combinations of lexemes, but frequent, probable, preferential or usual combinations of lexemes (namely [noun + adjective] or [verb + noun]), as well as apparently free combinations created according to the rules of a language where some type of lexical restriction determined by these rules is to be found. (Mel'čuk, 1995: 46)

Despite the complexity and fuzziness of set phrases, the following features can be summed up. Set phrases have at least two lexical independent elements; they bear a high degree of semantic opacity, i.e. they are non-compositional by nature; they are non-literal and often metaphorical and idiomatic, i.e. showing semantic irregularity; they enable the creation of mental images; they function as complete, unbreakable units; they are fixed, frozen or crystallised sequences, i.e. they bear syntactic irregularity; they are exocentric and demotivated constructions; they are institutionalised.

### Documentary film "The Real Da Vinci Code"

The documentary film chosen to be analysed was "The Real Da Vinci Code", originally in English and directed by Kashaf Chaudhry in 2005. It was based on the blockbuster book by Dan Brown – "The Da Vinci Code" – which was published in 2003, sold 60.5 copies by 2006 and has been translated in almost 50 different languages. The original English version was co-produced by Wildfire Television, Channel Four Film and History Television. This documentary film is especially long: it is 102 minutes, when opposed to the usual 45 and 60 minutes.

This documentary was broadcast in Portugal in 2006: the subtitled version was first shown on the public TV channel RTP2 on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006, whereas the voiced-over version about a week later, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2006, on the other public TV channel RTP1. Both were translated from English into European Portuguese and broadcast with a time span of one week. The subtitled version was translated by Filomena Pedro and subtitled by Teresa Sustelo, whereas the voice-over version was translated by the same person and Carlos Ribeiro, Isabel Angelino, José Henrique Nelo, Maria Margarida and Paulo Lázaro were in charge of the revoicing process.

It is worth mentioning that, in recent years, the

difference between one public channel and the other has been emphasised, especially due to the type of programmes televised, leading the general public to consider RTP1 more popular and RTP2 more intellectual and this elitist.

Although some efforts were made to gather further information on the original documentary, its two versions and the context in which the audiovisual work was conducted, it was impossible to find out more details about these. It was then impossible to have access to the script and the official subtitling of the documentary, which required manual transcription. Therefore, a question was left to answer which concerns the reason(s) why the same documentary film was broadcast on both public TV channels in two different AVT modes (subtitling with voice-over and revoicing), with only a week apart.

The materials that constituted the basis for this paper are then a documentary film originally in English, 102 minutes long, in its audiovisual versions – subtitled and voice-over in European Portuguese. They were recorded at the time they were broadcast (May 2006) from the two Portuguese public channels. In terms of methodology, we transcribed the original documentary film, which enable the creation of the subtitling text; and we also went through the original in search of set phrases and then compared them with their translation in the subtitled version. In addition, we also attempted to identify and classify these examples according to the theoretical framework presented above, especially in terms of collocations and idiomatic expressions. The examples presented forth were chosen from the

first 20 minutes of the documentary film, roughly giving the idea that a fixed expression is used every two minutes. To elicit the meaning of these expressions, the Cambridge Dictionary online was used and when this was shown insufficient, other Internet resources were also utilised.

From a first analysis of these examples, we could attempt to conclude that four out of ten of these phrases are semi-phraseemes (collocations), three of which clearly metaphorical, and the remaining five consist of full phraseemes (idiomatic expressions). Secondly, the contrastive analysis of the English examples and its respective Portuguese translations enabled to draw some conclusions, as presented below.

As far as the first example is concerned, *at the heart of* means that something is at centre of something, having thus a special importance. It is a semi-phraseeme that has a metaphorical basis, because it uses a part of a human being's body – the heart, which is in the middle of the body – to represent the centre of a certain activity, in this case of the quest. In the translation, the metaphorical collocation is simplified and the figurative aspect is eliminated, although a possible alternative collocation in English would also lose the metaphorical connotation – *at the centre of any quest*.

The print screen for Fig. 1 shows that the action on screen is enhancing the strength of the phrase, since the narrator is positioned at the centre of the live representation of the "Last Supper", preventing the viewers to actually see the person playing the role of Jesus Christ, who is replaced by the narrator.



Figure 1. Print screen of "at the heart of (any quest)".

