

# Kamila Chmielewska

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"Subtitling Matters. New Perspectives on Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning", Elisa Ghia, Oxford [etc.] 2012 : [recenzja]

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**Elisa Ghia, Subtitling Matters. New Perspectives on Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning, (= New Trends in Translation Studies, Vol. 3), Peter Lang, Oxford etc., 2012, 220 pp.**

This book is the published version of the author's doctoral thesis 'Patterns of Perceptual Salience in Audiovisual Input' from 2010. The topic fits into the wide research field of the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language through audiovisual input. The author focuses on the didactic potential of subtitles and their influence on the acquisition of syntactic structures in the foreign language. The book consists of 220 pages, opens with lists of tables, figures, acknowledgements as well as with a list of abbreviations, and comprises 8 chapters followed by the bibliography, an appendix and index. It is informally divided into a theoretical part, in which the author discusses main concepts and gives an overview of the most significant research findings in the fields of her interests (chapters 1–3), and into an empirical part, in which Ghia presents the methodology, the course of two experiments, results and conclusions (chapters 4–8).

The introduction to this book is also the first chapter. It is devoted to the presentation of the thesis, which is based on the concepts of perceptual and translational salience. According to Ghia perceptual salience means 'the prominence that linguistic items can enjoy in texts due to their distinctiveness and contrast to their co-text' (p.2). Interlingual subtitles imply a contrast between the L1 and L2 being a great 'locus for salience' (p.3), in this case translational salience. In conclusion, according to the author, interlingual subtitles are not only perceptual salient, thanks to the multimodality of the medium they are used in, but also translational salient, directing greater attention of the learners to the input. Based on these assumptions the goal of the author was to investigate whether 'salience in audiovisual input has repercussions on learners' perception and acquisition of an L2' (p.3). She was particularly interested in 'whether and how subtitle translation affects viewers' perception of audiovisual input and the way in which attention is allocated to images, dialogue and subtitle' (p.3). Furthermore, Ghia wanted to research if translational salience and specific translational strategies may have an impact on 'the short-term acquisition of syntactic patterns in foreign language' (p.3).

At the beginning of the second chapter, entitled 'Subtitled audiovisual input and L2 learning', the author describes various modes of screen translation, in particular different modes of subtitling as intralingual and interlingual subtitling (captioning and reversed subtitling). The main part of this chapter is however devoted to present the theoretical grounds of the acquisitional value of subtitled input in foreign language learning. Ghia characterizes audiovisual input and its beneficial effects on EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners as well as the language appearing in such a medium. Furthermore, she provides the reader with a broad overview of the influence of particular subtitling modes on certain language skills taking learners' levels of proficiency into consideration, e.g. the influence on listening comprehension, vocabulary development, speaking or acquisition of grammar.

In chapter three the author deals with the concepts of perceptual and translational salience. After theoretical considerations Ghia concentrates on the viewers' perception of subtitled audiovisual input and patterns of perceptual salience in audiovisual texts. Finally, it is dealt with different translational strategies and their degree of formal contrast (between source text and target text) which are understood as different degrees of translational salience. On this basis the author formulated the hypothesis: 'the greater the formal contrast which is created between ST [source text] and TT [target text], the more likely the contrasting elements are to be perceived as perceptually salient by a potential receiver – who has at least some degree of knowledge of the language heard in the soundtrack' (p.66).

Moving into the fourth chapter, the author explains the methodology and the procedure of a noticing study with an eye-tracker. Noticing processes were measured following three dimensions: eye-movements while watching a short movie clip, noticing discrepancy between dialogue (L2) and subtitles (L1), and the recall of vocabulary and syntax from L2 dialogue in situations of translational salience. The study was conducted on a sample of thirteen intermediate Italian EFL-learners, to whom two versions of an interlingually subtitled extract from the movie 'Nothing Hill' (R. Michell 1999) were shown. The experiment resulted in the conclusion that almost half of the participants noticed discrepancies in subtitle translation. Furthermore, Ghia's interpretation of the findings led her to the conclusion that 'the higher amount of deflections operated in the presence of diverging translation indicates a difference in perception' (p.90). Moreover, both literal and non-literal translation can support the recall of syntactic patterns from the L2 input.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the process of finding an answer to the research question whether translational salience is 'liable to affect the short-term acquisition of syntactic structures in the L2' (p. 94). In order to look into this issue, Ghia drew comparison (via oral tests) between the learner's linguistic performance before and after the exposure to 5 English films. The study was carried out among 39 Italian university students, intermediate EFL learners, divided into two experimental and two control groups. The targeted grammar structures were interrogative clauses (direct, indirect and tag questions), clefts and complex phrases. The subtitles used in this experiment were specifically designed for this study, concerning targeted structures and translational strategies (literal transfer, reduction and substitution). The independent variables were time, translational strategies and exposure (subtitled, non-subtitled input and no-exposure).

The results have undergone the ANOVA (analysis of variance) comparison as well as Tukey and Bonferroni tests and were presented in detail in form of tables and graphs in chapter 6. In the following seventh chapter the findings were discussed and led to two general conclusions, i.e. no-exposure to audiovisual input as well as exposure to non-subtitled input did not result in any difference in statistical terms in learner's performance from pretest to posttest. At the same time, syntactic structures were acquired when interlingual subtitles were included, which was proved by the learner's improvement between pretest and posttest. Although there was no statistically relevant difference recorded for any translational strategy, general growth trends emerged in higher-salience groups (reduction, substitution) for production of direct questions, cleft sentences and

question tags. Ghia has rightly pointed in her conclusions to the fact, that additional variables need to be taken into consideration while interpreting the results. In contrast to the above mentioned structures, indirect questions and complex phrases are not only less frequent but also less perceptible, thus more difficult to notice and acquire. In this case, explicit teaching might have been necessary.

Due to the limited number of participants, the achieved findings cannot be generalized. Additionally, no long-term learning effects via delayed posttests were investigated. However, the book written by Elisa Ghia is very informative and provides the reader with a good overview of the mile stone findings and current research projects in the field of foreign language learning with subtitled audiovisual input. This book is highly recommended for those who are interested in eye-tracking methods as well as for those, who would like to research either the impact of specific translation strategies in subtitling on language acquisition or the acquisitional value of subtitled audiovisual input for certain grammar phenomena.

Kamila CHMIELEWSKA  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań