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THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN DUBBING AMONG TRANSLATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper deals with the opinion and beliefs of two groups of translation students on the concept of quality for dubbing. Data have been gathered by means of electronic questionnaires. Translation students are aware of the importance for quality of both synchronisation (especially, isochrony) and the interaction of image and text. Video is essential to complete the translation task and to assess synchronies. Advanced students are more self-confident and show a wider knowledge of the professional activity. Translation students are an interesting profile in order to analyse the concept of quality in audiovisual translation, but further initiatives should consider other subjects as well.

Resumen

“El concepto de calidad en el doblaje para los estudiantes de traducción”

Este trabajo se basa en la opinión y los conocimientos de dos grupos de estudiantes de traducción en relación con el concepto de calidad en el doblaje. La información se ha recogido mediante cuestionarios electrónicos. Los estudiantes de traducción son conscientes de la importancia que tienen para la calidad tanto el ajuste (especialmente, la isocronía) como la interacción imagen-texto. Disponer del vídeo resulta vital para realizar una traducción completa y para evaluar la sincronización. Los estudiantes más avanzados demuestran una mayor seguridad y un mejor conocimiento de la actividad profesional. El perfil del estudiante de traducción resulta interesante para analizar el concepto de calidad en traducción audiovisual, si bien sería aconsejable contar con otros sujetos en el futuro.

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Keywords: Dubbing. Quality. Evaluation. Expertise. Questionnaires.

Palabras clave: Doblaje. Calidad. Evaluación. Pericia. Cuestionarios.

1. Introduction

Within the scope of Audiovisual Translation (hereinafter, AVT) Studies, various approaches are used to explain the translation of audiovisual products from complementary points of view. Even though the modality is riding high at the moment, ‘quality’—a key concept in Translatology—has received less consideration in AVT literature.

This paper reports on an investigation into some issues related to dubbing and the assessment of its quality. By means of questionnaires, the aim is to learn the inclination of two groups of Translation students towards this activity and to compare their knowledge, which could explain differences in maturity or their current and respective levels of expertise.

The study begins with a brief exposition of the problem, then explains the procedure of the experiment before going on to discuss the results and present conclusions. A copy of the questionnaire which served as the basis for the research is attached at the end of the paper, after the bibliography.

2. State of the art

In research settings, it is common to turn to translation students, perhaps because they are usually willing to collaborate and are accessible to academics who carry out experiments. Students are ideal for studies focused on the concept of expertise, since they represent several intermediate stages between subjects that may be categorized as ‘novices’ and those with years of experience who are considered ‘experts’. Following Hoffman (1998 apud Kiraly 2000: 58-59), they may be either ‘initiates’ (novices who have started introductory training) or ‘apprentices’ (students undergoing instruction beyond the introductory level). By classifying them according to their level of expertise—that is to say, their years of study—it is also possible to check to what extent they have acquired knowledge and attitudes, and how their profile has evolved as budding translators. As a secondary result, the success of teaching and learning processes—data on whether the skills needed to translate are being developed or not—might also be checked.

Questionnaire-based research is common in experiments with students. On the one hand, students are used to answering surveys and questionnaires, which means that it is not necessary to invest any time in training them in their use. On the other hand, with the right design, questionnaires enable responses to be classified and converted into measurable categories, which makes it possible to conduct a quantitative analysis of the results and even to extrapolate them. Moreover, surveys are suitable for collecting information concerning tastes, habits and attitudes, and are thus the most common tool in sociological research (Sierra Bravo, 1994, apud Casas Anguita *et al.*, 2003: 527).

According to Di Giovanni (2012: 496), “gathering and evaluating the opinions of receivers of translated films undoubtedly has great potential”. In recent years, several reception studies have collected data, among other tools, with questionnaires. A case in point is Ortiz-Boix and Matamala (2015: 19), who ask the potential addressees of a series of documentaries about their tastes and preferences. Lång *et al.* (2013: 77) complement their research based on eye-trackers with a questionnaire. Other authors do likewise: Bourne and Lachat (2010: 317) in their work on audio description; Antonini (2005: 216) in her research on humour and subtitling; and De los Reyes (2015: 1-2) in his doctoral thesis on dubbing. These are just a few examples of how questionnaires are useful for collecting data in AVT research, either as a single method or in conjunction with others.

The concepts of quality and assessment have always been at the heart of Translatology. The fact that they are dealt with again and again seems to point to an elusive reality, in need of continual investigations; an area in which methods of all kinds are used to shed light on its slippery, subjective nature. Within the scope of AVT, there are more and more initiatives that address the concept of quality and its assessment, taking into account the particularities of the modality. It should come as no surprise then that even the success (Díaz-Cintas 2003: 71) or the fame (Bittner 2011: 86) of a film may depend on the quality of AVT.

