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'A prompt box': The profile of Polish official audiovisual translators

Abstract. As audiovisual productions are becoming increasingly popular, the need for specialized translators in this field is growing. This study aims to create a profile of a typical Polish audiovisual translator who officially delivers commissioned renditions for clients. The study reports the results of an online survey with 56 questions in seven domains to gather data from the intended research group. The domains covered basic information, educational background, actual translation education, individual ways of mastering audiovisual translation skills, translators' preferences, workspace, and aspects of teamwork. The results of the profile indicate that audiovisual translation is the predominant type of work for an average Polish translator. However, those who graduated in foreign languages had no opportunity to attend ATV courses at university. Most translators had not completed any translation-oriented postgraduate studies or specialized translation courses, but preferred a less institutionalized form of self-education. The average translator delivers target subtitles but also provides other types of AVT, in a majority of renditions from English into Polish. SubtitleEdit is the most commonly used translation tool, while CAT tools and online services like Google Translate are avoided. Translators tend to work alone but cooperate with external proofreaders. This profile can help establish specialized profiles for other domains of translation and compare them in cross-linguistic, national or cultural contexts.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, official translation, translator, translation education, sociology of translation.

1. Introduction

Even though it might sound quite controversial, the COVID-19 pandemic has had one positive consequence: an increase in readership in Poland has been observed, as books and other written 'guilty pleasures' have become mainly more time-accessible due to the

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shift towards remote working (Chymkowski & Zasacka 2021: 2). Still, however, the main sources for establishing contact with cultural achievements are computers and TVs. In 2020 over 90% of all households in Poland had access to the Internet, which has become a new wide window on the world (Wegner 2020: 24). In the modern digital world, the consumption of online services has proliferated even more and they are available to a great majority of users, and their accessibility transcends audiences and language barriers. Thanks to several emerging streaming services (Netflix, Disney+, HBO GO, etc.), consumers are placed at the centre of interest. At the same time, a variety of viewers using distinct source languages, having individual needs and personal preferences towards favoured productions delivered in various modes of audiovisual translation (AVT), dictate the shape of the audiovisual market and other correlated fields, including translation. This unquestionable emphasis on the viewers, their importance and relevance, is also reflected in recent Polish studies focusing on AVT. Łabendowicz (2019) focuses primarily on the viewing styles, preferences and expectations of the Polish audience. Other current publications delivered by Polish scholars cover mainly the theoretical background of AVT and possible research areas within the field (e.g. Tryuk 2009; Bogucki 2013; Tomaszkiewicz 2015), focus on different issues correlated with media accessibility (e.g. Bogucki & Deckert 2020; Szarkowska 2009), discuss various current trends in AVT (see Organ 2019) or investigate various linguistic and cultural aspects of audiovisual productions (e.g. Rębkowska 2016; Garcarz 2007). Far less attention has been paid to the translators and their professional practice in the Polish audiovisual market. One of the studies covering this area of interest was conducted by Jankowska (2014), who investigated the situation of the professional AVT market in Poland in terms of translators' wages, working conditions, etc. However, her study was conducted at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010, and since then the Polish audiovisual market has experienced several phases of development and undergone fundamental changes, for instance caused by the emergence of streaming services and the popularization of other translation modes, such as subtitles and dubbing, previously less frequently commissioned by employers. Also, new generations of audiovisual translators have entered the market, new technological advances have allowed them to deliver translations faster and more conveniently, and, finally, the educational, audiovisual and translation markets are now in different places and shape than nearly a decade ago. A slightly different angle of research was undertaken by Szpilman and Hasior (2020), who aimed to practically verify the European Master's in Translation competence framework and the professional practice of audiovisual translators. A short overview of translators' competencies was sketched by Dąmbska-Prokop (2000: 109–10), and more specifically of audiovisual translators' hard and soft skills by Jankowska (2012). Garcarz and Widawski (2009) placed the audiovisual translator at the centre of attention as the authors considered the translator to be a creator and material in the process of translation, whereas

other studies take the translators into consideration within more niche fields like fundubbing.

There is no scarcity of international research into audiovisual translators. For instance, Vulpoiu's (2021) survey concentrated on the competencies of translators in Romania, whereas in Finland Ruokonen and Makisalo (2018) examined the professional status of translators. Outside Europe, a profile of audiovisual translators was, for instance, described by Qanbar (2020), who specifically analysed female audiovisual translators working in the Arabic context (Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and the Emirates), and by Tor-Carroggio and Casas-Tost (2020), who limited their scope to the profile of translators providing audio-descriptions in China. Other niche-based studies focusing on audiovisual translators tend to focus on translations delivered by specific groups of translators, for instance unofficial translators (see Pérez-González 2019), on translators who deliver target texts in a given mode of AVT, for instance subtitlers (see Tuominen 2018), or on translators who provide mediation services for audiences with special needs, for instance professionals preparing audio descriptions for people with impaired vision (see Perego 2022).

A very general outline of the above-mentioned sources suggests a need for further research on audiovisual translators, especially to offer an insight into the work of the professionals "hidden inside the prompt box", who provide the "voices" of the characters presented on the screen. In this study, emphasis is put on the group of specialists whose work allows the audience to enjoy audiovisual productions, regardless of their origin and the language used, namely on the professionals who provide AVT in Poland. It is my purpose to outline the current profile of *Polish official audiovisual translators*, hereinafter: POAVT. The statistical data acquired in the course of the conducted survey allows the profile of a POAVT to be outlined based on the most common responses given by the respondents in each of the covered categories (including their educational background, translation education, translation preferences, the way of mastering audiovisual translation skills, preferred translators' workspace and aspects of team work). The profile, in this particular case, is then a way of depicting an average POAVT, with an approximation of a typical professional translator who officially delivers AVT in Poland. In this sense, the profile can serve as a generalised representation of agents, in this case translators who play a crucial role in the specialized domain of AVT, and, as such, offers an opportunity to 'provide a peek' into the professional career of audiovisual translators. The profile depicted in the study may also be perceived as a summary or a 'shortcut' serving as a guide for those interested in the profession of audiovisual translator (for instance, to seek some advice from professionals who perform work in their desired profession), workers of higher education institutions teaching translation (for example, to adjust their translation curricula to include observations made in the course of the analysis), state and private educational institutions (for instance, to find an educational

niche), any specialists doing translator-oriented research focusing on the market of audiovisual translation (for instance, the role of the translator in the field), etc.

