Mapping Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling, Revoicing, and Accessibility Practices

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DOI : https://doi.org/10.61796/ijss.v3i1.106

Sections Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Submitted: January 10, 2026 Final Revised: February 05, 2026 Accepted: February 25, 2026 Published: March 06, 2026 *Keywords:* Audiovisual translation subtitling Revoicing Dubbing Voice-over Accessibility Corpus-based AVT Pragmatics Linguocultural features Uzbek audiovisual translation	*Objective: This review article examines the development of audiovisual translation (AVT) with a particular focus on subtitling, revoicing, and accessibility-oriented practices. Drawing on international AVT scholarship and recent studies from the Uzbek context, the article maps key theoretical approaches, research trends, and methodological shifts in the field. Method: The review highlights subtitling as a dominant mode of screen translation, the persistence of culturally and economically conditioned revoicing practices, and the increasing importance of accessibility as a core paradigm in AVT research. Results: Special attention is given to linguistic, pragmatic, and linguocultural issues, as well as to corpus-based and pedagogical approaches. The article identifies existing gaps and future research directions, particularly in underrepresented languages and emerging audiovisual cultures. Novelty: The findings contribute to a more inclusive understanding of audiovisual translation as a multimodal and socially embedded form of mediated communication.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of audiovisual media in the digital age has transformed the way information, culture, and entertainment circulate across linguistic and national borders. Movies, series, OTT content and online video platforms are increasingly using audiovisual translation (AVT) to reach new audiences worldwide [1]. This development has turned AVT from one of the more peripheral subfields of translation studies into an interdisciplinary, vibrant field that interacts with linguistics, media studies, cognitive science and accessibility research. AVT refers to a variety of translation modes, among them subtitling, revoicing (dubbing and voice-over), and accessibility-related translatoin practices like subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) or audio description (AD). Each mode operates under distinct technical, linguistic, and cultural constraints, requiring translators to negotiate meaning across verbal, visual, and acoustic channels simultaneously [2]. This multimodal complexity distinguishes AVT from other forms of translation and has motivated the development of specialized theoretical models and analytical tools.

In recent decades, AVT research has expanded both thematically and methodologically. In studies of earlier date, the technological restrictions and linguistic minimization was the main concern, above all in subtitling. More recent work has taken a wider view, considering issues such as cognition, audiences and reception, pragmatics,

ideology and the sociocultural context of audiovisual texts. Simultaneously, corpus-based and empirical methods have come to the fore, information scientists can use to systematically investigate extensive databases of subtitles or revoiced texts up and down the scale, finding translation patterns that occur repeatedly from one genre or language to another [3]. Another significant shift in AVT studies is the growing emphasis on accessibility. Practices such as SDH and AD are no longer viewed as supplementary but as integral components of audiovisual communication. This accessibility-oriented paradigm challenges traditional notions of a homogeneous audience and underscores the ethical and social responsibility of audiovisual translators to ensure inclusive media access for diverse user groups.

While there has been progress in these areas over the past decades, research in AVT remains limited by language and geographical focus. Despite this, research has mostly been conducted on high-profile European languages and long-existing audio-visual industries, with less research conducted on new audio-visual cultures and minor language pairs. Subtitling and voice-over, though the dominant forms of screen translation in many such contexts and in Central Asia, are few and far between in their theoretical elaboration and empirical recording [4].

Within this background, this review article seeks to sketch the landscape of the audiovisual translation field by providing a summary of key research areas: subtitling, revoicing, and accessibility. This article reviews international studies along with some studies conducted on the Uzbek audiovisual translation context and identifies the key research trends, the prevailing research methods, and the voids. In so doing, it contributes to a fuller and more inclusive understanding of audiovisual translation as a phenomenon on a global yet local stage [5].