It is worth wondering what specific issues may have an effect on quality in this modality as opposed to others. According to Mayoral (2005: 6), synchrony is the cardinal feature for researching AVT, given its impact on the final product. Fuentes-Luque (2005: 139) considers that synchrony is one of the factors that affect the success of the reception of audiovisual productions, and De los Reyes (2015: 48) gathers the opinions of several experts who hold that visual synchronisation is a determining aspect for dubbing quality. The importance of synchrony for dubbing is emphasised both in general (Arumí

et al. 2013: 47) and regarding particular types, especially those proposed by Chaume (2012: 68-69):

- lip or phonetic synchrony: between the lip movement and the sound that is articulated;
- kinetic synchrony: between the body movements and what is heard;
- isochrony: between the duration of the utterances and the pauses.

Of the three types, Chaume (2004: 279 and 2012: 68) believes that a lack of isochrony is the error most heavily penalised by audiences and therefore that which is most closely linked to the concept of quality.

Another issue that frequently appears in AVT literature is the crucial role that image plays in translating, because in this modality, by contrast with others, linguistic and iconographic codes interact (Chaume 2004: 232; Chaume 2012: 110-112; Segovia 2005: 85). Sometimes audiovisual translators work without the video, which undoubtedly affects the quality of their work: according to Chaume (2004: 268-269) and Sokoli (2005: 185), translating without visual support might lead translators to overlook kinetic synchrony, among other issues. If the lack of the video can affect translation quality, then it can also affect the assessment of the translated product.

Who is responsible for assessing dubbing? Díaz-Cintas (2003: 106) considers that it is translation supervisors who must ensure the quality of the product. According to Abdallah (2012: 36), it is difficult to agree on quality criteria for a service in which so many different agents take part; Alfaro de Carvalho (2012: 465) points to the translators themselves, i.e. to self-assessment. There are other investigations on the assessment of audiovisual products: a case in point is that of Nord *et al.* (2015: 8), who incorporate the researchers themselves as assessors of translated audiovisual products; the experiment carried out by Ortiz-Boix and Matamala (2015: 19) involved three groups of assessors: experts (AVT teachers specialising in voice-over), a dubbing studio (actors, dubbing director and technician) and end users. In short, most authors emphasise the role of the addressees as assessors (for instance, Abdallah 2012: 36; Alfaro de Carvalho 2012: 470, or Zabalbeascoa 2008: 172).

More studies—such as those put forward by scholars such as Chaume (2007: 78) or Di Giovanni (2012: 496)—are needed to measure reception by the audience² and show what viewers mean by quality in AVT. In the meantime, it may be interesting to get first-hand knowledge about the students'

2. Although the concept of assessment in AVT has not been widely dealt with, there is an increasing number of publications based on audience reception. Some of the most

opinions on the quality issues that affect AVT and on other controversial topics commonly found in the literature on dubbing. Among other methods, Gambier (2009 apud De los Reyes 2015: 56) suggest investigating reception via questionnaires.

3. Materials and methods

A questionnaire was designed to learn what the concept of quality in dubbing and in AVT in general means for translation students. This questionnaire is only part of a larger test on the assessment of dubbing; however, this paper focuses on the results collected from it³.

The subjects were students on the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). Two groups took part: one comprised second-year undergraduate students (hereafter called initiates or 2U); the other comprised fourth-year undergraduate students (apprentices or 4U). To contact them, the collaboration of the lecturers on two translation courses was enlisted: Translation Practice I: English-Spanish I (second-year) and Translation Practice V: English-Spanish and Spanish-English III (fourth-year). The courses were quite similar: they were taught by the same lecturers, based on the same language pairing (English-Spanish), they entailed the same number of credit hours (6) and were given in the same semester (the first). The two groups of students were therefore expected to be comparable, as the only a priori difference between them was their translation expertise.

Once the lecturers had agreed to collaborate, the next step was to decide how to measure the subjects' knowledge of dubbing quality and their career inclination towards this modality. A questionnaire was prepared to be circulated after a classroom experiment. An effort was made to make it short, so that it would not take the subjects too long to complete it. The aim was to maximise the involvement of the students, who could have been unmotivated if they had found the task too demanding. It was also decided to combine questions that would help to describe subjects (so as to discover differences and coincidences between the students from the two courses) and to gather information on their

relevant ones are summarised by De los Reyes (2015: 4 and 57-61) and Bucaria and Chiaro (2007: 94).

3. The test began with a dubbing assessment task. Students were asked to analyse several scenes in English and Spanish, either as videos or as transcripts. The results of this assessment test have already been compiled and are pending publication (Conde Ruano, forthcoming). The second part of the investigation was based on the questionnaire, the results of which are discussed in this paper.

opinions about certain issues related to the concepts of dubbing quality and assessment.

