

MY COMMENTS:

I can honestly say that it was not simply a pleasure to meet and converse with Eszter Pataricza but indeed a real honour to spend valuable time with her.

I believe I have learnt much about the various aspects of her profession. Unfortunately, this short profile is unlikely to cover all the information exchanged. However, I will not refrain from sharing a few pieces of information about Ms. Pataricza, since she leads an exemplary life, and her worldview is worth reading about. Additionally, I will report about everything useful for those interested in becoming dubbing translators.

ABOUT HER:

Eszter Pataricza is one of the most renowned and acknowledged dubbing translators of the Hungarian film industry. She was the one to have created the enchanting dubbed version of films such as *Good Morning, Vietnam, Look Who's Talking, and Mrs. Doubtfire*; film series such as the *Taxi* series, the *Police Academy* films, and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy; TV shows such as the *ER* and the *Sex and The City*; she created various immensely popular Hungarian versions of films as well, such as *The Cobbler, The Imitation Game, The Age of Adaline, the Spectre* and *The Transporter Refueled*.

Firstly, I inquired about Ms. Pataricza's reason of becoming a film script translator. She told me about her student jobs as a secondary school student during which she had the opportunity to spend time with Lucia Karsai at Hungarian Television Company, and to watch András Séri working at Pannonia Film Studio. She decided upon choosing dubbing translation as her future profession due to her experience with these accomplished dubbing translators, her knowledge about her language learning ability and her ability to phrase texts with sleight of hand. According to her, what she loves most about this sort of translation is that one can see the outcome. She finds film script translation an exciting, colourful, lively and immensely creative job, which she could never abandon.

Not only did she try her hand in this genre, but dealt with numerous different fields of translations: she translated prose for the Europa Publishing Company and texts in special fields such as technical, legal, working manuals, even about chicken-breeding. Moreover, she took on interpreting sessions in cinemas as well, where her task was to simultaneously interpret the texts of the films.

Secondly, her primary working languages are English and French. On the outset of her career – in a different political regime – she translated Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese movies with English transcripts. She had an excellent command of German as well, but she kept it a secret for the reason that she never wanted to translate GDR films about the Second World War. After the regime change she was finally able to use her French knowledge without being called a “West-lover”.

When asked which working language she preferred, she did not give a straight answer, for she believes, that English and French script translations are fundamentally different, which makes it impossible to choose. While it is possible to include roughly 75% of the English text in the Hungarian version, this figure is less than 60% in case of a French one. The reason for this is that French is more contractive than English.

Thirdly, I inquired about Ms. Pataricza's inclination to use technology. She started working in the film industry, when the only means necessary to translate scripts were a Betamax video player, pen and paper and a typist. In her answer she raised attention to the fact that even though she recognises the advantages of modern technology she used to be rather distrustful about them. Admittedly she was the last to switch to PC.

Fourthly, having covered so many different aspect of her life during our conversation, it is impossible to list them all. So I will only pinpoint some interesting facts about her views on her profession.

Ms. Pataricza:

- is keen on translating films rather than series, since she reckons that series-translation is 'slave' work; it is immensely monotonous;
- prefers translating almost all sorts of film genres, ranging from romance, through drama, to action comedies;
- loathes fantasy movies – even though she was the dubbing translator of all *Lord of the Rings* movies;
- believes that it is better not to use the official Hungarian translation of books in case of film adaptations, because interpreting differences may arise;
- loves to put her own abilities to a test, and uses a pseudonym when writing texts to rather modern worded films;
- is truly convinced that one may never be truly satisfied with her work, and it is a good thing.

ABOUT HER VIEWS ON...

...THE FILM SCRIPT TRANSLATOR PROFESSION:

Ms. Pataricza informed me that to choose this profession requires humbleness, since dubbing translation is a real art in its own right: it does not suffice to have vast language knowledge, but to have good phrasing skills and a thorough knowledge of the spoken language alike. One has to invest time in reading in all of his or her working languages, attend theatre, be attentive (at all times), so that one may be able to learn the layers of the language and the different genres as well.

Dubbing translators must be in possession of a diverse knowledge of the world, since it is unacceptable when somebody misreads the references of a motion picture. Nevertheless, she admits, it is not a sin to be unfamiliar with something but it is a sin not to research it.

It is also vital for an aspiring movie script translator to know what sort of jobs not to accept: Everyone has their own strengths. Somebody may have a great sense of humour, another may not. One might be great at writing text to costume dramas, another at translating modern slang.

Film translators have to live their lives with a notebook on them as words, expressions or special expressions may come in handy. Even though one does not use all the collected vocabulary actively, it is still essential to have a great collection of utterances for later usage.

...THE FREELANCER LIFESTYLE:

Ms. Pataricza experienced that being a freelancer is extremely hard, for one may believe that he or she has time for all chores beside work.

There are phases in her life when one wants to go to an ordinary workplace.

She warned me that the lifestyle of the translator is immensely lonely. She is conscientious about young film script translators going into the studio only to have company. This profession basically consists of the interaction with your computer and your own thoughts. That is the reason why it is not realistic to do only this kind of job. One has to do several types of jobs simultaneously.

Being a freelancer is stressful and outright demanding: One only has 5 or 6 days for an entire film script translation meaning that he or she rarely has time to revisit the sentences. The beginning of a translation process starts with a slow warming-up, when one is still feeling out the style to convey. Later on the film simply captivates the translator, thus he or she begins to become one with the movie for at least 10 hours a day.

Nevertheless, the fees paid for film script translation have not changed in 10 years.