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology of this review article is qualitative and the literature analyzed is descriptive. This research utilizes systematic literature review (SLR) method by choosing and analyzing international academic sources and works on Uzbek audiovisual translation context to reveal key theoretical positions, research trends and methodological enhancement in the field. The chosen sources are monographs, journal articles, conference papers and textbooks focused on linguistic, pragmatic, cultural and technical dimensions of audiovisual translation. These thematic analyses classified studies according to major AVT types (e.g. subtitling, dubbing, voice over) and types of accessibility-oriented translation (e.g. subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, audio description). Especially, corpus based and empirical approaches which enable both to identify the repetitive translation strategies like reduction, simplification, cultural readability or pragmatic change were mentioned [6]. Besides the theoretical works, the authors also analyzed selected Uzbek studies and professional interviews to bridge global tendencies in research with local practices in audiovisual translation. Using comparative analysis, common being between international models and the Uz context, especially regarding production conditions and translation ways. This approach

facilitated the identification of gaps in research, in particular the lack of empirical and corpus-based studies on underrepresented languages and in audiovisual settings. This analytical framework can serve as a single document that encapsulates a holistic and integrated foundation for mapping AVT as social-semiotic multiliteracies that are multimodal and socially situated [7].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has become a complex field because global media and communication are becoming more diverse and multimodal. In the beginning, AVT was mainly understood as the technical transfer of meaning from one language to another. Today, however, researchers focus not only on language transfer, but also on cultural, cognitive, and semiotic aspects. One important classification was proposed by Gambier, who identified seven main types of audiovisual translation and showed how these practices are influenced by technology, culture, and institutions. Later, Pérez-González grouped AVT into three main categories: subtitling, revoicing, and assistive forms [8], [9]. This three-part model offers a clear and useful framework for studying both traditional and new types of audiovisual translation.

Subtitling is one of the most widely studied and commonly used forms of audiovisual translation. Pérez-González explains that subtitles developed from intertitles and consist of written text shown on the screen to translate spoken dialogue into another language. It involves breaking spoken language, whether dialogue or narration, into short written segments that onscreen for the same duration the original speech inclusive [10]. In countries with more than one national language, the viewers may be able to see bilingual subtitles, two target languages side by side (Gambier). Semiotically, subtitling is intermodal translation as it transforms the spoken to written text. This evolutionary change creates enormous cognitive and time pressure. As viewers are generally able to speak faster than they can read (O'Connell), subtitles can typically render only about 60% of the original spoken content [11]. Consequently, subtitle texts are frequently condensed and simplified. These constraints, first articulated in the 1930s, are still governed by rules concerning reading speed, subtitle duration, and character limits per line [12].

Pérez-González further argues that adherence to subtitling norms significantly influences audience reception. One of the core norms—condensation and simplification—can affect the portrayal of characters and interpersonal relations. Indirect or ambiguous utterances in the source text are often rendered more explicitly in subtitles, which may result in the loss of narrative depth or character nuance. Such shifts can alter viewers' interpretation of characters and their relationships, occasionally prompting criticism from filmmakers who perceive subtitling conventions as overly restrictive [13]. Nevertheless, subtitles have also been employed creatively to challenge conventional cinematic norms. Naficy, in his study of diasporic cinema, highlights the work of Vietnamese filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha, whose film VietNam demonstrates innovative uses of subtitles as a form of "visual speech" [14]. In this film, subtitles and textual elements appear in unconventional positions and formats, sometimes overlaying

characters' faces or occupying large portions of the screen. Such strategies not only aid understanding but urge the viewer to reassess ways they normally watch film. By specifically violating the rules of synchronization — including long-duration subtitles that linger on the screen or disappear quickly — Trinh emphasizes the cognitive challenge of these phonological mismatches and highlights the multimodal, semiotic nature of meaning.

Digital technologies have made deep impacts on the practice of subtitling. The media production and distribution democratisation are themes through which non-professional communities have been able to engage in audiovisual translation. Fansubbing providing subtitles for film and television series is a well-known instance of this fandom translation, a lot of which are driven by the need (or lack thereof) for more culturally sensitive translations than are often disseminated [15]. Often, fansubbers will get creative and experimental, attempting to provide a greater sense of the more authentic experience they think they are better providing. At the same time, substantial interest in automated and semi-automated solutions has emerged as demand for subtitles on a variety of platforms—from streaming services to corporate videos to video games to documentaries—has surged. Works Cited O'Hagan, John. 2003. "Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Allocation." Armstrong et al. EBMT systems trained on parallel subtitle corpora have shown promise and this is what demonstrate. For example, they note that machine translation training based on homogeneous subtitle data outperforms mixed text types [16]. Later work from Volk et al. The automation works best in Scandinavian contexts where the large quantities of similar contents of closely related languages tend to facilitate the automation.