The questions on the questionnaire—drawn up in digital format to speed up the collection and subsequent analysis of data—were based on the corresponding literature (discussed in Section 2); a simple format (a table in MS Word) was used, once again seeking to make the task easy, familiar and comfortable for the participants. Once the design stage was completed, the questionnaire was uploaded to Consigna, a password-protected institutional platform.

The two groups worked on the experiment and the subsequent questionnaire on the same morning, so as to prevent any exchange of information between the students (or to put it another way, to ensure that all responses were equally spontaneous). The students in each group had to follow these instructions:

- download the files from Consigna;
- complete the assessment sheet (experiment);
- answer the questionnaire;
- e-mail the results.

The task was anonymous. However, each student was allocated a random code which had to be affixed to both the assessment sheet and the questionnaire. This enabled the data from the assessment test to be crossed with those from the questionnaires. During the session, which lasted no more than 45 minutes, the researcher was present and at students' disposal to answer any questions. In any case, there were few doubts during the two sessions (with the initiates and with the apprentices).

Since the goal was to use two comparable groups, only the questionnaires completed by 16 students from each course were processed. More students were in class during the experiments and completed the questionnaire, but the analysis focused on the questionnaires of a total of 32 subjects. The 16 students from each group were chosen based on the following system: 16 codes starting with the number '2' and 16 starting with '4' were prepared and distributed among the initiates and the apprentices, respectively. Other codes starting either with '1' or with '3' were also used. There were 18 second-year students, so the 16 codes starting with 2 and two starting with 1 were handed out. They were mixed and randomly distributed, and the two questionnaires beginning with 1 were then discarded for analysis. The fourth-year class comprised 24 students, so there were eight discarded questionnaires: those with a code starting with 3 instead of 4. The only manipulation during the distribution

of the tasks was to give Erasmus students a code starting with 1 or 3. This ensured that the profile of the subjects was as similar as possible, in the sense that extraneous variables (such as the mother tongue or the country of origin) were avoided to prevent data from being skewed.

The teachers resumed classes as soon as the researcher had verified that the students had correctly sent the questionnaire to the email address provided.

The information collected was transferred into an MS Excel spreadsheet; this was the software used for most operations. The idea of analysing data with statistical processing programs was considered, but since there were few subjects and most questions were open-ended, it was concluded that working directly on the spreadsheet would be operationally more feasible. The analyses were carried out in order to check the following hypotheses:

- 1) Most students would be positively inclined towards AVT.
- 2) Most subjects would believe that having the image is essential for AVT and for its assessment.
- 3) Students would place synchrony at the forefront of the dubbing quality criteria (and among the types of synchrony, isochrony would be highlighted as most important).
- 4) Apprentices would show greater conviction than initiates, due to their more advanced level of expertise regarding both their tastes and the profession itself.

4. Results and discussion

The exposition of the results is twofold: firstly, questions related to the profile of participants are addressed; secondly, responses specifically related to AVT, its quality and evaluation, are analysed.

4.1. *Personal profile*

Information has been divided into two parts: one describing the subjects and the other summarising their habits and tastes.

4.1.1. Identification

The most obvious question was in which year the students were enrolled. Even so, one of the 2U indicated that he or she was in his or her third year, perhaps because he or she had been on a student exchange (Erasmus) or had been held back in the previous year. The rest of the initiates stated that they

were in their second year, and all the apprentices responded that they were in their fourth year.

Given that the students came from different academic years, differences in the average age per group were expected. Table 1 shows the following indicators concerning the participants' ages: mean, minimum, maximum and range between the oldest and the youngest subjects.

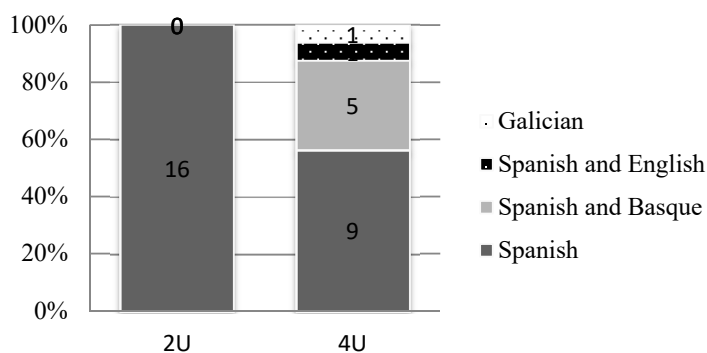
Table 1. Age

	2U	4U
Minimum	19.00	21.00
Maximum	40.00	22.00
Range	21.00	1.00
Mean	21.63	21.19

Taking only the mean, it may come as a surprise that initiates are older than apprentices. However, when the range is taken into account, 4U are a more homogeneous group than 2U; among the latter there is one subject aged 40 years old, one aged 23 and another aged 24, all of whom raise the group's average.

Figure 1 shows the results regarding the subjects' mother tongues.

Figure 1. Mother tongue

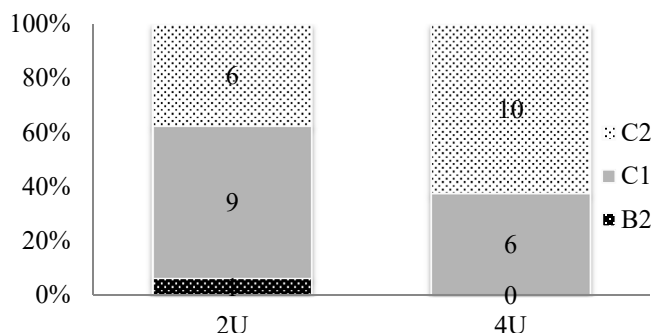


Both groups are rather homogeneous, although 2U shows a more consistent picture in this case. Apprentices include natives of Spanish, bilinguals with Basque and English and even a native speaker of Galician. The disparity between the two groups is rather surprising and unexpected, and could be due to an error in interpreting the questionnaire: 2U may have believed that they

should only mention one language, while 4U perhaps considered that they were allowed to indicate more than one.

The last question in this set deals with the subjects' levels of English: they took part in an English-Spanish practical translation course. Figure 2 shows the results per group.

Figure 2. English level



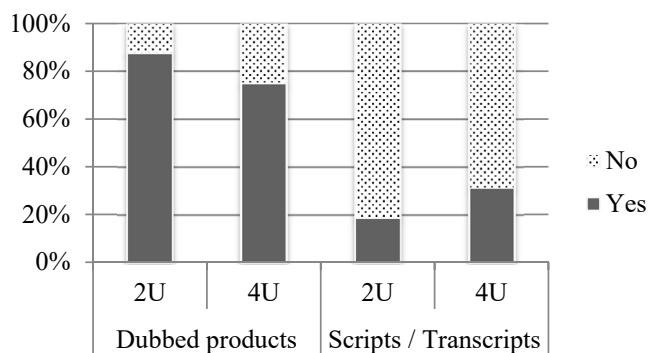
All subjects but 1 (from the group of initiates) had accredited at least a C1 level of English. The apprentices group included more subjects with a C2 level. A possible explanation for this gap is that some students might focus on obtaining the maximum English certification as they are enrolled in the degree in Translation and Interpreting.

In summary, the two groups showed comparable profiles typical of those expected for them as second- and fourth-year translation students, respectively. The only surprising data, given the context in which the questionnaire was circulated, is that none of the initiates presented themselves as bilingually literate in Spanish and Basque.

4.1.2. Habits and tastes

They were also asked about their habits. The aim was to find out whether they were used to watching dubbed films and series and reading scripts. Figure 3 illustrates the responses to these questions.

Figure 3. Habit of watching dubbed products and reading scripts



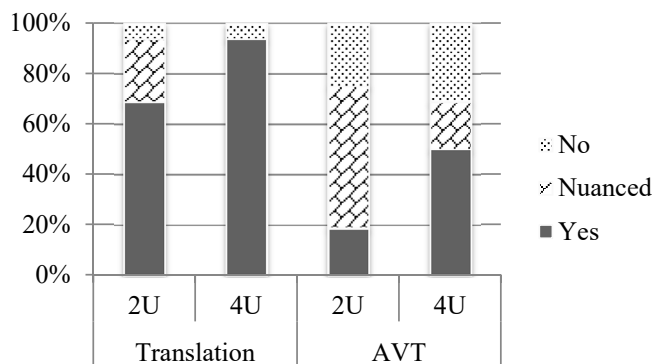
In both groups, most subjects said that they were used to watching dubbed films and series, but not to reading scripts or transcripts of them. There appears to be little difference between the two groups, although the habit of watching dubbed products was found to be more widespread among the initiates, and that of reading transcripts among the apprentices. This may be due to the fact that 4U had recently started working on AVT in class, so those answering yes could be referring to the experience gained in the academic environment.

Several students declared that they generally watched dubbed films in the cinema, but at home they preferred to watch series with subtitles. To some extent, the preference for the original version among translation students appears paradoxical. Even though it is important for budding translators to take advantage of audiovisual material to put into practice their language skills, moving away from dubbed material does not seem the best way to get used to the most widespread practices in the sector, to the dubbing conventions that, in some cases, they would have to internalise if they specialised in AVT.

In any event, they were specifically asked about their inclination towards becoming audiovisual translators in particular and translators in general. Their responses were sometimes inconclusive: that is why the category 'Nuanced' was introduced. Examples of responses categorised as 'Nuanced' include the following: "I'm not sure, but I think not"⁴ (subject 403), "I think so" (212), "It could be" (204) or "It attracts my attention a great deal, but until I experience it I won't know for sure" (201). Figure 4 presents the data per group.

4. Subjects expressed themselves in Spanish. Their comments have been translated into English by the researcher.

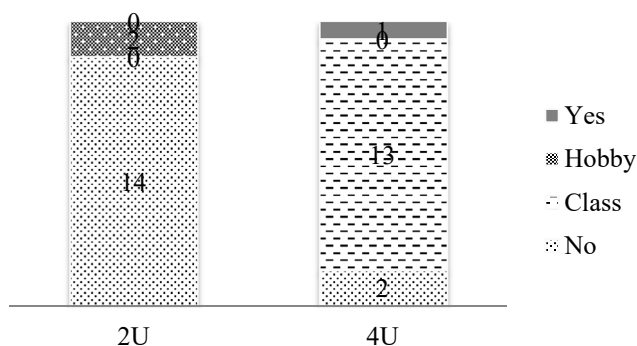
Figure 4. Inclination towards translation and AVT



2U show ambiguous or cautious responses to both questions more often than 4U. This is easy to understand: one of the functions of education is to help students realise whether they like what they are studying or not. In this sense, the apprentices seem much more confident than the initiates about both their inclination towards translation as a career (almost unanimous) and towards AVT (50%). It is therefore hardly surprising that there are fewer doubts about translation in general, since not all students may want to work as audiovisual translators. Either way, the number of students who express an inclination towards AVT is by no means insignificant: it makes full sense at a time when the leisure options offered by audiovisual media occupy a fundamental place for young people.

The last question which was useful for profiling the participants in this research concerned their prior experience in AVT. Yes / No responses were expected, but most subjects offered further explanations. Thus, two more categories were added to the binary ones: 'Class', for those who stated that they had gained experience in AVT in class (that is, in practical translation courses at the University); and 'Hobby', for those who said that they had subtitled YouTube videos or, in general, done AVT non-professionally for entertainment. Figure 5 shows the results for each group.

Figure 5. Prior experience in AVT



As expected, 2U do not have experience in AVT, though two of the students said that they had practised it for fun. The most common response among 4U is 'Class', but three respondents (one student who claimed to have experience and two who said that they did not) were reluctant to state categorically that they had experience in AVT. However, they may have wanted to show that they had already engaged in this type of translation, so they did not answer 'No' either.

4.2. AVT and quality

Now that the average profile of the participants has been outlined, the present section shows what both groups know and think about the profession of audio-visual translation, especially regarding the concepts of quality and assessment.

4.2.1. AVT work

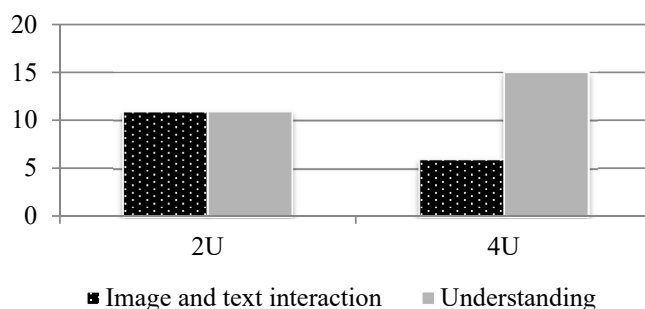
The questionnaire included questions related to two of the most common problems in AVT. The first is the need for the video as support for translation. All the subjects agreed that it was essential, except for two initiates. Even then, although they did not say that it was essential, they stated that when translating being able to see the video was 'advisable'.

The percentage of affirmative answers (which—as can be seen—was close to 100%) seems less interesting than the diverse justifications given by subjects for their responses. Some students referred to image and text interaction: lip synchrony, isochrony or kinetic synchrony. For instance, subject 202 stated "I think it is essential, so that later the synchrony is correct and the product remains natural". Other subjects commented on the understanding of the

original text, i.e. the importance of the context and the scenography in correctly interpreting the work. For example, subject 416 stated “Yes, because paralinguistic elements also come into play and can modify the translation”.

Figure 6 breaks down the responses by groups. It should be noted that not all subjects explained their responses and that some gave more than one explanation, so figures do not reflect the number of subjects but the number of references of each type.

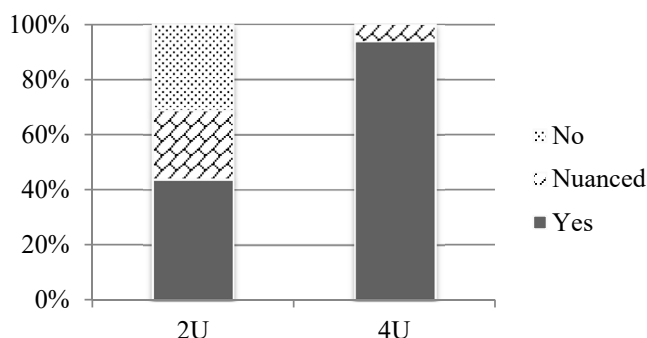
Figure 6. Importance of image for AVT



2U provide explanations of both types at the same level, but 4U—who also refer to both types—differ as regards the understanding of the original text, i.e. the importance of not leaving anything out during the translation process. Initiates seem to establish a direct link between AVT and synchrony. By contrast, apprentices may consider images as essential not only to produce a good synchrony but also, and above all, to obtain a complete translation of the audiovisual work. To sum up, both groups realise the importance of image and text interaction in AVT, but whereas 2U point more to technical difficulty 4U state that the interaction does not lie only on the technical surface but is more profound and affects the hermeneutics of the audiovisual product itself.

Another thorny, widely discussed question in the literature on dubbing is who should be in charge of synchronisation: the translators themselves or someone else. A question on this was included and the responses (as Figure 7 shows) differed from one group to the other.

Figure 7. Translation and synchronisation by the same person



Initiates did not express a consistent, expert opinion on the subject, as shown by the disparity of their responses. By contrast, apprentices were almost unanimous in answering that the translators themselves should be in charge of synchrony. This result might be due to a teaching effect, as 4U had begun to familiarise themselves with AVT in class.

Among those students who answered 'No', there are ambiguous explanations (some subjects suggested that "one person" should handle the task). The reasons given as to why the translators should be in charge of synchrony show initiates' lack of knowledge: only one of the 16 (subject 205) gave some kind of information: "they know how much time the subtitles occupy in connection with the audio". By contrast, apprentices had more to say in this regard: according to one subject, translators should handle synchronisation because they are trained to do so; two subjects argued that they are the only ones who know the two languages, and four more based their opinions on the idea that the translators have the best knowledge of the tasks and the texts to be translated.

4.2.2. Quality and assessment

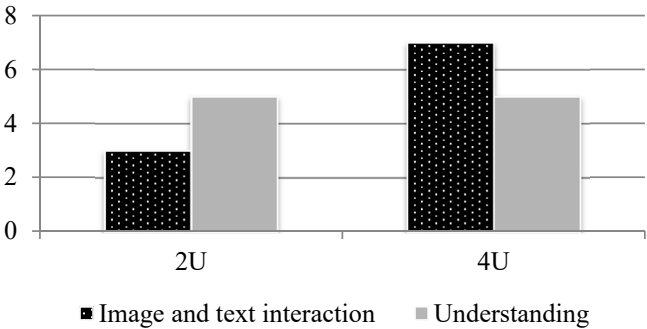
The remaining questions were about the assessment of audiovisual products and about the concept of quality in AVT. The first one is connected with the point illustrated by Figure 6, but in this case the purpose was to elicit the opinion of the students on whether the video was needed to assess the quality of AVT. Table 2 shows the results in percentage terms for each category:

Table 2. The importance of image for assessing audiovisual products

	Yes	Nuanced	No
2U	62.5	18.75	18.75
4U	81.25	18.75	0

Responses are classified as ‘Nuance’ when the subjects stated that having the video is not essential but recommended (for example, subject 201 declares “although not as important as in the case of translating it”). According to the participants, having the image is clearly important for assessing audiovisual products, but their responses are not as nearly unanimous as in the question about the importance of video in actually performing the AVT. Figure 8 shows the data grouped into the two main categories.

Figure 8. Importance of image for AVT assessment



It is in image and text interaction—more frequently indicated by the apprentices— that the largest gap between the two groups appears. Compared to Figure 6, it seems that students are aware of the importance of images for activities related to AVT, but with a difference: when translating, having the image is crucial above all to understand the text properly, so that all the information present in the original can be transferred to the translated product; conversely, when assessing the text, the image is especially important in order to verify that synchrony has been correctly achieved. Therefore, image-text interaction and understanding are two relevant aspects in the perception of AVT quality, but they play different roles depending on the task (translation or evaluation) performed.

Students were also asked who should assess audiovisual translations. The responses appear in Table 3, ordered from highest to lowest according to the total number of references made.

Table 3. Assessor

	2U	4U	Total
Translator	5	5	10
Viewers, audience	4	4	8
Bilingual or language specialist	0	8	8
Another translator	3	4	7
Dubber	4	1	5
Proof-reader	3	1	4
Director or dubbing director	2	2	4
The whole team or technical team	2	1	3
DK / NA	1	0	1
Critic	1	0	1
Scriptwriter	1	0	1
Producer	1	0	1
Film expert	0	1	1
Translation expert	0	1	1

Anecdotal responses aside, the item most frequently referred to is ‘Translator’, i.e. the same person who carried out the translation. ‘Viewer’ also appears quite frequently in both groups, as do ‘Another translator’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘Director’.

The most significant differences are found in the ‘Bilingual or language specialist’ category, which is only mentioned by the apprentices; in fact, it is the top answer by that group. The language variable is seen by 4U as a prerequisite that anyone who sets out to assess a translation should comply with. By contrast, 2U (more inexperienced) believe that the assessment must be done almost always by the same people who performed the work—with the audience being an exception, as it also plays an important role. In summary, initiates stand more for self-assessment (either individually or in groups), whereas apprentices more often refer to people who are a priori unconnected with the translation process, perhaps because the latter group are more used to having their work assessed and know the benefits of third-party assessment.

The last two questions are about the concept of quality in AVT. First, subjects were asked to order the three types of dischronies according to their severity, from 1 (lowest) to 3 (highest). Easy-to-understand descriptions were used for each type of dischrony. As a consequence, ‘lip’ asynchrony was explained as “does not coincide with the movement of the lips of the actors”; lack of ‘isochrony’ as “much longer or shorter than the actors’ speech”; and ‘kinetic’ asynchrony as “does not take into account the body movements of the actors”. In order to make the quantitative analysis easier, 1 point was awarded to the problem that the subjects considered least serious for dubbing, 3 points for the one considered most serious and 2 for the remaining one. Table 4 shows the average score for each problem per group, plus the mode or most repeated value.

Table 4. Importance of dischronies

	2U		4U	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Lip	2.07	2	1.80	2
Isochrony	2.47	3	2.53	3
Kinesic	1.47	1	1.67	2

Given these results, both groups seem to consider a lack of isochrony to be the most serious synchronisation problem in dubbed products; the two groups also coincide in pointing to a lack of kinetic isochrony as the least important problem. The only difference between the two groups is that the lack of kinetic synchrony almost always receives 1 point from the initiates and 2 from the apprentices, but the differences cannot be considered significant, especially when the mean is taken into account.

Finally, there was a question on what criteria should be used when assessing the quality of audiovisual products. This was an open-ended question, so the responses were later categorised as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Quality criteria for audiovisual products

	2U	4U	Total
Successful synchrony	10	12	22
Naturalness, adaptation to the target language	7	6	13
Accurate content	8	5	13
Tone or register preservation, orality, realism	4	6	10
Non-linguistic elements are taken into account	3	3	6
The translation itself	3	3	6
Cultural elements	1	4	5
Same function or purpose	2	1	3
Observation of technical conventions, segmentation	0	3	3
The same as for a play	1	0	1
Accurate language	0	1	1
Lexical choices	0	1	1
Consistency	0	1	1
Voice modulation and eloquence	0	1	1

Synchrony-linked criteria are the most widely mentioned by both groups, which demonstrates the significance of this factor for the assessment of AVT. In general, 4U mention a greater number of quality criteria, some of which—such as voice modulation and eloquence or segmentation—point to a better knowledge of the modality than is found among 2U. Apart from that, results are quite similar in the two groups. The biggest gap may be found in the good opinion that the initiates have about faithfulness in content or message, since the apprentices allude more to at least three criteria: synchrony (as discussed above), naturalness and orality.

It could be argued that what the students say about AVT quality provides important clues as to what they know about AVT; this would also explain why 4U point more to cultural aspects: they may already know from their experience in class that cultural differences are among the most common problems in dubbing. Conversely, 2U refer to more general phenomena, problems that are shared with other modalities—with the exception of synchrony, probably the most distinctive element of AVT for both apprentices and initiates.

5. Conclusions

This paper is a first approach to translation students' opinions about the concept of quality in AVT, particularly in dubbing.

Translation students are a suitable group for investigating issues related to the concept of expertise, because they represent consecutive learning stages, so it is easy to see how they internalise knowledge. Moreover, they respond well to questionnaires as they are more than used to them. Researching quality in AVT means emphasising those aspects that distinguish this modality: thus, a study of what translation students think about the concept must start from the controversial points that are usually found in AVT literature.

Synchrony is perhaps the most prominent aspect in studies of dubbing. This is reflected in the responses of students, who also confirm the second hypothesis: for them, a lack of isochrony is the most serious error regarding synchrony. This opinion cannot be due solely to the recommendation of their teachers, since 2U—who have a more intuitive knowledge and as yet no training in AVT—state exactly the same as 4U.