The conducted research follows current trends in translation studies, especially in the sociology of translation, and refers to the need for further investigation of translators themselves and their habitus (see Vorderobermeier 2014). It also stands in line with the observation made by Schögler (2017: 405), who noted that the sociology of translation 'continues to shape translator training and professional self-perception of translators by revealing the complexities of this endeavour'. Taking this into account, the results of the undertaken study may be perceived both as a signal or indication for professionals responsible for shaping and directing translation curricula, especially at the level of the higher-education system and beyond, and for translators themselves, for whom the profile serves as a representation of their 'self-reflection in the mirror' of the translation market. Therefore, the outcome opens possibilities for further research that takes into account issues such as AVT as a profession, professionalization or professional development of audiovisual translators, the place of translators in 'the chain of production', etc. Examining translators 'through a magnifying glass', in this case Polish audiovisual translators, follows Sapiro's (2014: 83) statement that 'the study of translators and interpreters as an occupational group is […] an emerging research domain which opens up to comparative approaches between countries and between different translational activities'. For that reason, the acquired profile may be used as a tool for further comparison of different groups of translators, for instance the profiles of official and unofficial translators, translators specializing in different fields, etc., and offers the possibility of a contrastive juxtaposition of translators performing analogous tasks in different countries, language groups, cultures, etc. Furthermore, the presented study complies with Zheng's (2017: 31) suggestion to deliver more empirical research on 'what translators actually do and say they do in the widest possible contexts of their professional practice'. This context allows further examination of the profile, especially in terms of capturing the 'self-representation' of the translators at a given point in time and its reassessment in the future or its continuous re-examination to provide data for specialists aiming to take account of the 'shape' of the profession in a larger frame of reference. It also contributes to making translation studies more 'translator aware' by helping audiovisual translators to 'get out of the prompt box' and reveal themselves to a wider public.

Additionally, the presented study complies with my previous analogous research focusing on Polish unofficial audiovisual translators (Organ 2021) and as such, it constitutes an element of a multiphase description of the AVT market in Poland, and especially the profile of translators who specialize in this field, both official and unofficial ones. Therefore, the outcome of the conducted survey might be utilized as reference material for further exploration of the profession, comparison of the specificity of the translators and their profile with corresponding groups of foreign and domestic

specialists, and form a basis for the representatives of the translation and educational market.

2. Purposes and Methodology

The main purpose of the study is to create a POAVT profile based on the 'voices' expressed by the translators themselves. The profile then aims to approximate a typical Polish audiovisual translator who officially provides renditions of audiovisual materials for their clients. The presented 'image' focuses on the translators in question and seeks to represent them by depicting a collective representation summarized in the form of a prototypical 'archetype' of a POAVT. The 'archetypical' profile is formed as a conclusion of the study based on the examination of the research group, which encompasses seven main categories of interest, namely: 1) basic information intended to introduce the research group (for example, to determine the age, sex, place of work, dominant occupation, main source of income, etc.); 2) educational background, aimed at depicting the 'portfolio' of the higher education of translators (for instance, to determine in which fields they have graduated or are studying, where have they studied, what type of higher education institution they have attended, etc.); 3) actual translation education, describing translators participation in institutionalized forms of translator training (for example, to determine the specialization covered within the system of higher education, translation courses included in the curricula of their studies, time devoted to AVT within POAVT's studies, courses and postgraduate studies, participation in postgraduate translation studies and other courses, etc.); 4) individual mastering of AVT skills in non-institutionalized forms of self-education (for example, to determine if the translators individually use any textbooks, coursebooks or other written sources focusing on AVT, how they master their AVT skills, the average duration of professional practice of POAVTs, the number of delivered translations and their productivity, etc.); 5) translators' preferences regarding carrying out AVT to express their own predilections (for instance, to determine translators' inclinations towards the most commonly rendered types of audiovisual productions, their genres and origin, favoured modes of AVT, etc.); 6) translators' workspace, outlining the technicalities of their work (for instance, to determine the types of software applied in the process of AVT, etc.); 7) aspects of team work (for instance, to determine the way in which commissioned audiovisual projects are handled, whether translators cooperate with other agents in this process, if they are members of larger translation teams or groups, how they solve potential difficulties encountered in their translations, etc.). The data collected serve as a basis for the establishment of a profile a POAVT.

As already mentioned, the creation of the profile is based on a survey carried out among POAVTs. The online survey was conducted in 2020 and the first six months of 2021, and was posted on various discussion forums and popular social networking

services gathering Polish audiovisual translators. Within the eighteen months, 47 translators agreed to take part in the study and complete the questionnaire. Although the number of participants could have been higher, the subject matter and specificity of the investigated profession at least partially explain the respondents' involvement in the conducted study (out of 112 participants who entered the online survey, 47 completed it, whereas 65 failed to do so). Audiovisual translators form an inner group within the translation profession; as their work predominantly involves constant use of computers, the Internet and specialized software, they may not be particularly willing to spend additional time working with any extra activities involving the tools that they use to earn their living, as they could spend this time on their actual translation tasks, or taking a break from their duties, etc. As mentioned before, the number of respondents is also limited due to the assumed specialization within the translation profession, as professional audiovisual translators constitute a small minority among Polish translators. Therefore, the data provided by the survey may be treated as an outline approximating the present general profile of POAVTs.

The conducted survey encompassed 56 questions, which concentrated on such issues as the respondents' previous education, particularly correlated with translation and their potential participation in different courses and classes devoted to the field, the source of their translation skills and knowledge and plans for their further broadening, professional career and translation experience, the most frequently rendered types and genres of audiovisual productions, software applied in the translation process, cooperation with employers, translators, proofreaders and other specialists involved in the translation process, etc. The information provided by the translators is grouped into seven fundamental categories discussing basic information about the POAVTs, their educational background, translation training, the way in which they hone their translation skills, favoured types of translations, the tools used in their work, and team work.

3. Basic information

Overall, 47 translators took part in the survey, three-quarters (74.5%) of whom were women and one-quarter (25.5%) men, which reflected the female domination in terms of the AVT market share. Interestingly, the participation of males, namely one-quarter of all respondents, seems to roughly resemble the landscape of gender share present at Polish university departments training translators of foreign languages. The age range is far more diversified; however, certain tendencies are also observable. POAVTs are mostly relatively young adults, as 36.2% and 29.8% of them are, respectively, between 25–30 and 31–40 years old. Additionally, 10.6% of the POAVTs are just beginning their professional career, as they have just entered the market because they qualify for the 18–24 age category. Similarly to the youngest group of translators, two age categories have a similar share of the market, namely 10.6% assigned themselves to the group of

51–60 years old, and 8.5% to the group of 41–50 years old. Only 4.3% declared themselves to be over 60 years old, and none of the translators are underaged (in Poland below 18 years old).

When it comes to the place of work, a general tendency might be observed which places translators mainly in larger cities, as three-quarters (74.5%) work in cities inhabited by more than 200,000 people. A large part of those surveyed tend to work either in cities or smaller towns, 4.3% in cities inhabited by 100,000–200,000 people, 4.3% in places ranging between 50,000–100,000 inhabitants, 4.3% in towns inhabited by 25,000–50,000 dwellers and 2.1% in a town between 5,000–25,000 inhabitants. The remaining group work in smaller towns and other places, as 4.3% have their jobs in places ranging between 1000–5000 dwellers and 6.4% in villages inhabited by less than one thousand people. More than half of them (59.6%) work in central Poland, nearly one-fifth (19.1%) in southern Poland, 6.4% in western Poland, 4.3% in northern Poland, 2.1% in eastern Poland, and 8.5% work abroad. The layout of declared locations seems to reflect the actual demand for AVTs, as this type of work is generally commissioned by larger companies that place their head offices mostly in densely populated cities, offering at the same time easier access to a large group of professional translators.

The POAVTs represent different professional careers. Among them, nearly three-quarters (72.3%) predominantly work as translators, 14.9% declared themselves as white-collar workers, 6.4% as teachers of foreign languages, 6.4% as representatives of other professions, and none of them classified themselves as a blue-collar worker. The observable predominance of professional translators is partially reflected by the main source of income: in this matter, AVT serves as the main source of earnings for nearly half of all respondents (46.8%), 12.8% of the POAVTs found it difficult to estimate the share of AVT in their income, and 40.4% see this type of translation as a minor source of their earnings. Having briefly covered some basic introductory information on the specificity of the group, the analysis will move forward to their educational background.

4. Educational background

The second category of questions investigated the educational background of the translators: in terms of higher education, a great majority of the POAVTs have either graduated or are studying different fields of humanities, predominantly related to foreign languages. Slightly less than one-third of all the translators, namely 30.9%, have graduated in foreign languages other than English or are continuing their education at the university level in this field. One-fourth (25.5%) of the surveyed are studying or have graduated from English studies, and nearly one-fifth (18.2%) applied linguistics. Only 3.6% of the translators chose Polish studies, and 14.5% other fields of humanities. The remaining group of respondents have graduated or are studying different fields, including arts (1.8%), exact or natural sciences (1.8%), social sciences (1.8%), etc. Here,

a general tendency might be observed, as it is no surprise that three-quarters of all translators have some university-level educational background related to studying foreign languages.

Taking into scope the university education and administrative division of Poland, almost half of all the translators (49%) have studied or are studying in the Masovian Voivodeship (province), 5.9% in each of the following voivodeships: Greater Poland, Lesser Poland and Lublin. 3.9% of the translators declared for each of the Silesian, Kuyavian-Pomeranian and Lower Silesian Voivodeships, whereas Pomeranian, Subcarpathian, Opole, Łódź and Lubusz were indicated by 2% of the translators each. 11.8% of the POAVTs have graduated or are studying abroad. The data suggest that most audiovisual translators have studied in the region where the capital of Poland is located, namely Warsaw, which offers a variety of different prestigious higher education institutions associated with studying foreign languages.[2]

The declared type of higher education institution which the surveyee has graduated from or is studying at presents an almost standardized path of educational career usually associated with professions focusing on foreign languages, as more than four-fifths (86.3%) of the surveyed selected universities, and only 5.9% academies, 3.9% other higher education colleges, 2% a teacher-training colleges and 2% a technical university.

5. Translation education

Having discussed some basic information concerning educational background in general terms, more emphasis was placed on the respondents' actual translation education and background. Interestingly, the scene of AVT in Poland is divided almost into two in terms of covered specialization within the system of higher education. During the study, almost half of the respondents (51.1%) declared that they have graduated in or are still studying a translation specialization, whereas the rest of the translators (48.9%) selected some other paths in their educational careers. Taking into account that most of the surveyed declared that their higher education studies were or are focused on foreign languages, the respondents were asked if they have completed or are continuing any translation courses included in the curricula of their studies. A vast majority of the surveyed, namely 83%, confirmed having finished or attended such a course, and only 17% had not been taught such subjects within their studies. In terms of AVT courses, nearly one-third (28.9%) had not studied any university courses in this field. The remaining group experienced considerable diversity when it comes to such courses, as many as 18.9% had workshops entirely devoted to subtitling and 17.8% attended

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2 Ranking of Polish universities issued in 2021 by *Perspektywy*: `http://ranking.perspektywy.pl/2021/ranking/ranking-kierunkow-studiow/kierunki-humanistyczne/filologia-angielska`; `http://ranking.perspektywy.pl/2021/ranking/ranking-kierunkow-studiow/kierunki-humanistyczne/filologie-obce`; accessed on 26.01.2022.

lectures in different aspects of AVT. Classes specializing in audio-description and voice-over were declared by equal groups of 12.2% of the translators, whereas courses focusing on dubbing were indicated by 8.9% of the respondents. Additionally, 1.1% reported having studied a different university AVT course. In terms of time devoted to AVT within POAVT's studies, courses and postgraduate studies, most workshops and lectures were typically limited to 30h (21.3%). 3 groups of 8.5% of the respondents indicated either 60h, 180h or more than 240h, whereas 2 groups of 4.3% of the translators covered 90h or 240h. A great majority of the respondents (87.2%) stated that they are familiarized with the elements of translation theory, whereas the remaining POAVTs were uncertain of their knowledge in this field.

The Polish system of higher education offers a supplementary level of improving one's professional qualifications, namely postgraduate studies, usually lasting approximately 2 or 3 semesters. As postgraduate studies are frequently chosen by people who want to update and broaden their knowledge, master their skills or acquire new qualifications, the survey first asked the POAVTs if they had participated in any postgraduate translation studies. Here, most of the surveyed (78.7%) admitted not having completed any such studies, only one-fifth (21.3%) had attended them, and none of the respondents are currently continuing their education as a student of translation postgraduate studies. Interestingly, the previously declared participation in postgraduate translation studies turned out to be greatly focused on AVT, as the same group of 21.3% of the translators specified the subject matter of their studies to be concentrating on this field of translation studies.

Apart from different levels of the system of higher education, translators may also improve their skills thanks to various courses; however, similarly to the postgraduate courses, three-quarters of the POAVTs (74.5%) have not completed any. Only one-fifth of the respondents (21.3%) took part in such training courses, and 4.3% are currently participating in them. The plans for further education are formulated by one-fourth of all translators: 16.3% wish to take part in an AVT training course, and 8.2% in postgraduate studies specializing in this field. The remaining respondents have already completed such courses or studies (20.4%) or have not and are not interested in them (55.1%).

6. Mastering audiovisual translation skills

Studying and mastering AVT may also take a more individual form, especially due to the overall deficiency of specialized courses covering different aspects of this field in Poland, as most of them are organized by just a few Polish higher education institutions (Organ 2017: 110). In this view, gaining experience in actual professional practice and using other specialized sources to broaden one's knowledge may be viewed as the translators' attempts to improve their AVT skills. Therefore, the next group of questions investigated whether they had individually used any textbooks, coursebooks or other

written sources focusing on this field. Interestingly, four-fifths (80.9%) of all the translators had used such materials, only 14.9% had not and were not interested in them, and 4.3% had not studied them but were still looking for some useful sources. Improving one's skills may further be based on other aspects and sources correlated with actual translation practice, so taking this into account, the translators were asked how they mostly master AVT skills. Most commonly, the pieces of advice and comments given by other translators are perceived to be a valuable means of improving one's qualifications, as this option was indicated in 32.8% of the answers. Both the advice given by users of their translations and various translation sourcebooks are also valued by the POAVTs, as these answers were equally selected by two equal groups of respondents, each constituting 16.8% of the surveyed. Marginally fewer answers were given to other online materials related to AVT; this option was selected by 16% of the translators. On the other hand, special online training videos covering different aspects of AVT are considered valid for one's professional development by 8.8% of the translators, whereas some other types of sources are applied by 1.6% of the respondents. Additionally, only 0.8% of the translators have not found such materials but they are looking for them, whereas 6.4% solely focus on their tasks, draw on the experience of previous translations, and do not look for any additional means of improving their translation skills.

As mentioned, experience may be perceived as a valuable asset in the hands of skilful translators, and therefore the next question investigated the average duration of professional practice of POAVTs. Most of them, namely 36.2%, had worked so far from 2 to 5 years, nearly one-third of the translators (29.8%) are truly experienced as they had been providing translations for more than 10 years, and 17% for more than 5 but less than 10 years. The remaining group is less experienced, as 12.8% had worked for up to 2 years, and 4.3% had just started their professional translation career and worked for less than 1 year.

Experience in providing AVTs increases with every subsequent commission, and thus the survey also investigated the number of delivered translations. In this view, the POAVTs are rather experienced translators, as one-third of them (31.9%) had rendered more than 100 movies, slightly less than one-fifth (17%) had provided so far from 20 to 50 AVTs, and 6.4% had delivered 50–100 target versions of such materials. On the other hand, the remaining group have less experience in this field, as 14.9% had rendered from 5 to 10 films, 12.8% from 1 to 5 movies, and 8.5% from 10 to 20 target versions of commissioned movies. In terms of series rendition, the respondents proved to be rather experienced translators, as more than half of them (53.2%) had rendered more than 100 episodes of different series, 8.5% had delivered from 20 to 50 episodes, and 6.4% from 50 to 100 such translations. Less experienced translators of series constitute a minority: 12.8% had rendered so far from 10 to 20 episodes, 6.4% from 1 to 5, and 4.3% from 5 to 10. Similarly to other types of audiovisual productions, slightly more than one-fourth of

all translators (27.7%) had delivered more than 100 target TV programmes and other shows, nearly one-fifth (17%) from 50 to 100 such renditions, and 6.4% from 20 to 50 translations of this type. Less experience in this matter is declared by nearly one-quarter of the POAVTs (21.3%), who had translated from 10 to 20 such audiovisual productions, 6.4% had rendered from 5 to 10, and 12.8% from 1 to 5 TV programmes and other shows. Interestingly, 8.5% of the translators had not translated at all at least one of the mentioned types of productions.

In order to estimate the general productivity of translators, they were asked how many audiovisual renditions they usually provide per month. More than 10 target versions are normally delivered by one-third of the POAVTs (31.9%), from 8 to 10 translations by one-fifth (19.1%), 2.1% translate 7 or 8 audiovisual productions, and 6.4% 5 or 6 such materials. Far fewer commissions are finished by roughly 40% of translators as one-fifth of them (21.3%) usually complete 3 or 4 renditions, and almost the same share of them (19.1%) provide 1 or 2 renditions per month. Time is a valuable asset for each translator, as the majority of commissions are generally accompanied with a deadline that needs to be met, and thus one's experience, skills, pace of work, one's qualifications and professionalism may determine the average time needed to render a given audiovisual production. Translation of a movie usually takes 1 or 2 days, as this option was indicated by more than half of the respondents (55.3%). For one-third of them (34%), 3 to 4 days is a typical time period in which they finalize the rendition of an average movie, and 2.1% need from 5 to 7 days to complete their task. Episodes of different series, typically shorter productions, generally need less effort; this observation is confirmed by the survey, as nearly half of them (46.8%) finalize the rendition of an episode in 1 or 2 working days, and 44.7% need even less time as they complete such translations in approximately 5 hours. Rendition of TV programmes and shows on average requires a similar amount of time as the translation of episodes of different series. Here, half of them (48.9%) complete such tasks in 1 or 2 days and nearly one-fourth (23.4%) in about 5 hours. Only a small part of them need some more time, as 8.5% translate such shows in 3 or 4 days, and 2.1% usually finalize their commissions in 5 or 7 days.

7. Translation preferences

Thanks to their translation experience, personal inclinations, preferred style of working, employers' demands and other factors, translators form their own preferences regarding carrying out AVT. Thus, the survey also investigated such issues as the most commonly rendered types of audiovisual productions, their genres and origin, favoured modes of AVT, etc., and the collected data outline the translation preferences and correlated market demands. Most commonly the POAVTs translate foreign movies and series. The first option was indicated by 37.1% of the respondents, whereas the latter one by nearly one-third of them (31.4%). Additionally, other foreign TV programmes were

rendered by one-fifth of the translators (21%). Interestingly, the podium of most translated types of audiovisual productions went to foreign, non-Polish materials, while domestic ones are far less popular in terms of their translation as Polish movies were indicated by 5.7% of all the translators, Polish series by 2.9% and other Polish TV programmes by 1.9%. Knowing more general translation preferences, it is worth investigating the issue in greater detail. Here, the scene of the most popularly translated genres of audiovisual productions presents a truly diversified portfolio. The following list hierarchically enumerates the most translated genres, from the most to the least popular ones, along with the percentage share of the translators who declared that they render such materials. Therefore, the most popular genres are: documentaries, selected by 12.4% of the translators; comedies of manners (10%); comedies (8.5%); dramas (8.1%); family (6.6%); historical (5.8%); animated (5.4%); suspense (5.4%); adventure (4.6%); biographical (4.6%); action (4.2%); science-fiction (4.2%); thrillers (3.5%); fantasy (3.1%); costume (2.7%); horror (2.3%); disaster (1.9%); musicals (1.9%); war (1.5%); sport (1.5%), and others by 1.5%. Modern audiovisual productions, both TV series and programmes as well as movies, are currently frequently published in the form of larger series or continuations which tend to refer to previous episodes or films, and therefore the POAVTs were asked if they specialize in translating one series, or the subsequent parts of movie series or programmes. It turns out that the vast majority (68.1%) do not specialize in such continual translations, for nearly one-fifth (19.1%) it is difficult to give a clear answer, and only 12.8% tend to perform such renditions. Moreover, the respondents were asked if they had been responsible for providing translations of further instalments of audiovisual productions, and here the answers are diversified. 40.4% of the translators stated that it depends on the agreement with their employers, almost the same number of respondents (38.3%) denied being accountable for such translations, and one-fifth (21.3%) reported having an agreement with their employers obliging them to work on the next parts. Providing prime quality translations may also be correlated with one's preferences and liking for a given title, type of production, etc., and thus the POAVTs were asked if they considered themselves to be true fans of the audiovisual materials they had rendered. Over half of them (61.7%) view themselves as fans but not of all of the productions they translate, one-fifth (21.3%) do not perceive themselves in this fashion, for 14.9% it is difficult to determine, and only 2.1% believe themselves to be a true fan of the series, movies and other programmes which they translate.

Translation preferences may also encompass different modes of AVT. According to the survey, translators most commonly deliver subtitles, as this form was indicated by more than half of respondents (61.7%), nearly one-third (29.8%) mostly produce texts for voice-over versions of source materials, only 2.1% of the translators predominantly provide texts for dubbing, and 6.4% some other forms of AVT. As subtitles were indicated as the most popular mode of translation, the respondents were also asked whether

they had also delivered other forms of AVT apart from subtitling. Here, nearly four-fifths (78.7%) of the POAVTs answered affirmatively, 17% solely translate subtitles, and 4.3% for now only focus on subtitling but also plan to carry out other modes of AVT.

AVT offers various solutions for people struggling with different difficulties and limitations, such as providing some additional information for the hard-of-hearing and hearing-impaired audience, and thus the translators were asked if they had sought to add such supplementary aids. Here, the situation is simple: if the employer demands such solutions, they are applied by the respondents, whereas when such requirements are not directly stated no extra beneficial aspects are proposed for the text of translation.

Being an audiovisual translator does not necessarily mean that one has to deliver only AVT, and therefore it was deemed necessary to investigate the actual share of the most commonly produced forms of translation. As the survey was directed at POAVTs, not surprisingly AVT was placed on the pedestal as this form of translation was indicated to be the basis of one's translation activity by more than half of all respondents (63.8%). Further, nearly one-third of all answers took written translation (31.9%), interpreting (2.1%) and other forms of translations (2.1%).

The direction of delivered translations might be considered from the perspective of market needs, the condition of national cinematography, its central or peripheral status, as well as the "market productivity" index, but also by translators' skills and their inclinations and their own preferences. In this view, most POAVTs translate foreign productions into Polish, rather than render domestic audiovisual materials for the needs of foreign audiences. Here, the first option was indicated by 55.3% of the translators, whereas the latter one was selected by a slightly smaller group of 44.7% of the respondents. To supplement it, an additional question asked whether the surveyed translate into foreign languages other than English. A vast majority of three-quarters (74.5%) negatively answered this question. Additionally, 10.6% also do not translate into other foreign languages but plan to do so. Only 14.9% of the respondents provide translations into other languages, namely Italian, Spanish, French and German. This observation contributes to the perception of the Polish audiovisual market and the flow of foreign productions for the needs of the domestic audience. A vast majority of productions are delivered from English-speaking cinematographic traditions, and the same language also dominates in terms of Polish movies and series rendered for foreign audiences. Only a minor part of Polish translators provide renditions for foreign markets.

8. Translators' workspace
Working with audiovisual materials necessitates the use of special software, depending on the translator, the actual needs of a given task, or requirements imposed by the commissioner of a given translation. One may use various types of computer program,

ranging from free of charge tools to more professional and paid software. The scale of applied programs is diversified; most commonly the POAVTs try to adjust to a given task and use either paid or free tools as this solution is usually applied by nearly one-third of the respondents (30.4%). The same number of translators (30.4%) tend to use solely free programs, whereas one-fourth of them (26.8%) generally work with internal software provided by the companies they work for. Only 12.5% always work with paid AVT tools. In terms of the most frequently used subtitling tools, the respondents ranked their application from the most to the least commonly applied software: *SubtitleEdit* is used by 30.1% of the respondents, *EZTitles* by 16.4%, *Subtitle Workshop* by 6.8%, *Aegisub Advance Subtitle Editor* by 6.8%, *VisualSubSync* by 4.1%, *Open Subtitle Editor* by 4.1%, *Amara* by 2.7%, *Video Subtitle Editor* by 1.4%, *SubtitleCreator* by 1.4%, *Poliscript Create* by 1.4%, *Jubler* by 1.4%, *EasySub* by 1.4%, *CaptionMaker/MacCaption* by 1.4%, *Aura Video Editor* by 1.4%, other programs are used by 12.3%, and 6.8% do not translate subtitles at all.[3]

Apart from special desktop software, translators may also use other Internet tools that facilitate the rendition of audiovisual materials, and therefore the respondents were asked if they had looked for some translation solutions in online tools like *Google Translate*. More than half of the POAVTs (57.4%) do not use such tools at all, one-fourth (27.7%) sporadically resort to them, and 14.9% apply such services in their work on a daily basis. One of the most advanced types of translation programs offered by the market is Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, many of which offer special plugins allowing them to work more efficiently in the process of rendering audiovisual materials (for instance the *Studio Subtitling* application for *SDL Trados Studio* or *memoQ Video Preview* tool for *memoQ*). Even though such programs are gaining popularity in the eyes of numerous freelance translators and translation agencies, they are still not associated with AVT, as four-fifths (80.9%) of the respondents do not use them at all, 10.6% occasionally apply such tools, and only 8.5% usually employ them in the translation process.

In comparison to most written texts, audiovisual materials tend to be more problematic in terms of their processing, as sending larger files in various formats and filename extensions may require different solutions, and thus the POAVTs were asked how they usually acquired and returned the files to be rendered. Sending a file via an Internet link is the most popular way of exchanging versions of the source and target materials, as this option was indicated by more than half of the translators (62.7%). Other methods

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3 None of the following programs was indicated by the respondents: *Womble EasySub, WinSubMux, Wincaps Q4, VoxscribeCC, Titlevision Submachine, Titlebee, Subtitles Translators, SubMagic, Subbits, POP Subtitle Editor, OmegaT, Ninsight Ayato, MovieCaptioner, iToolSoft Movie Subtitle Editor, InqScribe, Gnome Subtitles, Gaupol, fiveLoadSub, FinalSub, DivXLand Media Subtitler, CaptionHub, Belle Nuit Subtitler, Ayato 3, AHD Subtitles Maker*.

of exchanging files are far less popular. 10.2% of translators access and return files via special online services and webpages, 6.8% are usually given a USB flash drive with a film or series, only 1.7% get the file on a CD or DVD, and nearly one-fifth of respondents (18.6%) tend to receive and send audiovisual materials by some other means.

The types of data given to the translators, employers' requirements and respondents' preferences are some of the factors which affect the way they acquire the actual texts for given audiovisual materials. Nearly half of the POAVTs (47.2%) on the whole create their translations based on source dialogue lists, more than one-third of them (37.5%) use the source subtitles, and 15.3% rely on their listening skills.

9. Team work

Depending on the type of work, employers' guidelines, and their own preferences and limitations, the way in which audiovisual projects are handled differ significantly. They may either be conducted from start to finish just by the translator on his or her own, or be collaborative and involve more participants taking part in different stages, for instance other translators, proofreaders, specialists responsible for the synchronization of the lines with the action presented on the screen, etc. However, according to the collected data, most translators perform all the tasks, as roughly three-quarters of the respondents (72.3%) work alone on their audiovisual projects, depending on the task, one-fifth (21.3%) collaborate with others, and 6.4% generally tend to cooperate with other participants.

When rendering various audiovisual projects, one may encounter numerous elements posing potential difficulties. Then, depending on the weight of the problem, he or she may independently solve the issue or resort to the support offered by external sources, for instance other translators. The majority of the respondents (68.1%) consult other translators, but only in the case of extreme difficulties. One-fifth of the translators (19.1%) do not seek such help, and on the other hand, the 12.8% minority frequently consult their fellow translators on various issues. Cooperation with other specialists in the field may also enhance the quality of the final target versions, and thus one of the most important factors in the subsequent phases of the translation process is the correction stage. In this view, the translator's effort combined with the help of professional proofreading is vital for more than one-third of all respondents (38.3%) as they generally tend to cooperate with proofreaders. Almost the same number of translators (36.2%) only sporadically collaborate with such specialists, and one-fourth (25.5%) do not consider any external help.

Proofreading a translation is a meticulous task that needs precision, perceptiveness and linguistic instinct, and it frequently constitutes a decisive factor that definitely determines the final result. To offer the highest possible quality, translators tend to outsource the correction of their translations: editors revise the text of translations for

one-quarter of POAVTs (26.4%), for one-fifth (22.2%) such a task is performed by other translators, 13.9% ask native speakers to proofread their translations, 4.2% get their renditions checked by reviewers, and 1.4% delegate such tasks to teachers of foreign languages. Additionally, one-fourth of the respondents (20.8%) usually correct their translations on their own, and 11.1% provided other answers. Most popularly, the POAVTs have Q&A sessions with their clients that help them to dissipate various doubts and find optimal translation solutions.

Once the target text is completed, translators may either send it for further revision, correct it on their own, or simply forward the file to the customer. Most frequently, as many as one-third of the respondents (34%) tend to send the text back soon after they have individually briefly checked and corrected the translation. Slightly less, that is one-fourth (25.5%), forward the text on the next day after the correction, and one-fifth (19.1%) only after the text has been professionally proofread by a specialist. However, some translators (10.6%) generally do not find any further corrections necessary for their texts and they send them back just after the actual translation is completed, while 10.6% adjust their strategies depending on the deadline. When a text is proofread, some additional comments and solutions might be proposed for further consideration; here, the translator may apply suggestions and make minor alterations to a text, or simply reject them. Three-quarters of the POAVTs (74.5%) accept the proposed solutions and introduce them to the text of translations if the suggestions are considered suitable and correct, 14.9% only sometimes apply such changes to their texts, whereas the remaining part (10.6%) do not usually work with proofreaders, etc., and as such do not have any comments to ponder.

Apart from linguistic correctness, translation fidelity and other grammatical aspects, AVT necessitates that translators take into account other factors, predominantly non-present in other forms of translation, one of them being the adjustment and synchronization of the subtitles, the sound of the voice-over or dubbed dialogue, to the actual utterances presented on the screen. However, the data suggest that POAVTs are generally either not responsible for this task, do not find it sufficiently important, or they synchronize the texts of their translations on their own, as three-quarters (76.6%) do not cooperate with other specialists responsible for the synchronization of target texts with audiovisual productions. Less than one-fifth (17%) occasionally take advantage of this form of technical support, and only 6.4% of the respondents generally cooperate with other specialists dealing with synchronization of their translations.

Depending on the translators' own preferences, employer's requirements and the type of audiovisual productions one is predominantly dealing with, audiovisual translators may either work independently or be members of translation teams. More than half of them (61.7%) prefer to work on their own, 17% translate independently of other translators but wish to become a member of a professional translation team, and one-

fifth (21.3%) cooperate with other translators within a specialist translation team. However, only one-third (37.5%) of the overall number of translators gathered in translations teams have been additionally trained by its members in AVT.

Apart from smaller translation teams, either temporarily formed by employers to deal with particular translation projects, or permanently cooperating within translation agencies, audiovisual translators may function within larger bodies, organizations and societies. For instance, in Poland such a function is performed by the Association of Audiovisual Translators (STAW). The mission of such associations embraces the integration of audiovisual translators, promoting their work, improving translators' qualifications, supporting their members, enhancing the prestige of the profession and representing their agenda outside. As the survey revealed, when asked about membership in associations gathering audiovisual translators the respondents are divided into two larger groups: half of them (51.1%) are not associated with any translation-oriented organizations, whereas the second group, formed by roughly one-third of translators (31.9%), do not belong to such associations but wish to join them, and 17% presently hold the status of members of such specialized organizations.

One of the crucial aspects of the audiovisual translator's professional life is the ability to maintain business contact with their clients, translation bureaus, distributors of audiovisual productions and other companies which may provide them with work. Ensuring permanent cooperation with different employers might also be viewed as a particular style of work that stresses the importance of stability and predictability, and is somehow opposite to the more selective nature of constant freelancing. In this view, the respondents were asked which approach they tended to follow, and the acquired data greatly favour a more organized form of partnerships in which translators and their clients frequently cooperate with each other; this option is declared by 70.2% of the translators. Conversely, a more independent and unrestricted style of work is preferred by a minority, as only one-fifth of all the translators (19.1%) are not officially in partnership with translation agencies specializing in audiovisual materials or distributors of such productions, and 10.6% are actively planning and seeking this form of cooperation, although for now they do not have permanent business partners providing them with new audiovisual projects.

10. Conclusion: the Profile of Polish Official Audiovisual Translators

The data acquired in the course of the survey make it possible to establish a profile of an 'archetypical' model of a POAVT based on the most frequent answers given by the analysed research group. In this view, a POAVT is predominantly a woman below forty who lives in a large city inhabited by more than 200,000 people situated in the central part of Poland. She works as a professional translator, and almost half of her income is earned by delivered AVTs; similarly, this type of translation predominates in her work.

In terms of higher education, an average translator is studying or has graduated in a field specializing in foreign languages or directly in English studies, at a university located in the Masovian Voivodeship. During education, this translator has either attended a translation specialization or selected other educational paths. Regardless of the specialization, a POAVT is familiar with some translation theories and has also taken some translation courses included in the curricula of studies covered, but most typically they were not focused on AVT. Apart from typical higher education studies, an average POAVT has not completed any translation-oriented postgraduate studies or specialized translation courses, nor is she interested in attending them in the future. A translator prefers a less institutionalized form of self-education, as she has individually used some textbooks and other sources covering different aspects of AVT. In most cases, she masters her skills by taking into consideration pieces of advice and comments expressed by other translators. On average, a POAVT is an experienced translator, and the duration of professional practice oscillated in the range from 2 to 5 years. In this period of time a translator has likely delivered more than 100 renditions belonging to each of the following categories: movies, series, TV programmes and other shows. During one month, a POAVT tends to translate at least 8 audiovisual productions. Most commonly, a typical movie, episode of a series and other TV programmes are rendered in 1 or 2 days. The most frequently rendered audiovisual productions include foreign movies and series, primarily documentaries, comedies of manners, comedies and dramas. A POAVT is also not responsible for the translation of subsequent episodes belonging to a series she has rendered, nor for the next parts of movie series or other TV programmes. Generally, she considers herself a fan of the productions she is rendering but this is not a rule, and she adds additional information to supplement different needs of audiences only if it is directly requested by the commissioner. Most commonly, she delivers target subtitles, but also provides other types of AVT, in a great majority from English into Polish. Similarly, if the translation involves the rendition of a Polish production, it is mostly delivered for English-speaking audiences. A POAVT applies various translation tools that are adjusted to actual needs, and therefore she uses both paid and free of charge software, or programs required and provided by her employers. One of the most popular translation tools used is *SubtitleEdit*, whereas more specialized pieces of software, such as CAT tools, or other online services like *Google Translate*, are avoided. Nevertheless, the Internet is frequently applied as it is the most popularly used method for receiving and sending files to be translated, and usually such files are source dialogue lists or subtitles. In most cases, a POAVT works alone and conveys most aspects of AVT on her own, and only when encountering truly demanding translation challenges does she consult other translators to find a suitable solution. Furthermore, she tends to cooperate with external proofreaders to enhance the quality and correctness of target versions; most popularly this task is performed by editors and other translators.

The final version of a given translation is mostly sent back to the employer just after the POAVT briefly checks and corrects their rendition, or the next day after the correction. When a text is returned from a proofreader to the translator, a POAVT predominantly introduces proposed solutions if the suggestion is perceived as suitable and correct. Synchronization of the delivered translations is not seen as being as important as their linguistic correctness, and an average translator does not cooperate with other technical specialists who adjust the timing of the translated dialogues to the actual utterances presented on the screen. In terms of professional preferences, a translator generally favours working alone instead of being a member of a larger team. This approach is also reflected in the lack of membership in any translation-oriented organizations or associations. However, this freelancing style of work is contrasted with the need for stability, as a POAVT opts for a more organized form of partnership with regular employers.

11. Discussion

As a result of the study, the profile of a POAVT has been established, and the proposed model highlights further possibilities of research and offers an insight into the sphere of translators' background, education, preferences and work.

Having created a POAVT profile, the results may be situated in a larger context. The first issue to be discussed is the number of respondents who took part in the survey. As the number is limited to 47 audiovisual translators it would be advisable to repeat the study and include a larger group of translators to compare and validate the obtained results, namely to juxtapose both profiles to find similarities and divergences between them. An additional limitation is imposed by the method of collecting information. Although the survey was posted on special discussion forums and popular social networking services gathering Polish audiovisual translators with an extra introductory note specifying the purpose of the survey and determining the intended research group, just like in any anonymous and free-access survey it can not be absolutely certain that the information provided by the translators is true, and that the respondents have respected and rigorously adhered to the introductory note. Repetition of the study would also be beneficial in terms of changes taking place in the audiovisual market, especially if the study were to be of a continuous nature, and further studies would re-evaluate the profile to form a larger historical and sociological view of the profession (see Perego and Pacinotti 2020). In terms of the Polish translation market, the acquired profile could also be compared with other profiles created for translators specializing in delivering different types of texts and forms of translation, for instance, to set side-by-side profiles of audiovisual translators and literary translators, interpreters, sworn translators, etc. (see Kubacki 2012, Guttfeld and Linke-Ratuszny 2019). Furthermore, the comparison between the profiles could also be extended to the status of the translators in question, for example, to collate official translators with their unofficial counterparts

(see Antonini et al. 2017). Having that in mind, the profile of POAVTs may be compared with the prototypical profile of an audiovisual translator who specializes in delivering unofficial or unauthorized audiovisual translations in Poland (see Organ 2021). Covering similar studies could contribute to the depiction of the Polish AVT market, and especially to the image and self-representation of the translators, and be of great value for various studies concentrating on translators' training (see Merchán 2018), for instance, to equip members of academia with the knowledge to be applied in the translation curricula (such as the most popular software used in the process of AVT in Poland, in order to include it and make it available during translation courses). Further implications in terms of translation training noted in the study include several observations or key findings that may be considered valuable for Polish institutions specializing in teaching translation skills. As the survey revealed, most of the translators have not covered AVT during their studies, and thus it opens possibilities for including its elements in curricula, especially in the form of practical workshops focusing on rendering English subtitles into Polish and vice versa, the use of various paid and free translation programs, as well as elements of proofreading. The inclusion of such subjects in translator training plans might be the last opportunity for institutionalized education in this field, as respondents generally tend to shy away from any further plans for attending any additional translation AVT courses or postgraduate studies. The potential improvement of their AVT skills is usually achieved individually by studying different sources or by cooperating with other translators. This suggests a further need for AVT coursebooks, especially since the Polish market offers only a few such publications (e.g. Belczyk 2007, Adamowicz-Grzyb 2010, and Adamowicz-Grzyb 2013). The crossing of linguistic, national, or cultural barriers opens further vistas of the profile's application, as it may be compared with its counterparts created for translators working in different countries, and in this sense the profile might be compared with an analogue or analogues established in Germany, France, the UK, etc., to propose a larger study of European translators (see Pym et al. 2013), and then even further by juxtaposing the acquired results with non-European contexts. Such studies conducted on a larger scale might be beneficial for a better understanding of the profession, especially in terms of translators' professionalization. However, in order to do so, the questions included in the survey would need to be at least partially standardized to reveal the possible divergencies observable among the respondents representing different research groups.

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