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Dubbing as a tool for the integration of older people and language transmission

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Abstract

This paper addresses the first stage of a three-year project developed in the community of Santo Amaro — Sao Tome and Principe — where many older people are living in circumstances of exclusion or risk of exclusion. Based on an understanding of language as an essential element of culture, dubbing is presented as a playful and attractive initiative for all generations, allowing them to socialise with one another and contribute to the transmission of Forro Creole, and also serving to integrate the older people into the wider community. We started by designing a series of questionnaires to measure participants' attitudes towards the language and its speakers. Secondly, groups of children and older people were organised to dub cartoons into Forro. Finally, the groups of children were surveyed again to learn about how they experienced these activities in terms of language and intergenerational interaction. We found that dubbing enhances socialisation between the participating older people and children, introduces Forro Creole to the youngest generation, and facilitates a change in the perception of Creoles and their speakers — mainly older people. It is also a useful tool for enhancing the well-being and integration of older people within coordinated projects for sustainable development cooperation in the community.

Keywords

Sao Tome and Principe, dubbing, human development, intergenerational project, indigenous languages

1. Introduction

1.1. Sao Tome and Principe

Sao Tome and Principe (STP) is a multi-isle nation in central Africa with an approximate surface of 1,001 km² and 215,000 inhabitants. One third of the population is living below the poverty line, and more than two thirds are poor (World Bank, 2022).

After centuries of Portuguese colonisation, STP gained independence in 1975, and since then poverty in the country has progressively worsened (Caballero & Metzger, 2007). In terms of human development, STP is ranked 135th out of 189 countries (UNICEF, 2021). Among the many vulnerable groups are older people (Fernandes de Almeida, 2022; Guedes, 2018; PNUD, 2002), who are sometimes abused and marginalised as a consequence of household poverty, and this is exacerbated by intolerance and prejudice (Cooperación Bierzo Sur, 2012-2013). Occultism and sorcery play a major role in STP (Espírito Santo, 2016; Neves, 2009; Valverde, 2000), and many age-related symptoms are identified by some as characteristic of sorcerers, which can lead to the mistreatment of older people.

As for its linguistic reality, apart from Portuguese, four Creoles are spoken. Among these, Forro —also known as Santome or Dialecto— is considered to be the national Creole (Hagemeijer, 2009) and the most extensive (Araujo, 2020; Bouchard, 2022, p. 167). Notwithstanding this status, Forro is an endangered language, only used daily by older people (Mata, 2004; Ribeiro de Souza, 2015). During colonialism, Creole languages were vilified and were rarely used for fear of punishment (Ribeiro de Souza, 2015). After independence, Portuguese remained the only official language (Gonçalves & Hagemeijer, 2015; Ribeiro de Souza, 2015), leaving the Creoles as the languages of poor and illiterate people. Although at present Creoles are only used in the private sphere and do not have any institutional support, it must be acknowledged that in recent years important academic advances have been made (Agostinho & Bandeira, 2017; Araujo & Agostinho, 2010; Araujo & Hagemeijer, 2013; Bouchard, 2020; Hagemeijer *et al.*, 2014). Despite all these efforts, Creoles are still not included at any level of education (Hagemeijer *et al.*, 2018) with the exception of Lung'ie on Principe Island (Agostinho & Araujo, 2021). The media generally broadcast in Portuguese although with some exceptions (Bouchard, 2017; Hagemeijer *et al.*, 2018). Considering the situation of older people and the Creole with which they are connected, the following research question arises: Would it be possible to use dubbing as a tool for the inclusion of older people, to promote their socialisation and to encourage the transmission of their language?

1.2. The Intergenerational Project

Since 2015, the NGO Cooperación Bierzo Sur has been developing their Intergenerational Project in the community of Santo Amaro, on the island of Sao Tome. The aim of this project is to stimulate relationships between older people and children around shared activities that promote social bonds and the opportunity to overcome mutual stereotypes with a particular emphasis on cultural continuity. This project is based on Articles 17 and 22 of the African Charter (Carta Africana, 1981), which refers to the rights and freedoms related to the culture of communities, as well as the special protection needed for older people. The African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older People, adopted in 2012, specifies and contextualises these rights according to the African reality, including aspects such as independence, dignity, self-fulfilment, participation, and the elimination of social practices such as accusations of sorcery, which entail the violation of these rights, etc. (Yeung & Yeung, 2014), although STP is so far not among the small group of countries that have decided to sign and ratify it (African Union, 2020).

The project is also influenced by studies of how loneliness affects older people (Iglesias *et al.*, 2001; Rodríguez Carrajo, 2000; Rodríguez Martín, 2009; Rubio, 2011; Rueda, 2018; Yangués *et al.*, 2018), which is indicative of poor family relationships, loss of roles and status, impoverishment of social relationships, lack of enjoyable activities and prejudices as causes, and among the possible strategies and resources to alleviate them, they recommend social participation involving socialisation, communication, or self-fulfilment.

The NGO is now including Forro, with its unquestionable cultural value, in a dubbing workshop to assess its effects on how the youngest in the community perceive the older people and their language. This collaboration is planned to run over a two-year period and has the support of the UNESCO Chair on World Language Heritage. The project was implemented during one month of the school summer holidays. The activities included several cultural workshops, although in this paper we just discuss dubbing.

Each workshop had around 6 to 10 children between six and twelve years old. After they had chosen which workshop they preferred to be in, groups were formed to work in different areas with one volunteer from the community and one or two NGO members as coordinators. Workshops were developed from Monday to Friday for two or three hours in the morning and always included a series of previous and final games to get the children's engagement and make them feel comfortable about participating in the session.

1.3. Why dubbing?

Although the results of the previous surveys are not presented until Section 3.1, we would like to briefly preview some of the answers that were decisive for the design of the dubbing workshop. From the first two questions, we learned that the most frequently spoken language by the older people of the community was Forro and that children did not know this language. So it was clear that this would be the working language, especially considering that Forro was one of the children's least preferred languages but the favorite of the older people. Furthermore, from the answers to the third question we learned that the activities they mostly engaged in in Creole languages were listening to music and watching television, so the activities had to have some musical or audio-visual component. At this point, what activities would be carried out that year were decided together with the NGO team and community volunteers. As the local volunteer team wanted to organise a workshop on traditional songs and dances and therefore the musical element would already be present, the researcher and the NGO decided to organise a dubbing workshop so that the audio-visual component would also be present.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to review what we mean by dubbing. According to Chaume (2012, p. 1):

Technically, it consists of replacing the original track of the film's (or any audiovisual text) source language dialogues with another track on which translated dialogues have been recorded in the target language. The remaining tracks are left untouched (the soundtrack –including both music and special effects– and the images).

Now that this concept has been settled and having reviewed the context of the country and the Intergenerational Project as well as the pre-workshop surveys in the previous sections, it is time to clarify what additional reasons we identified to opt for this technique. Firstly, digital and audiovisual material — beyond the conclusions drawn from the previous survey — seemed to be one of the most attractive options for the younger generation, as the activity needed to be interesting enough to convince them to participate, even with older people. Moreover, as Sello (2019) notes:

Throughout the history of humankind, the power of film has been used to achieve certain goals. This might be because film is the most watched media, both on TV at home and in cinemas. Furthermore, film reflects societies and teaches viewers something, thereby creating a meaningful space in their existence. Each viewer identifies easily with one of the characters. Moreover, a well-made film ignites conversation. People debate about films they have just seen, whether in agreement or disagreement with the topic of the films, thereby creating meaningful social connections through a shared experience.

Not only did this socialisation and identification fit in with the NGO project, but different studies of translation and audiovisual translation and its relationship to development, inclusion and well-being (Dore & Vagnoli, 2020; Marais, 2018; Sello, 2019; Todorova & Marais, 2022), as well as to minority languages and language preservation (Belmar, 2017; Monaghan, 2022; de Ridder, 2022; de Ridder & O'Connell, 2018) pointed in this direction, and these are precisely the components of this project's approach: intergenerational transmission of knowledge, which implies learning the older people's language; the well-being, integration and development of older people; and the preservation of their cultural knowledge, in this case, Forro Creole. Since the idea was to enable effective language transmission from older people to children, we also took into account the existing evidence on the benefits of dubbing for language learning (Fernández-Costales, 2021; Ghia & Pavesi, 2016; Soler, 2020). Finally, in Montroy's work (2022) on the possibilities of subtitling as a tool for language revitalisation and the integration of older people in Sao Tome and Principe, dubbing was identified as an activity that was likely to be beneficial for this purpose.

All in all, the Intergenerational Project required an activity that would allow older people and children to socialise, that would somehow place older people in a role of usefulness to the community, and that would maintain the cultural background which is the basis of the project, as well as being sufficiently attractive so that the beneficiaries would want to participate. Under these conditions, dubbing emerges as an activity that aligns with the project and its objectives and which, moreover, fitted into the community according to the results obtained in the pre-workshop surveys and could be carried out while adapting to the material needs of the community, as we can see in Section 2.3.

2. Methodology

We started by designing a series of questionnaires to measure participants' attitudes towards the language and its speakers in order to design the workshops accordingly. Each older person was visited at home and, as most of them could not read or write or had very basic literacy skills, a local volunteer they trusted (such as a neighbour, family friend or because they had cared for or helped them before) was in charge of reading the questionnaire and taking down their responses.

For the children, the school was visited, and the project and the survey were discussed with the headmaster, who agreed to inform teachers and parents and suggested the best dates and times to carry out the surveys. At the agreed time, different classes were visited and, with the collaboration of the teacher, the surveys were explained and each child answered them alone at their desk. If they had any questions, both the teacher and the volunteers present assisted them.

Secondly, the dubbing workshop in Forro was organised as a playful initiative for all generations. Finally, the participating children were surveyed again to learn about their perceptions of these activities in terms of language and intergenerational interaction. In this case, the researcher passed the survey to the children, summoning them one by one and letting them respond freely while their peers were playing in another activity to avoid group conditioning.

2.1. Pre-workshop questionnaire

In May 2022, 243 children and teenagers between 9 and 16 years old and 31 older people between 60 and 90 years old were surveyed. The design of this questionnaire was based on Casas Anguita *et al.* (2003a & 2003b) and on the Cluster de Sociolingüística (nd).

The first question asked which language the respondents speak in a number of suggested situations. The questionnaire allowed the selection of multiple responses, as it was taken into account that more than one language may be used in some situations. Secondly, respondents were asked to define the level of proficiency they consider themselves to have in the languages of STP with regard to understanding, speaking, reading and writing. The third question asked in which language they listen to music, watch television, read and use social networks. In this case, the option “none” was included on the assumption that not all respondents did all the suggested activities. The fourth question addressed the issue of attitudes and beliefs among Creole language speakers and presented 13 assumptions to which respondents were asked to answer “yes”, “no” or “I don’t know”. These assumptions were:

1. They are adults over the age of 50
2. They live far from the city
3. They speak Creoles only with their family or friends
4. They relate better to older people than people who only speak Portuguese
5. They know the culture and traditions of the country better
6. They have difficulties communicating with doctors or social services
7. They are better at making jokes
8. They have difficulties in speaking Portuguese correctly
9. They are less educated than people who speak only Portuguese
10. They have the same success rate at school as people who speak only Portuguese
11. They have the same job opportunities as those who speak only Portuguese
12. They would like more people to speak Creoles
13. They have some advantages over people who only speak Portuguese

The fifth question asked which language they like the most, the options being all the languages of STP and “other”. The sixth asked whether respondents would like Creoles to be taught at school, and if so, which one they would like to be taught. Finally, respondents were asked if they think that it is important to read and write Creole languages so that they do not disappear. The response options in this case were: “It is important to read and write Creoles so that they do not disappear,” “Creoles are languages to be spoken, they will not disappear for that reason,” “Creoles will disappear anyway,” and “I do not know”.

2.2. Dubbing workshop

An episode of a cartoon series — *Una mà de contes* — from Televisió de Catalunya was used for this workshop¹. This video was chosen because it did not require lip synchronisation, which facilitated the task. The dubbing workshop involved five Forro-speaking older people in the translation process, two Forro-speaking older people in the dubbing, and six children between 8 and 12 years old, only one of whom could speak Forro. The other five were not able to understand or speak this language. Permission was, of course, obtained from the authors of the original video, the parents of the children, and the older participants.

¹ <https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/sx3/el-sol-i-la-lluna-21-llengua-forro/video/6179064/>

Regarding the authors of the video, there was a mutual interest in carrying out this project because of the multicultural and multilingual openness of the programme, so they willingly agreed to get the Forro version of the episode on the condition that they would be responsible for adapting the dialogues to the images to ensure that the episode maintained the standards of the programme. The permission of older people was collected orally by the researcher with the presence of a local volunteer and another volunteer from the NGO because older participants were either illiterate or had very low-level literacy skills. For the children's parents, however, since we were dealing with minors, a simple document was drawn up explaining what the activity would consist of and what it was for, and they were asked to read and sign it to give their consent to their child's participation.

After an initial translation of the original script in Catalan into Portuguese conducted by the researcher, five elders were visited by a local volunteer so that they could contribute to the translation into Forro. This phase involved individual visits to the homes of older people with whom we worked only on the script, although they were informed that the story was part of a video that they would be able to watch at the end of the workshop. One or two older people could be visited each morning and were assigned no more than three sentences at most so that they would not get tired. Sometimes they doubted how to translate a word or an expression. In these cases, the volunteer decided to ask at least three older people and to choose the option that the majority advised. Even so, some flexibility was allowed with respect to the original script to facilitate the translation, avoiding very long sentences by shortening them whenever possible and summarising information that was not essential in order to facilitate the dubbing for the children, but above all, for the older people, since they were illiterate and would have to memorise their sentences. This task lasted for two weeks, which was also used to play games with the children to practise voice modulation and acting, and to explore the content of the story and provide a brief introduction to the Forro language, with the support of another local volunteer, following the video and the script as the translation process progressed.

Once we had all the script translated and the children had rehearsed enough so that they understood the story, their interventions and how the dubbing would be done, visits to the local radio station Rádio Lobata were organised to make the recordings in one of their studios. It is worth mentioning the involvement of the employees of this radio station and the facilities they provided so that this activity could be carried out with the highest possible quality. The recording sessions took place over a week with one older person and three of the children in each session. During the previous weeks, the children had been trained through games to try to match their interventions to the images and each one of them had a copy of the script. For the older people, this task was much more complex, so although they had seen the whole video beforehand, they only recorded their interventions independently of the video, as they were not able to read. The rehearsal was much more difficult for them, as they were unable to imagine what it would be like in the recording session, so although some practice had been done with them at home, they had not prepared much for their interventions. We estimated that if this activity were to be repeated in the same community, this practice would make it easier, as the older people would already be familiar with the activity, either by having participated before or by having seen the resulting video, and would know what it was for.

Recordings were conducted one at a time (one recording for each individual sentence) as recording several dialogues at once could have led to more mistakes and repetitions. Also, we wanted to avoid exhausting the children and making the workshop seem burdensome. Afterwards, volunteers from the NGO were in charge of adapting all the interventions to the images, which would be further adapted if needed by the authors of the video as agreed. At this point a difficulty arose with two of the participating children, who refused to share an

activity with an older person. It took a lot of awareness-raising to get one of them to finally agree to “try it out”, assuring them that they could drop out if they did not feel comfortable. The second child decided not to attend the recording session.

During the recording process, the children correctly followed their script, which they had already practised many times, and were able to include, in the presence of the older people, the corrections they made in terms of pronunciation. The older people’s interventions, however, were done in a freer way, as they could not read and found it impossible to follow the script. Thus, the literal sentence that corresponded to them was read aloud and they expressed the sentence as they pleased, while retaining the essential meaning. For example, in one of the interventions of an older person, her character was angry with another character, complained and called him “arrogant”. For older people, this word was awkward, and she was asked to say it the way she would say it herself. The resulting phrase is “I don’t like what you have done”. As for the children’s dubbing, the older people tended to intervene mainly to correct their pronunciation or to encourage them in some cases.

It is important to highlight that the dubbing process was carried out in the least technical and most accessible way possible for the context of the participants. Besides giving some freedom when translating or reading the script verbatim, the recordings were made with a mobile phone with the device’s own basic voice recording app. This project considers that it is essential that the suggested activities can be conducted in STP without external intervention so as not to create dependency. In this way, although the result is not as professional as dubbing for cinema or television, quite a good quality was achieved by means of methods that are within the reach of almost any Santomean.

At the end of the month, once all the recordings had been completed and the video in Forro was ready, the older people were visited at their homes and the participating children were summoned to show them the full episode in Forro. In addition, during the final party that is always held to conclude the Intergenerational Project, and in which a sample from the workshops conducted is exhibited, the video was screened for all the attendees: community older people, participating children, their families, NGO members and community collaborators.

2.3. Post-workshop questionnaire

After the workshop, another survey was conducted with the participating children to assess whether this activity might influence their attitudes and beliefs about Creoles and their speakers (older people), and also to find out their candid opinion about dubbing and their interaction with older people. In this post-workshop questionnaire, in addition to a series of specific questions, all the questions from the first survey that refer to attitudes and beliefs were repeated. It should be noted that the results of the pre-workshop surveys serve as a reference for the general thinking in Santo Amaro. However, this project could not cover the full number of respondents in May for reasons of time, logistics and available human resources, so the questionnaires are not comparable. However, they do provide us with information that can be contrasted with that obtained from the first questionnaire and the perceived attitudes of the children throughout the development of the activities. Having clarified this issue, we now turn to the questions that the children had to answer:

1. Did you enjoy doing activities with the older people?
2. Would you like to do more activities with older people?
3. Have you learnt anything from the older people with whom you have shared activities?
4. Did you enjoy doing activities in Forro?
5. Would you like to do more activities in the STP Creoles?

6. Would you like to repeat the workshops we did this summer next year?
7. Which language do you like the most?
8. Do you think the people who speak STP Creoles... (see Section 2.1).

3. Results

3.1. Findings from pre-workshops questionnaire

Despite the fact that the questionnaire includes all the STP Creoles, in this article we will only discuss the results related to Forro, as it was the working language chosen on this occasion. Likewise, we will avoid analysing all the percentages obtained and instead we will focus on those that we consider most relevant to the topic under discussion.

Among the elders, the most widely spoken languages are Portuguese and Forro. In the current uses of the languages, the higher the register, the lower the use of Forro, a point on which they coincide with the children's answers. 48.39% of the older people say they can understand Forro "a lot", a very different figure from that given by the children; only 11.52% consider themselves to know Forro "a lot". The majority of respondents enjoy all their leisure activities in Portuguese. However, the activity most frequently practised in Forro, both by older people and children, is listening to music. In terms of attitudes and beliefs, we observed a large number of "I don't know" answers from the older people. Beyond this question, they mostly believe that Creole speakers would like more people to speak Creoles and that they have some advantage over monolingual speakers of Portuguese. As their preferred language, the older people mostly chose Forro. They would like Creoles to be taught at school and, of these, the one they would most like to see included in the curriculum is Forro. They also consider it important to read and write Creoles so that they do not disappear.

As far as the children's use of the language is concerned, we see that the situations in which Forro is used most often are singing, joking and talking to grandparents; while it is used least to talk to the teacher and to the doctor, to go shopping, and to talk to other children. 60.91% of children say they understand little Forro and 25.51% say they do not understand anything. We have already seen that in leisure activities, when they use Forro the most, it is to listen to music and, secondly, to watch television, although we repeat that, even so, the percentages are far from those who practice these activities in Portuguese.

From the children's responses to the questions concerning attitudes and beliefs, we observed a large number of "I don't know" responses and a tendency towards a negative opinion. For them, the preferred language is Portuguese, secondly Cape Verdean, thirdly "other" and fourthly Forro, which is only ahead of Angolar. Most would like to learn Creoles at school and, when asked which of these languages they would like to learn, the preferred language is again Cape Verdean. Children also believe that it is important to read and write STP Creoles.

In short, we can see a clear generational difference both in terms of knowledge of this Creole and in terms of appreciation of the language. Moreover, both the older people and children agree that they use Forro less in situations involving a high register or children. The leisure activities that seem to be most attractive in Forro are related firstly to music and secondly to television. Both age groups think that Creoles should be taught in schools and, although they disagreed on which of them they would prefer to be taught, they agreed on the importance of reading and writing in these languages so that they do not disappear.

3.2. Upsides and downsides of the dubbing workshop

The results of the dubbing workshop, classified into the positive and negative aspects that we have been able to identify, are presented below. Firstly, we review the most positive aspects and, secondly, those points that need to be improved.

Positive aspects include:

- **It is an attractive tool.** The fact that it was a different activity for them, that involved a visit to the radio station, that they would have the chance to see the result of, and show it to their families in the case of the children, and the fact of having an important role in which their knowledge and opinions were valued in the case of the older people, was motivating for them. Besides the post-workshop surveys, we were able to verify this when we presented the different workshops to all the participating children, as they all wanted to take part in the dubbing workshop and, those who ultimately stayed, did not miss a single day and were committed and enthusiastic about the task. In the case of the older people, numerous conversations were held with them throughout the workshop, in which they showed their satisfaction with the activity and emphasised the fact that they “had to help” for it to go well.

- **It stimulates interaction between older people and children or young people.** It was obvious that the support of the older people was needed in order to have the translation in Forro and to make sure that the pronunciation was correct, so the proposal for their involvement was not artificial.

- **It allows the integration of related local stories or games.** Dubbing practice for two or three hours every day would have been exhausting for the participants, so this practice was alternated with games involving some form of acting or voice modulation. In this context it is easy to involve traditional stories that support the theme of some of these activities. On the other hand, the theme of the video chosen for translation and dubbing, a Sioux legend about the sun and the moon, encouraged the transmission of the Saotomenese legend of the sun and the moon by the older people, which was unknown to the children.

- **It involves a friendly introduction to Forro.** Actually, the usefulness of dubbing as a language learning tool has already been addressed in several studies with very positive results as discussed in Section 2.2. In this case, the children did not receive Forro lessons as such, but they needed to understand their interventions, so they saw the direct usefulness of knowing the words, the correspondence of the sentences in Forro with the Portuguese sentences and the support of the video images, becoming familiar with words or expressions that are similar in one language and the other, and understanding in a very basic and intuitive way the grammatical form of this Creole, as well as some very basic pronunciation.

- **It encourages older people to leave their home environments.** This is a stimulating change in their routine as they are aware that their participation is indispensable for the activity and that their presence and criteria are counted on.

- **It makes older people feel valued.** They are conscious of the importance of their role in the activity, and this strengthens their motivation to carry it out and their well-being.

- **Participants can see the result of their contribution,** as it was screened for all the attendants at the final party plus it remains available for them on the Internet (TV3, 2022), which was also a motivation according to their enthusiastic reactions.

- **The simple way in which it has been done makes it possible for them to replicate this activity by themselves.** They already have the necessary tools: a mobile phone and a space in which they are allowed to make the recordings (although a room in the community could be soundproofed in a more rudimentary way to make it even easier). To integrate sound into the video they would require the willingness of some of the community members with a computer to participate and a brief course to learn how to use one of the free apps available.

- **It gives the language a usefulness and prestigious status,** as it is the protagonist of the workshop. In addition, this activity attracted the attention of one of the country’s leading

online newspapers, which dedicated a couple of articles to this Forro dubbing²³.

We will now review the downsides of the dubbing workshop:

- **The distance between Santo Amaro and the radio**, which makes it necessary to use transport. On this occasion, this was taken care of by the organisation, but it is a complication if we intend this activity to be run by local people independently. Due to the economic situation, it could only be carried out by soundproofing a room in the community and if there was a volunteer among the people who had a computer to integrate the audio into the videos, as we have mentioned above.

- **Dubbing in this context requires much more time commitment**, which is difficult in the case of external volunteers or researchers who usually only have a certain amount of time to stay in STP. Firstly, many older people live in remote or inaccessible areas, which makes daily joint activity impossible, either in their homes or in another common space in the community. Secondly, children need physical activity and to participate in dynamic games even when attending the dubbing workshop, which they might otherwise find to be burdensome. This implies sufficiently solid and flexible preparations that include all these activities and foresee unexpected events, which would inevitably lengthen the dubbing process. Thirdly, older people need more time to do the translations and to get used to the dynamics of the activity. For example, when recording, given that they cannot read or can read very little, they have to do a more improvised dubbing, which requires more practice on their part, because they easily forget what they have to say, stutter, etc. At the same time, the repetition of these recordings in the same session should not be overused so as not to tire them. Ideally, these recording sessions should not exceed one hour.

3.3. Findings from the post-workshop questionnaire

As explained previously, this post-workshop survey consisted of a set of questions identical to those in the pre-workshop survey that referred to attitudes and beliefs about Creole languages and their speakers. A new set of questions was added for children to rate the workshops and their experiences of doing activities in Forro and with older people. In this article, however, we just analyse the results of the dubbing workshop. The results indicate that children enjoyed doing this activity with older people (83.33%); they would like to do more activities with elders in the future (83.33%); half of the participant children considered that they had learned something from the older people (50%); they enjoyed doing activities in Forro (83.33%); half of them would like to do more activities in Creole languages (50%); and they would repeat the dubbing workshop in 2023 (66.66%).

In terms of preferred languages, both for general use and for a hypothetical inclusion in schools, Forro was chosen by a 66.7% of participants. While in the previous survey it was the penultimate language chosen by the majority of children (Section 3.1), in the post-workshop survey it is the second most preferred language after Portuguese and the first among the Creole languages.

If we look at the set of questions which coincided with those on attitudes and beliefs from the first pre-workshop survey, we find that, in general, children have a more positive view of Forro and of speakers of Creole languages than in the pre-workshop survey, as we can graphically see in Figure 1 — the colour blue represents the pre-workshop survey results, the colour orange is for post-workshop results. The issues that stand out most are that they

² <https://www.telanon.info/cultura/2023/01/31/39776/o-nosso-crioulo-forro-cruza-a-fronteira-ate-espanha/>

³ <https://www.telanon.info/suplemento/opiniaio/2023/02/16/39894/o-sol-a-lua-e-o-principezinho-uma-peculiar-promocao-do-crioulo-forro-que-renova-o-debate-sobre-as-linguas-nativas/>

consider that people who speak Creole languages know the country's traditions and culture better, they would like more people to speak Creoles, they are better at making jokes and they have some advantages over people who only speak Portuguese. The Figure shows a range of numbers from 1 to 13, which correspond to the questions asked in both surveys on attitudes and beliefs, the equivalent of which can be found in Section 2.1.

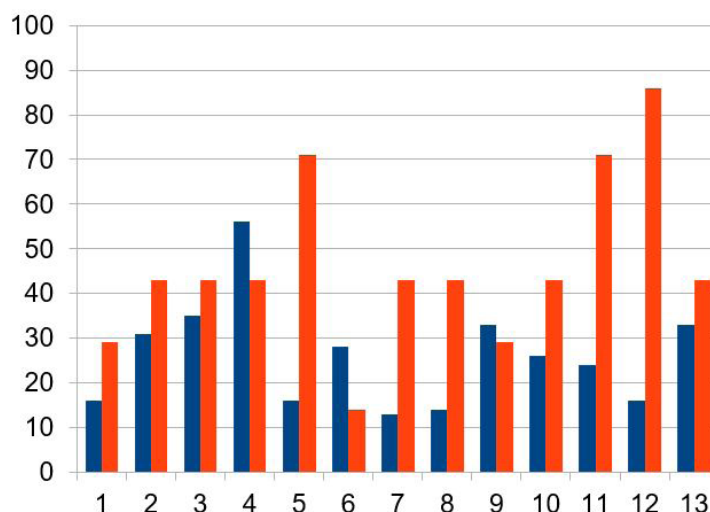


Figure 1. Attitudes and beliefs

The two children who were initially reluctant to share activities with older people were very pleased with the activity and with interacting with older people in these subsequent surveys, giving very positive responses regarding this experience and the possibility of doing more recreational activities in Forro, so we hope that the workshop played some part in changing their perceptions of older people and Creole languages.

4. Conclusions

From the surveys prior to the workshops, we observed a large number of “I don’t know” responses from the older people, which led us to think about the possible effects of the devaluation they suffer. Perhaps an approach to older people from the perspective of linguistic biography (Wolf-Farré, 2018), which implies that the interviewee speaks freely about their personal experience, could offer more complete information. Beyond this question, participants mostly believed that people who speak Creoles would like more people to speak them and that they have some advantage over monolingual speakers of Portuguese. From the first of these beliefs, and as it is precisely the older people who represent the majority of Forro speakers, we conclude that activities involving the transmission of Forro would improve their well-being. Coupling this conclusion with the belief that Creole speakers have some advantage, we understood that the greatest benefit for older Creole speakers would be derived from activities that, in addition to transmitting the language, provide an opportunity for them to share their knowledge with the rest of the community, as a way of showing and sharing these “advantages”, as happened in the dubbing workshop. In terms of leisure activities in Forro, the results from both the older people and the children allowed us to position dubbing as a promising possibility that would work in favour of Forro and the integration of older people, because it seems it would be well received as it can be part of a naturally enjoyable leisure activity.

Continuing with the results obtained from the children in the previous survey, we saw that the situations in which Forro is most and least used suggested that the old prejudice that Creole

languages are not to be used in high-register contexts is still prevalent today, and that Forro is clearly related to older people. It is evident that the language is being progressively lost with the new generations, especially if we compare the children's results with those obtained from the older people. And it shows that it is urgent for the relevant actors to take some kinds of measures if their intention is to preserve the linguistic heritage of STP. Furthermore, after the experience of the dubbing workshop in the Intergenerational Project, we consider it appropriate to include Creoles in cultural and sustainable development processes in a cross-cutting manner, due to the connection they have with older people and their undoubted cultural value, which can be extended to various fields such as the one proposed in this pilot project.

From the children's responses to the questions concerning attitudes and beliefs, we concluded that there is a lack of knowledge about Forro speakers, who are perhaps alien to them, given the number of "I don't know" responses we observed and, on the other hand, their view of Creole speakers — mainly older people — tends to be negative, from which we deduce that the old discrediting of these languages is still present today. However, children also think that it is important to read and write in Forro, which is surprising given the low popularity of Forro among young people, and we consider it encouraging in terms of the children's response to a hypothetical approach to Creoles in their reality.

Post-workshop surveys showed that dubbing had a high degree of satisfaction among the participant children and older people, who shared their own testimonies during personal communications. In the dubbing workshop, we can see the recommendations to palliate loneliness in older people applied (see Sections 1.2 and 3.2). Therefore, we reinforce the idea that dubbing deserves to be taken into account in intergenerational sustainable development projects, as it gives older people a higher status position and stimulates their social relationships with the rest of the participants through a fun activity.

However, this activity must be coherently accompanied by other activities that support the objective of integrating older people, as we have to be prepared for challenging attitudes from some participants as in the case of the children who refused to share activities with older people. This requires careful planning of different activities that can be representative for children and that pursue the same goal of raising awareness about ageing and the needs of older people, which implies having enough volunteer staff who are aware of this issue. This need to involve more staff is also justified by the time required for this activity, which is a heavy burden if it is led by an insufficient number of people, and this can weaken the quality of the process and affect the results. On the contrary, if there is a sufficient number of people in charge of the organisation and implementation, it can be carried out without requiring too great a sacrifice for the local volunteers, which increases the chances that the activity will be sustained over time. Another reason why we conclude that it is worth actively involving more volunteers from Santo Amaro to lead the activity is the need to raise awareness among the population about multilingualism and its benefits, the importance of language as part of culture and, of course, about ageing and the rights and needs of older people.

According to the experience of this first phase of the pilot project, the dubbing workshop is a positive way to initiate children into Forro, as it offers them a playful, dynamic way of learning and a very well-adapted goal for what they will need to learn in order to carry out the activity. In some cases, it has also provided an opportunity for the children to spend time with the older people in their family, on whom they relied to prepare their pronunciation in Forro, so that the project has also briefly influenced individual family relationships.

At the beginning of this workshop, almost none of the children wanted to dub in Forro, although they found the activity very attractive. The reasons for their complaints were that they could

not speak nor understand Forro and would not be able to. No rejection was detected beyond the simple fact of lack of knowledge, and they quickly and willingly adapted to the activity. At the same time, we had the case of a single child, usually quite shy and not very participative, who did speak Forro and this activity made them become the protagonist of the activities and a reference for their companions, exhibiting a better relationship with them and a special pleasure in participating in the workshop. This same joy was shared by the older people, who showed a great willingness and enthusiasm for activities to promote Forro. The dubbing workshop, as well as allowing interaction between children and older people, is quite positive for the older ones, since it is not very demanding as long as their interventions are not too long, and they are given a certain margin of freedom in their dubbing.

If we now look at the children's responses in the post-workshop surveys, we conclude that they can enjoy doing activities in Forro and with older people. Although the results are not comparable with those obtained in the pre-workshop survey, there is a contrast in the more positive view of Creoles and Creole speakers after the activities. We find particularly striking the beliefs that Creole speakers know the country's traditions and culture better, that they would like more people to speak Creoles, and that they have some kind of advantage over monolingual speakers of Portuguese. Finally, Forro climbs up the rankings as a preferred language to second place. As these results contrast with those obtained in the previous surveys, we consider that the dubbing workshop could have had some influence on them.

It may thus be concluded that well-designed and properly adapted dubbing workshops can be useful to changing attitudes and beliefs about Creole languages and their speakers. Therefore, dubbing can be regarded as a positive tool for working towards the integration of older people through activities that promote their socialisation and the transmission of their language.

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Representations of masculine speech in the Japanese dub of the movie *Call Me by Your Name*: Virtual spaces and bodies of otherness

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Abstract

This case study analyses adult male language in the Japanese-language version of the American movie *Call Me by Your Name* (2017). Building upon audiovisual translation and recent Japanese sociolinguistic studies, this article intends to highlight the gap between the non-native actors' language and the actual speech of Japanese speakers, as well as the hypermasculinization of fictional speech aimed at indexing a *hard masculinity* model through the so-called phenomenon of *transduction*. By intertwining the analysis of the Japanese male markers in dubbed texts with the phonetic analysis of the original voices and Japanese voice actors, this study testifies to a different orientation in the Japanese dialogues compared to those in English and highlights the exploitation of the speakers' bodies which become themselves vehicles to portray certain ideologies of masculinity. In particular, it reveals a clear polarization between *hard* and *soft masculinity* mediated by a set of metapragmatic stereotypes that inherit, in turn, a homonormativity vision which is directly borrowed from the imagery of different gender relationships in Japan.

Keywords

Gender ideologies, audiovisual translation, inter-indexical relationships, masculine identity construction, bodies of otherness

1. Introduction

This study aims to analyze male adult speech in the context of audiovisual translation from English to Japanese with a focus on interlingual dubbing and subtitling. Specifically, the object of analysis is Luca Guadagnino's feature film *Call Me by Your Name* (2017) in its Japanese-distributed version (*Kimi no namae de boku o yonde*). Just as illustrated in Miyazaki's studies (2023), today's virtual spaces represent *social contexts* where every speech style is subject to dynamic interpretations that can not only convey metapragmatic gender-related stereotypes but also influence end viewer's unconscious sociolinguistic imaginary through the widespread contact of audiovisual artifacts in global society, known as *indexical bleaching* (Nakamura, 2020a; Squires 2014). Even in the context of contemporary Japanese audiovisual distribution, this risk materializes through two processes that are inherent in the practice of audiovisual interlingual mediation: the strategy of *transduction*, as well as the exploitation of so-called *bodies of otherness* (Inoue, 2003). Specifically, *transduction* refers to a relation in which a certain indexical order from a source language is transposed *tout court* into the target language through some relevant equivalences: in her studies, Inoue has shown how this practice can be exploited to suggest the presumed membership of certain virtual speakers to specific identities, classes or social groups. From a translation oriented perspective, this process is also related to the so-called *adequation*¹ strategy mentioned by Nakamura (2013, 2016, 2020b, 2022, 2023) which is made possible, in turn, by the iconic exploitation of the bodies of foreign actors and actresses (*bodies of otherness*) on which new voices and dialogues are mounted through dubbing and subtitling, effectively transforming them into potential vehicles of ideological manipulation (Díaz Cintas, 2012; Zabalbeascoa, 2012).

As already suggested by studies conducted in the field of audiovisual translation with a special focus on gender (De Marco, 2006, 2009, 2016; Konstantinovskaia, 2020; Ranzato, 2012; Vitucci, 2020, 2023), those on Japanese gender translation (Hiramoto, 2009; Kobayashi, 2024; Länsisalmi, 2019; Saito, 2018; Nakamura, 2020a, 2022, 2023; Ohara, 2019; SturtzSreetharan, 2006, 2009, 2017), role language (Johnstone, 2017; Kinsui, 2003, 2007, 2017; Kotlarczyk, 2021; Yasui, 2024), and language ideologies (Duranti, 2021; Irvine & Gal, 2000, 2019; Spitzmüller, 2022), the representation of certain *genderlects* in the media not only exerts a profound influence on the perception of masculine and feminine speech by various reference audiences, but it can also stimulate forms of juxtaposition between this and certain gender ideologies. Besides, as Balirano (2014, 2015) also suggests, since language plays a fundamental role in simultaneously (re)producing both social exclusion and inclusion, one needs to deepen the link between the use of audiovisual texts and the ways in which they shape meanings and identities both from a sociological and a translational perspective. On the other hand, as recent sociolinguistic studies suggest (Iwata, Shigemitsu, & Murata, 2022; Miyazaki, 2023; Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith, 2004; Sanada, 2020; Yamashita, 2022), Japan is undergoing a progressive dissolution of the boundaries between male and female speech, which runs counter to the gendered language one finds nowadays in most Japanese dubbing of foreign actors. In particular, what contemporary audiovisual products seem to reflect in male speech seems to corroborate a kind of collective imaginary in which Japanese hegemonic masculinity partly inherits the characteristics of the Japanese *salaryman* of the second half of the twentieth century, that is, of an identity constructed in response to certain sociocultural, economic and political conditions (Dasgupta, 2013, p. 7). On the other hand, it is insightful to note how the model of homonormativity often proposed in translation, often traces from a linguistic-

¹ "One example of adequation is the process in which a speech style ideologically linked to a culturally recognized subject position in the target language is applied to the speech of a non-native speaker, adequating the indexical distinction of the original speech to that of the target language" (Nakamura, 2016, p. 3).

aesthetic point of view the ideal of the so-called *ikanimokei*, that is, that of a *hard masculinity* that takes its direct cue from a model derived, in turn, from the dominant heterosexual imaginary (Baudinette, 2021, pp. 206-211). In our view, this kind of translation attitude (i.e. the attempt to polarize a *hard masculinity* vs. *soft masculinity*) can be related to the linguistic bias produced by language ideologies that Heinrich (2012) already highlighted in his studies:

Ideologies give rise to the existence of a binary opposition, whereby the self and the familiar are assigned a positive value, while the other and the new are seen as negative. Deviance to and criticism on standing ideology is part of the negative pole (Heinrich, 2012, p. 174)

Since the analysis of audiovisual texts can prove extremely useful in tracing certain ideological sub-texts which are instrumental to the subjugation of some of the social actors at play (which means that language itself is not the final object of ideology, but rather the discourses in which it is organized), this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) How does the Japanese translation of the two characters' speech differ from each other?
- (2) How do their Japanese translations differ from the original English?
- (3) Which type of masculinity do they refer to when they produce Japanese texts?

2. Dataset and methodology

The dataset of this study is based on dubbed and subtitled texts in Japanese and English² of the movie *Call Me by Your Name*³ (Japanese title: *Kimi no namae de boku o yonde*, 2017), directed by Luca Guadagnino and based on a novel written by André Aciman. The movie is set in the summer of 1983 and tells the story of Elio Perlman, a 17-year-old French-Italian Jewish boy living with his parents in rural northern Italy, and Oliver, a 24-year-old Jewish-American graduate student who has come to Italy to help Elio's father with his research. Despite their age difference, a passion soon ignites between the two that leads them to discover both the nature of desire and the pain that inevitably accompanies separation.

From a textual perspective, this study focuses on three dialogues featuring Oliver (Elio's lover and co-protagonist) and Elio (the young protagonist), considering the different indexes of their speech⁴. The selection of male speakers takes the length of the speech within each analysed scene into account, and every scene has been inserted in its entirety so as to not limit the analysis to short portions of speech. Due to spatial limitations, the investigation is restricted to the morphological-lexical aspects of the speech with the aim of (1) describing the most salient characteristics of the Japanese speech of each speaker with a specific focus on sentence-final particles (henceforth, SFP. In particular, *-da*, *-nda*, *-nanda*, *-ka*, *-na*, *-darō*), personal pronouns and relative possessive adjectives (*kimi*, *anata*, *boku*, *ore*, *kimi[no]*, *anata[no]*, *boku[no]*, *ore[no]*), and verbal morphology (imperative forms vs. polite requests); (2) including both dubbing and subtitling in the analysis⁵; (3) comparing the Japanese texts with the original dialogues in English; (4) comparing two male characters in the scenes (Oliver, Elio). Through these four objectives, the study intends to highlight indexical relations that arise in the speech of the two male characters and detect eventual ideological positioning in the two target texts (dubbing and subtitles).

² The source text is in English with some occasional forays into French and Italian.

³ Henceforth, CBYN.

⁴ In particular: spatial-temporal locus of the communicative context, personal characteristics of the speaker, social identity, linguistic acts, social activities, affective and epistemic stances.

⁵ The comparison between dubbing and subtitling can be insightful for understanding the quantitative incidence of MM in both texts, but it is also useful for intercepting possible temporal relationships between them. In Vitucci (2024) one notes, for example, how subtitles can inherit stylistic choices not only from earlier subtitles, but also from dubbing itself by imitating its translation choices.

3. Translation analysis of the scenes

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the translations into Japanese of three scenes extrapolated from CBYN with a particular focus on utterances from Oliver confronting Elio. The reason for selecting the two male protagonists is to highlight, on a linguistic and gender identity level, the kind of masculinities as well as the kind of relationship that arise between the two men in the Japanese texts. In order to keep the investigation as objective as possible, the female characters were left aside, since, in addition to playing a secondary role within the narrative (the main focus of the narrative develops around the romantic relationship between the two men), the quantity of intersexual dialogue is also scarce (i.e. Elio vs. female character; Oliver vs. female character). To ensure maximum data transparency, the tables show the original text in English together with Japanese dubbing and subtitling transcribed through the Hepburn method. Each scene review is divided into three parts: scene setting, extra and paraverbal analysis, linguistic and identity-related analysis. For each of the three scenes, the two speakers interact with each other and the topic of their exchanges revolves around their romantic relationship.

3.1. Elio's declaration to Oliver

	ENG DUBB-SUB	JAP DUBB	JAP SUBS
1	O: I never even heard / ⁶ of the Battle of Piave.	O: Piābegawa no tatakai ka.	O: Piābegawa no tatakai wa / hatsumimi da
2	E: Battle of Piave was one of the most / lethal battles of World War 1.	E: Daiichiji taisen de mo tokuni hisanna tatakai.	E: Daiichiji de / mottomo hisanna tatakai no hitotsu
3	E: Hundred and seventy thousand / people died.	E: 17mannin ga shinda.	E: 17mannin ga shinda
4	O: Is there anything you don't know?	O: Kimi ga shiranai koto wa aru?	O: Kimi ga shiranai koto wa aru?
5	E: I know nothing, Oliver.	E: Boku wa nanimo shiranai.	E: Nanimo shiranai yo
6	O: Well, you seem to know / more than anybody else around here.	O: Kono hen ja, dareyori monoshiri da.	O: Dareyorimo chishiki ga aru
7	E: Well, if you only knew how little / I know about the things that matter.	E: Daijina koto wa nanimo shiranai yo.	E: Daijina koto wa shiranai nda
8	O: What things that matter?	O: Daijina koto tte nanda?	O: Daijina koto tte?
9	E: You know what things.	E: Wakatteru kuseni.	E: Wakatteru darō
10	O: Why are you telling me this?	O: Dōshite boku ni iu?	O: Naze boku ni iu?
11	E: 'Cause I thought you should know.	E: Shiru beki dakara.	E: Shiru beki da to omou kara
12	O: Because you thought I should know?	O: Boku ga shiru beki da tte imi ka?	O: Boku ga shiru beki da to omou?
13	E: 'Cause I wanted you to know?	E: Shitte hoshii kara.	E: Shitte hoshii kara
14	E: Because I wanted you to know.	E: Anata ni shitte hoshii kara.	E: Shitte hoshii kara
15	E: Because I wanted you to know.	E: Anata ni shitte hoshii.	E: Shitte hoshii kara
16	E: Because I wanted you to know.	E: Shitte hoshii kara.	E: Shitte hoshii kara...
17	E: Because there's no one else / I can say this to but you.	E: Hoka no darenimo konna hanashi dekinai kara.	E: Anata ni shika hanasenai kara
18	O: Are you saying / what I think you're saying?	O: Tsumari sō iu koto?	O: Boku ga omou koto to onaji?
19	O: Don't go anywhere. Stay right here.	O: Mattero. Soko de.	O: Mattero. Dokohemo iku na.

⁶ The slash symbol indicates the partition of the lines in the original subtitles.

20	E: You know I'm not going anywhere.	E: Ah, dokonimo ikanai	E: Dokohemo ikanai
21	O: They mixed up all of my pages.	O: Genkō no junban ga gucha gucha ni natteru. Zenbu uchinaoshi da.	O: Genkō no junban ga kurutteru/ Uchinaosanaito
22	O: I'm gonna have to / retype this whole thing.	-	-
23	O: I'm not gonna have anything to work on / this afternoon.	O: Gogo ga tsubureru okage de shigoto ga ichinichi okureru.	O: Kore de shigoto ga / ichinichi okurete shimau
24	O: This is gonna set me back a whole day.	-	-
25	O: Damn it.	-	O: Maitta na
26	E: Shouldn't have said anything.	E: Iwanakya yokatta.	E: Iwanakereba yokatta
27	O: Just pretend you never did.	O: Iwanakatta to omoe.	O: Itte nai
28	E: Does that mean we're on speaking terms / but not really?	E: Hanasu yōna aidagara janai kara.	E: Hanasanakatta furi o suru?
29	O: It means we can't talk / about those kinds of things.	O: Sō iu hanashi wa subeki janai kara.	O: Sō iu hanashi wa subeki denai wakatta ne?
30	O: Okay?	O: Ii ne?	-
31	O: We just can't.	O: Dame nanda.	O: Dame nanda

Table 1. Scene 1 (min. 47:55 - 50:50)

(a) Setting. The scene takes place in the main square of the town where Elio lives. While commenting on a monument dedicated to the fallen soldiers of World War I, Elio takes the opportunity to declare himself to Oliver, who is bewildered by the young man's unexpected revelation.

(b) Extra and paraverbal elements. In this scene, Elio wears a white T-shirt and shorts, while Oliver has a light green short-sleeved shirt and shorts. Both arrive in the square on bicycles. On a paraverbal level, the rhythm of the dialogue is marked by well-defined turns with a measured speed of speech. They both speak in a moderate tone of voice, and the pace of the lines tends to slow down further in the second half of the scene, coinciding with Elio's declaration to Oliver and Oliver's warning to Elio. Vocally, a qualitative difference between the original voices of Oliver and Elio and those of the Japanese dubbing actors are noticeable in this scene: in English, Oliver's voice is warm but mid/high pitched, while Elio's, despite his younger age, is still warm and not very ringing. In contrast, in the Japanese version Oliver is characterized by extremely baritone tones (certainly that of an adult male voice actor) that go better with his character's image of the 'mature' man. Elio, however, has a higher, squeakier voice that more easily matches the image of the 17-year-old teenager.

(c) Linguistic analysis and identity-related analysis. The dialogue between Oliver and Elio is set within a symmetrical and informal framework (they speak to each other in the *futsūgo* informal register). This is significant from a translation point of view because the register indexicalizes a relationship of psychological closeness that, as will be seen later, is nothing more than a prelude to a romantic relationship between the two. Although more recurrent in the dubbing than in the subtitling, the most significant male markers (MM) in Oliver's speech include: the final copula *-da*, with variations in explanatory mode (*-nda*, *-nanda*), the insertion of the interrogative SFP *-ka*, the insertion of the informal pragmatic SFP *-na* (instead of *-ne*), the first person singular pronoun *boku*, the second person singular pronoun *kimi*, the use of the imperative affirmative verbal form (*Mattero!* → BT. *Wait!*; *Iwanakatta to omoe!* → BT. *Pretend you never did!*), and its negative form (*Iku na!* → BT. *Don't go!*). For his part, despite the fact that at the diaphasic level Elio resorts to the same informal register as Oliver, in this scene his speech style is characterized by an extremely sparse amount of MM. Notable among

them is the only interrogative copula (-*darō*) and its variation in explanatory mode (-*nda*). In terms of percentages, the occurrences of the aforementioned MM⁷ are distributed as follows between the two characters in the two Japanese translations: 85,7% in Oliver's dubbing and 71,4% in subtitling, 7,1% in Elio's dubbing and 14,2% in subtitling. This confirms, at least in Oliver's lines, a generic tendency for dubbing to insert more gender markers compared to interlingual subtitling (Vitucci, 2023).

Besides creating a sense of complicity with his interlocutor (Elio), the MM in Oliver's Japanese speech serve the purpose of portraying him as a mature and very determined man (unsurprisingly, at the end of the scene he himself will be the one to beg Elio not to mention his feelings again); on the other hand, the fact that Elio almost never uses MM can be linked both to his age and to his role within the relationship with Oliver (he appears indeed more fragile and disoriented toward his own feelings). On the contrary, in the English version Oliver appears more oriented towards 'listening' in a more equal relational mode, almost as if he wants to approach Elio as a peer. By contrast, in the Japanese passage, thanks to the insertion of the MM and a more set voice, Oliver seems to leverage his 'manliness', thus completely altering the perception of the second target audience. In our opinion, such choices support an erotic subtext where masculinity is synonymous with 'seduction' and 'dominance' over the counterpart. In this regard, the argument for an inter-indexical relationship through *transduction* is also supported in this scene (Inoue, 2003: 328), since it confirms certain metapragmatic stereotypes aimed at juxtaposing Oliver's speech style with that of other male *virtual speakers* that are traceable in various Japanese media (Suzuki, 2020). In particular, his speech style and the MM in his lines index a type of masculinity that imposes itself on its counterpart through the categories of social class (i.e., well-behaved, highly educated, cosmopolitan) and the stereotype of male seduction (sexually active, dominant), reinforcing domestic ideologies concerning the ideal of sexually active and dominant men and, therefore, of an assumed *hard masculinity* linked to his role as the active lover, which is directly borrowed from the imagery of different gender relationships in Japan (Baudinette, 2021). The next scene features the same speakers in a love scene, offering further perspectives on the subject.

3.2. Love scene

	ENG DUBB-SUB	JAP DUBB	JAP SUBS
1	E: I like what you've done with the place.	E: Oribā no ie tte kanji.	E: Ii kanji dane
2	E: It's nice.	E: Ii ne.	E: Suteki dayo
3	O: You okay?	O: Daijōbu?	O: Daijōbuka?
4	E: Me okay.	E: Dōka daijōbu.	E: Boku wa heiki da
5	O: Can I kiss you?	O: Kisu shite ii?	O: Kisu shitemo?
5b	E: Yes, please.	E: Uhm, shite.	E: Onegai
6	O: What are you doing?	O: Nani shiteru nda?	O: Nani shiteru?
7	E: Nothing.	E: Betsuni.	E: Nanimō
8	O: Does this make you happy?	O: Hontōni ii noka?	O: Hontōni nozonderu?
9	O: You're not gonna get / a nosebleed on me, are you?	O: Boku ni hanaji o tarasu na yo.	O: Hanaji o dasuna yo
10	E: I'm not gonna get...	E: Tarasu wake nai darō!	E: Mochiron da
11	O: Off, off, off, off, off.	O: Nuge, nuge, nuge, nuge, nuge!	O: Nugisutero
12	O: Yeah. Just pull it.	O: Hippatte!	O: Hippatte
13	O: Or I'll pull it.	O: Jibun de nugu.	O: Jibun de yaru

⁷ Oliver's MM/ Oliver's total lines + Elio's MM/ Elio's total lines.

14	E: Oliver.	E: Oribā.	E: Oribā
15	O: Call me by your name, / and I'll call you by mine.	O: Kimi no namae de boku o yonde / Boku no namae de kimi o yobu	O: Kimi no namae de boku o yonde / Boku no namae de kimi o yobu
16	E: Elio.	E: Erio.	E: Erio
17	O: Oliver.	O: Oribā.	O: Oribā
18	E: Elio.	E: Erio.	E: Erio
19	O: Oliver.	O: Oribā.	O: Oribā
20	E: Elio.	E: Erio.	E: Erio
21	E: Did we make noise?	E: Oto hibiita kana?	E: Oto o tateta kana
22	O: Nothing to worry about.	O: Shinpai suru koto nai.	O: Shinpai suruna
23	E: I don't know. / Mafalda always looks for signs.	E: Demo Mafaruda wa itsudatte mezatoi shi.	E: Mafaruda wa nandemo kizuku
24	O: Well, she's not gonna find any.	O: Nanim o wakaranai sa.	O: Konseki wa nanim o nai
25	E: You wore that shirt / the first day you were here.	E: Tsuita hi ni kiteta shatsu dayone?	E: Tōchaku shita hi ni kiteta shatsu
26	E: Will you give it to me when you go?	E: Kaeru toki kurenai?	E: Tatsu hi ni moraeru?
27	E: Let's go swimming.	E: Oyogi ni ikō.	E: Oyogi ni ikō

Table 2. Scene 2 (min. 1:21:40 - 1:28:40)

(a) Setting. The scene takes place in Oliver's room at midnight where Elio and Oliver have been secretly meeting. The scene plays a central role in the plot because in addition to revealing the feelings of both protagonists, it sets the stage for the first sexual encounter between the two.

(b) Extra and paraverbal elements. In this scene Oliver wears a green linen shirt and beige pants, while Elio wears a white T-shirt and jeans. On a paraverbal level, the rhythm of the dialogue is marked by well-defined turns with a measured speed of speech. Oliver speaks very quietly in a low tone of voice, while Elio, despite his low tone of voice, tends to speed up his lines toward the end of the scene. Vocally, in the context of this scene, the gap between the Japanese dubbed voices and the original ones is again accentuated as the extremely low tone of voice of the original scene prompts Oliver's voice actor to emphasize the low register of his voice.

(c) Linguistic analysis and identity-related analysis. As seen in Table 2, the Japanese dialogue between Elio and Oliver develops within a horizontal perimeter due to their use of the *futsūgo* informal register. In this case, the level of symmetry of the exchange is justified by the sentimental relationship between the two men that places them on the same psychological and emotional level. In fact, the sentence uttered by Oliver in line 15 (*Call me by your name and I'll call you by mine*) represents the highest point of union between the two in the entire movie. As in the previous scene, the linguistic analysis of Oliver's speech reveals a higher frequency of MM in the dubbing than in the subtitling which, for the most part, reiterates stylistic solutions that are quite similar in diagenetic terms. These include the final copula *-da*, with variations in explanatory mode (*-nda*), the insertion of the interrogative SFP *-ka*, the SFP *-sa*, the first person singular pronoun *boku*, the second person singular pronoun *kimi*, the use of the imperative affirmative verbal form (*Nuge!* → BT. *Take It off!*; *Nugisutero!* → BT. *Take It off!*), and its negative form (*Tarasu na!* → BT. *Don't droop!*). From an indexical point of view, just as in the first scene, the use of the pronoun *boku* by Oliver links to a less pronounced masculinity as indicated in Miyazaki's studies (2023); at the same time, the presence of the SFP *-sa* in his speech seems to confirm a trend toward a *cool* translation in line with the image of foreign actors' speech in Japan (Nakamura, 2020b). As far as Elio is concerned, in this scene his speech style is characterized once again by an almost total absence of MM: it is only notable

in the reiteration of the copula (*da*) in line 10. In terms of percentage, it is insightful to note how the occurrences of the aforementioned MM almost confirm the trend of the first scene: 107% in Oliver's dubbing and 69% in subtitling, while one finds only 6% in Elio's dubbing and 13% in subtitling.

Besides creating a sense of complicity with his interlocutor (Elio), the MM in Oliver's Japanese speech in this scene serve the purpose of portraying him as the more active participant of the two lovers, relegating Elio to a less assertive position. In contrast, in the English version Oliver relates more equally with Elio: this is evident both at the beginning of the scene when he asks him if he is alright (*You okay?*), if he can kiss him (*Can I kiss you?*), and at the end when he comforts him in a moment of despondency (*Nothing to worry about*). On a polysemiotic level, it almost seems as if the two voices become so confused that they resemble each other, while in the Japanese version Oliver seems to be linguistically preponderant on the counterpart and overly masculinized. According to Van Dijk (2008), it is precisely thanks to these possible subtexts that some mental models crystallize and are reinforced among the spectators. These models are suggested not only by the actors on screen but also by the underlying narration levels that can escape the attention of the audience. This happens because, as stated by Messerli (2019), some translation genres - such as interlinguistic subtitling and dubbing - act as textual agents on behalf of internal narration entities, including the characters on the screen, the script, and the directors. In this case, such mediation causes Oliver's iconic body to be 'filled in' and 'repositioned' through the new Japanese soundtrack confirming to both the exploitation of the so-called *bodies of otherness* postulated by Inoue (2003), and to the reiteration of an *adequation* strategy such as that proposed by Nakamura (2016, 2020b). In fact, the assignment of a hypermasculinized genderlect to Oliver reinforces the image of a 'powerful' and 'assertive' man, in which the idea of 'dominance' seems to almost prevail over the romanticism of the original scene. This image can be also traced through the use of his *casual* register which is completely absent in the intentions of the English prototext.

3.3. Elio's meets Oliver in town

	ENG DUBB-SUB	JAP DUBB	JAP SUBS
1	E: Oliver.	E: Oribā.	E: Oribā
2	O: You're not sick of me yet?	O: Kirai ni natte nai?	O: Mada boku ga iya janai?
3	E: No, I just.../ I just wanted to be with you.	E: Ah, masaka...Isshoni itai kara	E: Masaka isshoni itakute
4	E: I'll...I'm gonna...I'll go.	E: Yappari...	E: Demo...
4b		E. Ii ya...kaeru ne.	E. Mō kaeru yo
5	O: Do you know how happy I am / that we slept together?	O: Kinō wa hitotsu ni narete shiawase datta.	O: Boku ga doredake shiawaseka waku?
6	E: I don't know.	E: Sō nano?	E: Wakaranai
7	O: Of course, you don't know.	O: Wakatte nai.	O: Sō dayone
8	O: I don't want you to regret anything.	O: Erio, nanimo kuyande hoshiku nai.	O: Nanimo kōkai shite hoshikunai
9	O: And I hate the thought that maybe / I may have messed you up or...	O: Kimi no koto o kurushimasetaka to omou to tsurasugiru.	O: Kimi o kurushimasetaka to omoitakunai
10	O: I don't want either of us / to pay for this,	O: Dochiramo gisei ni naru beki janai.	O: Daremo warukunai
11	O: one way or another.	-	-
11b	E: No, I...	E: Sonna...Anō...Kinō no koto wa...	E: Boku wa...

12	E: It's not like / I'm gonna tell anyone.	E: Dareka ni iu tsumori wa nai.	E: Darenimo iu tsumori wa nai shi
13	E: You're not gonna be, like, / getting in trouble.	E: Meiwaku wa kakenai kara sa.	E: Meiwaku wa kakenai yo
14	O: That's not what I'm talking about.	O: Sonna kotto itte nai.	O: Sonna koto janai
15	E: Are you happy I came here?	E: Boku ga kite ureshii?	E: Boku ga kite ureshii?
16	O: I would kiss you if I could.	O: Dekiru nara kisu shitai gurai.	O: Kisu shitai hodo da

Table 3. Scene 3 (min. 1:32:20 - 1:33:40)

(a) Setting. The scene takes place near a newsstand near the main square of the town where Elio lives. After their first night of physical intimacy, Elio seems confused but Oliver lets him know that he is happy with what happened between them.

(b) Extra and paraverbal elements. Oliver wears a blue T-shirt and yellow shorts, while Elio wears a red and blue striped T-shirt and shorts. On a paraverbal level, although the pace of the English dialogue is slightly faster than in previous scenes, turns of phrase remain well-paced, even with some rephrasing by Elio. The tempo of the Japanese dubbing differs – unlike Elio, Oliver seems to express himself at a slower speed with more paced lines, especially at the beginning of the scene where his dubbing appears more preordained and syntactically concise.

(c) Linguistic and identity-related analysis. As one can observe in Table 3, the Japanese dialogue between Oliver and Elio maintains a horizontal perimeter due to their use of the *futsūgo* informal register that indexicalizes the intimate relationship between the two speakers. A decrease in MM is noticeable from the previous scenes, although the lower number of lines means that the rate of occurrence is not significantly reduced. As seen previously, MM percentages appear higher in Oliver's speech than in Elio's, even though subtitling reverses the previous trend of dubbing in Oliver's speech. Among the most significant MM in Oliver's speech are the past tense copula *-datta* and the second person singular pronoun *kimi*, while Elio resorts to the first person singular pronoun *boku* and the SFP *-sa*. It is also interesting to observe the presence of the interrogative SFP *-nano*, which is often traced in the sphere of the so-called *women's language*. Such use could support a passive interpretation of Elio's role within the relationship, since in the subtitle the young man perfectly treads the English line without any semantic adaptation (*Wakaranai* → BT. *I don't know*). The percentages of occurrences of the aforementioned MM are distributed as follows in the characters' speech: 25 % in Oliver's dubbing and 37,5% in subtitling, 22% in Elio's dubbing and 22% in subtitling.

As in the previous scene, there is a different attitude between the English and Japanese versions. Starting from the first lines in English, it is possible to observe how Oliver openly and horizontally confronts Elio, both through a direct question in line 2 (*You're not sick of me yet?*) and an equally direct comment that expresses his feelings toward the young man without any qualms in line 5 (*Do you know how happy I am / that we slept together?*). It is also worth noting the circular manner in which Oliver comforts Elio by telling him that he does not want to cause him problems in any way in lines 8 and 9 (*I don't want you to regret anything. And I hate the thought that maybe / I may have messed you up or...*). He remains allusive, hesitant, and less direct compared to his interlocutor. This attitude on Oliver's part shows a clear inclination toward 'confrontation' and 'respect' which positions the relationship between the two speakers within the framework of an almost 'equal' relationship. The Japanese dubbing contrasts this. On a polysemiotic level, an analysis of Oliver's speech rhythm, low tone of voice, and pauses reveals a trend of hypermasculinization of his character, especially in the vocal management, which appears very low, strangely calm, rhythmically cadenced and, therefore, 'unidirectional' and 'confident'. In this regard, one can again detect an inter-indexical relationship that juxtaposes

Oliver's vocal portrayal with an idea of masculinity related to his role as a more mature man and, therefore, as the real 'leader' in the romantic relationship, supporting once again an erotic subtext where his masculinity is synonymous with 'dominance'. For this very reason, despite having a less intense exchange in terms of length, Elio also appears more submissive in Japanese, whereas in English he gives the impression of greater self-determination and confidence. For example, in line 6, Elio responds in English with a declarative phrase (*I don't know*), while in Japanese he responds with a counterclaim characterized by an SFP typical of feminine speech (*Sō nano?* → BT: *Really?*).

4. Discussions and perspectives

In a recent study, Nakamura recalls some of Bakhtin's positions about interlinguistic translation:

Translation actively promotes identity construction by inter-relating the distinctions in gender, ethnicity, class, and age of the source language to those of the target language. The identity constructed by translation is not reducible to identities in the source or target text. It is different from the identity of the original text because no two languages provide linguistic resources sufficient to create exactly the same identity category. It is also different from the identity the same target text would construct without being a translation, because in translation the non-native voice and body of the original text interfere with the translated identity, making it highly polyphonic and polysemious (Nakamura, 2016, p. 1).

Similarly, as introduced at the beginning of this study, other research conducted in the field of audiovisual translation with a special focus on gender and language ideologies (De Marco, 2006, 2009, 2016; Konstantinovskaia, 2020; Ranzato, 2012; Vitucci, 2020, 2023) have highlighted both the role of translation as a crucial instrument for the re-definition of non-compliant identities and the risk of developing stereotypes that encourage more or less patent forms of social exclusion. The quotation above evokes the idea that the iconic bodies of actors and actresses can be linguistically emptied to make room for a 'new' vocal and, therefore, social identity which is certainly not new. On the other hand, it is surprising that there is still a certain stubbornness to reiterate certain ideological practices within Japanese audiovisual translation⁸. In response to this case study's first two questions (How does the Japanese translation of the two characters' speech differ from each other? How do their Japanese translations differ from the original English?), the linguistic and phonetic data collected shows that the hypermasculinization of Oliver's character seems to be embedded within a social image anchored in the past where the stereotype of an 'active' role of men seems to be linked to certain characteristics 'inherent' in the very essence of masculinity. Not surprisingly, the Japanese dialogists tend to stage his masculinity as a tendentially 'normative' one (it must not be forgotten that Oliver will return to the safe haven of a heterosexual relationship at the end of the story) while, on the contrary, this cannot be said for Elio, who is represented in translation through a register that is more hybrid and marked phonetically by higher frequencies than the English original. Such an image and the permanence of certain metapragmatic stereotypes is due to a cultural ideology mediated by clear historical-political instances which began to spread in Japan as early as the late nineteenth century (Yukawa & Saito, 2004; Nohara, 2018; Nakamura, 2018, 2010, 2021,

⁸ Part of this attitude can also be traced in the tendency to resort to *role language* (*yakuwarigo*), which Kinsui defines as those speech patterns (combinations of vocabulary, syntax, voice, peculiarities, set phrases) strongly associated with the speaker's character image (such as gender, age, generation, occupation, social class, regional origin, nationality, race) found especially in works of fiction (Kinsui, 2003).

2024) and still enduring in the audiovisual realm (SturtzSreetharan, 2017)⁹. As is also evident from the dubbing of this movie, Elio's speech seems to reveal a 'weaker' identity that activates two different language profiles between him and Oliver (Figure 1).

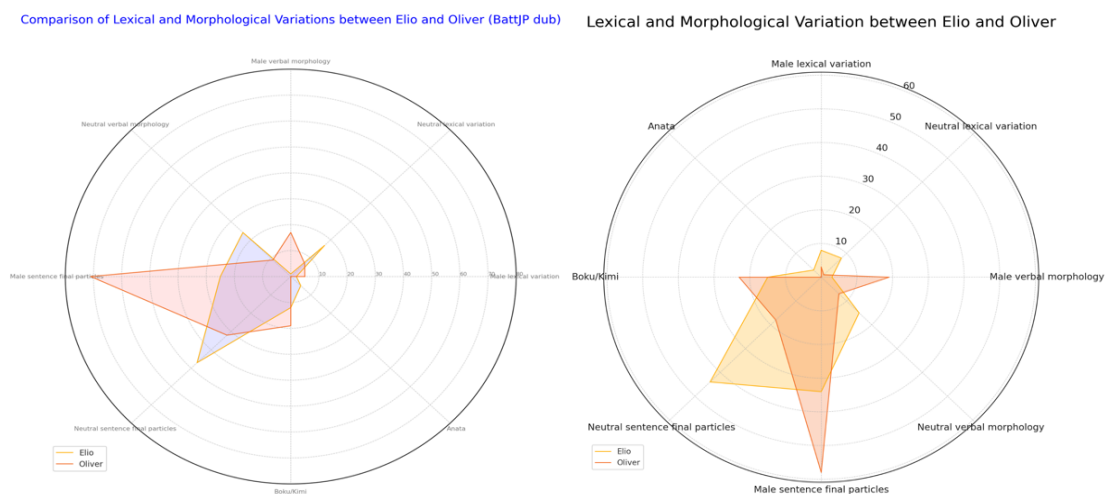


Figure 1. Linguistic comparison based on the occurrence of all linguistic tokens in dubbing (left) and subtitling (right) between Elio and Oliver. (source: author)

In considering the third question (Which type of *masculinity* do translators refer to when they produce their Japanese texts?), from a vocal point of view, the dubbing of the characters analysed gives us two profiles of adult (foreign) males who rely, once again, on a diagenetic polarisation which is anchored to a societal vision that does not take ongoing social evolutions into account (Miyazaki, 2023; SturtzSreetharan, 2006, 2009). From a strictly polysemiotic perspective, it is insightful to juxtapose the phonetic alteration of the two actors in the Japanese version (see Figures 2, 3) from which one notes that Oliver's voice tends toward the masculine spectrum in both languages, even though in Japanese it is accentuated in the low range (90-157 hertz), which is typically associated with masculine frequencies (Figure 2). In contrast, Elio's most represented frequencies range between 130 and 180 hertz in English (middle/androgynous frequencies), and 180 hertz onward in Japanese (high frequencies/typically more feminine and more pronounced) (Figure 3).

⁹ Not surprisingly, this kind of ideological positioning, although analysed in the context of a homosexual fictional representation, also has an indirect impact on the 'ideal' representation of women, who are often represented linguistically through the stereotypical idiolect of *womens' language* (Inoue, 2003; Konstantinovskaia, 2020).

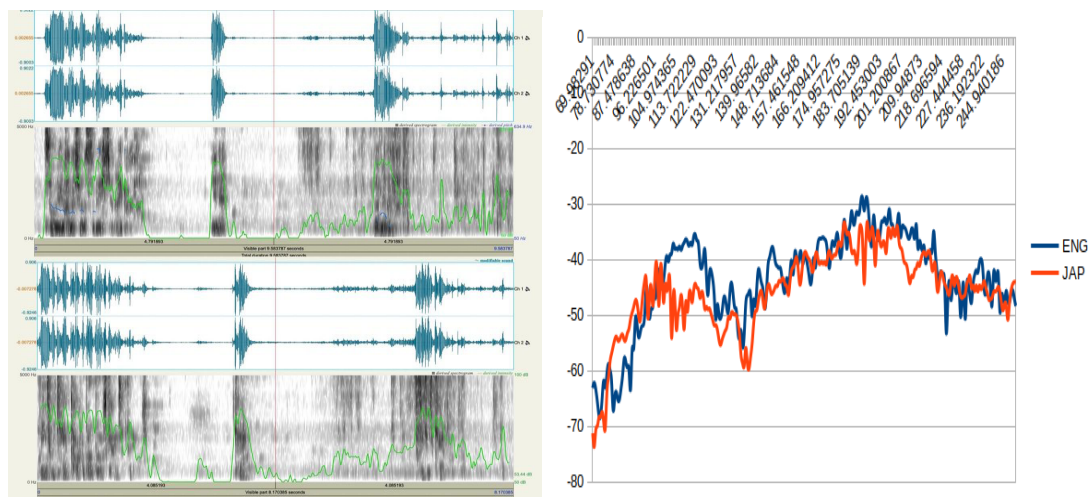


Figure 2. Vocal comparison between Oliver's voice in English (bottom) and Japanese (up). Lines 29-30, Scene 1. (source: author)

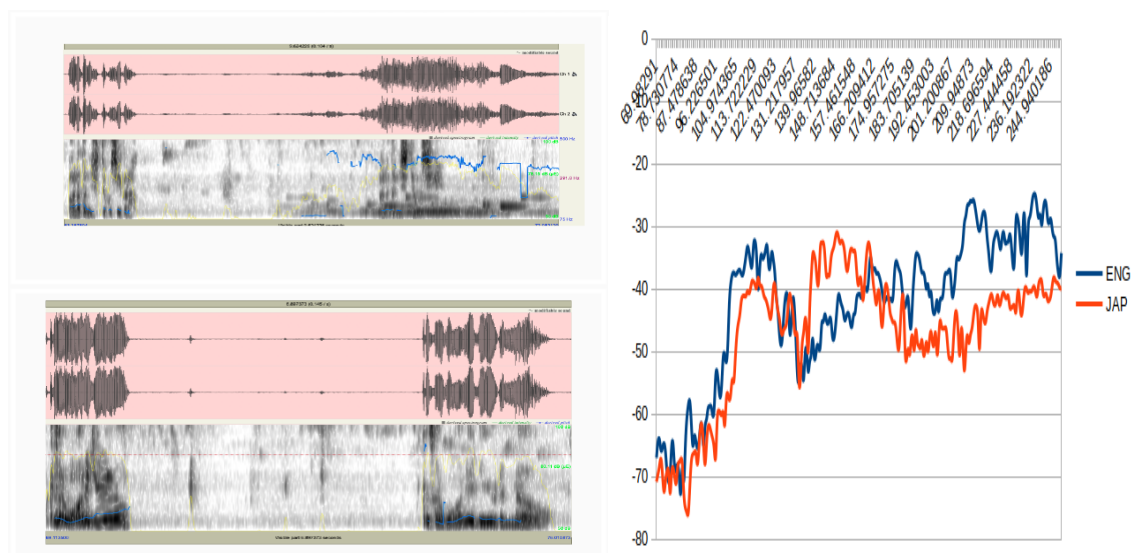


Figure 3. Vocal comparison between Elio's voice in English (bottom) and Japanese (up). Lines 14-15, Scene 1. (source: author)

Undoubtedly, the most interesting phonetic profile analysed in this study is that of Oliver, whose dubbed voice presents a qualitative discrepancy compared to the original English voice, where the actor has a warm, but still youthful voice. The Japanese version, which is characterised by extremely low frequencies, makes him appear older than his age, concealing the intrinsic aim of making him more 'seductive' and in line with the image of a well-behaved, highly educated, and cosmopolitan white man. As already mentioned, such choices are aimed at supporting an erotic subtext where this type of masculinity is synonymous with 'seduction' and 'dominance' over the counterpart with the ill-concealed aim of staging a romantic relationship where he is depicted as the 'leader' and representative of a *hard masculinity* that almost becomes the symbol of a supposed homonormativity. Moreover, there is an inter-indexical relationship that juxtaposes MM in Oliver's speech with an idea of masculinity linked to his active lover's role which is directly borrowed from the imagery of different gender relationships in Japan. In Elio's case, however, despite the qualitative differences between the original voice and the dubbed voice, there is an extremely low percentage of MM in his speech, which is accompanied

by a use of a more hybrid lexicon in gender terms (think of the first-person pronoun *boku*), the SFP *-da*, and a few timid forays into female speech (the SFP - *nano*). This demonstrates that Japanese dialogists wanted to portray him as a character who is 'weaker' in relational terms and, therefore, more representative of a *soft masculinity*, which, however, seems to be characterized negatively than the polarity expressed by Oliver.

As can be seen from the aforementioned analysis, such an operation is achievable through the concatenation of two essential steps occurring during the translation process, namely: the strategy of *transduction* with the production of the inherent inter-indexical relationships and linguistic *adequation*, as well as the exploitation of so-called *bodies of otherness*. As illustrated by this study, the hiatus produced between body and voice of foreign actors/actresses in the context of fictional dialogues often represents the ideal perimeter to propose a 'normative speech style' toward which to strive (Nakamura, 2013; Vitucci, 2023), since fictional speech often becomes a disembodied language marked by enormous ideological work that erases all traces of mediations by political and historical forces and their agents (Inoue, 2003, p. 316). When it comes to ideologies of communication, it is relevant to note, for example, how Oliver and Elio's bodies were dubbed by local actors with vocal textures different from the originals and then mounted on foreign bodies in order to re-enact them in a new gender ideological perspective for which language is the main vehicle (Johnstone, 2017). Once again, therefore, we can see that foreign actors on stage become the vehicle for a reinforcement of those metapragmatic stereotypes that are intended to suggest both a certain image of adult men, but also a precise social system in which to insert them. From a translation perspective, it is clear that the texts produced for CBYN reflect cultural choices that arose from the personal beliefs of unknown dialogists and subtitlers (Ide, Sunakawa, & Yamaguchi, 2019). In fact, as already illustrated by recent Japanese sociolinguistic research, diagenetic variation in Japan has revealed a progressive dissolution of the boundaries between male and female speech (Miyazaki, 2023; Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith, 2004; Sanada, 2020; Yamashita, 2022), which runs counter to the gendered language we find in the dubbing of foreign actors. As expressed by Squires (2014), from a translation and sociolinguistic perspective, this ideological operation relies on the potential of the so-called *indexical bleaching* phenomenon which is deeply connected to the high rate of pervasiveness of audiovisual texts in their target societies (which means that metapragmatic stereotypes are actually reinforced through dubs and subtitles).

In conclusion, the masculine imaginary evoked by the two *virtual speakers* presented here is stimulated by the recourse to a type of ideological recomposition of speech that allows the indexicalisation of ideologized Japanese masculinities projected onto American actors characterised by metapragmatic stereotypes such as those of dominance, virility, and imposition, in the case of Oliver, and of submission and weakness in the case of Elio. These concepts clearly emerge from the translation and phonetic dataset, which testifies to a different orientation in the Japanese dialogues compared to those in English. Moreover, this polarisation is reinforced by the exploitation of the speakers' bodies which become themselves vehicles to portray certain ideologies of masculinity. However, since virtual spaces are indeed social contexts where speech styles are subject to dynamic social formations (Miyazaki, 2023), it remains to be examined whether this type of positioning will still be present in other Japanese audiovisual artefacts, and how exposure to this type of fictional speech can influence the unconscious imaginary of masculinities within Japanese society.

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Una aproximación a la audiodescripción del terror para personas con discapacidad visual: estudio de un corpus de películas españolas de terror

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An approach to audio description of fear in Spain. A corpus-based study of Spanish horror films – *Abstract*

Horror is a genre that is directly linked to emotions and to the intention of disturbing or scaring the public. Most audio description (AD) standards agree that this service should provide the audience a filmic experience similar to that offered by the original products, but they also state that AD should be objective and be limited to describing what is on screen. Only in the last years has subjective AD started to be suggested by some scholars. In this contribution, we will show how horror has been dealt with in the AD of a selection of clips from six Spanish horror films. Based on the proposals by Ramos Caro (2013) and Romero-Muñoz (2023), the degree of objectiveness and subjectiveness in the corpus is measured. The results of the analysis show that most descriptions are objective, although subjectiveness is also present in a high percentage (40.37%). Through the corpus analysis, a number of non-subjective elements potentially contributing to the *skopos* (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984) of horror films were identified. Finally, further studies focusing on the influence of the voicing on AD reception are suggested in order to continue to shed light on a subject that is still little explored.

Keywords

Audiovisual translation, media accessibility, audio description, horror, Spanish cinema

1. Introducción: la AD del género de terror

La AD del terror es una práctica compleja que puede suponer grandes retos para las personas expertas en accesibilidad audiovisual, pero existen solo unas pocas investigaciones al respecto, especialmente trabajos finales de grado como los de Remolina Beltrán (2021), Carbajal Velarde y Granados Romaní (2022) y Gallegos Yarrow y Hermoza Taipe (2023), así como las investigaciones de Michalewicz (2015) y Stefanini y Matamala (2023).

Si nos centramos en las contribuciones más destacadas dentro del ámbito de la AD del género de terror, destaca la aportación de Michalewicz (2015) en el Advanced Research Seminar on Audio Description (ARSAD). En su comunicación, la autora explora la forma en la que se audiodescriben las películas de terror y reflexiona sobre la importancia de que las personas expertas en esta práctica tengan en cuenta las reacciones de la audiencia y las convenciones cinematográficas de dicho género al elaborar la AD. En la investigación de Stefanini y Matamala (2023), se entrevista a nueve personas expertas en relación con la práctica de la AD del terror y se da cuenta de las restricciones que implica este género, tales como la falta de tiempo para describir la información visual y la imposibilidad de detallar todo aquello que resulta relevante (2023, p. 284).

El estudio de Remolina Beltrán (2021) constituye un trabajo final de grado que combina la descripción y la prescripción y en el que se analiza la forma en la que se ha llevado a cabo la AD de diversas escenas de dos películas de terror y se elabora una propuesta de AD subjetiva para una escena de otra película de este género. En su estudio de recepción, Carbajal Velarde y Granados Romaní (2022) analizan la percepción del miedo por parte de personas con discapacidad visual a través de la AD de tres películas de terror con el objetivo de conocer las preferencias de las personas destinatarias del producto. Por último, el trabajo de Gallegos Yarrow y Hermoza Taipe (2023) analiza la AD de dos películas de suspense en sus versiones en inglés y en español neutro para observar cómo se lleva a cabo dicha práctica en este género.

Por otro lado, destacan cada vez más obras en los últimos años que estudian la cuestión de la AD desde el punto de vista de las emociones en general, como los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013, 2016) y Chica (2019). En su tesis doctoral, Ramos Caro (2013) trata el tema de las emociones desde el ámbito psicológico y desde una perspectiva más amplia, ya que no hace referencia exclusivamente al terror, sino también a otras emociones como la tristeza y la rabia. No obstante, su trabajo resulta de gran utilidad para el estudio que planteamos en la presente contribución, pues la autora (2013) analiza la AD según si es objetiva (como se recoge, por ejemplo, en la norma UNE 153020) o no, y parte del carácter intencional o subjetivo intrínseco de las obras de terror (Altman, 2000, p. 208; MoyaHigueras, 2000, p. 2) para reflexionar sobre si la AD debería contribuir a la intención propia de este género, que suele despertar en la audiencia emociones relacionadas con el terror. Para identificar aquellos rasgos que hacen que un segmento de AD sea considerado subjetivo, partimos de la categorización que presenta Ramos Caro en su estudio doctoral (2013), en el que recoge los siguientes elementos como rasgos propios de una AD subjetiva (p. 289):

1. SUBJ: Descripción subjetiva, valoración del descriptor, sobreinterpretación de un hecho:
 - 1.1. EST: información sobre el estado emocional de los personajes que, en la versión objetiva, se omite o expresa con una descripción física (por ejemplo: “desolado”).
 - 1.2. VAL: Descripción que añade una valoración personal del descriptor (por ejemplo: “repugnante”).
 - 1.3. INT: (Sobre)interpretación de un hecho que el descriptor no puede deducir de la imagen en el momento de la descripción con certeza. Añade información a la escena (por ejemplo: “a salvo”).