Fresh scholarship has begun to focus on 3D subtitling as well, each of which presents its own set of technical and aesthetic challenges. Kozoulyaev (n.d.) states that standard 2D subtitling techniques are not sufficient for immersive 3D environments, as static subtitles can conflict with three-dimensional components [17]. Dynamic, spatially-adaptive, and environmentalized, effective 3D subtitles challenge technologic and design ingenuity both.

Revoicing encompasses a range of voice-based translation practices, including voice-over, narration, free commentary, simultaneous interpreting, and dubbing (Luyken; Baker & Hochel). In voice-over translation—often described as "half-dubbing"—the original soundtrack remains audible at a reduced volume while the translated voice becomes dominant. This technique is widely used in documentaries, interviews, and non-fiction genres, where perceived authenticity is valued [18]. Professional dubbing, by contrast, is regarded as the most elaborate form of revoicing. Developed in the 1930s, dubbing aims to replace the original dialogue with a target-language soundtrack synchronized with lip movements, intonation, and timing [19]. Historically viewed as a secretive craft or even an art form (Doane), dubbing has been shaped by ideological, cultural, and political considerations. Pérez-González illustrates this through the Indonesian case, where government policies regarding dubbing reflected concerns about cultural identity and foreign influence [20].

Contemporary dubbing studies, particularly those by Chaume Varela, extend analysis beyond lip synchronization to include the multimodal distribution of meaning. Chaume identifies multiple semiotic codes operating simultaneously in film, including verbal, paraverbal, acoustic, visual, and kinetic elements. Successful dubbing must account for this multimodal interplay to preserve emotional authenticity and narrative coherence.

Some scholars like Romero-Fresco and Pavesi study what they term "dubbese" as a specific linguistic variety influenced by translation norms and film conventions. They identify prominent characteristics that lead to the perception of the naturalness of dubbed dialogue [21]. Technological innovations—like voice cloning and synthetic speech—are redefining the very practices of dubbing. For a solution to a long-time dilemma about finding a suitable voice actor, systems like Reel Voice generates target-language voices that closely match the original actor's voice.

The third category, assistive forms, identified by Pérez-González, highlights the increased pillar of accessibility and social inclusion in audiovisual translation. These include access services such as Subtitling for the deads and hard of hearing (SDH) and Audio Description (AD)for visually impaired audiences [22]. SDH subscribes to certain conventions on timing, only on human voice transcription as well as extra-linguistic information such as music, sound effects, and even background noise (Neves). The emergence of the legal obligations in the 1980s forced broadcasters to give real-time on-line subtitles to live programs, which resulted in the appearance of respeaking (Remael). Trained speakers thus reformulate live delivery for the speech-recognition software, which requires an optimal mix of speed, accuracy and readability (Romero-Fresco). Strategic deletion and reformulation is therefore not only possible, but necessary (Van Waes) [23].

Audio description, meanwhile, provides verbal narration of key visual elements during pauses in dialogue, enabling visually impaired audiences to follow narrative developments. Pérez-González emphasizes that audio description requires careful selection of relevant details to avoid cognitive overload while preserving narrative meaning [21]. As such, assistive forms have not only expanded access to media but have also contributed new theoretical insights and methodological tools to audiovisual translation studies.

In recent years, research on audiovisual translation (AVT) in Uzbekistan has grown significantly. This growth reflects both academic interest and practical problems in the national media industry. Most studies focus on subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, pragmatic adaptation, and teaching AVT. Researchers also study cultural and professional aspects of screen translation. An important contribution to the field is the textbook Audiovisual Translation by N. Daminov. This book explains the main types and concepts of AVT for Uzbek translation studies. It gives a theoretical and teaching framework for understanding subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over [24]. It is also one of the first serious attempts to establish AVT as an academic subject in Uzbekistan.

Many studies analyze the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of film translation. For example, Bagavova studies speech genres in films and shows the translator's role in connecting spoken dialogue, visual elements, and genre rules. These studies show that pragmatics is becoming an important part of AVT research in Uzbekistan. Subtitling, in particular, has received much attention. Ruzimurodova examines cultural elements in subtitles of animated films and discusses problems such as culture-specific references, humor, and language for children [9]. Norbekova studies documentary films and points out technical, terminological, and stylistic difficulties. She also explains the challenge of keeping accurate information while working under time and space limits.

Besides academic studies, interviews with well-known Uzbek dubbing actors such as Elbek Mirzohidov [25] and Behzod Muhammadkarimov [26] provide useful information about current dubbing practices. They explain that professional lip-synchronized dubbing is decreasing, and voice-over translation is becoming more common because it is faster and cheaper. They mention reasons such as short deadlines, small budgets, actors doing multiple tasks, and the lack of specialists like editors and lip-synchronizers. According to them, modern Uzbek "dubbing" often works more like off-screen translation than a fully localized second version of the film.

In this review, we have seen how the field of audiovisual translation (AVT), with a focus on subtitling, revoicing and accessibility, is rapidly changing. This discussion illustrates some of the key trends in contemporary AVT research and practice. The number of AVT types has been expanding, there has been a shift towards a user-oriented perspective and the study of AVT has also increasingly been conducted with the help of empirical and corpus-based research methods. As a continuity from the previous SD, the studies reviewed here confirm the idea that subtitling is still the most investigated and most frequently applied type of AVT. Because its low cost, ease of production, and general suitability to world media. But previous research was not limited strictly to technical limits, like character count or reading speed. Instead, scholars have began to conceptualize subtitling as a multimodal, cognitive, and cultural activity. And that subtitles should not be simplement written words of spoken words. Instead, they function as interpretive artworks shaped by visual stimuli, sonic elements, formal conventions, and viewer anticipation.

An additional major trend is the corpus-based approach to subtitling studies. These approaches facilitate a systematic quantitative comparison of source texts and subtitles across languages and genres. Corpus studies reveal that the most frequent strategies include reduction, explicitation as well as cultural adaptation and stylistic normalization. For less commonly studied languages and audiovisual contexts, corpus based research offers a more pragmatic and less problematic pathway for providing evidence based findings. It is no surprise that, with trade routes largely re-established and the sheer volumes of material beginning to necessitate further revoicing efforts, we would see revoicing modes — especially dubbing and voice-over — continue to reflect the strong cultural and regional traditions from which they emerge. The way these forms are presented are often dictated by what viewers expect, what broadcasting systems need,

and occasionally the ideological dictates of national media. In revoicing, the intention is often to pass the voiced text off as natural, original speech, unlike subtitling. This generally requires a greater level of adaptation and domestication of the source text as a consequence.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This review identifies audiovisual translation (AVT) as an increasingly complex and multimodal field that extends beyond simple language transfer to include cognitive, cultural, technological, and social dimensions. Subtitling remains the most widely used and researched form because of its affordability and suitability for global media distribution, while revoicing practices are shaped by local traditions, production conditions, and audience expectations. At the same time, accessibility practices are redefining AVT as a form of collective audiovisual communication rather than merely a technical service. Methodologically, the field has progressed through the growing use of corpus-based and empirical approaches to analyze translation strategies, text reduction, pragmatic adaptation, and cultural transfer across audiovisual genres. **Implication :** These developments indicate that AVT studies increasingly require interdisciplinary perspectives and stronger integration between theoretical research and professional practice. The example of audiovisual translation in Uzbekistan demonstrates how global trends interact with local production realities, where qualitative analyses dominate academic work while practitioners increasingly adopt faster voice-over techniques instead of traditional lip-synchronized dubbing. This gap between academic frameworks and industry practices highlights the need for closer collaboration between scholars and practitioners in order to produce research that better reflects real production environments. **Limitation :** Despite the methodological progress in AVT studies, empirical and corpus-based approaches remain underutilized in less-researched languages and media environments. In many contexts, including emerging audiovisual markets, translation practices are strongly influenced by limited budgets, time constraints, and rapidly evolving technologies, which restrict systematic investigation and reduce the availability of comprehensive empirical data. **Future Research :** Future studies should adopt broader and more inclusive research frameworks by combining empirical analysis with audience reception and accessibility perspectives. Greater attention should also be directed toward underrepresented languages and audiovisual cultures, while connecting global theoretical models with locally grounded research in order to strengthen the role of screen translation in facilitating linguistic and cultural exchange within a multilingual and audiovisual world.

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