QUALITY STANDARDS IN DUBBING:
A PROPOSAL

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RESUMO: Este artigo apresenta um conjunto possível de padrões de qualidade na Tradução Audiovisual, especialmente na tradução para a dublagem. Esses padrões são motivados pela presença implícita de um espectador ideal ou espectador no polissistema alvo. O receptor da tradução desempenha um papel de receptor ativo em potencial que condiciona a forma e as convenções do produto alvo. Os padrões de qualidade são então postulados com o público em mente e de acordo com alguns aspectos convencionais da dublagem. Os padrões de qualidade discutidos aqui representam os alvos e objetivos desejáveis de ambos o tradutor e o roteirista, bem como do diretor de dublagem, dos atores e atrizes de dublagem e do engenheiro de som.

UNITERMOS: sincronização de dublagem, desempenho dramático; aceitabilidade; adaquação; norma; recepção.

ABSTRACT: This paper presents a possible set of quality standards in Audiovisual Translation, especially in translation for dubbing. These standards are motivated by the implicit presence of an ideal viewer or spectator in the target polysystem. The receiver of the translations plays a potential role of active addressee who conditions the form and conventions of the target product. Quality standards are then postulated with the audience in mind and according to some conventional dubbing aspects. The quality standards

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dealt with here represent the desirable aims and objectives of both translator and dialogue writer, as well as of the dubbing director, the dubbing actors and actresses and the sound engineer.

KEYWORKDS: dubbing synchronization; dramatic performance; acceptability; adequacy; norm; reception.

1. The pact with the viewer

In *La estética de la creación verbal* [English translation (partial): "Speech Genres and Other Late Essays" (1986)], Bakhtin (1982: 334) wrote that life is by its very nature dialogical, that living means entering into dialogue with the other, questioning, listening, responding, agreeing, dissenting, etc. Dialogical relations are therefore present in all human activity, and may even be said to give these activities their raison d'être.

All interaction between a text and its receiver is directed towards a response from the latter. From his or her dialogical horizon, the receiver confers meaning and significance on the work of art. The recognition of this dialogical inclusion of the reader also assumes an awareness of the way in which texts appeal to each other; move us to identify ourselves and to adopt certain identities.

Although Bakhtin understands dialogue as an open space, this does not imply that it is free of conflicts or that it lacks a set of rules. In the same line of argument, the Aesthetics of Reception is concerned with the study of which components of literary work emerge as dominant as a result of a prevailing code in a given moment, and which components appear sketchy or even completely hidden.

In any text that is subject to certain rules or conventions of genre in a specific culture and time, the absence of an expected element (the lack of synchronization in dubbed films or television series in a tradition in which synchrony is normative or regulated, for instance), may be received by the reader as a negative mechanism. Lotman (1982: 125) refers to this concept with the notion of minus-mechanism, although particularly in

relation to literary texts (for example the absence of rhyme in a genre that would conventionally have this stylistic feature). In the same way, the macro-genre of audiovisual texts also canonically presents a specific configuration. Translated audiovisual genres (films, television series, cartoons and documentaries in the Spanish case) should, by convention, present certain specific characteristics that contribute to their recognition by the audience, to the way they are consumed and thus their foreseeable success. Breaks with conventions or with the canon and the absence of expected elements do not necessarily lead to a breakdown in communication; they may represent an innovation in the genre that might bring success or failure, depending on the historical conditions affecting the audience. However, these ruptures have certain limits that we will attempt to define in this paper.

From the perspective of synchrony, we will examine now which elements of dubbed fictional works dominate in the Spanish audiovisual panorama of the early 21st century.

We can pose certain questions from the receiver's point of view: What does the audience expect from a translated audiovisual product? What type of dischrony (Fodor, 1976: 80) or lack of synchrony is most negatively evaluated and tolerated by the audience (minus-mechanisms)? What will the viewer overlook? What most stands in the way of an accurate reception of the message by the audience? The answers to these questions will inform the translator about the prevailing norms in audiovisual translation, or even about his or her priorities when making a translation. Once the norms have been identified, they must then be evaluated to verify whether they meet the quality standards, or simply conform to roughly consolidated historical conventions. Whatever the case, in this paper we are dealing with an ideal viewer, an abstraction that simplifies our analysis, although future research should focus on different spectator groups, as suggested by Mayoral (2001) when he refers to the factors that an audience analysis should take into account: its heterogeneity, the passing of time, etc.

Within the field of dubbing, these priorities can be grouped into various broad areas:

a) respect for mouth articulation and body movements, and especially for the duration of the original actor's utterances; in other words, compliance with synchronization norms (Chaume, 2004a);

b) the writing of credible and realistic dialogues, according to the oral registers of the target language; this involves going slightly beyond the correct expression of the source content in the target language, something which is also a desirable general objective in any translation (such as, for example, avoiding structural and lexical calques in Spanish when translating from English);

c) coherence between what is heard and what is seen, i.e., between words and images, and likewise, the internal coherence of the plot, on the one hand, and dialogue cohesion, on the other;

d) fidelity to the source text (overlooked by some academic circles today), understood as fidelity to content, form, function, source text effect, or all or any one of the aforementioned, etc., depending on the job in hand;

e) other factors that fall beyond the control of the translator, the dialogue writer and even the dubbing director. These include technical conventions: in dubbing (except in the case of voice-overs) the original version must never be heard, not even in the case of a specific paralinguistic feature. The recording volume and voice quality must also be appropriate, i.e., what has become conventional over the years: a fairly high volume and clear voices with tense articulation, together with an absence of noise and interferences in the final recording, so that the sound that reaches the spectator is as clear as possible. In any case, these conventions depend on the sound technician and are beyond the scope of the translator, although as conventions, they constitute one more standard of quality in what is understood as good dubbing;

f) the final group includes the performance and dramatization of the dialogues, which is also beyond the control of the translator and the dialogue writer, although the dubbing director and the actors have a part to play. By

convention, dubbing actors are required to perform in such a way that it does not sound either faked (overacted) or monotonous.

The absence of these elements, because they are foreseeable and conventionalized, puts the accurate transmission of the message at risk, both in terms of information and aesthetics. Indeed, the ultimate aim of dubbing is to create a believable final product that seems real, that tricks us as spectators into thinking we are witnessing a domestic production, with easily recognised characters and realistic voices.

Ávila also highlights some of the same quality standards. He adds that the viewer expects the dubbed translation to keep to the original (I believe this to be even more patent in the case of subtitling, especially amongst viewers who are familiar with the source language), that the same voices should not be over-used, and that good use should be made of technical resources (which, as previously mentioned, fall outside the translator's brief):

> En este sentido, el gran público reconoce la mediocridad por dos vías: una deficiente sincronización y una pésima interpretación. Sin embrago, pueden achacarse otros motivos que, en muchos casos, escapan a la percepción del espectador. Una traducción *que no se atenga al original* o un mediocre ajuste que atente contra la normativa del lenguaje estándar y audiovisual pueden transmitir una visión errónea del filme que, sin duda, horrorizará a los guionistas originales o a aquellos que decidan comparar la versión doblada con la original. Una excesiva reutilización de voces en distintos papeles de la misma película conduce a un empobrecimiento de su calidad, aunque abarate costes. Por supuesto, el inoportuno uso de los recursos técnicos puede igualmente hacer fracasar la idea de un buen doblaje. (Ávila, 1997: 39-40, my underlining)

2. The status of synchrony

With regard to the first section, respect for mouth articulation (phonetic or lip-sync), body movements (kinetic synchrony)

and the duration of the translation to match the lines spoken by the screen actors (isochrony), constitute one of the cornerstones of dubbing (Chaume, 2003 and 2004a). The greatest challenge facing the translator is not the stringent matching of bilabial or labiodental consonants, or of open vowels –this is only the case with close-ups and extreme close-ups, and detailed lip shots. Nevertheless, when the translator or dialogue writer does not comply with lip-sync or kinetic synchrony in these shots, the result is a loss of credibility and the consequent negative appraisal by the audience:

> En un doblaje cinematográfico, en cambio, el doblador habla sincronizadamente con el personaje e incluso con el movimiento de sus labios. Lo que se entiende por un buen doblaje hace desaparecer toda diferencia entre personaje, protagonista y doblador. Ante el público se quiere confundir toda frontera. La marca de un buen doblaje es la desaparición de la frontera. Se aspira a la verosimilitud, al "make believe" total. (Kahane, 1990-91: 116)

Gestures and facial expressions accompanying the dialogues represent one of the most outstanding intercultural differences. In dubbing, the spoken text and the suprasegmental features, i.e., the linguistic and paralinguistic codes are replaced by other dialogues and suprasegmental features in the target language. However, this is not the case with facial and body gestures. This has led some actors to speak of a communicative noise caused by the coexistence of two different cultural systems:

> Noise produced by the coexistence of different cultural systems. This is illustrated by the appearance on screen of scenes of Moscow with actors speaking Spanish, or by the assignation in the dubbing of film of varieties of language peculiar to Spain to characters whom the image reveals as non-Spanish [...] (Mayoral, Kelly & Gallardo, 1988: 362)

Obviously, Anglo-Saxon facial expressivity does not coincide with that of the Mediterranean, neither quantitatively nor

qualitatively. The same can be said about Latin gesticulation compared with the almost inexistent hand and arm gesticulation in Northern Europe. Yet there is a tacit agreement between the sender and the receiver: the audience knows perfectly well that it is watching a film, and as such, there will always be a certain amount of dischrony (Fodor, 1976) or lack of synchrony in numerous aspects (lip-sync, kinetic synchronization, isochrony). These dyschronies, however, will not totally invalidate the overall understanding of the product or its quality. This tacit agreement allows for and tolerates a certain amount of dischrony or communicative noise (Mayoral, Kelly & Gallardo, 1988) up to a point. It would therefore be useful to define these limits or thresholds of what is permitted, in order to guide the translator on the tolerance of the target culture to which his or her product is addressed; in other words, to define the norms of translation in this field that prevail in the target culture.

The tacit agreement referred to is based on the fact that the spectator has been conditioned to accept that he or she is watching a film and that in general, he or she will be listening to voices in stereo and with a clarity alien to real life situations. Even when characters walk off towards the horizon, we can still hear their voice perfectly and understand what they say. We may be shown a completely dark room, for instance, but the cinematographic illusion has reached the point where, to a great extent, it is accepted that we are able to distinguish the facial features of the characters in the room, and even see their gestures. When we go into the cinema, we know that what we are going to see is not exactly real, but rather the language of film, with its grammatical rules and its own particular logic:

> The audience often retreats into the movie house for exactly the purpose of escaping reality and it would be a perhaps misdirected attempt at realism to make them strain to hear passages that would be inaudible in real life situations. Even children exposed to film and television very quickly come to understand this distortion of reality and are not disconcerted by it. This is, of course, a bona fide tool of film-making and, as such, a valid technique. Yet, when perspectives and relations, either acoustic, optical, temporal or otherwise,

cross the threshold of even this film credibility, the effect
will suffer. (Whitman, 1992: 79)

An empirical study should be undertaken to examine
audience response with respect to how it receives a series of
films with a varying degree of synchronization according to the
three types of synchrony aforementioned (labial, kinetic and
isochrony). Meanwhile, audiovisual translation practice leads us
to the hypothesis that, of the three dubbing synchronies, lip-
sync does not come top in the translator's list of priorities. Within
the profession, isochrony is usually respected to a great extent,
which is not the case with lip-sync, even less as far as kinetic
synchrony is concerned. The audience tends to be very critical
of films in which the right isochrony is not observed. Yet lip
sync, given the scarcity of extreme close-ups and detailed lip
shots in films, and particularly kinetic synchrony, are not too
highly respected as they are not placed at the top of the hierarchy
of norms that make up the tacit agreement between the sender
and the receiver referred to above.

Thus, we could say that the threshold of permissiveness is
crossed when the length of the translation does not respect the
duration of the lines spoken by the screen actor, and in extreme
close-ups and detailed lip shots, when lip-sync is not respected.
However, other lip and kinetic synchronies do not break this
tacit agreement, despite Fodor's insistence in his historic
pioneering 1976 study. In the absence of empirical studies on
reception (with the exception, in Spain, of Fuentes, 2001), the
words of the professional translators and dialogue writers of *El
País* serve to illustrate this point:

> "– Ese Calla d'una volta!, debe quedar algo más corto y
> mucho más rabioso", apunta Casanova, mientras el téc-
> nico de sonido deja de fondo la voz susurrante de Leonard
> Cohen (...) (C. Navarro, 6-VII-1998)

Shorter, because in isochronic terms, the English impera-
tive interjection would surely have been uttered in no more than
two or three syllables (six in the Catalan example). The journal-
ist continues with her isochrony-based argument:

(…) en valenciano, las frases son más largas que en inglés y en una película como ésta se puede suprimir algún taco <u>si con ello se consigue que todo el texto encaje en la boca del actor</u>. Los ajustes finales los realizará el adaptador (en este caso, Àngels Martí), quien ajustará al máximo el texto, <u>de forma que el actor no hable cuando en pantalla aparezca una boca cerrada</u>. (C. Navarro, 6-VII-1998, my underlining)

It would therefore seem that of the three synchronies mentioned, the overall norm is to respect isochrony, over and above the other synchronies.

3. Credible dialogues: adapting to a prefabricated oral register

Translation oscillates between two poles: its adequacy to the source text and its acceptability in the target culture. In the case of translation for dubbing, another cornerstone for good dubbing quality is that the target language sounds realistic, credible, and plausible; i.e., it does not take us away from the storyline. Put another way, it must be acceptable according to the canonical standards of an audiovisual text translated into the target language. The second threat to the breakdown of the tacit agreement between spectator and film mentioned in the previous section must be overcome by achieving an oral register that can be defined as false spontaneous. And not only in dubbing and subtitling; one of the most widespread criticisms of the work of Spanish film director José Luis Garci is the artificiality of the dialogues in his movies.

Nonetheless, it is quite true that academics and linguists had neglected oral register until recent decades. