

Chapter 6

Dischronies and the Absence of Image in the Evaluation of Dubbing

José Tomás Conde Ruano
University of the Basque Country, Spain

ABSTRACT

An approximation of quality in audiovisual translation is presented, based upon an experiment carried out with students of different level of expertise, in order to check whether considering the image affects the evaluation of quality in dubbing and which dischrony has a greater impact on students' ratings. When they watch the scenes on video, evaluators (i.e. the students) bestow them higher ratings as opposed to when they have only the text. The lack of synchronization, which is penalized the most, is lip synchronization, although the differences do not seem to be significant. The average ratings given by the two groups of students are similar, but there is a stronger coincidence among advanced students. The presentation on video beclouds potential linguistic errors made during the translation phase. Errors related to synchronization are not as relevant to the receivers' judgement as expected.

INTRODUCTION

'Quality' and 'evaluation' are recurring concepts in the literature on translation and interpreting. While earlier studies addressed such concepts on a fairly intuitive manner and by means of fundamentally prescriptive approaches, the 21st century has witnessed a boom of empirical research resulting in more up-to-date and comprehensive knowledge on the feasibility of assessment methods and tools (Waddington, 2001) and what is meant by a 'good' or 'bad' translation (Conde, 2009). In the field of audiovisual translation (AVT), however, only a few studies have dealt with quality and evaluation of audiovisual products, and sometimes the scope of this research is very limited.

The study of expertise in translation is also to the fore in the literature on translation studies (see, for instance, the work carried out by the PETRA Research Group). Translation expertise is usually investigated on the grounds of translation process research and consists of a comparison of the way experts

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and non-experts behave, not only when translating, but also towards other tasks and skills that are at the core of the translation activity, such as reading, problem-solving or assessing.

This chapter is a first approximation to the study of the evaluation of AVT with a scientific methodology and taking into account the potential differences in two groups of students with different levels of expertise (i.e. second- and fourth-year undergraduate students). It is a preliminary study aiming at discovering how important is for the assessment of AVT the format in which the translation is presented and which type of dischronies has a greater impact on the evaluation of the dubbing quality.

BACKGROUND

AVT products, by matching text and image, do not evoke but represent a concrete reality that restricts translation (Díaz-Cintas, 2003, p. 33). The image takes part in the creation of meaning, being crucial for AVT professionals to have both the scripts and the video at their disposal (Chaume, 2004, pp. 268-269; Segovia, 2005, p. 85; Sokoli, 2005, p. 185). Some research (Chaume, 2004, p. 89; Díaz-Cintas, 2003, p. 125) shows, however, that this is not always the case.

De los Reyes (2015, pp. 28-29) gathers the criticisms about studies that do not focus on aspects such as code interaction and synchrony. Another pertinent question to be asked is whether having the video or not also influences the response to the audiovisual texts. Image and text interaction is common to all the modalities of AVT, although the present chapter focuses on the most common modality in Spain (Chaume, 2004, p. 33): dubbing.

Dubbing

According to Chaume (2012, p. 1) dubbing consists of ‘replacing the original track of a film’s (...) source language dialogues with another track on which translated dialogues have been recorded in the target language’. Much has been written about the differences between dubbing and other modalities of AVT; each modality has advantages and disadvantages as well as particular challenges (Díaz-Cintas, 2003, p. 294).

From a theoretical point of view, Hurtado (2001, p. 76) considers dubbing a type of a simple subordinated translation, since it maintains the medium of the original text. From a practical point of view, Agost (1999, p. 97) claims that the feature that singles out the dubbing modality is the synchrony.

‘Adjusting’ or ‘synchronising’ consists of ‘matching the target language translation and the articulatory and body movements of the screen actors and actresses, and ensuring that the utterances and pauses in the translation match those of the source texts’ (Chaume, 2012, p. 68).¹ Given this element is paramount for dubbing, it is no wonder that synchronising has been addressed so profusely. Most of the studies that deal with this aspect in dubbing suggest that synchronies can be of three types (Agost, 1999, p. 65; Chaume, 2012, pp. 68-69; Arumí et al., 2013, p. 47):

- Lip synchrony (henceforth, L): between the lip movement and the words that are articulated;
- Kinetic synchrony (henceforth, K): between the body movements and what is heard; and
- Isochrony (henceforth, I): between the duration of the utterances and pauses.

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