The two groups do differ as regards knowledge of the profession (also linked to synchrony): for example, apprentices believe that synchronisation and translation should be done by the same person, whereas the initiates' responses are more varied. In general, this lack of clarity or security in the responses from 2U has been the trend throughout the analysis. This in turn confirms the fourth hypothesis set out in Section 3.

The third hypothesis is also confirmed, given that translation students are clear as to the importance of images and video when working with audiovisual products. The most interesting result in this regard is the difference shown between the explanations put forward, which reflects how the subjects' knowledge and opinion evolves during the degree. 2U need the image basically for technical reasons, but 4U give more profound reasons. The other question concerning image and text interaction emphasises the role of the former also for AVT assessment, and suggests that video is especially useful in checking the success of synchronisation. This contrasts with the translation stage, where video is helpful in ensuring the complete transfer of the original contents—including those not contained within the text but emerging from the image and text interaction.

Participants were also asked who should assess audiovisual products. Once again, their responses confirm that apprentices know more than initiates; the data collected also reinforce the essential role of viewers, who are more than qualified to issue quality judgements about dubbed products.

This study is probably most useful in demonstrating that translation students can provide significant opinions on the concept of AVT quality, even though they are not experts in the field. Apart from the fact that the concept has a pedagogical value per se, translation students seem an interesting group for research, because they are far removed from the passive receptor model which, according to Díaz-Cintas (2003: 44), is typical in dubbed products, and thus—just like audiences for subtitled products—they are able to assess and criticise. This evolution from passive to active receptors in a dubbing assessment exercise is made possible by the subjects' knowledge not only of the languages concerned but also of the profession. What is more, this expertise makes translation students suitable informants for assessing dubbing because, again as per Díaz-Cintas (2003: 70), the audience sometimes does not have the knowledge required to assess audiovisual products.

All in all, it has to be said that some questions may not have been well formulated, as the results at times differed atypically across the two groups; this is the case, for example, of the question on mother tongue. In view of the few differences found between the personal information on the two groups, it is perhaps questionable whether the corresponding section should be included in the questionnaire. An exception is the level of English, as the responses clearly show that participants keep learning as they advance through their degree.

The questions about students' inclination towards the profession were intended to provide data for confirming or rejecting the first hypothesis. In that regard, it is true that apprentices' responses show less insecurity, which could be explained by metacognitive reasons and maturity, i.e. to the level of expertise achieved probably thanks to the learning accumulated during the degree. A final self-criticism related to the nature of the questions is that intermediate categories (for example, 'Nuance') had to be introduced in some cases. This suggests that the questionnaire should have included closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions have both advantages and disadvantages, but if the questionnaire had combined both types the data collected would probably have been more accurate. In any case, this would have meant an extra workload for participants, which could have discouraged them from answering.

Future initiatives might analyse more carefully the habits and tastes of budding audiovisual translators. Their preference for audiovisual products in their original languages seems particularly striking, as it takes them away from the professional conventions that they will have to familiarise themselves with if they aim to work in translation for dubbing, as many indicated in the questionnaire that they wished to do. This result raises a new question about the sociological reality of the sector: do professional audiovisual translators

watch dubbed rather than subtitled products in their spare time? However, the paper opens the door to collecting the opinions on dubbing quality of other agents with an interest in the activity, such as translation teachers, professional translators, dubbing studios and producers and as the potential addressees of translated audiovisual products.

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BIONOTE / BIONOTA

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Annex: Questionnaire⁵*Code:*

	QUESTION	RESPONSE
1	Do you think that being able to see the video is essential for the translation of audiovisual products? Explain your answer.	
2	And for assessing their quality? Explain your answer.	
3	Who should assess the quality of dubbing?	
4	Is it the translator's responsibility to match text and image?	
5	Order from 1 (lowest) to 3 (highest) which of the following you consider most detrimental for dubbing quality: a) when dubbing does not coincide with the movement of the actors' lips; b) when the dubbed audio is much longer or shorter than the actors' speech; c) when the actors' body movements are not taken into account.	
6	What criteria should be used to assess AVT quality?	
7	Do you usually watch dubbed films and series?	
8	Do you usually read scripts or transcripts?	
9	Indicate which year you are enrolled in.	
10	Do you have experience as an audiovisual translator? Explain your answer.	
11	Do you have an inclination towards translation as a career ?	
12	And towards AVT translation ?	
13	Had you already watched any of the scenes that you had to assess? Which ones?	
14	Indicate your age .	
15	Indicate your level of English (C2, C1, B2, B1, etc.)	
16	Indicate your mother tongue .	

5. The original questionnaire was in Spanish.