2. LEX: Uso de léxico con valencia emocional frente a un término sinónimo pero con valencia neutra (por ejemplo: “espiar”).

3. MET: Uso de metáfora (por ejemplo: “sale disparado”).

Si bien la mayoría de guías y estándares (consúltense, por ejemplo, Benecke y Dosch, 2004; AENOR, 2005; Morisset y Gonant, 2008) tienden a recomendar que se describa de forma que no se transmitan emociones a través de la AD y que esta sea neutra, encontramos también algunos trabajos que consideran que una AD no objetiva es posible¹. Es más, hay estudios que demuestran que la objetividad y la subjetividad son rasgos que coexisten en los guiones audiodescriptivos. Un ejemplo destacable es el trabajo de Romero-Muñoz (2023), en el que se cuantifica el grado de objetividad y subjetividad en un corpus de cuatro guiones de Netflix en español. A continuación, presentamos los criterios de objetividad y subjetividad que recoge el autor² en cuanto a la elaboración de la AD (2023, p. 22) en la Tabla 1:

Parámetros de objetividad	Parámetros de subjetividad
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No se interpreta de forma subjetiva ni se transmiten puntos de vista • No se hace referencia a las emociones de quien describe • Se incluye únicamente aquello que se puede ver en pantalla • No se emplean adjetivos subjetivos, solo descripciones basadas en hechos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Se aprecia cualquier tipo de interpretación • Se incluye lenguaje relacionado con las emociones • Se añade información adicional sobre las acciones o los entornos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Se emplea un lenguaje gráfico • Se utiliza terminología fílmica

Tabla 1. Recopilación de parámetros de objetividad y subjetividad. Fuente: Romero-Muñoz (2023), con base en las investigaciones sobre objetividad y subjetividad que cita en su estudio (2023, p. 22)

Partiendo de los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013) y de Romero-Muñoz (2023), entendemos por estos elementos subjetivos aquellos que tienen el potencial de generar emociones relacionadas con el miedo o el terror en la audiencia³, en contraposición con los rasgos objetivos o neutros que recogen documentos como la norma UNE 153020 (AENOR, 2005) y que, entendemos, aportarían información sin contribuir de forma directa al propósito, o *skopos* (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984, 1996), de la obra.

En el siguiente apartado, presentamos la metodología que hemos empleado para elaborar nuestro análisis.

¹ Véanse, por ejemplo, los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013) y Remolina Beltrán (2021). Sobre esta cuestión, destacan también los estudios de Jankowska (2015), Walczak y Fryer (2017), Bardini (2020, 2022) y López *et al.* (2021), que consideran la AD interpretativa o creativa como una alternativa válida al estilo tradicional de AD objetiva. En relación con esta idea, cabe señalar que Vercauteren (2007) ya añadía que la descripción de detalles como las emociones, los gestos o las expresiones faciales de los personajes implica siempre cierta subjetividad y una interpretación del estado emocional de los personajes por parte de las personas expertas en AD.

² Nótese que se ha llevado a cabo una traducción de los parámetros para ajustarlos al idioma de la presente contribución.

³ En su estudio empírico, Vrana, Cuthbert y Lang (1986) demuestran que el empleo de enunciados emocionales, que se corresponderían con lo que aquí denominamos *subjetivos*, tienen un efecto en cómo las personas consumen la obra, ya que reciben el impacto de las emociones narrativas, entre ellas el miedo o el terror (Ramos Caro, 2013, p. 103). En relación con el papel de la narratología en traducción audiovisual, remitimos a los lectores y lectoras al trabajo de Vandaele (2018).

2. Metodología

La idea de llevar a cabo la presente investigación surge a raíz de la necesidad que observamos de ofrecer una aproximación más amplia al estudio de la AD del terror dada la escasa bibliografía y la falta de recomendaciones que existen al respecto de dicha práctica, como se mostraba en el apartado 1. Esto es algo que contrasta con la amplia oferta⁴ de contenido audiodescrito que se brinda del género de terror en España.

En la presente contribución, buscamos detectar si los fragmentos correspondientes al género de terror que seleccionamos para nuestro corpus de estudio se rigen por los principios de objetividad que recogen guías como la norma UNE 153020 (AENOR, 2005) o si, al tratarse de un género que busca producir una emoción de miedo o suspense en la audiencia, se identifican en las obras posibles elementos que van más allá de la objetividad, como sugieren algunas investigaciones llevadas a cabo en esta dirección, algunas de ellas mencionadas en la nota al pie número 1. Para determinar aquellos rasgos que hacen que un segmento de AD sea considerado subjetivo, partimos de la categorización que presenta Ramos Caro en su estudio doctoral (2013, p. 289) sobre los rasgos propios de una AD subjetiva que recogíamos en el apartado 1. Hemos complementado dicha propuesta con la clasificación que plantea Romero-Muñoz (2023, p. 22) de los parámetros que tienen que ver con la objetividad y con la subjetividad y que presentábamos en ese mismo apartado.

Con base en las propuestas de Ramos Caro (2013) y Romero-Muñoz (2023), hemos elaborado el siguiente listado de preguntas que empleamos en nuestro análisis para identificar las características que presentan los bocadillos audiodescriptivos analizados y clasificarlos según si son objetivos o subjetivos. Siguiendo este baremo, si la respuesta a alguna de las preguntas planteadas es *sí*, el bocadillo audiodescriptivo se consideraría subjetivo, mientras que si el bocadillo analizado no reúne ninguno de los criterios asociados a la subjetividad, se trataría de un bocadillo de tipo objetivo:

Preguntas para la detección de bocadillos audiodescriptivos de tipo subjetivo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Se aprecian signos de interpretación a la hora de describir? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Se expresan emociones? • ¿Se añade información más allá de la imagen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Se emplea terminología fílmica? • ¿Se añaden puntos de vista y opiniones? • ¿Se emplean términos valorativos? • ¿Se usan figuras retóricas como la metáfora? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Se utiliza un lenguaje gráfico?

Tabla 2. Listado de preguntas para distinguir entre bocadillos objetivos y subjetivos. Fuente: elaboración propia a partir de los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013) y Romero-Muñoz (2023)

Los fragmentos audiodescritos sobre los que aplicamos dicho análisis se han extraído de las siguientes seis películas españolas de terror a las que hemos podido acceder a través de la página de contenido audiodescrito Audiocinemateca (Delicado, 2023a): *Malasaña 32* (Albert Pintó, 2020), *La abuela* (Paco Plaza, 2021), *Tin & Tina* (Rubin Stein, 2023), *Hermana Muerte* (Paco Plaza, 2023), *El páramo* (David Casademunt, 2021) y *La influencia* (Denis Rovira, 2019). Los criterios de selección de los fragmentos han sido los siguientes: proceden de películas españolas de terror estrenadas en los últimos años, con una duración de alrededor de 5 minutos cada fragmento y que tienen lugar en el segundo acto de la película, en el que se desarrolla la acción y, por lo tanto, en el que, estimamos, tendrán una mayor presencia los elementos

⁴ En la plataforma de contenidos audiodescritos Audiocinemateca, se recogen más de 500 películas y series de terror (Delicado, 2023a, 2023b).

del texto audiovisual que contribuyen a la intención de generar emociones relacionadas con el terror.

En la Tabla 3, se recogen las características de cada fragmento en lo referente a su duración, el número de bocadillos audiodescriptivos que lo conforman y la cantidad de AD que contiene:

Identificación	Responsable de la AD	TCR	Duración	N.º de bocadillos audiodescriptivos	N.º de palabras
Fragmento 1 (<i>Malasaña 32</i>)	Movistar	49:59-54:48	4 min y 49 s	29	381
Fragmento 2 (<i>La abuela</i>)	Amazon Prime Video	57:13-01:01:49	4 min y 36 s	22	267
Fragmento 3 (<i>Tin & Tina</i>)	Netflix	37:38-45:36	7 min y 58 s	24	317
Fragmento 4 (<i>Hermana Muerte</i>)	Netflix	34:45-39:54	5 min y 9 s	30	381
Fragmento 5 (<i>El páramo</i>)	Netflix	44:01-48:08	4 min y 7 s	35	232
Fragmento 6 (<i>La influencia</i>)	Netflix	01:01:27-01:06:40	5 min y 13 s	26	265
		MEDIA	5,31 min	27,67	307,17
		TOTAL	31,87 min	166	1843

Tabla 3. Características de los fragmentos de estudio. Fuente: elaboración propia

El motivo por el que la duración de los fragmentos seleccionados varía de forma considerable en algunos casos (véase, por ejemplo, el fragmento 3, con casi 8 minutos de duración) responde a la necesidad de escoger escenas que tuvieran un sentido completo dentro de la obra y en las que hubiera un porcentaje comparable de contenido audiodescrito para analizar.

Una vez seleccionados los fragmentos, nos preguntamos en qué medida los bocadillos audiodescriptivos que los conforman serán de tipo objetivo o subjetivo y a través de qué parámetros se transmitirá dicha posible subjetividad. En el apartado 3, presentamos el análisis que hemos llevado a cabo de los fragmentos de películas españolas de terror que conforman nuestro corpus de estudio.

3. Análisis del corpus de películas de terror

A continuación, exponemos los resultados del análisis del corpus, que muestran el grado de subjetividad detectado en los seis fragmentos de estudio una vez formuladas las preguntas que recogíamos en la Tabla 2 para cada uno de los bocadillos audiodescriptivos que componen cada fragmento:

Fragmentos	N.º de bocadillos audiodescriptivos	Cantidad de bocadillos subjetivos
Fragmento 1 (<i>Malasaña 32</i>)	29	14 (48,28 %)
Fragmento 2 (<i>La abuela</i>)	22	12 (54,55 %)
Fragmento 3 (<i>Tin & Tina</i>)	24	16 (66,67 %)
Fragmento 4 (<i>Hermana Muerte</i>)	30	12 (40 %)
Fragmento 5 (<i>El páramo</i>)	35	4 (11,43 %)
Fragmento 6 (<i>La influenza</i>)	26	9 (34,62 %)
MEDIA	27,67	11,17 (40,37 %)

Tabla 4. Análisis de la subjetividad de los fragmentos. Fuente: elaboración propia

Los resultados muestran que el corpus de fragmentos de terror audiodescritos que hemos analizado combina elementos tanto objetivos como subjetivos. El grado en el que se aprecian parámetros relacionados con la subjetividad varía considerablemente en función del fragmento analizado. Destaca el fragmento 3 como aquel que contiene un mayor porcentaje de bocadillos subjetivos (un 66,67 %), frente al fragmento 5, que es el que presenta un menor grado de subjetividad (un 11,43 %). Si calculamos el porcentaje medio de los fragmentos del corpus en relación con el tipo de bocadillos audiodescriptivos, encontramos un ligero predominio de los rasgos objetivos, con un porcentaje del 59,63 % de objetividad frente al 40,37 % de bocadillos subjetivos, tal y como se recoge en el Gráfico 1:

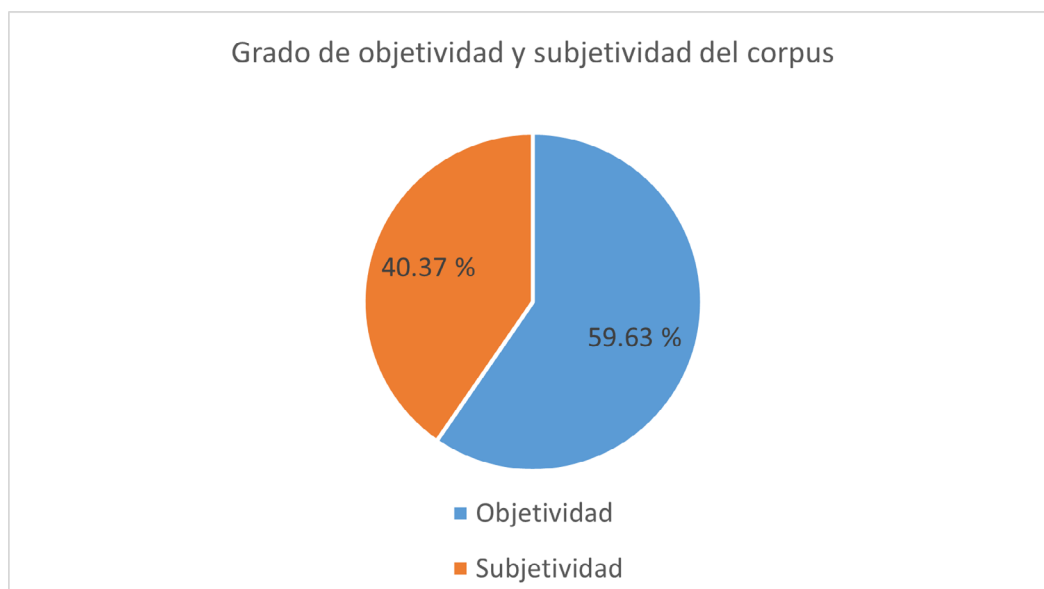


Gráfico 1. Porcentaje de objetividad y subjetividad de los fragmentos. Fuente: elaboración propia

3.1. Parámetros de subjetividad detectados

Una vez identificados los elementos que denotan subjetividad en los fragmentos del corpus, hemos clasificado cada uno según diferentes parámetros siguiendo el listado que presentábamos en la Tabla 2 y que aunaba las características de una AD subjetiva de acuerdo con los trabajos previos de Ramos Caro (2013) y Romero-Muñoz (2023). En la Tabla 5, mostramos una clasificación de los parámetros de subjetividad que hemos detectado:

Fragmentos / Parámetros de subjektividad	<i>Malasaña 32</i>	<i>La abuela</i>	<i>Tin & Tina</i>	<i>Hermana Muerte</i>	<i>El páramo</i>	<i>La influencia</i>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Emociones	9	8	2	7	1	1	28
Terminología fílmica							0
Información añadida (interpretación, opinión...)		1	9	2		4	16
Términos y expresiones de tipo valorativo	4	5	3	1	1	2	16
Figuras retóricas (ej. metáfora)			1	1	2	1	5
Lenguaje gráfico		2	4	2		2	10
Expresiones aproximativas	2						2

Tabla 5. Clasificación de los parámetros de subjektividad del corpus analizado. Fuente: elaboración propia

Con base en la información que arroja la Tabla 5, encontramos que el elemento que más presencia tiene en el corpus es la expresión de emociones a través del lenguaje, con un total de 28 instancias. Este parámetro se manifiesta en la AD a través de ejemplos como los que citamos a continuación: “asustado”, “angustiado”, “horrorizado”, “aterrada”, “atemorizada”, “paralizada” o “apenada”. El fragmento 1 es aquel en el que más prevalece este parámetro de subjektividad (con un total de 9 ejemplos). El siguiente que más se observa en la AD de los fragmentos analizados es el empleo de términos y expresiones de tipo valorativo, con un total de 16 instancias, entre las que destacan, por citar algunas: “trastos viejos”, “siniestros”, “envejecida”, “canoso” o “palazo”. Estos dos primeros parámetros se han detectado en la totalidad de los fragmentos que hemos analizado.

También se han encontrado 16 ejemplos de información añadida en forma de interpretaciones o de transmisión de opiniones que confieren subjektividad al discurso. Son ejemplos hallados en los fragmentos de análisis 2, 3, 4 y 6: “con esfuerzo”, “con miedo”, “para no verlos”, “con afán” o “apaciblemente”. Por último, en estos mismos fragmentos, se han detectado 10 instancias que tienen que ver con el uso de un lenguaje gráfico, con ejemplos como “se abalanza”, “cubierto de arrugas”, “ensangrentadas” o “un amasijo sanguinolento”. El parámetro del que menos ejemplos se detectan en los fragmentos analizados es el que tiene que ver con el empleo de figuras retóricas como la metáfora, que está presente en los fragmentos 3, 4, 5 y 6 con ejemplos como “tiene la piel como la corteza de un árbol”. No se han encontrado instancias en los fragmentos que den cuenta del empleo de terminología fílmica como parámetro de subjektividad.

Por último, cabe señalar un parámetro de subjektividad adicional que no se contemplaba en la Tabla 2 y del que hemos identificado dos ejemplos en el fragmento 1. Se trata del uso de expresiones aproximativas que describen cantidades de forma no exacta, tales como “levemente” o “un poco más”.

Además de detectar ejemplos que dan cuenta de la presencia de parámetros de subjetividad en los fragmentos de estudio, hemos identificado también elementos que, si bien no se clasifican como subjetivos, estimamos, tienen potencial para contribuir al propósito o *skopos* (Reiss y Vermeer, 1984, 1996) de la obra, es decir, el de generar emociones relacionadas con el terror.

3.2. Elementos no subjetivos que podrían contribuir al terror

Entre dichos aspectos, destaca el hecho de que se haga referencia a la forma en la que se realizan las acciones (por ejemplo, “se asoma lentamente”, en el fragmento 1, y “quita la colcha de su cuerpo pataleando”, en el 2), las descripciones detalladas de los rasgos físicos y los gestos de los personajes (“unos siniestros pies con largas uñas amarillas”, en el fragmento 1, y “Su dorso tiene la piel envejecida. [...] Su pelo es canoso. [...] Su rostro está cubierto de arrugas”, en el 2), la impersonalidad y la poca concreción con la que se describe en ocasiones para mantener la intriga (“algo pasa por detrás de él” y “unas manos suben por sus hombros”, en el fragmento 1, y “Ve una silueta alargada”, en el 5) y la descripción detallada de los lugares y de los elementos que hay en ellos. Destacamos especialmente la importancia que tiene la descripción de los espacios para la AD, ya que permite que las personas que reciben el producto audiodescrito tomen consciencia de cómo están situados los elementos en la escena y detecten aquellas características del ambiente que pueden llegar a provocarles emociones relacionadas con el terror. Por ejemplo, en el primer fragmento que analizamos, se hace referencia a las puertas que tiene la estancia y a si están abiertas o cerradas. También se menciona si hay espejos y lo que se refleja en ellos (véanse los fragmentos 1 y 4).

Otro aspecto que conviene destacar también porque contribuye a la intención de crear estas emociones en el público de la AD a pesar de no ser un rasgo de subjetividad tiene que ver con el momento en que se describen los elementos que aparecen en la escena, y el orden en que se enumeran. Por ejemplo, en el fragmento 1, no se descubre el aspecto que más contribuye al terror, que es la presencia de la anciana, hasta el final del bocado audiodescriptivo, coincidiendo con la música y los efectos sonoros. Creemos que este hecho refuerza la intención del texto de producir miedo o suspense, pues con ello se ayuda a mantener la tensión dramática: “Se agacha a recogerlo. Se gira. En el espejo descubre el reflejo de unos siniestros pies con largas uñas amarillas. Se levanta horrorizado. La anciana está tras él”. En el momento en el que se pronuncia esta última oración, en la que se revela el elemento con potencial de generar miedo en la audiencia, se escuchan también la música y los efectos sonoros, lo cual, estimamos, contribuye a reforzar la intención de la escena de generar miedo en los espectadores y espectadoras. En general, y como se muestra en este pasaje, la distribución de la información adhiere a lo que se ve en la imagen, ya que es más tarde cuando se comprende que las uñas amarillas son de la anciana. Por ello, se podría decir que, además de reproducir la intención de la escena, la AD respeta los criterios de la norma UNE 153020, que dispone que la AD se debe realizar respetando los datos que aporta la imagen, evitando descubrir o adelantar sucesos de la trama y tratando de no descubrir aquello que se deduce a partir de la obra (AENOR 2005, p. 8).

Además de los rasgos que ya se han mencionado, destaca también la descripción detallada de elementos que se emplean a lo largo de las diferentes escenas del filme con la intención de contribuir al terror, como la sangre, los rasgos relacionados con la vejez (las canas, las arrugas, el hecho de que se caigan los dientes...) y las herramientas peligrosas como cuchillos, látigos o escopetas. A continuación, citamos algunos ejemplos de los diferentes fragmentos del corpus: “La anciana está tras él” (fragmento 1), “Su pelo es canoso. Susana se arranca un diente atemorizada. La sangre le brota entre los labios” (fragmento 2), “[J]unto al perro, hay un cubo

de sangre. El sofá y la alfombra están ensangrentados” (fragmento 3), “[S]e autoflagela con el látigo sobre la espalda desnuda y llena de marcas” (fragmento 4), “Lucía coge la escopeta y apunta hacia su habitación” (fragmento 5) y “Nora sangra por ojos y oídos” (fragmento 6).

Como señalaba Ramos Caro (2013, p. 113), en combinación con la música, la descripción de los gestos y actitudes de los personajes permite una inmersión del público en la escena, ya que la persona que consume la obra puede llegar a ponerse en la piel del personaje y experimentar emociones que se vinculan con el género de terror (Gross y Levenson, 1995; Rottenberg *et al.*, 2007), como malestar, tensión, miedo o ansiedad, entre otras. Por ejemplo, hacia el final del primer fragmento, cuando la protagonista está en el suelo envejecida y cubierta de sangre, se describe que “la sangre le brota de la boca hasta el pecho” y, al mismo tiempo, en la escena, suena un tipo de música alegre. La incongruencia que genera el contenido del bocadillo en contraste con el tipo de música podría potenciar la intención de la obra de generar emociones relacionadas con el terror en las personas que utilizan la AD.

Como ya apuntaba Ramos Caro (2013), los silencios tienen implicaciones notables en la AD del terror. A diferencia de otros géneros como la comedia, en el que el porcentaje de diálogos tiende a ser más elevado, en los fragmentos que conforman nuestro corpus de estudio compuesto por fragmentos de terror, hemos encontrado numerosos silencios que cumplen una función concreta dentro de la obra, que es la de crear o mantener la tensión dramática. Se trata de silencios que no son absolutos, ya que, generalmente, van acompañados de música y efectos sonoros que refuerzan la tensión de las escenas. El hecho de que haya una cantidad de silencios considerable elimina el problema de falta de huecos de mensaje tan habitual en la práctica de la AD, ya que se puede describir sobre ellos en el caso de que no sean imprescindibles para la trama. Sin embargo, tras analizar cómo se han audiodescrito los seis fragmentos del corpus, consideramos esencial que la descripción no se solape con algún elemento acústico importante o con un silencio que resulte relevante en la obra. En este sentido, aunque haya silencio suficiente, parece necesario escoger adecuadamente los momentos para insertar la AD de modo que no se desaprovechen los recursos ya presentes en el texto origen (como los silencios intencionados o los sonidos que se incluyen con intención de generar emociones relacionadas con el terror) y que se logre explotar al máximo el potencial de la AD para contribuir al propósito o *skopos* (Reiss y Vermeer, 1984, 1996) de la obra, en la medida en la que así lo requiera el encargo de traducción para la accesibilidad. Muestra de ello es el fragmento 2, en el que los dos niños manipulan cuchillos y se escucha el sonido de los filos, lo cual permite que la audiencia que no cuenta con el apoyo de la imagen pueda intuir que estos están especialmente afilados.

Por otro lado, creemos que una adecuada combinación de la AD con los elementos que ya están presentes en el texto y que ayudan a transmitir la intención original de la obra podría contribuir a su éxito sin necesidad de elaborar una AD que se aleje de las pautas de objetividad que recoge la normativa vigente (UNE 153020, AENOR, 2005). Por ejemplo, en el fragmento 2, la intensidad con la que el personaje observa la nota, junto a la música extradiegética, podría ser un elemento que refuerce el suspense y que añada una cierta interpretación por parte de quien audiodescribe. Sin embargo, para poder comprobar si, en la práctica, las personas con discapacidad visual valoran más positivamente una AD que actúe como una herramienta neutra, como recoge la norma UNE 153020 (AENOR, 2005), o si, por el contrario, prefieren una AD valorativa que contribuya en sí misma al terror, como proponen algunos estudios previos (véanse, por ejemplo, los trabajos de Ramos Caro, 2013 y Remolina Beltrán, 2021), será necesario llevar a cabo estudios de recepción en los que se dé a conocer las expectativas y necesidades de las personas con discapacidad visual en relación con la AD de las obras de terror.

Por último, la locución es otro factor que, estimamos, podría contribuir a alcanzar el *skopos* o propósito del texto. Si bien en los fragmentos analizados no encontramos ejemplos de interpretación ni subjetividad en la voz de quien locuta, parece probable que la locución influya en sí misma en la transmisión de emociones relacionadas con el terror. Si nos centramos en el corpus de análisis, cabe señalar que los fragmentos están locutados por una voz humana, en su mayoría femenina, y presentan un tono y una modulación neutros. En general, la forma de locutar es clara y no interpretativa. A pesar de que la mayoría de las voces son femeninas, estas tienden a ser graves, algo que, creemos, podría contribuir a la transmisión de emociones relacionadas con el terror. Esto se aprecia sobre todo en los fragmentos 5 y 6, que están locutados por voces masculinas especialmente graves. A la espera de llevar a cabo futuros estudios de recepción, creemos que, en la AD del terror, una AD interpretativa podría contribuir de forma positiva al propósito o *skopos* de los filmes que se inscriben en este género. En este sentido, estimamos que un tono de voz poco acorde al estilo y al propósito de la obra podría llegar a suspender la ilusión cinematográfica (Chaume, 2005, p. 7) que permite que la audiencia conecte con la escena y con los personajes y que pueda llegar a experimentar emociones relacionadas con el terror.

Una vez presentado el análisis del corpus, en el siguiente apartado, revisamos los resultados obtenidos y exponemos la discusión sobre los mismos.

4. Resultados obtenidos y discusión

Los resultados del presente estudio muestran que el contenido de los bocadillos audiodescriptivos de los seis fragmentos de terror que hemos analizado está formado por descripciones que, en su mayoría (el 59,63 % de los bocadillos analizados), no se corresponden con los parámetros de subjetividad que identificábamos a partir de los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013) y Romero-Muñoz (2023) (véase la Tabla 2). Aun así, cabe señalar que se ha detectado un porcentaje considerable de bocadillos audiodescriptivos que se corresponden con dichos parámetros de subjetividad (el 40,37 % de los bocadillos analizados).

Entre los elementos de la AD que reflejan este alto porcentaje de subjetividad, se han detectado rasgos asociados con los parámetros que, con base en los trabajos de Ramos Caro (2013) y Romero-Muñoz (2023), presentábamos en la Tabla 2. Según los resultados de nuestro estudio, los parámetros de subjetividad que más presencia tienen en los fragmentos analizados son la expresión de emociones a través de la AD, el hecho de que se añada información y se llegue a interpretar más allá de la imagen o se aporten puntos de vista y el empleo de términos y expresiones de tipo valorativo. En menor medida, han conferido también subjetividad otros elementos también contemplados en dicha tabla, como el uso de un lenguaje gráfico y el empleo de figuras retóricas como la metáfora. No se han detectado ejemplos de terminología filmica. Sin embargo, sí se ha identificado en uno de los fragmentos ejemplos de un parámetro que no se había considerado en la Tabla 2, pero que confiere subjetividad al discurso. Se trata del empleo de expresiones aproximativas.

Por último, durante el análisis del corpus, se ha detectado una serie de elementos descriptivos que, si bien no se corresponden con los parámetros de subjetividad en sí mismos, tienen potencial para contribuir al *skopos* (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984, 1996) del texto. Se recogen a continuación:

- Descripción de cómo se realizan las acciones
- Descripción detallada de los rasgos físicos y los gestos de los personajes
- Empleo de la impersonalidad y falta de concreción
- Descripción detallada de los ambientes y la situación de los objetos

- Inserción de la AD y combinación con los otros elementos sonoros
- Selección de elementos que contribuyen al terror: utensilios peligrosos, elementos relativos a la vejez, al dolor y a la muerte
- Empleo del silencio como recurso
- Locución interpretativa

El hecho de que los bocadillos audiodescriptivos analizados contengan elementos tanto objetivos como subjetivos con potencial de contribuir al propósito o *skopos* de los fragmentos, que es generar emociones relacionadas con el terror en la audiencia, nos lleva a considerar que el mantenimiento de la intención humorística en el texto meta no está necesariamente ligado al grado de subjetividad de los bocadillos audiodescriptivos. En este sentido, la AD presenta rasgos tanto subjetivos como objetivos que se combinan con los elementos ya presentes en los fragmentos de terror (silencios, diálogos, ruidos, música, locución, etcétera) con el objetivo de que el texto meta conserve la esencia de la obra. Para medir de qué forma han influido estos elementos, tanto objetivos como subjetivos, en la recepción del producto audiodescrito del género de terror por parte de las personas usuarias de la AD, nos planteamos llevar a cabo un estudio de recepción con personas ciegas y con baja visión en el que se las exponga a la AD de los fragmentos que hemos estudiado.

5. Conclusiones

A partir de los resultados de nuestro análisis, podemos concluir que la AD de los fragmentos de terror que hemos estudiado no es puramente objetiva o subjetiva, sino que, como ya demostraba Romero-Muñoz (2023) en su análisis multimodal sobre un corpus distinto, los parámetros propios de la objetividad y de la subjetividad coexisten en la AD de los textos audiovisuales.

Si bien es cierto que son necesarios estudios de recepción que complementen los resultados de nuestra investigación y arrojen una mayor claridad sobre cómo perciben las personas con ceguera o baja visión la AD del terror, creemos que el análisis de un corpus de fragmentos de terror como el que presentamos en esta contribución supone en sí mismo una aportación valiosa para esta cuestión tan poco explorada hasta la fecha, ya que nos ha permitido comprobar de qué forma se ha llevado a cabo la práctica de la AD desde el punto de vista del binomio objetividadsubjetividad en una muestra de películas de terror que se han estrenado recientemente. Si tomamos como referencia el procedimiento que se ha seguido en investigaciones sobre la AD de otros géneros, como la comedia, entre las que caben destacar aportaciones como las de Martínez Sierra (2010, 2015) y López Rubio (2024), observamos que, en un primer momento, se ha buscado retratar cómo viaja el humor en la AD a través del análisis de fragmentos audiodescritos, con el objetivo de, posteriormente, llevar a cabo “estudios de recepción para poner a prueba material humorístico audiodescrito y ver qué nivel de éxito real (relevancia óptima) se obtiene, en forma de efecto humorístico en el espectador” (Martínez Sierra, 2015, p. 71). En este sentido, parece razonable realizar una primera aproximación descriptiva y pragmática sobre la AD del terror como la que presentamos en este artículo y, a partir de ella, llevar a cabo más investigaciones sobre este objeto de estudio desde una perspectiva más amplia, que contemple no solamente la emoción del terror a través de la AD, sino también aquello que puedan aportar los efectos sonoros, la música y el propio lenguaje, tanto si se corresponden con parámetros de subjetividad como si no. El producto audiodescrito se percibe en su conjunto y es muy probable, como hemos detectado a lo largo de nuestro análisis, que existan otros elementos que, lejos de poder clasificarse como subjetivos en sí mismos, contribuyan de forma intencionada a generar emociones relacionadas con el género de terror en las personas que consumen la AD.

Otra posible línea de investigación que estimamos de gran interés dentro del ámbito de la traducción audiovisual y la accesibilidad y en la que trabajaremos a continuación es la influencia del tipo de locución sobre cómo se reciben los bocadillos audiodescriptivos de los fragmentos de terror, de nuevo, con independencia de que estos sean objetivos o subjetivos. A la espera de presentar nuestro siguiente estudio, creemos probable que una locución interpretativa repercuta en el grado en el que la audiencia que consume la AD percibe los elementos relacionados con el terror de la obra. En este sentido, resulta de especial interés el trabajo de Machuca *et al.* (2020) sobre las voces en la AD, en el que se concluye que lo que realmente interesa a las personas con discapacidad visual “es que la voz del audiodescriptor no transmita emociones” (2020, p. 8). Esperamos poder llevar a cabo un estudio de recepción de fragmentos de terror para comprobar si esta afirmación sería aplicable también a la locución en este género, ya que, quizá, una AD neutra en obras de terror podría llegar a dificultar, o incluso a impedir, que se cumpla el propósito o *skopos* (Reiss y Vermeer, 1984, 1996) del texto. Si bien el alcance del estudio que aquí se presenta es limitado, pues no abarca toda la complejidad de la AD del terror, estimamos que se trata de una aportación necesaria dentro del ámbito de la traducción audiovisual y la accesibilidad en tanto que contribuye a arrojar luz sobre un tema poco explorado hasta la fecha y sobre el que existen todavía numerosos interrogantes.

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Quality assessment tools for studio and AI-generated dubs and voice-overs

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Abstract

This paper proposes a quality assessment model designed for dubs and voice-overs, applicable to both studio recordings and AI-generated output. Drawing on a prior quality assessment proposal narrowed down to script adaptation (Spiteri Miggiani, 2022a), this paper introduces a broader model that includes an additional rubric to assess the overall quality of dubbed and voice-over output. The quality rating of the end product is determined by evaluating and assigning individual scores to a set of comprehensive quality indicators categorized into two main components: speech and sound. In contrast, the dubbing script is evaluated using the textual parameters rubric developed previously, which adopts a granular, error-based approach and combines a formula to calculate a percentage score. The newly revised quality assessment model thus enables a comprehensive or macro evaluation of a dubbed product from a viewer's perspective. Additionally, it provides another tool focused on textual parameters for a more detailed micro examination from the perspective of linguists and adapters. These tools have broad applications and account for recent AI advancements in dubbing and media localization. The model is intended for dubbing practitioners, trainers, evaluators, recruiters, dubbing managers, quality control specialists, and software developers interested in creating dubbing-related tools or enhancing localization management platforms with quality control features.

Keywords

Quality assessment, quality control, dubbing, voice-over, script, speech-and-sound, speech-and-sound post-editing, studio dubs, AI-dubs

1. Adjusting to recent developments in the field

This paper applies to various revoicing modalities: lip-sync dubbing, phrase-sync or lector dubbing, voice-over or UN-style voice-over, and voice-over narration. Lip-sync dubbing demands ‘full’ synchronization, meaning all synchronies must be respected, including 1) isochrony (Chaume, 2012) or timing (Spiteri Miggiani, 2021a, 2021b), which refers to the cue-in and cue-out of the utterances and duration; 2) phonetic sync or lip sync (Chaume 2012); 3) rhythmic sync or tempo (Spiteri Miggiani 2019, 2021a, 2021b), which pertains to internal speech tempo, pace, pauses, all of which determine mouth flap recurrences; 4) kinesics (Chaume, 2012), referring to the correspondence between the target language utterances and on-screen body language; and, 5) general semiotic cohesion, including synchronous and semantic correspondence between visuals and speech. Conversely, phrase-sync dubbing currently requires synchronization in terms of timing and rhythm, but not phonetic sync. Voice-over dubbing or UN-style voice-over approximates isochrony or timing with deliberate delayed or anticipated cues, in any case demanding a certain level of accuracy, while other synchronies are not essential, except for long pauses. Voice-over narration requires an approximation in terms of timing and duration to ensure semiotic cohesion. The differences between modalities also include the extent to which the original voice tracks are audible, whether completely muted or faintly heard in the background.

Dubbing is a complex mode of translation characterized by several constraints. Its effectiveness relies on the viewer’s suspension of disbelief toward the mode itself, making credibility key. This credibility depends on a few factors, such as habituation to dubbing (Zabalbeascoa, 1993; Spiteri Miggiani, 2021a, 2021b; Sanchez Mompeán, 2023), but also on the quality of the overall dubbed and voice-over output, which is the core focus of this article. The multiple constraints managed by dubbing practitioners have led to script adaptation being considered ‘constrained writing’ (Mayoral et al. 1988; Titford 1982). The main challenge lies in molding the verbal text to match the visible mouth movements on screen, condensing or amplifying the utterances to match the timing and duration, creating natural pauses in the target language that coincide with those in the source text, and maneuvering syntax as well as target language equivalents to align with the body language. And this is just addressing the synchronization issues without delving into cultural, territorial, and other linguistic aspects.

The shift to cloud dubbing is intended to mitigate some challenges, facilitate the work of the professionals involved, and streamline processes and communication (Chaume & de los Reyes-Lozano, 2021). Cloud dubbing refers to an end-to-end workflow production and management system hosting the entire dubbing process on a cloud-based centralized platform: from script origination, script translation and adaptation to casting, auditioning, and recording. In some companies, the script adaptation process is still managed independently, sometimes using different software tools, while the cloud-based platform is mainly used for the recording process and can facilitate remote recording. When recording is done at home workstations rather than studios in other territories, different quality considerations must be made compared to traditional in-studio recording because of the non-studio recording environments and equipment and their implications. In this paper, the term ‘studio dubs’ or ‘studio recordings’ will encompass cloud-based recording, with the main distinction being drawn between human-generated and machine-generated dubs.

Regarding script adaptation, when hosted on a cloud-based platform, script adapters can rely on tools such as the rythmo band, along with its rhythmic cues and lip-sync markers, to facilitate the text synchronization process. This allows them to focus on the linguistic aspects, potentially improving the quality of the script. Merging the translator and adapter roles, as required by cloud-based platforms, can also impact the quality of the translation. Training

approaches and skill requirements differ, and these platforms can also facilitate quality control (QC) processes by integrating user-friendly tools to flag and review errors.

The migration to cloud-based platforms is not the only ongoing shift occurring in the dubbing industry that can affect the quality of the outcome. Recent advancements in AI technologies address the main synchronization challenges by reversing the traditional approach. Instead of relying on word-to-lip adaptation techniques, these technologies facilitate lip-to-word adaptation through specific tools and algorithms (Spiteri Miggiani, 2022b). In other words, the lip movements in the visuals are synthesized to match the translated audio. Examples of such tools include TrueSync by Flawless (<https://www.flawlessai.com/truesync>), the large-scale multilingual audiovisual dubbing tools developed by Google's DeepMind researchers (Yang et al. 2020, <https://deepmind.google/>), and Lenseup (<https://www.lenseup.com/en/>), among others. In contrast, Lipdub (<https://www.lipdub.ai/>) allows the recording process to be handled by voice talents and studios, then artificially modifies the lip movements to achieve phonetic sync. This means script adapters are relieved from the effort required to achieve one type of synchronization, while still catering to others. The sound mixing and editing of the newly adapted visual content also fall into the hands of sound technicians.

Apart from word-to-lip maneuvering, software developers have focused efforts on voice cloning, transcription, translation, and, in some cases, adaptation. An example is Dubly (<https://dubly.ai/>), which, at the time of writing, clones the original voice, transcribes and translates the speech utterances, and then, rather than artificially modifying the lip movements, adapts the text based on a sync algorithm that analyses the length and timing of the original audio. It then provides clients (and their adapters) with the ability to edit the script adaptation and regenerate the merged video and audio file accordingly. It is important to note that all the above-mentioned examples are a continuous work in progress seeking further development and enhancement.

Considering the shifts brought about by this AI revolution and the incorporation of such tools to facilitate the dubbing process (to various extents), it seems necessary, if not urgent, to reconsider the notion of quality and identify new challenges and issues that may arise, along with their impact on the overall quality of dubbing or voice-over. Currently, the decision-making, observational, critical, and analytical processes in defining quality, and controlling and determining the parameters, heavily depend on scholars and practitioners. To this end, the revisited quality assessment model proposed in this paper considers parameters specific to AI-generated output while including parameters common to both studio and AI processes. Ultimately, they share a common goal: ensuring satisfaction of the product, and this is determined by practitioners and viewers.

1.1. Aims

Drawing on a previous quality assessment proposal narrowed down to script adaptation (Spiteri Miggiani, 2022a), this paper provides a broader model that seeks to evaluate the quality of the overall dubbed or voice-over output. The ultimate objective is to provide an additional tool for practitioners, stakeholders, and trainers to measure the overall quality, and pinpoint, identify, and label any issues or glitches, and intervene as necessary. The previously developed script-focused rubric based on textual parameters is integrated as a separate analytic tool within the same model. The following sections delve into quality assessment in media localization and specifically dubbing, outline the existing textual parameters rubric and measuring system, and then present the revisited quality assessment model with its newly developed rubric. The section before the conclusions focuses on its application and integration into professional workflows, tools, and training contexts.

2. Quality control and quality assessment in media localization

QC in dubbing and media localization is increasingly becoming a crucial part of professional workflows. This is also evident from the fact that some stakeholders publish their QC processes and vendor expectations online (Netflix, 2024). A typical in-studio dubbing or voice-over workflow involves several steps, as illustrated in Figure 1. These include:

- 1) Preparation of working materials. This involves retrieving or preparing the original post-production scripts or dialogue lists or transcription, pivot language translation (if applicable), and video;
- 2) Translation and adaptation of the speech or dialogue. This may involve two separate professionals, one for translation and another for adaptation;
- 3) Linguistic QC, when feasible. This step ensures that the translated dialogue is accurate and culturally appropriate, respects the original creative intent, and adequately caters to the synchronies;
- 4) Loop or take segmentation (if applicable). This involves dividing the dialogue into smaller segments for recording purposes;
- 5) Voice casting: This involves selecting the appropriate voice actors (often via an auditioning process);
- 6) Recording: This is the process of recording the speech utterances;
- 7) Mixing: This involves combining the recorded dialogue with the original audio and music and effects track;
- 8) Technical and linguistic QC: This ensures that the dubbed content meets the required technical and linguistic standards.

This is followed by further adjustments and editing before the deliverable is finalized and sent to the client. While this workflow is an ideal scenario, in reality, a linguistic QC is not always conducted before recording due to various reasons, including the challenging task of evaluating the synchronization aspects of an adapted text without the actual recording. This will more likely lead to further audio editing, reviewing, and retouching of the dubbed content, which may require re-recording specific segments in the case of traditional in-studio dubbing. Workflows vary depending on the companies. For instance, a typical workflow is one in which the linguistic and technical QC are performed by two separate professionals, with differentiating skills, especially if the technical QC requires direct intervention on the audio tracks. In such cases, the same practitioner can perform the technical QC across multiple languages. Another workflow may require the same practitioner to perform both linguistic and technical QC in a specific language.

The availability of quality assessment tools can play a significant role in facilitating the integration of QC in various phases of the workflow. These tools can be implemented as features in cloud-based platforms or as manual tasks in more traditional processes, as will be discussed briefly in Section 4.



Figure 1. Dubbing and Voice-Over Workflow. Source: Author

Academic research has introduced various quality-related tools for trainers in the profession. While some tools are originally designed for professional use, they can also be applied within university or corporate training environments. They serve as valuable resources for trainers to evaluate and provide feedback, as well as for trainees to engage in self-assessment and improvement. Bolaños García-Escribano (2025) addresses assessment in audiovisual translation specifically for educational settings by proposing a model that embraces all modalities. The landscape of subtitling quality assessment is diverse, with various models catering to different needs and perspectives. The FAR model (Pedersen, 2017) adopts a product-oriented approach, focusing on the viewer's experience. It employs an error-based assessment method, evaluating functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability. By assigning penalty points to errors, the FAR model generates a final score reflecting overall quality. This approach provides clear guidelines for evaluation, ensuring consistency and objectivity. In contrast, the NER model (Romero-Fresco & Martínez Pérez, 2015) caters specifically to intralingual live subtitling. It focuses on error detection, analyzing the number of words, editing errors, and recognition errors. Errors are classified as minor, standard, or serious, providing a straightforward assessment suitable for the fast-paced nature of live situations. The NTR model (Romero-Fresco & Pöchhacker, 2017), designed for interlingual live subtitling, also employs error detection. It considers the number of words, translation errors, and recognition errors, classifying errors as minor, major, or critical. This model incorporates translation quality into the assessment, ensuring accuracy and faithfulness to the original content. The CIA model (Künzli, 2017, 2021) takes a unique approach by incorporating the perspective of professional subtitlers. It focuses on interlingual subtitling and relies on subjective assessment. The model evaluates correspondence, intelligibility, and authenticity, assigning maximum scores to each dimension and deducting penalty points for errors. This approach acknowledges the expertise of subtitlers and emphasizes the importance of a flowing viewing experience.

Conversely, there are fewer quality assessment tools specific to dubbing. While some academic courses have their evaluation rubrics, such as those applied at Universitat Jaume I and Universitat de València, in Spain, the need for a standardized assessment rubric prompted the development of the Textual Parameters quality assessment model (TP model) (Spiteri Miggiani, 2022a) focusing on script translation and adaptation. This model combines an assessment rubric with an error-based formula to identify and categorize errors, provide tailored feedback,

and calculate evaluation scores. It aligns with universally accepted quality standards, focusing on aspects such as lip synchronization, natural dialogue, coherence with visuals, faithfulness to the source text, pleasant phonaesthetics, and script functionality. Some scholars have delved into specific quality parameters in dubbing within training contexts, emphasizing skills like synchronization (Chaume, 2007, 2008) and natural dialogue delivery (Baños, 2021) as pivotal for viewer immersion. Different perspectives exist regarding the prioritization of quality standards, ranging from prioritizing a realistic oral register over lip synchrony (Martínez Sierra, 2008, p. 58, drawing on Whitman-Linsen, 1992, p. 55; Chaume, 2012, pp. 85–86, drawing on Caillé 1960, p. 107), to focusing on phonetic equivalence over semantic or pragmatic equivalence in the case of close-up shots (Chaume 2012, p. 74). The TP model assigns equal importance to all quality parameters to ensure objectivity but also provides the option to differentiate between minor and major errors in the evaluation process.

2.1. The Textual Parameters Model

The TP model was designed exclusively for script adaptation and has been integrated as a separate analytic tool within the enhanced and expanded dubbing and voice-over quality model proposed in this paper. It condenses six core error categories based on established textual quality standards. These categories, which focus on both the process and end product, offer a comprehensive framework for assessing adaptation quality:

1. **Synchronization:** This category encompasses technical issues related to timing, tempo, and lip-sync accuracy. Precise timing and matching lip movements are crucial for maintaining viewer immersion and avoiding jarring discrepancies.
2. **Language:** This category evaluates the naturalness of the adapted dialogue, while also focusing on grammar, vocabulary, style, and register. It also focuses on smooth flow, cohesion between dialogue events, and clear comprehension. This category also includes source language interference issues, particularly those arising from the ‘dubbese’ register. It is distinct from the Translation category as it can be assessed solely through the target language, without the need to reference the original text.
3. **Visuals and Sound:** This category examines the cohesion between the target language words and the visuals on screen, including body language, and the retained original soundtrack. Inconsistencies can disrupt the viewer’s understanding and engagement.
4. **Translation:** This category focuses on the accuracy and fidelity of the translation, identifying mistranslations, unnecessary omissions or additions, awkward phrasing, and undue non-inclusive or overly sensitive language use.
5. **Phonaesthetics:** This category assesses the euphony of the dubbed dialogue, avoiding cacophonous utterances, excessive repetition, or unwanted rhyme that could detract from the listening experience.
6. **Script Functionality:** This category delves into process-oriented issues encountered during post-production script processing. These include practical issues that can disrupt the dubbing workflow, such as formatting inconsistencies, missing dialogue, or wrong character attribution. Orthography is also included in this category because errors in spelling or writing are typically not detectable by dubbing viewers. However, they can disrupt actors during the recording process, thus representing a functional issue rather than a linguistic one in this modality.

Textual parameters	Generic Error Tag	Error category	Specific Error Tag	Error specifics
Adequate lip synchronization	[S]	Synchronization	[...] [--] [R] [L] [V]	Too short Too long Rhythmic issues (mouth flaps mismatch) Labial consonants mismatch Vowels or semivowels mismatch
Natural-sounding language	[L]	Language	[GR] [SC] [REG] [COMP] [NAT] [FLOW]	Incorrect grammar Source calque Unsuitable register Lack of clarity & comprehension Lack of naturalness Lack of flow & cohesive dialogue exchanges
Semiotic cohesion	[VS]	Visuals & Sound	[VIS] [SND]	Lack of cohesion between words & visuals (such as body language) Lack of cohesion between words & sound belonging to the original audio track (music & effects, lyrics, noise)
Fidelity to source text	[T]	Translation	[MIS] [OM] [ADD] [LOSS] [AWK] [IMP]	Mistranslation Unnecessary omission Unnecessary addition Unnecessary loss (semantic) Awkward rendering Improper translation (such as undue non-inclusive, offensive or derogatory terms that are not functional to the plot or characterisation)
Phonaesthetics	[PH]	Phonaesthetics	[CAC] [REP] [RHY]	Cacophonous utterances Annoying repetition Unintended rhyme
Script functionality	[F]	Functionality	[CON] [REAC] [NOT] [/] [FOR] [DS] [OR] [CH] [D-?] [B-?] [PUN] [TC] [G/P] [PRON] [MISC]	Lack of consistency (non-compliance with glossary sheets; inconsistent use of names/nicknames, forms of address & terminology within the same script or across serial production scripts) Missing or wrong reaction Missing or wrong notation Missing pause marker Layout or format issues Unsuitable dialogue segmentation Orthography mistakes Wrong character allocation Missing or redundant dialogue Missing or inadequate background walla Misleading punctuation Missing or wrong time code Non-compliance with guidelines & policies Tricky articulation or pronunciation Miscellaneous

Table 1. Script Rubric

These main error categories are broken down further into 37 error specifics, as shown in Table 1. Every error category and error specific has a tag for ease of use during an evaluation or review process. These tags can be used to flag a specific issue by inserting them in a specific point within the text, therefore indicating the exact issue and location. The rubric can then be used as a legenda to interpret the tags. The evaluator or QC specialist can review a script by adopting the 6 generic error categories and generic tags, without delving into the error specifics within each category. In other words, this rubric offers two possibilities: a simplified and more detailed variant, depending on the level of granularity required.

During the evaluation process, the individual errors (tagged as generic or specific) are quantified and the total number of errors is then incorporated into a formula to calculate a percentage score: $S\% = 100 - (E/W) \times 100$, where S is the total percentage score indicating quality levels; E is the total number of errors; W is the total number of words in the source text sample. This basic formula gives equal weight to each error. Variations on the formula are possible and these can consider different levels of severity, by flagging errors as major or minor (or major or critical, or whichever marked distinction is preferred), and also varying levels of difficulty of the texts in question. In this case, the formula can integrate these elements as follows: $S\% = 100 - [(Emaj \times 3 + Emin) \times O/W] \times 100$, where S is the total percentage score indicating quality levels; Emaj is the number of major errors; Emin is the number of minor errors; W is the total number of words; O is the error 'offset', a parameter which varies according to the degree of difficulty of the text; O will be taken as a number between 0.5 and 1, based on 3 degrees of source text difficulty: Low: O = 1, Medium: O = 0.75, High: O = 0.5. These formulas and examples of their application are explained and exemplified in further detail in a previous article (Spiteri Miggiani 2022a). Tables 2 and 3 illustrate how errors can be quantified and tagged to calculate a percentage score based on the total number of errors while flagging the issues to address.

Adapted dialogue	Percentage score
FARSHID (OFF-ON) Here it is. / The wonder of wonders. // I remember the first time I heard you play. [S] (gasps) [F] I'd never heard anything like it. Really, it was [S]... When I think about it, I want to cry. [S]/ I... [F] Do you see this tear running? [S] / Just there. Do you see?	Total no. of words: 57 (W) Total number of errors: 6 (E) $S\% = 100 - (E/W) \times 100$ $89.5\% = 100 - (6/57) \times 100$

Table 2. Error tagging and quantification applying the 6 generic categories

Adapted dialogue	Percentage score
FARSHID (OFF-ON) Here it is. / The wonder of wonders. // I remember the first time I heard you play. [...] (gasps) [/] I'd never heard anything like it. Really, it was [...]... When I think about it, I want to cry. [L]/ I... [/] Do you see this tear running? [...] / Just there. Do you see?	Total no. of words: 57 (W) Total number of errors: 6 (E) $S\% = 100 - (E/W) \times 100$ $89.5\% = 100 - (6/57) \times 100$

Table 3. Error tagging and quantification applying the 37 error specifics

This model, implemented in professional and training settings (Spiteri Miggiani, 2023; Spiteri Miggiani, 2024), yielded valuable insights into error patterns among established and trainee translators. Analysis of the results revealed that synchronization and script functionality

emerged as recurring error categories across both groups. This suggests that these areas pose particular challenges for translators, regardless of their level of experience. Further research is ongoing to provide a more detailed analysis of these error patterns and identify potential interventions to improve accuracy and efficiency in script adaptation for dubbing.

That said, the advancements and rapid changes in the field outlined earlier necessitate the expansion of the model to provide a more comprehensive, versatile, and rapid tool. This broader model evaluates not only individual script adaptation elements but also the overall effectiveness and coherence of the final dubbed product and is based on a wider range of quality parameters.

3. Script, Speech and Sound Quality Assessment Model

The revisited quality assessment model can be referred to as the ‘Script, Speech and Sound (SSS) Model’ reflecting its all-encompassing approach to evaluating dubbing quality through its three main components, which are used to categorize the key performance indicators. The model can also be referred to as a QC model since it applies to the final product. That said, the term ‘assessment’ will be adopted in this proposal, considering the thorough evaluation process through comprehensive analysis, the possibility of providing feedback, the script evaluation process that can occur during the production cycle, the rating and score calculations, and the different contexts in which the model can be applied, especially corporate training and university settings.

The model encompasses two analytic rubrics:

- 1) the newly developed Speech-and-Sound Rubric that offers a comprehensive evaluation of the entire dubbed product, including a high-level assessment of the script’s impact on overall quality;
- 2) the already established Script Rubric (or Textual Parameters rubric) illustrated in Table 1 that provides a detailed and focused evaluation of the script, specifically targeting error analysis. Integrating the Textual Parameters rubric into the broader dub and voice-over quality assessment model prompts the adoption of the simpler term Script Rubric to clearly differentiate it from the Speech-and-Sound Rubric.

As a result, the model now includes an additional rubric that covers speech and sound components, allowing for the evaluation of the dubbed version of the target language, after it has been recorded/produced by humans or generated by machine. This addition facilitates a comprehensive, ‘macro’ evaluation of the dubbed product from a viewer’s perspective. This evaluation is intended to be performed by QC specialists, supervisors, or, in some cases, dubbing managers, or other designated individuals within the workflow. A possible process-oriented solution prior to recorded output is also discussed later, along with the potential integration of this rubric into dubbing workflows.

The Speech-and-Sound Rubric employs an acceptability score system of 0 to 10, evaluating various quality indicators through rapid assessment due to its ‘perceived quality’ approach. This approach provides a quick and efficient overview of the overall quality without requiring a comparative analysis with the source version. In contrast, the Script Rubric delves deeper with a granular, error-based approach, requiring a thorough review of the entire script against the original product. This more in-depth ‘micro’ evaluation allows for precise identification and quantification of errors, facilitating targeted improvements. While the Script Rubric’s error quantification offers a degree of objectivity, the Speech-and-Sound Rubric may benefit from multiple raters to reduce subjectivity, which is one of the main limitations of the assessment process. Additionally, while random sample-checking can be sufficient for the Speech-and-

Sound Rubric, a comprehensive script review is essential for the Script Rubric's accuracy. The model can be applied to a project using either one or both rubrics, with the latter being preferred when the script-related parameters in the broader rubric are insufficient and a more detailed script assessment is needed.

In the Speech-and-Sound Rubric, the speech component encompasses those parameters related to the voice, vocal delivery, and synchrony with the visuals, including those dependent on the script and technical factors, but ultimately conveyed through the actor's performance and speech output in general. The sound component focuses on the cohesive whole at a technical audio level, emphasizing the quality of the recording itself and the roles of mixing and editing to shape the final product's overall quality. These could make or break the product, potentially undoing all the effort and standards achieved through the other parameters (Spiteri Miggiani 2021). Table 4 summarises the main differences between the Script Rubric and the Speech-and-Sound Rubric.

ASPECT	SPEECH-AND SOUND RUBRIC	SCRIPT RUBRIC
FOCUS AREA	Entire dub or voice-over product, including speech, sound, and high-level script assessment	Textual parameters, language, translation/adaptation accuracy
EVALUATION CRITERIA	15 quality indicators covering performance, voice, sound, synchronies, dialogue	6 categories and 37 specific errors focusing on the script; can apply two levels of severity and three degrees of difficulty
SCORING SYSTEM	0–10 scale for each criterion; overall average score calculated.	Error quantification; formula calculating percentage score based on errors vs. word count
ASSESSMENT APPROACH	Analytic, comprehensive evaluation of various aspects separately; perceived quality; viewer-centred	Analytic, detailed analysis of translation/adaptation and error-specific impact; quantification of errors; linguist-adaptor centred
OUTCOME	Overall quality score for dubbed product.	Percentage score for script quality and accuracy
UTILITY	QC tool and metrics; performance comparison; identification of issues; recommended action	Possibility to give feedback; specific error flagging; translator ranking & recruitment; self-revision tool
WORKFLOW	Applied after recording or machine-generated output; prior to finalization and delivery	Can be implemented before or after recording or machine-generated output; ideally applied before
EFFECTIVENESS	Provides accurate evaluation; less cost-effective	Could offer less accuracy; more challenging; more cost-effective if applied before output
PROFILE	Technical and linguistic QC specialist	Linguistic QC specialist with technical adaptation skills

Table 4. Script Rubric versus Speech-and-Sound Rubric

3.1. Speech-and-Sound Rubric

Table 5 illustrates the newly developed Speech-and-Sound Rubric, which consists of 15 quality indicators that will be discussed in this section. Each parameter is assigned equal weight for simplification purposes, though this can be tailored to the client's needs, priorities, and project requirements. Each quality indicator is assigned an acceptability score from 0 to 10 and an overall average score can also be calculated at the end. If a specific quality indicator does not apply to a given project, a full score of 10 can be assigned, provided that the final average is calculated over 15 indicators. The suggested rating scale is 0–6: Action required, 7–8: Enhancements recommended, 9–10: No action required. However, this is customizable. It is at the discretion of the model user to define their desirable acceptability rating criteria.

The specific scores attributed to individual indicators serve as valuable tools to pinpoint areas that require attention or specific actions. While individual indicator scores are crucial to identify and address issues, the overall rating (the sum of all the scores divided by 15) can take precedence. Even if some indicators have low scores while others have higher scores, no immediate action may be necessary if the overall rating is deemed satisfactory. Assessing the overall rating proves beneficial, especially for comparative analyses. Comparing overall ratings from different team members or suppliers, products, or components of the same serial production enables the identification of potential challenges, areas for improvement, or the need for further professional development. Likewise, comparing overall ratings of the same product calculated by different evaluators can reduce the degree of subjectivity.

SPEECH	Quality indicator	Descriptors	Acceptability Score (0–10)
1.	Voice Symbiosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitable voice casting according to age, gender identity, physique du rôle, characterization, narrative-related features - Suitable voice qualities in terms of range (e.g., mid-to-low, high, mid-range female), pitch, timbre, adequate volume rises 	
2.	Vocal Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording quality (including, mic and home station equipment considerations) - Voice quality in terms of naturalness and credibility (the way the voice sounds) - Warmth and naturalness of human voice - Continuity and consistency of character voice and style - Sufficient voice varieties - Avoidance or minimization of synthetic qualities (e.g., derived from voice synthesis, or pitch adjustments, e.g., in the case of adults dubbing children) - Suitable degree of synthetic qualities if deliberate 	

3.	Performance & delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convincing role interpretation (conveying characterization & emotions & intensity through voice dynamics) - Natural emphasis (elongated or stressed syllables) - Natural tone and intonation (balance between extreme dubbese and over-domestication) - Natural speech melody, target-appropriate rising and falling tones, avoidance of monotone intonation - Clear diction (articulation) - Voice projection - Correct pronunciation of proper nouns, specialized jargon, foreign language utterances - Suitable language variation (accents or flavour) - Sufficient/adequate non-verbal sounds and reactions
4.	Body Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speech-to-face correspondence: Semantic correspondence and synchrony between utterances and facial expressions - Speech-to-body correspondence: Semantic correspondence and synchrony between utterances and body gestures
5.	Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate synchronization of target language audio track to visuals in terms of cueing in and out of utterances, and duration - Genre-appropriate sync (e.g., voice-over TL deliberate lag, phrase sync, or lector dubbing cues & pauses) - Pauses & pace if applicable
6.	Lip Sync	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matching lip articulatory movements (labial consonants and lip rounded vowels, semi consonants) - Internal speech tempo/rhythm (matching mouth flaps)

7.	Narrative cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative integrity/holistic storytelling experience - Cohesive, seamless flow between dialogue exchanges and character interactions; smooth and well-connected dialogue events or speech utterances or narration - Logical sequence of utterances and lack of ambiguity and disjointed exchanges - Consistency and continuity across scenes or episodes of the same serial production; plot progression - Consistent characterization - Understanding of context, e.g., determining what to render in the target language or source language - Suitable attribution and distribution of multilingual words or utterances (different characters or same-character speech)
8.	Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fidelity to original creative intent - Faithful rendering/translation - Cultural appropriateness (e.g., honorifics or culture-bound items or idiomatic expressions in target version) - Accurate use of specialized jargon - Appropriate rendering of sensitive content and inclusive terms, expressions and pronouns as per the narrative or characterization and creative intent - Evidence of accurate transcription from original source when applicable
9.	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural-sounding dialogue (e.g., avoidance of source calques), spontaneous spoken discourse and interjections, well-balanced <i>dubbese</i> features - Suitable linguistic style and registers - Appropriate use of slang, colloquialisms, or dialects - Correct use of language, grammar, and syntax or lack thereof where applicable (e.g., if character-appropriate) - Consideration of phonaesthetics, overall pleasant-sounding speech, that is avoidance of cacophonous sounds (consonant clusters, hissing sounds, annoying repetition, unintended rhyme)

10.	Wider visual & aural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General semantic correspondence between dubbed speech utterances and overall visuals and sound (e.g., reactions of other characters to dialogue; canned laughter) - General correspondence between speech output (dubbed or retained original) and visible on-screen mouth movements (technical), that is, avoidance of missing dialogue - Correspondence between speech utterances/ dubbed output and on-screen graphics, forced narratives, or subtitles in the target version
SOUND		
11.	Volume balancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-blended volume levels across newly recorded tracks - Well-blended volume levels between newly recorded voice tracks and original voice tracks - Avoidance of unwanted original dialogue bites - Suitable volume levels for overlapping speech - Suitable volume levels voice-over/lector & original voice tracks
12.	Camera shots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitable adjustment of volume levels and voice positioning based on camera shots in terms of distance (long shots versus medium and close-up shots) and camera angle (over the shoulder or profile view, or other)
13.	Background murmur & M/E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient depth to general audio conveyed through ambient sounds - Sufficient crowd murmur density - Adequate balance between background and foreground dialogue and noise - Well-blended music and effects track

14.	Room tones & effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voice in spatial context, that is, the narrative setting - Credibility in specific ambiance achieved through general acoustic effects - Room type/venue adaptability - Outdoor/indoor space adaptability - Avoidance of recording studio tone (suitable levels of echo, reverberation, or lack thereof where applicable) - Recording environment considerations in the case of home station recording - Adequate addition of filters and effects for voices in another spatial context (differing from that of the camera) TV, radio, computer, phone, or behind physical barriers. Addition of filters and effects. - Lack of unnecessary noise or interference picked up involuntarily in the recording studio (e.g., script rustling, hitting microphone, unnecessary pop)
15.	Voice transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smooth transition in the case of different alternating voices for same-character multilingual utterances
Overall SCORE (0–10)		Addition of all scores ÷ 15

Table 5. Script-and-Sound Rubric

The first ten quality indicators focus on speech-related elements, while the last five address sound in general. Table 5 includes detailed descriptors, some of which may overlap due to their interconnected nature. The descriptors are not meant to be measured individually; they are intended to further explain and clarify each quality indicator. Despite not requiring in-depth scrutiny on a micro level, as with the textual parameters, this rubric attempts to provide a sufficient level of detail to facilitate the identification and resolution of glitches or issues.

The rubric is applicable to both dubs and voice-overs, making some quality indicators more relevant than others based on the modality. For example, lip sync, voice transitions, and background murmur may not apply to voice-overs, whereas timing and vocal delivery would. As outlined earlier, a score of 10 can be assigned to quality indicators not applicable to a particular product, provided this approach is used across all voice-over products. This ensures consistency and enables comparative analysis and quality benchmarking across different product types and modalities within the same company. It is important to recognize that voice-over products may not solely involve traditional voice-over narration or UN voice-over style but often also encompass hybrid modalities, such as combining both voice-over and lip-sync dubbing within a single product.

The relevance of specific quality indicators can also differ depending on whether the output is human-generated or AI-generated. For instance, descriptors related to naturalness, emotion, warmth, and consistency in voice and style tend to be more critical for AI-generated output compared to human recordings. Regardless of whether the dub is produced by humans or machines, the goals of achieving credibility, authenticity, and creative intent remain the same. Therefore, the same rubric can be applied to both, with features that address specific

challenges and issues more frequently encountered in AI dubs, as revealed in the model's pilot application by the researcher in a didactic context. These include speech-to-body correspondence, narrative cohesion, contextual understanding, continuity, coherence and consistency in dialogue, characterization, and narrative flow.

For a better understanding of the quality indicators, a brief description of each one is provided below:

- **Voice Symbiosis** emphasizes the appropriate attribution of voice qualities to speakers in the original product. Voices must align with age, gender identity, physique du role, and characterization. Matching voice qualities implies a suitable voice range (e.g., mid-to-low, high, mid-range, low range), pitch, timbre, and adequate volume rises.
- **Vocal Output** refers to the degree of naturalness and credibility achieved, whether the voice conveys warm or natural human tones, or if synthetic attributes emerge (unless deliberate). Synthetic qualities could arise from AI voice synthesis or intentional editing (e.g., pitch shifting when adults dub children).
- **Performance and Delivery** involve voice interpretation, relying heavily on the actor's ability to embody the character through their voice. This includes conveying dramatic and emotional dynamics, dependent on natural intonation, speech melody (rising and falling tones), emphasis and also adequate voice projection. Clear diction (pronunciation and articulation) is crucial for comprehension. The ability to apply specific accents or flavors significantly contributes to the performance. Enriching the performance with necessary reactions and non-verbal sounds per the visuals is equally important.
- **Body Language** refers to the semantic and synchronous correspondence between facial expressions, body gestures, and the uttered target-language speech.
- **Timing** is crucial, implying appropriate levels of speech cueing and duration based on the specific modality. In voice-over, slightly delaying the voice ensures technical accuracy. Timing depends on various professional roles, including script adapters, voice talents, and sound technicians. Issues in timing can be traced back to the script, performance, pace, or technical glitches during voice track placement and movement.
- **Lip sync** refers to the lip articulatory movements, generally entailing matching bilabial consonants, fricatives, lip-rounded vowels, and semiconsonants. Ensuring the same mouth flap recurrence is paramount and depends on the internal speech tempo of every phrase.

The next three quality indicators are heavily script-dependent, though still focused on the reception and perception of the viewer when watching the final dubbed product. If most text-related parameters do not achieve a sufficient acceptability score, the Script Rubric, which centres on a micro-analysis of textual parameters, can help pinpoint specific issues and address them.

- **Narrative cohesion** is a crucial quality indicator, especially when considering AI-generated dubs, to ensure a seamless and engaging viewing experience. It hinges on maintaining narrative integrity and a holistic storytelling experience through consistent plot progression. This involves facilitating a cohesive flow between dialogue exchanges and character interactions, ensuring smooth and well-connected dialogue events or narration. A logical sequence of utterances with minimal ambiguity or disjointed events is vital for maintaining coherence. Additionally, maintaining consistency and continuity across scenes or episodes within the same serial production, including consistent characterization, plays a pivotal role. Understanding the context and determining what to render in the target or carry over in the original language is essential. Moreover,

suitable attribution of multilingual utterances among different characters or within the speech of the same character contributes to the overall narrative cohesion.

- The **translation** aspect emphasizes staying true to the original creative intent by rendering the content in a way that is both understandable and meaningful in the new cultural context. Depending on the product and genre, a high level of accuracy and equivalence may be necessary, or otherwise, a certain degree of adaptation may be needed to achieve the desired impact and offer culturally appropriate solutions. Special attention should be given to the precise use of specialized terminology. It is also crucial to employ sensitive and inclusive language that suits the plot, context, and target audience, while at the same time preserving the original creative essence. The evaluation of this quality indicator is based solely on the target output, adopting a perceived quality approach, and thus reflecting the viewer experience. Reference to the original source text or video can be made only if and when necessary but not as a default comparative approach throughout that would significantly slow down the overall assessment process.
- **Language** concentrates on the technical elements of language, ensuring correctness, sensitivity, and stylistic appropriateness. It considers linguistic precision in terms of register, grammar, slang, colloquialisms, and use of dialects (where needed). Some dubbing cultures also value phonaesthetics, aiming to avoid discordant sounds, repetitive patterns, or unintended rhymes. This quality indicator also focuses on how believable and authentic the dialogue sounds. While a natural-sounding intonation relies primarily on the actors' performance, achieving authentic-sounding dialogue is primarily dependent on the quality of the script. In the realm of fiction, viewers typically expect a level of naturalness that may not align with everyday speech patterns in real life. This expectation, ingrained through viewers' habitual consumption of media, sits within the acceptable range of dubbed content, which may inherently carry an artificial register, the so-called dubbese register. A carefully weighed balance of dubbese features is essential for the dialogue to sound natural and find the right position on the spoken-written continuum. Even in its original form, film dialogue reflects a scripted orality, designed for spoken delivery, a prefabricated orality (Baños-Piñero and Chaume, 2009; Baños-Piñero, 2024). This consideration may hold less significance for genres like documentaries, live TV, interviews, or reality shows, where techniques like voice-over or phrase-sync dubbing are commonly employed.
- The final aspect to consider in the speech category is the wider **visual and aural context**, which plays a role in ensuring alignment between dubbed speech and the overall visual elements. This alignment extends beyond just matching body language which is a separate parameter; it includes reactions of other characters and elements displayed on screen, such as on-screen graphics or forced narratives, or any other elements in the images. Discrepancies, such as missing speech, can disrupt the harmony between visual and audio components, impacting the audience's viewing experience. These discrepancies fall outside the realm of translation, as they can also be attributed to technical glitches rather than linguistic choices, while still influencing how the content is perceived by viewers. Additionally, this rubric focuses on the viewers' perspective, therefore missing speech is perceived as a lack of visual and aural correspondence.

The **sound component** focuses on post-recording elements, at least in the case of in-studio dubbing, whilst in AI-generated dubs there may not be a recording process depending on the type of tool and its features. Meticulous attention is given to several key parameters to ensure a seamless aural and viewing experience.

- **Volume balancing** is paramount, requiring a harmonious blend of volume levels not only within newly recorded tracks but also between these tracks and the original voice recordings. This careful balancing also applies to overlapping speech and voice-over or lector tracks. All this entails careful management while also preventing unwanted original dialogue interference.
- Additionally, adjustments must be made based on **camera shots**, considering varying distances (e.g., long shots versus close-ups) and angles (e.g., over-the-shoulder shots) to optimize voice positioning and volume levels.
- **Background murmur** and general audio depth play a crucial role, necessitating a balanced mix of ambient sounds, crowd murmur density, and a coherent blend of background dialogue and noise with music and effects tracks.
- **Room tones and effects** further contribute to the immersive experience, grounding voices in their spatial context and establishing credibility through specific ambiance effects. Adapting to different room types or outdoor/indoor settings demands versatility while avoiding a sterile studio sound, instead incorporating appropriate levels of echo and reverberation. Filters and effects also need to be applied to simulate varied spatial contexts like TV, radio, or also physical barriers (e.g., characters talking through a glass door), enhancing the narrative's realism by giving depth to the audio track. Eliminating unwanted studio noise or interference that could detract from the final product is also essential.
- **Voice transitions** (where applicable) add another layer of complexity, requiring seamless track shifts between different voices for multilingual utterances by the same character.

By meticulously addressing volume nuances, spatial considerations, ambiance authenticity, and continuity in voice delivery, the sound component in dubbing plays a crucial role in crafting a cohesive and engaging audiovisual experience for audiences.

4. Application and integration into workflows, tools and training

Exploring the practical applications of the SSS model and its rubrics reveals its potential use in various areas.

4.1. Professional workflows

The SSS Model could serve as a resource for professionals within the dubbing industry, including translators, adapters, reviewers, QC specialists, project managers and software developers. It can be used to integrate QC features into a professional workflow or platform since it offers a structured framework to identify areas requiring improvement. The ultimate goal is to uphold the necessary quality standards required to engage an audience. The scoring systems provide a tool to measure dubbing quality, setting benchmarks for project acceptability and facilitating comparisons across different projects. This comparative analysis can unveil areas necessitating enhancements, potentially linked to team competency, the need for ongoing training, client-specific requirements, or nuances related to different project types. Furthermore, the model can serve as a ranking system for recruitment purposes, aiding in the evaluation of adapters, translators, and other professionals.

Within professional workflows, the Script Rubric can optimize QC processes by introducing early script-related quality assessment before recording or producing the AI voice-over or dub. In the case of generative AI output, depending on the tool used and the types of post-QC adjustments implemented, regenerating the dubbed content can lead to significantly different

outcomes. This scenario would mandate a thorough review check to ensure that any glitches newly appearing in other areas, previously considered satisfactory, are promptly addressed.

Integrating the Script Rubric within cloud-based dubbing platforms can facilitate the review process, enabling efficient error identification and quantification by reviewers or project managers. The individual parameters or their tags can be integrated (possibly as a drop-down menu) in the individual dialogue events to rapidly flag issues in their specific location. That said, both rubrics can also be used as manual easy-to-use templates or mere checklists.

Conversely, the Speech-and-Sound Rubric can be applied once the product has been recorded and dubbed, but before finalization and delivery. This reflects common current quality control (QC) workflows, which conduct technical and linguistic evaluations at this stage. Although this approach may not be the most time and cost-effective, it ensures a more accurate assessment. Introducing an additional linguistic and technical script assessment (Script Rubric) prior to recording or machine generation could potentially reduce the occurrence of errors and subsequent adjustments. This could prevent scenarios where actors must return to the studio to re-record dialogue, which can incur extra time and costs and potentially strain delivery deadlines. Incorporating QC twice in the workflow naturally involves additional roles and processes; however, if it mitigates time and cost burdens further down the chain, it may prove worthwhile. A challenge with pre-output script assessment is the need for highly specialized evaluation skills, as discussed in the next section.

Another (more convoluted) alternative aimed at optimizing time and cost-effective QC processes is to break down the Speech-and-Sound Rubric and distribute its various quality indicators among the pertinent professional roles involved. This would offer the possibility of a *pre-output process-oriented QC process* carried out by multiple players in the workflow of a project, each one responsible for an individual quality indicator or more than one. For instance, the performance and synchronization-related parameters could be controlled by the dubbing directors, creative leads, or assistants, the script-related parameters could be controlled by linguists or adapters while the sound-related and vocal-related parameters could be controlled by sound technicians, each group using their relevant rubric quality indicators as a checklist once that specific stage in the workflow has been completed.

4.2. Evaluation techniques

The Speech-and-Sound Rubric involves conducting random sampling of the product, depending on its duration, and can focus solely on the target language version to speed up the process and reflect the viewers' experience. Incorporating multiple reviewers can mitigate subjective biases, considering the perceived quality approach. On the other hand, in the case of the Script Rubric and its textual parameters, a thorough check across the entire dialogue list against the original content is recommended. Given that the Script Rubric is ideally intended to assess the pre-dubbed adaptation, the key difficulty lies in honing the skills required to perform both linguistic and technical assessments of the script independently of the recording, particularly in identifying synchronization issues by relying only on the script. In this case, one effective technique involves having the script reviewer or QC specialist test the target language-adapted speech by reciting it alongside the original video (while varying the volume levels), simulating the process as an adapter. This requires highly specialized skills, therefore providing training for QC specialists, script editors, or post-editors to develop these skills, especially if they are not script adaptation professionals, is crucial. For cloud-based systems that host and facilitate the script adaptation process, a potential workaround involves granting script adapters and reviewers access to the platform's remote recording tool used by voice actors for individual dialogue events. This will enhance their ability to evaluate and fine-tune scripts effectively. The

SSS model and its rubrics can serve as guiding tools to support any QC process, regardless of whether they are used as scoring tools.

4.3. Training

In educational and training settings, the proposed model offers a pedagogical tool to develop QC, script editing, and speech-and-sound post-editing skills essential for emerging roles in AI-driven dubbing environments. Drawing on the SSS model, *speech-and-sound post-editing* refers to modifying, refining, rewriting, reworking, or recreating the speech and sound components of AI-generated dubs, thus incorporating both technical and linguistic revisions. Trainees and students in audiovisual translation studies can practice analyzing and rating AI-generated dubs using the Speech-and-Sound Rubric and its scoring system as part of their training. Comparing ratings of the same output could serve as a useful exercise. Specifically for script translation and adaptation, trainees can use the Script Rubric as a checklist and a tool for self-evaluation or self-revision. The rubrics' versatility extends to in-studio training and corporate contexts, aligning educational initiatives with industry demands for adaptable skill sets required to navigate the rapidly changing landscape of dubbing technologies. The SSS model offers audiovisual translation students the opportunity to broaden their skill set to include the ability to critically analyze and assess the entire product, not just the linguistic aspects typically concerning them. This know-how and supporting didactic tools are increasingly relevant in an industry reshaped by AI technologies, which require traditional roles to evolve and pave the way for new profiles demanding versatile skills and a broader knowledge base. The SSS model has already been applied and tested by the researcher in a university training setting and the findings from the experiment will be presented in a separate paper.

5. Conclusions

The Script, Speech and Sound (SSS) Quality Assessment Model recognizes the importance of evaluating not only individual script adaptation elements, but also the overall impact of the dubbed product on the viewer. It incorporates two distinct yet complementary scoring rubrics. The Script Rubric focuses on textual parameters, employing a granular, error-based approach for a thorough assessment against the original script, and is outlined in Section 2. The Speech-and-Sound Rubric takes a viewer-centered perspective, employing an acceptability score system to evaluate the quality of speech and sound elements in the dubbed product.

These rubrics serve as versatile tools applicable to both in-studio dubs, voice-overs, and AI-generated outputs, as they all pursue a common goal of ensuring quality. The rubrics have been developed through meticulous analysis, drawing on first-hand experience in dubbing and voice-over, combined with research and evaluation of both in-studio and AI-generated dubbed content. This led to the identification of prevalent patterns, areas of improvement, strengths, and weaknesses that were methodically organized, labeled, and incorporated into the rubrics. Valuable data was generated by systematically comparing outputs from in-studio and AI-generated dubbing processes for the same content, as well as from the first pilot attempts at applying the model in training contexts. As previously noted, this data and the findings will be shared in future publications.

It is essential to note that this quality assessment model has its limitations and is not intended as a definite or exhaustive solution, but rather an evolving framework that will require further refinement in response to its application as well as ongoing industry developments, particularly within the rapidly changing landscape of AI dubbing. As the AI revolution continues to unfold, revealing new advancements and challenges, professionals, trainers, and researchers will need to adapt accordingly. Meanwhile, this model is presented as a flexible tool for industry

practitioners, educators, and learners in the field. It offers customization options and the potential for continuous enhancements as industry practices evolve and new insights emerge.

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Practitioner perspectives in the French subtitling industry: Insights into collaborative work practices

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Abstract

This paper investigates the often-overlooked practices and perspectives of subtitlers within the context of the French audiovisual translation (AVT) industry. It descriptively examines processes associated with different French distribution media – specifically cinema and Video on Demand (VOD) platforms – and how these shape practitioners’ practices and collaboration within subtitling production networks. Through interviews and non-participant observations with seven professional English-French subtitlers, this study explores various steps in the production process that differ according to distribution media and influence subtitlers’ workflows and interactions. It demonstrates that practices in subtitling extend beyond linguistic tasks, highlighting that navigating professional interactions and requirements within collaborative production contexts are central aspects of the subtitlers’ role. By presenting practitioners’ own accounts of their collaborative processes, the study underscores the significance of incorporating these experiences into broader discussions.

Keywords

Audiovisual translation, subtitling industry, collaboration, subtitling practices

1. Introduction

While audiovisual translation (AVT) has attracted increasing scholarly attention since the 1990s (Remael, 2010), it has traditionally been analysed from a product-oriented perspective (Beuchert, 2017), later shifting to reception studies. However, the practitioners' perspectives and practices have often been overlooked.

AVT primarily revolves around "the transfer of multimodal and multimedia speech (dialogue, monologue, comments, etc.) into another language/culture" (Gambier, 2012, p. 45). Notably, subtitling has emerged as a major focus of interest, covering both intralingual subtitling within the same language, such as subtitling for the d/Deaf and the hard of hearing, and interlingual subtitling, which enables communication between different languages. This study falls within the latter category, exploring the sphere of interlingual subtitling from English into French.

Research in the field of AVT has undergone four turns as outlined by Chaume (2018): the descriptive, cultural, sociological, and cognitive turns. The present study positions itself within the sociological branch and contributes to an area that has been relatively underexplored by adopting the Translator Studies paradigm (Chesterman, 2009). This approach allows for an examination of "translation practices and working procedures, quality control procedures and the revision process, co-operation in team translation, multiple drafting, relations with other agents including the client" (Chesterman, 2009, p. 17). Such insights are necessary, because although the products of AVT are visible and widely consumed, "its practitioners can be invisible and undervalued" (Tuominen, 2021, p. 88). The pronounced lack of recognition for translatorial professionals is even more prevalent in the AVT domain (Loison-Charles, 2022), where "[r]elatively little is known about the perceptions professionals have of their working environment and conditions, and about their role and status" (Künzli, 2023, p. 2).