The second example bears a rather strong metaphorical connotation in which we could mention the comparison between 'taking [over] the world', attacking it in order to rule it, and the effects of a storm, sudden, noisy, sometimes destructive. Cambridge Dictionary (online) defines it as something or someone that has suddenly become successful. Therefore, we could compare the reception of Dan Brown's book to a storm, a story that 'attacked' the world in a sudden way; leading to various reactions and, in this case, some degree of controversy.

The Portuguese translation followed the idiomatic and metaphorical sense of the original, although it shifted from the conceptual field of the weather to the conceptual field of crime and robbing or eventually boxing.



Figure 2. Print screen of "taken the world by storm".

The third example, *one hell of* functions as a qualifying expression meaning a great, awesome or similar idea. The Portuguese translation followed another path and changed the expression into a paraphrase that attempted to replicate the same significance – *A coisa promete...* Nonetheless, it would be possible to use a set phrase, which could be considered rather informal, such as *uma viagem e peras*, which can mean both interesting and difficult.

Fig. 3 illustrates the narrator preparing himself to start a journey, by looking to the back and the side mirrors, and by admitting that it would be both interesting and difficult journey.



Figure 3. Print screen of "one hell of (a journey)".

Follow in the footsteps means to do the same job or the same things in your life as someone else, which is exactly what is expressed by the Portuguese equivalent. Fig. 4 exemplifies this replication of one's footsteps, because the narrator is actually replicating the main character's steps in "The Da Vinci Code".



Figure 4. Print screen of "follow in the footsteps".

In the following example, think-tank represents a group of people established by a government or organisation in order to advise them on particular subjects and to suggest ideas. Here, it seems that the translator considered a paraphrase (*grupo de reflexão* seen in Fig. 5) more appropriate to the context, which can be arguable, but matches the meaning of the English phrase, in spite of losing the underlying metaphor.

Fig. 5 seems to be an example in which the image does not bring any advantage to the understanding of the set phrase in question, in the same way as it happened with Fig. 2, since the only characteristic that could be related to think-tank would be the setting, which is a library where a scholar is reading.



Figure 5. Print screen of "think-tank".

	ORIGINAL VERSION (EN)	SUBTITLING (PT)	CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEMES AND METAPHORS
1.	at the heart of (any quest)	"no came de qualquer busca"	Semi-phraseeme or collocation Metaphorical
2.	take[n] the world by storm	"que tomou o mundo de assalto"	Semi-phraseeme Metaphorical
3.	one hell of a journey	"A coisa promete..."	Full phraseeme Metaphorical
4.	follow in the footsteps	"seguir os passos"	Full phraseeme
5.	think-tank	"espécie de grupo de reflexão"	Full phraseeme Metaphorical
6.	(do one's) legwork	"o meu próprio caminho"	Full phraseeme Metaphorical
7.	a spit in the ocean	"uma gota no oceano"	Semi-phraseeme Metaphorical
8.	give it a good go	"Prometo que vou tentar"	Semi-phraseeme
9.	get to grips with	"Se vou desafiar"	Full phraseeme
10.	(be) at the cutting edge	"Eram o supra-sumo"	Full phraseeme Metaphorical

Table 1. Examples of set phrases from "The Real Da Vinci Code".

Concerning the sixth example, legwork means practical or boring work that needs to be done. This meaning was clearly lost in the translation and replaced by a somewhat different sense, which is equivalent in English to follow a certain path. At first sight, this could be considered an incorrect translation, but it is actually a set phrase in Portuguese – *fazer o meu próprio caminho* – meaning to do something (by) myself. An alternative translation could be *partir pedra*, but that would raise the issue of language register.

The action preceding the print screen in Fig. 6 is the narrator gathering books from several shelves so as to say that he has to make his own legwork, represented by the pile of books he carries on his arms.



Figure 6. Print screen of "(do one's) legwork".

As far as a spit in the ocean is concerned, this was definitely the most interesting example, because the most usual synonym is actually a drop in the ocean, something in a very small amount compared to the amount necessary, and this was actually the translation chosen by the translator, also a set phrase in Portuguese.

In Fig. 7, the narrator is putting books into a plastic box in order to conclude his remark, which emphasises the fact that this little box carries only a small part of all that has been written on the Holy Grail.

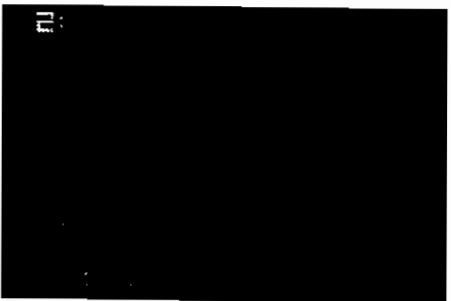


Figure 7. Print screen of "a spit in the ocean".

The semi-phrase or collocation *give it a good go* is one of at least four different alternatives sharing the same meaning, i.e. to attempt or try to do something. The Portuguese translation clearly lost the idiomaticity

and frozenness of the original, but maintained the same significant idea: promise to do something.

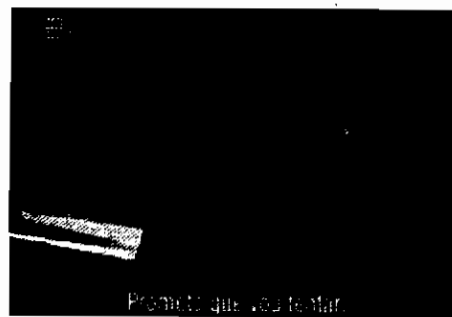


Figure 8. Print screen of "give it a good go".

The key word in this fixed expression – *grip* – is widely used in many different expressions (e.g. *get a grip*; *loosen your grip*; *hold your grip*), as well as an independent word either functioning as verb (in the sense of holding interest or emotion on something) or as noun (i.e. having control or hold on something). In this particular expression, it has a rather strong meaning: to begin to deal with someone or something difficult or challenging in a sensible way. The Portuguese translation again loses the idiomaticity, but conveys the main idea of the expression by using the verb *desafiar* (challenge).



Figure 9. Print screen 'get to grips with'.

Finally, at the cutting edge, in Fig. 10, is a metaphorical expression that refers to something placed at the most recent stage of development. The interesting thing is the association of edge (outer point, border or outline) with cutting, which is usually associated with knives or axes and in this case tries to convey the image of something that breaks or divides a surface, leading to a breakthrough. However, it seems that the Portuguese expression fails to express this idea of forefront and vanguard, because *suprasumo* refers more to the idea of the highest point in something, but not necessarily in terms of development.



Figure 10. Print screen of "[be] at the cutting edge".

To conclude, we could claim that, in most cases, the Portuguese translations maintained part of the idiomatic and metaphorical strength, transferred into Portuguese idioms or collocations or, at least, paraphrased in its core meaning. Furthermore, the setting of the scenes is also important, which clearly emphasises the deliberate mode of numerous documentaries. Examples of this are the narrator in the centre of the representation of "The Last Supper"; the action that is also essential, such as the car coming out of parking lot, the pile of books, the books inside the plastic box (a container); the library surrounded by bookshelves and the scholar.

The work done so far is undeniably a *drop in the ocean*, because it has only shown *the tip of the iceberg*. Following in these footsteps would be *one hell of a journey* and a lot of *legwork* to be done. The next stages of this *iceberg* will be to gather any other fixed expressions from the remaining 80 minutes and *get to grips* with a more balanced and sustained classification scheme for these expressions, and *give a good go* at analysing the translation/subtitling strategies used in the Portuguese translations.

## Conclusion

This paper intended to examine the verbal-auditory channel transposed to the interlingual subtitling of the documentary film "The Real Da Vinci Code". The basic premise for the choice of this topic was the social and cultural role that subtitling plays in a country such as Portugal with has a large tradition in this AVT mode, though also making occasional use of dubbing and voice-over.

The initial theoretical discussion enabled us to conclude that, as expected, set phrases are extremely common in audiovisual texts, represented by this study case, the documentary film based on Dan Brown's best-seller. Added to this, it was also possible to confirm that most set phrases were maintained with almost "perfect" or close equivalents in Portuguese, whereas others were either translated or paraphrased into non-idiomatic expressions, due to the constraints imposed by the languages involved, by the subtitling activity or the absence of idiomatic equivalents.

Furthermore, it was also possible to conclude

that the setness of language presented in the given examples was emphasised by what was going on in the image, in terms of the action, the setting or details, thus taking advantage of the richness of the verbal-auditory and non-verbal visual channels involved in audiovisual texts to support the effect of the set phrases.

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