With this in mind, the current study does not focus on the subtitles themselves. Instead, it investigates the intricate dynamics of subtitling practices in the French industry, emphasising the practitioners' insights into their roles and habits that shape the content displayed on our screens. A focus is placed on social interactions, exploring how interpersonal relations are embedded in these practitioners' processes. Contrary to the common perception of translators working in isolation, they are part of extensive social networks (Risku & Rogl, 2022). Collaboration in translation is not new; it occurs "not just between multiple translators but also between translators, authors, clients, project managers, editors, and myriad other (both human and textual) stakeholders in the translation process" (Alfer, 2017, p. 276). Audiovisual translators, though often freelancers, are deeply embedded in production networks, as "[m]ost forms of AVT have always involved some form of collaboration, rendering AV translators and their work dependent on other agents in the production process" (Remael, 2010, p. 15).

Central to this paper is an overarching question: How do the processes and working practices associated with different French distribution media influence the organisation of subtitlers' workflows and their collaboration within production networks? To this end, the present study emphasises the collaborative nature of subtitling in the AVT industry, in which the rising consumption of content via streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon, largely driven by globalisation (Massidda, 2023, p. 7), has significantly altered workflows. These changes have reshaped traditional practices and collaboration patterns.

Previous studies on collaboration in AVT have predominantly focused on the subtitlers' interactions with filmmakers (e.g., Romero-Fresco, 2019; Zanolini, 2020). This also applies to the French context, where research has mainly examined the same type of collaboration within the realm of *auteur* cinema (Eisenschitz, 2013; Silvester, 2022). This focus highlights a gap in understanding how audiovisual translators collaborate with each other, particularly

in mainstream subtitling distribution. In previous work (Caseres, 2023, 2024), I have noted that while studies on independent cinema reported a higher degree of collaboration with producers and directors, facilitated by the higher status of these subtitlers and the different power dynamics at play in their work (Silvester, 2022), in mainstream distribution, “subtitlers primarily collaborate at post-production level with clients, colleagues, and experts” (Caseres, 2024, p. 187). During the translation process, these subtitlers demonstrate sustained engagement with co-subtitlers, dubbing teams, and other agents such as specialists, language consultants, and external colleagues, through both formal and informal modes (Caseres, 2023), thus highlighting the multifaceted nature of their collaborative endeavours to enhance translation quality. The current study expands on these findings by shifting from the subtitlers’ individual interactions to explore the broader implications of collaborative practices in workflow organisation (i.e., the different steps in the translation process) across different distribution media. It offers insights into how working environments impact collaboration within subtitling production networks.

In what follows, I offer an overview of the French AVT industry, before introducing the main details of my research project. I then turn to some of the major findings, in particular the participants’ profiles and projects and the functioning of subtitling production networks in France. Finally, I outline working practices shaped by collaboration with other agents.

2. Context

While it is one of the largest audiovisual markets, in France, AVT has not received a lot of academic attention compared with other large markets such as Spain or Italy (Valdeón, 2022, p. 373). In particular, the French subtitling industry remains rather underexplored in the current literature, with few studies looking at the processes or the translators from a social perspective.

The practitioners’ insights are especially interesting to study in this context, because French subtitlers have the particularity of being protected by legal recognition in the form of author status and having copyright over their translations, which grants them both moral and economic rights (Gourgeon, 2014, p. 6), and allows them to receive royalties for their subtitles (Genty et al., 2021, p. 8). According to the 2022-2023 survey on working conditions in AVT carried out by the practitioners’ association AudioVisual Translators Europe (AVTE, n.d.), over 28% of French audiovisual translators’ incomes come from royalties and author rights, which is the highest percentage reported among 35 European countries.

Such advantageous positions in the industry can often be traced to the presence of strong unions and associations, which contribute to a homogenisation of working conditions – including rates, royalties, and credits – in contrast with the disparate practices seen in other contexts (Kuo, 2015, p. 189). Community collaboration among practitioners leads to visible benefits across many areas, with French subtitlers seeming to experience better circumstances in comparison to other European contexts (Caseres, 2024), in relation, for instance, to negotiating power, rates, and royalties (AVTE, n.d.). In this regard, the role of the French association for audiovisual translators, ATAA (*Association des Traducteurs/Adaptateurs de l’Audiovisuel*), has been recognised as crucial in advocating visibility, better working conditions, and contributing to the sustainability of the AVT professions (Caseres, 2024). Similar observations are reported in Silvester’s (2022) investigation of working conditions and collaborative practices in subtitling, which found that the six French-English subtitlers she interviewed reported relatively good working conditions and rates compared to other contexts, despite challenges such as tight deadlines.

Despite these relatively favourable conditions, scholars such as Genty et al. (2021) have highlighted substantial disparities in the professional practice of AVT in France across various post-production laboratories and TV channels. The imbalance between the demand for high quality and the pressures of reduced rates has been underlined in the French industry (Rosnet, 2012). The reduction in rates is an overarching concern among translators, and is also prevalent in subtitling. On the other hand, Kuo's (2015) worldwide study has highlighted that, despite the challenges facing subtitlers, the French industry stands out as particularly lucrative, with its subtitlers reporting the highest average rates. However, this finding reflects the industry context prior to the proliferation of streaming platforms, which has since introduced new dynamics.

Therefore, in this evolving landscape, considering the economic pressures and shifting working conditions that affect subtitlers' tasks and collaborative efforts is essential to provide a deeper understanding of the environment. Broader economic trends impacting subtitlers are a growing concern (e.g., Künzli, 2023). Industry discussions frequently reference a "talent crunch", describing a "small pool of skilled professionals available in the AVT sector" (Massidda, 2023, p. 13). However, despite the rising production of audiovisual content, the decline in rates and working conditions is closely tied to this phenomenon, which reflects inadequate conditions that discourage practitioners from continuing in the field rather than a lack of skilled professionals.

Similarly to trends observed in other subtitling industries, working conditions in the French context have been increasingly shaped by economic pressures, particularly declining rates and tighter deadlines. Subtitlers report facing varying remuneration models – such as payment per subtitle, per minute, or per project – depending on the distribution medium and clients (Caseres, 2024). While subtitling for cinema generally offers more favourable rates, the VOD sector has seen a downward trend in compensation. These shrinking rates are compounded by shorter deadlines, limiting subtitlers' ability to engage in thorough quality control or collaborate effectively with colleagues (Caseres, 2023). Additionally, administrative tasks associated with freelancing, such as invoicing and handling social contributions, add to the overall workload, making it difficult for subtitlers to balance work and personal life, especially under the pressure of quick turnaround times.

On the technological side, the shift towards remote and decentralised workflows, alongside the increasing use of cloud-based platforms and automation, has further strained collaboration. Cloud-based platforms have replaced traditional desktop subtitling software (Massidda, 2023, p. 8), centralising processes but limiting subtitlers' autonomy and also reducing opportunities for collaboration with colleagues or other agents in the production process. The global nature of these platforms, with its increased need for confidentiality, can also restrict access to full video content, complicating collaborative efforts to maintain consistency across episodes or projects.

The combination of economic pressures and technological transformations not only complicates individual workflows but also presents barriers to broader effective collaboration. These challenges are amplified by flawed communication, often resulting in a lack of transparency in the production networks' workflows. Insufficient communication hinders the exchange of essential information in the subtitling process, while also undermining practitioners' expertise and diminishing their creative roles.

The intersection of these challenges within the French AVT industry highlights the complex environments that subtitlers must navigate beyond their specialised skills, as working conditions impact both the subtitling processes, and the collaboration involved.

3. Current study

The findings reported here emerged from a larger project organised around two case studies which examined subtitling practices, processes, and collaboration in two distinct contexts: an amateur subtitling community and industry subtitling. The current paper focuses on the second context. Specifically, I have investigated the work of seven English-to-French subtitlers affiliated with ATAA working for cinema and Video on Demand (VOD) platforms. In the VOD category, I encompass a large spectrum of platforms to highlight the hybridity of systems (e.g., streaming platforms, platforms available through cable TV subscription, platforms belonging to TV channels, etc.). Subtitlers often work across different types of platforms, as their roles overlap due to shared content and cross-platform distribution.

The seven participants were recruited through a number of strategies: dissemination on the ATAA mailing list, posts on social media, personal email outreach and snowball sampling, notably facilitated by the proactive involvement of the first participant who recommended colleagues. The design of the data collection aimed to give central importance to the subtitlers, recognising the significant value of each participant's perspective and contribution.

Each practitioner participated in an introductory interview, followed by non-participant observation of their workday, and a retrospective interview. Both interviews followed a semi-structured approach and took around 30-60 minutes. The introductory interview focused on key information about the subtitlers' profile, work, and background. In the non-participant observation, the subtitlers' tasks and tools were recorded electronically with time stamps, following Beuchert's (2017) fieldnote template. The non-participant approach was deliberately chosen to address several ethical considerations. These included minimising intrusiveness and bias by avoiding active intervention that may influence the environment, and implementing strict confidentiality measures to ensure that neither the subtitlers nor their clients could be identified. The retrospective interview, which allowed for further investigation of some of the tasks the subtitlers performed in the process, was carried out after they had finished their working day. Both interviews were recorded and later anonymised during transcription. For each participant, the data set was therefore composed of a pre-observation interview transcription, fieldnotes and a retrospective interview transcription. These multiple data sources enabled the triangulation of information to analyse the data, identify, and report patterns using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process. This type of analysis allows for the identification and interpretation of key ideas or themes by regrouping patterns under specific labels (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014, pp. 189–190).

The thematic analysis was conducted using a 6-phase coding process with Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis software. I initially used a "theoretical" approach, guided by predefined research questions and existing theoretical frameworks, for drawing conclusions on specific aspects of the data. Complementarily, an "inductive" approach was applied, allowing themes to be generated organically from the data without predefined categories. This combination of approaches revealed new insights, such as the importance of recognising collaboration as a pivotal factor in the analysis of subtitling processes and working conditions.

Table 1 below provides key demographic information about the seven participants, offering insights into each subtitler's profile and project(s).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Gender	female	female	female	male	female	female	male
Age range	41-50	21-30	51-60	41-50	41-50	31-40	41-50
Experience (in years)	20	1.5	28	19	21	13	18
Project(s) observed	film for cinema	series for VOD and/or TV	film for cinema film for VOD and/or TV	film for VOD and/or TV	film for VOD and/or TV series for VOD and/or TV	series for VOD and/or TV	series for VOD and/or TV

Table 1. Description of participants

The participants in the study presented a variety of profiles, especially regarding years of experience. All participants worked as freelancers, with six having author status and one registered as a micro-entrepreneur. Each subtitler worked regularly for at least one form of VOD platform or for cinema distribution, but some also subtitled for various other media, including TV channels, DVD/Blu-ray, and film festivals.

In this study, I specifically focused on two project categories: films for cinema on the one hand, and films and series for VOD on the other. Participants often grouped the latter under the broader category of “video” subtitling, which also encompasses TV distribution. It is important to note the differences in how collaboration is organised among subtitlers based on distribution media, but also on content type. Subtitlers translating films generally worked independently. In contrast, those working on series typically collaborated with one or two co-subtitler(s), dividing the season’s episodes in half. However, Participant G was an exception, working independently on a 6-episode mini-series. Additionally, while the primary language combination for the subtitlers was English to French, Participant D worked on an Italian film using English as a pivot language.

The analysis of participants’ profiles reveals their ability to manage multiple projects across different distribution media, sometimes simultaneously. This adaptability leads to substantial variations in how they organise their work and collaborate with clients and colleagues, highlighting the diverse dynamics at play in the different environments.

4. Findings

This section first explores how the work environment associated with different French distribution media influences practices, focusing on the concept of subtitling production networks. These networks function differently depending on the specific distribution medium, which in turn affects how subtitlers organise their work and manage interactions with various stakeholders in the process. Building on this understanding of the subtitlers’ working contexts, I further examine how their workflows are tailored to meet the distinct expectations of different clients, offering a descriptive overview of specific steps in the subtitling process.

4.1. Subtitling production networks

The framework of production networks, introduced in subtitling by Abdallah (2010, 2011; Abdallah & Koskinen, 2007), has played a pivotal role in examining subtitling processes. Abdallah’s (2011) conceptualisation of subtitling production networks distinguishes such constellations from traditional in-house or freelance models, where subtitlers work directly for end-clients. Emerging in response to economic globalisation and content outsourcing,

these networks often involve intermediary suppliers. This framework enables an examination of how processes are organised and provides insights into interactions with various agents. In this study, the clients' processes differed depending on the distribution destination of the subtitles, leading to variations in guidelines, materials, and collaboration patterns from one project to another. Despite these differences, the subtitlers' interactions within their production networks can be categorised into three main levels:

1. *Translators and revisers* are mainly freelancers who co-translate and/or revise the subtitles. In the French context, revisers are known as "simulation operators". The "simulation" is a quality control step of a subtitle file, during which the subtitlers are typically assisted by one or more observers (the simulation operator and the clients), to show the subtitles in real viewing conditions in a laboratory to correct or enhance the text or adjust the timing of the subtitles (Gourgeon, 2014, p. 35).
2. *Primary clients* are production companies, which create and produce the audiovisual content, or French distributors, who purchase the rights to distribute the audiovisual content in France. In video projects, these tasks can also be carried out by VOD platforms and TV channels (Ferrer Simó, 2021). These will be the first to decide about the commissioning of subtitling.
3. *Secondary clients* are post-production companies, also called "laboratories" in the French context, which are often composed of linguistic or technical project managers. In this role, these intermediaries are responsible for providing the necessary materials to the subtitlers and clients. Nowadays, laboratories are not always French companies, but are often multinational Language Service Providers (LSPs), who are typically multilanguage vendors (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2020, p. 33). Some multinational LSPs have established a French branch, functioning as an independent local post-production company under the umbrella of the LSP, while some operate at international level through different globalised processes.

All the subtitlers mentioned two levels of clients. As Participant E explained, "there is always an intermediary as there will always be a French distributor, even when working for cinema", and she added, "I always work [...] through a laboratory". However, in cinema projects, subtitlers have a direct line of communication with primary clients, which enables them to seek clarifications, ask questions, and obtain feedback from them, notably through the aforementioned simulations. The cinema workflow can therefore be defined as more direct and transparent, as it allows subtitlers to interact directly with technical directors of the French distributors or the major company. In these scenarios, these primary clients usually initiate the request and rely on post-production companies as their technical service providers. The primary client informs the subtitler about which intermediary the subtitler will interact with, and they only go through the secondary client for technical aspects, such as to receive the materials. Therefore, cinema subtitlers interact with clients at both levels: the primary clients for content-related aspects, as in this area "there are no intermediaries in cinema" (Participant G), and the secondary clients for technical considerations and quality assurance processes in their laboratories.

On the other hand, when working for video subtitling, subtitlers only rarely interact with primary clients. As shared by Participant E: "the laboratories [...] don't want us going directly to the client because it undermines their role". Video subtitlers thus interact almost exclusively with secondary clients at a post-production laboratory or an LSP, who commission the subtitles and serve as intermediaries between agents. These secondary clients handle rate negotiations, communication, file exchanges, and payments, creating a barrier between subtitlers and the primary clients who are directly responsible for the content. As illustrated by Participant G:

The laboratory acts as an intermediary. They prefer that you do not communicate directly with the clients. So, if you have questions about the series, you write to the laboratory, which then writes to the client, who responds to the laboratory, and the laboratory then communicates the response to you.

This restricted communication with primary clients can thus have considerable repercussions on the exchange of important information, and thus hinder the “flow of information and knowledge” (Abdallah, 2011, p. 181) and the decision-making process. In the video context, it is also important to note that revision is optional and may not be consistently commissioned by clients across all projects.

The dichotomy in interactions within the two different types of production networks underscores a primary nuanced distinction between cinema and video distribution, which is also marked by variations in terms of work practices and collaboration, detailed in the following sections.

4.2. Work organisation and practices

This examination of subtitlers’ workflows focuses on the organisational structure of the subtitling projects I observed and its impact on practices. I aim to highlight often-overlooked aspects of the subtitling process, revealing behind-the-scenes practices and challenges that are typically hidden from public view. This exploration enhances understanding of subtitling as a complex field and underscores the critical, yet unrecognised, elements shaping the final product, such as the information and materials provided to subtitlers, their content viewing processes, and their management of quality control tasks. Understanding these foundational elements is essential for appreciating the collaborative nature of subtitling work, which varies significantly based on the work environment.

4.2.1. Information provided

During subtitling commission, information patterns vary among clients, with some providing detailed schedules and information on the audiovisual content, while others rely on subtitlers to research the content online and guess broadcast dates. A common element across all distribution media is the absence of a brief or systematic provision of relevant information about the target audience, such as demographics. This observation aligns with findings in other studies (Beuchert, 2017; Silvester, 2022). The absence of audience information is intriguing because it “makes it very difficult for the subtitler to take an informed approach to audience design” (Silvester, 2018, p. 116) when awareness of the target audience “could inform the subtitler’s choice of strategies” (p. 88). Sometimes the subtitlers in the present study were not even given the exact distribution destination, such as for Participants D and F, who were not entirely sure about which VOD platform would broadcast their subtitles.

In the projects observed for cinema distribution, Participants A and C received general information from the distributors regarding the titles and directors of the films, the rates and which intermediary would be the technical service provider. Then, the secondary client sent an email with all the details and materials of the film, as well as the pre-established deadlines. Participant G also detailed a similar information process for his cinema projects, however I could not observe this as he was working on a VOD project at the time of the study.

When subtitling for VOD production networks, the organisation of the information process I observed varied considerably from one intermediary to the other (i.e., post-production company or LSP). Participant D stated that usually the information process is disorganised with his post-production company and the only information he is given is the distribution medium (DVD, VOD, etc.) and the deadline. Participant B, on the contrary, had a particularly meticulous client who sent her information on the type of content, rates, duration of episodes, and the

general theme of the series, although they did not disclose the exact title in case she refused the project. Nevertheless, as they did not have the episodes yet, they could not provide her with the schedule and deadlines at the beginning. For the same end-client, but through a different LSP, Participant C received detailed written information about all the deadlines of her film, which is not the case with all her clients. This difference in organisation between clients was also highlighted by Participant E who noted a clear difference between her TV and VOD projects. While the deadlines for TV tended to be planned in advance and broadcast dates were clearly pre-established, for her VOD projects, she had to estimate broadcast dates as she did not receive clear information on this. Similarly, Participant G, who was usually given fixed deadlines for other projects, noted that for the VOD project he was working on at the time, the LSP could have changed deadlines as they were not very well organised.

In summary, most subtitlers often lack essential project details, such as audience insights, deadlines, and occasionally, the distribution destination. While cinema projects typically provide more comprehensive information, in video subtitling, less clarity can lead to diverse and unpredictable subtitling practices. This variation underscores how distinct distribution media and clients already impact the organisation of a project and create differences in communication and the networked processes from the beginning. Although common patterns are identifiable between projects intended for similar distribution, it is also important to recognise that certain aspects may exhibit slight individual variations from one project to the other.

4.2.2. Materials provided

After the information step, subtitlers are sent video files through different encrypted and password-protected methods, or can stream the video on a cloud-based subtitling platform, depending on the secondary clients' requirements. Independently of the distribution medium, many subtitlers usually work on non-final video files. As a result, they may need to adapt their subtitles at different stages of the process to reflect changes such as adjustments in timing or the addition of subtitles for new scenes. This adaptability underscores their need to remain flexible within the networked subtitling process.

In cinema projects, subtitlers highlighted that they work with spotting files, which serve as the structural blueprint for subtitles, by outlining the precise timing and placement for each subtitle on screen. These files are created by spotters and can be edited by the translators to suit their needs. While in this study, the three subtitlers generally working for cinema (Participants A, C, and G) expressed enjoyment in working on pre-spotted files as they can focus on the more creative linguistic aspects, in different linguistic contexts, separating these tasks is not the norm (Beuchert, 2017, p. 134). Cinema subtitlers are usually also sent a script which contains the dialogue in the original language and is sometimes accompanied by comments such as on context (Gourgeon, 2014, p. 33). The two cinema subtitlers observed were sent both dialogue lists and spotting files for their projects alongside the whole film.

In video subtitling, there are two approaches to materials. In the globalised chain of LSPs, templates are often sent to subtitlers to centralise subtitle creation (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2020, p. 43), and reduce time and costs (Nikolić, 2015, p. 196) thus possibly having adverse effects on both rates and professional status (Oziemblewska & Szarkowska, 2022). These master files, of variable quality, already contain subtitles, usually in English, with their corresponding entry and exit time codes (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2020, p. 43) and will subsequently be used to translate all languages, thus not leaving subtitlers much room for flexibility in adaptation, notably with non-editable time codes in the case of locked templates. In this study, four Participants (B, C, D, and G) worked on a template for VOD projects, the first two locked and the latter two

unlocked. In the case of locked templates, the subtitlers had to request project managers to merge subtitles, split them, or make them longer, as they could not change the time codes of the template themselves. Participant E also received a template for her VOD project, but refused to use it. This process reflects a more centralised and sometimes restrictive form of collaboration.

In non-globalised video subtitling, on the other hand, the norm is for the subtitlers to perform their spotting themselves, as they would only work with a video file and a script. This was the case for one of Participant E's projects, as well as Participant F's series which would both be broadcast on TV and the TV channels' platforms. Participants D, E and F expressed enjoyment of the technical aspects of this task, despite the fact that spotting adds one or two extra workdays per project, which is remunerated at a different rate than their translation work. While video subtitlers now consider spotting part of their workflow, the subtitlers who had considerable experience in the French industry shared that they considered this to be a shift in practices, because these tasks used to be separated between "technical spotting and linguistic translation" (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2020, p. 43) and should theoretically be handled by distinct professionals (Rosnet, 2012). As Participant G points out:

In TV subtitling now translators have to do their spotting, because there is no more money to do it in post-production companies. Therefore, they have this additional step of spotting all their subtitles, but at least it is well done because they know how to do it. In cinema, there is always someone external doing [the spotting file], I receive it, but don't have anything to do, I upload it. [...] This is an additional luck that we have in cinema.

This illuminates a noteworthy distinction within the video category in terms of materials that subtitlers work with: projects associated with VOD (streaming) platforms typically adhere to globalised guidelines, notably the use of templates, while VOD platforms affiliated with French TV channels do not follow these guidelines. In the case of TV projects (Participants E and F), subtitlers received minimal materials, limited to dialogue lists, while all the other subtitlers were sent a spotting or template file for other distribution media. Nonetheless, the quality of this file was variable and thus did not always improve the subtitling workflow. Additionally, it is worth noting that among the five subtitlers who received a template, only two also received a dialogue list, because as Participant G notes, clients "consider that the template they have created, which includes English, is sufficient", despite this, he specifically requested the dialogue list as well. In addition to the files sent by the primary clients, Participants A, B, C, and G also received the dubbing files from the French dubbers in order to ensure consistency between both versions.

In summary, distribution media also shape subtitling practices through the materials provided, which in turn impact the subtitlers' workflow and collaboration with other stakeholders. Cinema subtitlers benefit from scripts and pre-prepared spotting files, streamlining their work and allowing them to focus on linguistic tasks. In contrast, video projects vary: globalised VOD often imposes locked templates, while non-globalised VOD often requires subtitlers to perform their own spotting, integrating both technical and linguistic tasks. Understanding these variations in materials across local and global distribution media is essential, as the quality and type of these files can significantly influence subtitlers' collaboration and shape their interpersonal workflows.

4.2.3. Content viewing

Content viewing depends on whether the project is a film or a series. All participants working on films, whether for cinema or VOD, were able to watch the full film (though not always the final version) upon accepting the project. Participant C said that when she has time, she likes

to watch it a second time while reading the dialogues to identify technical vocabulary for which she will need a consultant. Participant D, on the contrary, begins adapting the spotting and translation of the template the first time he watches it, as he does not like pre-translation tasks and does not always have time to watch the film multiple times. This aligns with findings from other studies that have similarly noted how, given the current rates and tight turnaround times, the preview step is occasionally omitted, especially when working with templates (Tuominen, 2021).

On the other hand, when working on series, Participant B was the only subtitler able to watch the full season in advance. She had watched all the episodes upon reception one month before the episodes' translation and expressed that, as she was working with a co-subtitler, she would quickly rewatch his last episode to ensure she was well-prepared for the translation of her own current episode. Participants E, F, and G were not able to watch the full season of the series before starting their episodes as they had not received all the video files. All participants agreed on the fact that this represents a challenge in terms of contextualising translation choices within the broader context of the full season. Having to submit files for the first episodes without having seen the end of the season, and without the possibility to edit translations once the episodes have been submitted, can lead to incoherence in their subtitles, an issue often ignored by clients. While Participant G had time to watch each episode before starting to work on it, Participants E and F viewed them for the first time during the spotting process.

Examining the content viewing step reveals an additional layer of complexity beyond the cinema vs. video subtitling production networks divide: films vs. series, and the availability of full content. For video projects, especially series, the need for quick content delivery can significantly affect collaborative efforts among subtitlers. When co-subtitlers work on series without access to complete content, it can disrupt continuity and impact the overall quality of the subtitles, demonstrating how important effective communication and coordination are within these interconnected workflows.

4.2.4. Quality assurance processes

Although subtitling and revision processes differ from one subtitler to another, subtitle quality assurance is important for each of them, and they all employ their own strategies, such as simulating subtitles in real-life settings or reading them one by one in text format. Beyond these personal quality assurance methods, collaboration with clients plays an essential role in ensuring subtitle accuracy and quality. In the cases examined, when simulations take place, the revisers undertake a full revision examining both linguistic and technical aspects, sometimes in collaboration with the subtitlers. The quality assurance collaboration patterns present similarities according to distribution medium.

When working for cinema, Participants A, C, and G can often attend in-person simulations at laboratories with a reviser. Participant G described this step as a collaborative effort: "generally, [we] go to the laboratory, and we review the subtitles together with the client. And there is someone managing the technical aspects, who can also provide their input". However, participants who work on video projects rarely or never attend such simulations. Only Participant E reported that the quality assurance processes of her VOD and TV projects involve a formally commissioned simulation, which is arranged by the post-production company who appoints an external subtitler as reviser. Subsequently, Participant E mentioned an additional simulation done internally by her TV client "who has an in-house simulation operator".

When working for video projects, the other subtitlers (Participants B, C, D, F, and G) usually carry out their simulations themselves or remotely with their co-subtitler(s). Once subtitlers

have completed their own simulations, or their cross-revision (*simulation croisée*) of each other's episodes, they submit their subtitles and subsequently receive written feedback from the client, typically through email. This feedback is provided as part of the internal quality control process overseen by project managers at the post-production company. Some subtitlers believe that after incorporating this feedback, there might be a simulation or verification of the revised versions by the primary client. However, they cannot all ascertain whether this step takes place.

These quality control processes thus demonstrate a range of collaboration patterns with colleagues and clients, which are far from homogenous and vary between in-person simulation, remote simulation, or written feedback. While in cinema subtitling, practices seem to be harmonised and to foster the highest degree of collaboration, in most video projects, the subtitlers' needs and concerns are less integrated into the quality control process.

Overall, these findings highlight the nuanced and evolving nature of subtitlers' practices beyond linguistic tasks, demonstrating their high adaptability to the diverse demands and challenges presented by different clients and project types. This adaptability reflects the inherently collaborative and networked nature of their work, as subtitlers navigate the complexities of different production networks. In particular, the varying requirements and workflows across French distribution media shape these subtitlers' work practices, illustrating how their role extends beyond the individual practitioner and is embedded within broader, collaborative processes. The disparities reveal how institutional frameworks and varying client priorities influence the extent to which the subtitlers' needs are considered and their contributions are valued, ultimately determining the level of collaboration in their networks.

5. Conclusion

By adopting a human-centred, process-focused approach to exploring the French subtitlers' perspectives on their work organisation and roles within subtitling production networks, this study highlights their behind-the-scenes work and demonstrates the inherently collaborative nature of subtitling. In particular, the findings reveal that subtitling is not just an isolated task but a complex, interconnected practice, where the processes are shaped by economic pressures, technological changes, and institutional management. These influences extend far beyond the individual subtitler's work, which is governed by external constraints. Consequently, subtitling is driven not only by creative or linguistic decisions but also by the operational and financial priorities of the production networks in which its practitioners are embedded.

While it has been acknowledged that translation is a collaborative endeavour (Alfer, 2017), particularly in AVT where subtitling production contexts can impact the product (Abdallah, 2011), the current study documents how subtitlers themselves experience and navigate these collaborative processes. In doing so, I have also been able to pinpoint clear distinctions between cinema and video production networks, highlighting how the distribution medium imposes variations in practices and stakeholder interactions, particularly with clients. These differences span multiple areas, including the information and materials provided to subtitlers, opportunities for content viewing, and the handling of quality control processes – facets that influence the final product yet are often overlooked in broader discussions of subtitling.

By spotlighting the diverse realities of translators and the nuanced impact of other agents on subtitling creation, the current study underscores an often-overlooked aspect in academia and public discourse. While viewers are often highly critical of the quality of subtitles, it is important to recognise the largely invisible dynamics at play: subtitlers do not bear sole responsibility for the final product, as their work depends on an entire network of agents and associated working conditions (Remael, 2010, p. 15), in which the degree of collaboration and communication

varies, and they do not always have the final word. To fully appreciate subtitlers' contributions to the movie industry, their role behind the screen must be acknowledged within this broader and interconnected framework. Future research on subtitling dynamics would benefit from a holistic approach, incorporating the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in the process – such as dubbers, reviewers, and clients – along with exploring working conditions and institutional factors.

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**Arber, Solange (2023). *Genèses d'une œuvre de traducteur. Elmar Tophoven et la traduction transparente*. Presses universitaires François Rabelais.
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Objet et enjeux généraux

L'ouvrage de 380 pages de Solange Arber, *Genèses d'une œuvre de traducteur. Elmar Tophoven et la traduction transparente* (2023), dresse le portrait du traducteur allemand Elmar Tophoven (1923-1989), auteur d'une centaine de traductions littéraires (Samuel Beckett, Marguerite Yourcenar, Monique Wittig...), et présente son ambitieux projet de « traduction transparente ».

Description détaillée du contenu

Dans cette monographie, Arber nous invite à entrer dans l'atelier du traducteur Elmar Tophoven et à explorer les genèses de son œuvre traductive. Il s'agit bien de genèses au pluriel, car l'autrice explore trois approches pour aborder plusieurs aspects de la carrière du traducteur. Une approche discursive, qui analyse le discours de Tophoven sur sa propre pratique. Une approche sociologique, qui s'inscrit dans la tradition bourdieusienne et s'appuie sur la notion de *posture* telle qu'elle a été forgée par Jérôme Meizoz. Enfin, une approche génétique, dont l'émergence depuis les années 2010 (Munday, 2014 ; Agostini-Ouafi & Lavieri, 2015 ; Cordingley & Montini, 2015) a conduit à un essor de recherches traductologiques portant sur le processus traductif et la figure du traducteur ou de la traductrice (voir notamment Nunes *et al.*, 2020 ; Hersant, 2020 ; Cordingley & Hersant, 2021).

Suivant ce découpage, l'ouvrage se compose de trois parties. La première brosse le portrait d'Elmar Tophoven à travers son « histoire linguistique, son expérience de l'interculturalité, ses réseaux et sa carrière professionnelle » (p. 36). Le parcours de ce traducteur est pour le moins fascinant. Il commence à traduire alors qu'il est fait prisonnier de guerre par l'armée américaine en 1945. À sa libération, il étudie la philologie et le théâtre à Mayence, puis part pour Paris où il devient lecteur d'allemand à la Sorbonne. C'est dans la capitale française qu'il se forge un réseau dans le monde de la traduction littéraire. En 1953, sa carrière de traducteur fait un bond grâce à la traduction d'*En attendant Godot* de Beckett. L'auteur lui propose ensuite de traduire plusieurs autres textes, mais Tophoven a des réticences en raison de sa faible maîtrise de l'anglais. Beckett lui présente alors la traductrice diplômée Erika Schöningh, qui devient sa collaboratrice. Ensemble, tous deux travaillent sur plusieurs traductions de l'anglais vers l'allemand. Vie professionnelle et vie personnelle s'entremêlent : ils se marient quelques années après. Erika Tophoven jouera un rôle important dans la carrière d'Elmar, puis dans la conservation de ses archives après sa mort.

En parallèle de ses activités traductives et universitaires, Elmar Tophoven est activement engagé dans la valorisation et la visibilisation du métier de traducteur/traductrice. Les dimensions collective et communautaire de cette activité sont au cœur de sa pensée de la traduction. Il participe ainsi aux premiers « Entretiens d'Esslingen » organisés par l'association *Verband deutschsprachiger Übersetzer literarischer und wissenschaftlicher Werke* (VdÜ) en 1968. Ces Entretiens réunissent de nombreux traducteurs et traductrices dans le but de favoriser les

échanges et les collaborations. Ils deviendront une véritable institution dans le monde de la traduction germanophone. Elmar et Erika Tophoven contribuent aussi à la création d'un collège de traducteurs en 1978, présidé par ce premier.

La deuxième partie du livre s'attache à analyser la figure de Tophoven d'un point de vue sociologique. Après avoir défini la notion de « champ de la traduction littéraire », Arber démontre que Tophoven possédait un capital culturel et une légitimité grâce à ses études universitaires et ses débuts professionnels dans le monde académique. De plus, sa fréquentation du milieu littéraire parisien et sa participation aux rencontres franco-allemandes d'écrivains lui permettent de tisser les liens nécessaires avec des éditeurs et auteurs pour stabiliser sa carrière. Cette réflexion amène la chercheuse à considérer comme primordial le rôle de Tophoven dans l'édition de certains textes : à sa fonction de traducteur s'ajoutait celle de médiateur.

La troisième partie concerne l'analyse des archives du traducteur. Le fonds d'archives de Tophoven est un cas unique en raison de la richesse et la nature des documents qu'il comporte. Il a été constitué par Tophoven afin de documenter précisément son processus d'écriture dans une visée d'enseignement et de partage avec la communauté de traducteurs et traductrices. Ce projet de « traduction transparente », comme il l'a nommé, peut être défini comme un « partage d'expérience et de solidarité entre traducteurs et traductrices » (p. 225) au moyen d'une explicitation minutieuse des différentes phases du processus de traduction d'un texte. Grâce à l'étude des documents génétiques constitués de brouillons, mais surtout des très nombreuses fiches de notes prises en parallèle de l'écriture de la traduction, Arber réussit à décrire le processus de traduction du traducteur allemand étape par étape. Ces fiches font la spécificité du fonds : sur chacune d'entre elles, Tophoven mettait en œuvre son projet et résumait « en quelques mots-clés le problème rencontré, la stratégie adoptée ou bien l'opération de traduction employée » (p. 306). Le dernier chapitre du livre présente le projet inachevé de manuel de traduction rédigé par le traducteur à partir d'une traduction littéraire collaborative : ce dernier visait à documenter de manière systématique les phénomènes traductifs observés à l'aide des catégories lexicale, syntaxique et prosodique.

Appréciation générale et critique

L'ouvrage présente de nombreuses qualités, dont une grande clarté structurelle et stylistique, qui en font un texte très compréhensible et agréable à lire. Nous recommandons vivement sa lecture à toute personne intéressée non seulement par Elmar Tophoven, mais aussi par la génétique des traductions, la notion de champ appliquée à la traductologie ou encore la dimension collaborative de la profession de traducteur/traductrice.

De plus, cette recherche ne s'arrête pas à son étude de cas, mais s'inscrit dans une pensée plus complexe – à la fois historique et sociologique – de la traduction comme profession, en particulier dans le monde germanophone. Les questionnements qui traversent le livre traitent aussi de l'auctorialité du traducteur et de la visibilisation des agents collaborateurs à la traduction. De plus, l'autrice s'astreint à ne pas laisser dans l'ombre les personnes qui ont activement participé au travail de Tophoven, et met notamment en avant la figure d'Erika Tophoven en tant que traductrice et collaboratrice.

Enfin, soulignons que cet ouvrage représente, à notre connaissance, la première monographie inscrite en génétique des traductions qui porte sur la description du parcours et du processus traductif d'un traducteur. Sa riche bibliographie s'ajoute à celle mise en ligne par Patrick Hersant (2023), qui sera utile à toute personne intéressée par les recherches issues de l'approche génétique.

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**Guillemin-Flescher, Jacqueline (2023). *Linguistique contrastive : énonciation et activité langagière*. Presses universitaires de Rennes.
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Les rapports entre linguistique (générale, appliquée, contrastive) et traductologie n'ont jamais été un fleuve tranquille, notamment depuis le « tournant culturel » de cette traductologie dans les années 1980. Néanmoins, certaines branches des sciences du langage (linguistique textuelle, pragmatique, cognitive, de corpus ; neuro-/psycho- et sociolinguistique) ont apporté leur contribution au développement des études en traduction. Entre les relations ambiguës des années 1950-60 quand la traduction était encore perçue comme un transfert de langues, et le rejet radical de la linguistique par certains traductologues fonctionnalistes dans les années 1980-90, l'histoire des synergies entre les deux disciplines, au statut inégal, suit un parcours assez alambiqué, fait d'échanges théoriques, conceptuels, méthodologiques souvent asymétriques, marqués par une défiance institutionnelle réciproque (Gambier, 2020). Un des malentendus récurrents a porté sur le rapport entre mot et sens, entre sémantique lexicale et discours toujours à interpréter. C'est dans ce large contexte qu'il faut saisir l'originalité des travaux de J. Guillemin-Flescher (J. G.-F.).

La réédition de 21 de ses textes, publiés ou exposés pour l'essentiel dans les années 1990-2000, est bienvenue. D'une part, l'ouvrage est excellemment édité et d'autre part, il reflète une approche particulière qui souligne avec force la constance de certains phénomènes linguistiques dans les traductions entre anglais et français, mettant en lumière combien les langues résistent dans ces traductions. Achopper sur les langues n'est pas forcément se condamner à une impasse, se vouer à l'échec, à la perte, si on se donne la peine de saisir l'activité langagière dans sa plénitude. Il ne s'agit pas de justifier ou de critiquer ces textes traduits mais de démontrer que, quelle que soit la créativité des traducteurs, il y a des récurrences systématiques, non arbitraires, entre les contraintes des structures syntaxiques et le style individuel, subjectif – manière de démontrer que les langues ont leur mot à dire dans les traductions, qu'il y a une grammaire intériorisée chez les locuteurs d'une langue donnée, que ce comportement langagier collectif (ou représentations linguistiques de comportements culturels) se manifeste par exemple dans l'organisation des discours, le choix des formes verbales, la mise en jeu de l'interlocution. Dans cette perspective, la traduction n'est pas vue comme un prisme déformant, mais bien au contraire comme un révélateur du fonctionnement de l'activité langagière qui établit des contraintes d'ordre énonciatif, un révélateur des manières de s'approprier le « réel » selon la position des énonciateurs, dans la construction de la référence.

Le volume commence par une présentation de ses éditrices (pp. 15-29) qui met bien en perspective ce que cherche à faire J. G.-F., ses approches, ses analyses, prolongeant son ouvrage de 1981 sur la syntaxe comparée du français et de l'anglais. Elles soulignent l'exemplarité de la recherche, à la fois par la solidité de ses principes théoriques et méthodologiques et par la diversité de ses exemples toujours attestés, contextualisés, puisés non seulement dans les fictions narratives, les pièces de théâtre, la BD, les livres pour enfants, les romans policiers, mais aussi dans la presse, les guides, la publicité, les publications en sciences sociales, comme sources originales ou traduites. Il ne s'agit pas pourtant d'un de ces corpus électroniques sur lesquels la traductologie s'est appuyé à partir de la fin des années 1990 pour mettre en valeur certains traits de la langue traduite, certains universaux. On peut regretter que les études

contrastives de J. G.-F., leurs apports, leur optique différentielle, ne soient pas rapprochés de la démarche des études traductologiques basées sur de vastes corpus, plus ou moins homogènes. Certes, chez J. G.-F. la lecture des textes (traduits) oriente la formulation d'un problème, d'une hypothèse et illustre souvent la définition d'une notion métalinguistique (comme par ex. la deixis, la narration, l'assertion), permet de préciser la terminologie utilisée (comme par ex. présupposé/préconstruit, phrase/énoncé, repère origine/repère translaté, contexte situationnel/situation d'énonciation, terme repère/terme repéré), avant de mettre en œuvre, d'ajuster les concepts opératoires de la théorie des opérations prédicatives et énonciatives d'Antoine Culioli. Les objectifs sont donc différents des corpus électroniques de la traductologie.

Suite à cette introduction qui souligne la permanence du cheminement de J. G.-F., les chapitres sont répartis en quatre parties de manière thématique et non chronologique, chacune portant sur des phénomènes divers mais convergents : vers la théorisation de la traduction (partie 1, avec quatre articles), sur les opérations de repérage et de détermination au niveau prédicatif (partie 2, avec six articles), sur la construction de sens à travers les opérations de détermination, de qualification, de modalisation au niveau énonciatif (partie 3, avec sept articles) et sur la perception immédiate et représentée, notamment dans ses rapports à la cognition (partie 4, avec quatre articles). La revue de chaque article dépasserait les limites de ce compte rendu.

Notons simplement que dans la première partie (pp. 32-92), J. G.-F. cherche à se positionner parmi les « théories » de la traduction en s'appuyant surtout sur des références d'avant 1995, donc avant les « tournants » sociologique, cognitif, empirique de la traductologie. N'empêche, elle pose d'emblée les problèmes, entre autres, de l'antéposition, de la coordination, de la négation, des énoncés interrogatifs, des usages du pluperfect et du plus-que-parfait, problèmes auxquels tout traducteur de textes (littéraires ou pas) de l'anglais/français est rapidement confronté. Dans la deuxième partie (pp. 93-200), sont convoqués la plupart des concepts théoriques (opérations et relations de repérage, opération de construction des valeurs référentielles et de détermination, contraintes de qualification, etc.) et sont abordés des points là aussi familiers aux traducteurs comme la deixis, l'imparfait/le plus-que-parfait/le pluperfect/le prétérit, la transitivité, certaines structures verbo-nominales typiques de l'anglais, les différentes formes de prédication, les constructions relatives, etc. À remarquer ici que les trois articles en anglais, distribués dans les parties 2, 3 et 4, sont résumés très substantiellement en annexe (pp. 413-423). Par ailleurs, le découpage en parties n'interdit pas que certains phénomènes explorés, comme l'assertion, la modalisation, le passé simple/le prétérit, l'exclamation, les énoncés averbaux, l'évaluation qualitative, les interrogatives, sont repris d'une partie à l'autre – renforçant ainsi la pertinence du cadre théorique utilisé, la proximité des problèmes analysés et la continuité des questions abordées dans les divers chapitres, sous des angles différents. La partie 3 (pp. 201-330) considère les manifestations, dans chacune des langues étudiées, de l'inscription du sujet dans le discours, des manières dont se construit le point de vue, analysant les fonctionnements de l'assertion, divers types d'énoncés de qualification, la question rhétorique, le passage de l'anglais au français des énoncés exclamatifs et intensifs (en tenant compte des marqueurs de modalité appréciative et des contraintes d'ordre aspectuel), et enfin les énoncés averbaux. La dernière partie (pp. 331-405) se penche sur la perception directe ou translaturée, sur la relation de perception entre une origine de la perception (explicite ou pas), l'élément perçu et le relateur donnant des indications sur la nature de cette relation. Là encore, les différences entre le français et l'anglais, surtout dans la perception représentée, sont mises à jour, ainsi que les contraintes de construction de la valeur de perception, en anglais.

J. G.-F. ne prétend jamais à l'exhaustivité des problèmes soulevés, favorisant plutôt la finesse des analyses – ce qui fait que parfois la lecture est exigeante, semble s'attarder sur un détail.

Mais toujours, le lecteur est saisi par la force des exemples malgré le doute dans certains cas sur leur représentativité, la force de la méthode mise en œuvre, de la démarche singulière suivie, y compris pour des phénomènes relativement restreints comme l'exclamation, la deixis, et malgré la répétition inévitable de quelques-uns de ces phénomènes due à la composition de l'ouvrage. L'ensemble des chapitres est conclu par une postface (pp. 407-411) qui signale pourquoi J. G.-F. a pu former une génération de contrastivistes, aidée par les travaux plus pédagogiques de Chuquet et Paillard (1987, 2017) et de M. Ballard dans les années 1980-1990, mais aussi par les douze monographies (sur l'anglais, et le grec, l'arabe, le polonais comparés au français), les six volumes d'articles et les actes de colloques publiés chez Ophrys dans deux collections (Linguistique contrastive et traduction ; Langues, langage et textes) dirigées par l'ancienne professeure de l'université Paris-Diderot. L'influence de J. G.-F. a été d'ailleurs rappelée en temps utile par les trente contributions du volume *Contrastes* (Merle & Gournay, 2004). On peut s'interroger ici sur la pertinence des travaux de J. G.-F. aujourd'hui, à un moment où la traduction automatique, alimentée par l'intelligence artificielle, néglige le contexte situationnel, le discursif, l'inscription du sujet dans son dire, les paramètres énonciatifs révélateurs de certains aspects des systèmes linguistiques, eux-mêmes liés à des différences culturelles – en un mot négligeant la voix, la lisibilité des textes. Le volume s'achève sur la bibliographie de J. G.-F. (1969-2021) (pp. 425-428) et sur un index assez conséquent (pp. 429-434) des notions traitées.

En dépit de la brièveté de nos remarques sur chacune des parties, nous ne pouvons que recommander la lecture de l'ouvrage, malgré parfois sa technicité, son métalangage qui sont aussi le reflet des exigences analytiques de l'auteure. Peut-être pourra-t-il réconcilier les traductologues avec la linguistique quand celle-ci aborde les énoncés concrets, traite les écueils inhérents au passage d'une langue à une autre. Une certaine traductologie a peut-être trop vite condamné la linguistique, ignorant ou faisant semblant d'ignorer sa diversité théorique. Le temps n'est plus aux invectives simplistes, liées davantage aux luttes institutionnelles entre disciplines qu'à leurs innovations, propositions et apports conceptuels et méthodologiques. A. Culioli et J. G.-F. étant mal connus, on pourrait ajouter aussi G. Garnier (1985) et F. Rastier (2018).

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**Cedergren, Mickaëlle & Lindberg, Ylva (2023). *Le transfert des littératures francophones en(tre) périphérie. Pratiques de sélection, de médiation et de lecture*. Stockholm University Press.
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Comment les littératures francophones d'Europe de l'Ouest et d'Afrique du Nord sont-elles importées en Suède ? Qui sont les agents et quelles sont les dynamiques derrière le choix des auteurs qui feront le voyage vers le grand Nord et des sentiers qu'ils suivront ? C'est à cette question que Mickaëlle Cedergren, professeure de littérature de langue française à l'Université de Stockholm (Suède), cherche à répondre dans sa dernière monographie en date, *Le transfert des littératures francophones en(tre) périphérie. Pratiques de sélection, de médiation et de lecture* (2023). Cette recherche, publiée aux Presses universitaires de Stockholm, a été écrite avec le concours d'Ylva Lindberg, professeure en science de l'éducation à l'Université de Jönköping (Suède) et collaboratrice de longue date aux travaux de Cedergren. L'ouvrage est préfacé par Véronique Porra, professeure en littérature française à l'Université Johannes Gutenberg de Mayence (Allemagne).

Ancrée dans le domaine d'étude des transferts culturels, cette étude passe à la loupe les transferts littéraires du Maghreb et de l'Europe occidentale vers la Suède entre 1989 et 2019, en se concentrant tout particulièrement sur deux modes de transfert : la traduction et la réception dans la presse. Cedergren et Lindberg y mènent une analyse rigoureuse, dont la complexité tient autant au grand nombre de données qu'à la variété des configurations employées pour étudier ces dernières ; les autrices font pleinement usage des atouts de l'approche mixte, qui conjugue les outils des méthodes quantitatives avec l'analyse de l'approche qualitative. Les nombreux tableaux et graphiques, qui présentent les données sous différents jours et sont accompagnés d'explications précises et d'analyses quelque peu répétitives, mais toujours pertinentes et pointues, témoignent de l'ampleur du travail effectué sur les données.

Un grand soin a également été apporté à l'élaboration, à la description et à la justification de la méthodologie. Cette dernière est tout d'abord décrite en détail dans une partie qui lui est consacrée (pages 46 à 64), mais elle fait l'objet d'explications ultérieures à de nombreux autres endroits du texte, pour clarifier certains résultats ou pour justifier le traitement réservé à certaines données. La présentation de l'état de la littérature et l'inscription de cette étude dans la recherche actuelle n'est pas en reste : une trentaine de pages sont consacrées au passage en revue des recherches antérieures dans le domaine et à l'établissement du cadre théorique de l'étude. Il y est question des transferts culturels (sur la base des travaux d'Espagne et de Werner, naturellement, mais aussi de Broomans, de Sapiro, de Meylaerts, d'Hulst et de Verschaffel) ainsi que de la dichotomie centre-périphérie appliquée aux transferts (d'après Bourdieu, Casanova, Heilbron, Sapiro, Verstraete-Hansen et Lievois, entre autres). En effet, cette étude prend comme cadre problématisant le paradigme qui définit certaines régions linguistiques et culturelles comme « centrales » et d'autres comme « périphériques ».

Une étude innovante du transfert culturel entre (semi-)périphéries

Dans leur étude, Cedergren et Lindberg passent en revue les œuvres de littératures francophones¹ transférées vers l'univers culturel suédois entre 1989 et 2019. Pour ce faire, elles ont recensé les auteurs qui ont été traduits et/ou qui ont fait l'objet d'une couverture médiatique (même ténue) dans la presse suédoise. Elles n'ont finalement retenu pour leur projet que les auteurs d'origine d'Afrique du Nord et d'Europe de l'Ouest (hors France), en raison du nombre significativement inférieur de transferts en provenance de l'Amérique du Nord, troisième pôle de production littéraire francophone.

Ces régions émettrices de littérature sont considérées comme des périphéries culturelles et linguistiques de la France métropolitaine et, surtout, du centre parisien, qui concentre le pouvoir de consacrer – ou non – les œuvres littéraires issues aussi bien du centre que de la périphérie francophone. Cependant, le fait que ces littératures sont écrites en langue française, la langue du centre parisien, leur confère un statut en quelque sorte hybride à l'échelle mondiale, que Cedergren et Lindberg appellent « semi-périphérique », selon la terminologie de Verstraete-Hansen et Lievois (2023). En considérant leur traduction et/ou réception en Suède, Cedergren et Lindberg étudient le transfert culturel de semi-périphérie à semi-périphérie (la Suède étant également considérée comme occupant une position intermédiaire entre centre et périphérie au sein de la littérature mondiale ; voir Edfeldt *et al.*, 2022) : ce cadre est une des innovations principales de cette recherche, et il s'avère très fertile.

Au cours des chapitres d'analyse (pages 143 à 184 et 185 à 210), qui décortiquent et réassemblent les données récoltées et se consacrent longuement aux modalités du transfert culturel entre les régions étudiées, plusieurs constats sont formulés et confrontés les uns aux autres selon des critères très variés : les différentes époques historiques et culturelles auxquelles les œuvres ont été écrites, le genre sexué des auteurs, le genre littéraire des œuvres concernées, la relation entre le nombre de traductions et la couverture médiatique reçue, et bien d'autres encore. Les hypothèses et analyses qui découlent de ces observations sont souvent aussi convaincantes qu'elles sont intéressantes. À l'appui d'une palette de concepts qu'elles utilisent pour catégoriser les phénomènes qu'elles décrivent², les autrices parviennent non seulement à repréciser et à illustrer ces notions, mais également à mettre au jour l'enchevêtrement des dynamiques à l'œuvre dans le transfert culturel entre semi-périphéries. Elles soulignent notamment le double-jeu auquel se livre la semi-périphérie réceptrice (en l'occurrence, la Suède), pour laquelle ces transferts sont l'occasion non seulement d'attirer l'attention sur des auteurs issus de la (semi-)périphérie et d'enrichir la littérature mondiale en consacrant leurs œuvres, mais aussi de se placer sur la scène internationale comme autorité consacrant et innovante. Ce faisant, elle augmente le prestige de ses propres culture et littérature nationales, tout en concourant à l'évincement des centres historiques de pouvoir consacrant.

Autre exemple de constat qui pourrait donner lieu à des prolongements innovants : grâce à leur analyse qualitative de la réception des œuvres, Cedergren et Lindberg parviennent à mettre en lumière une différence de traitement envers les œuvres issues d'Europe de l'Ouest par rapport à celles qui viennent d'Afrique du Nord. Alors que, pour les premières, l'intérêt littéraire de l'œuvre est souvent mis en avant lors de sa réception, pour les secondes, le discours porte très peu sur la littérarité des textes, et bien plus sur le contexte culturel et politique de production

¹ Les autrices font la distinction entre « littérature française » (issue du centre, de la France métropolitaine), « littératures francophones » (issues d'autres régions) et « littérature de langue française » (l'ensemble de ces productions littéraires).

² Nous pensons notamment à la dichotomie entre les médiateurs culturels considérés comme « douaniers » et ceux qui sont considérés comme « contrebandiers » (Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts, 2018) ainsi qu'à la « traduction-accumulation » et à la « traduction-consécration » de Casanova (2002).


de l'œuvre. Ainsi, les autrices constatent que, même au sein d'un corpus composé uniquement d'œuvres issues des semi-périphéries, les motivations et les modalités de transfert ne sont pas les mêmes.

Remarques finales

Le projet de Cedergren et Lindberg est plus ambitieux qu'il n'y paraît au premier regard, mais les autrices se montrent à sa hauteur et publient dans cet ouvrage une étude innovante et rigoureuse, non sans implications pour la sociologie de la traduction littéraire, et qui enrichit indubitablement la recherche sur les transferts culturels. Si la lecture de certains chapitres très denses est parfois laborieuse, cela est surtout dû à la taille du corpus et à la structure de l'argumentation, qui est propice aux répétitions. Par ailleurs, une relecture plus soignée de la part de l'éditeur aurait profité au texte : les coquilles importantes n'y sont pas rares, et la bibliographie est incomplète. À tous autres égards, il s'agit-là d'une recherche notable, rendue d'autant plus pertinente par l'annonce d'un regain de projets bilatéraux entre la Suède et la France en janvier 2024, qui viendra sans doute renforcer l'intérêt du public suédois pour la littérature française, mais peut-être aussi pour la littérature de langue française.

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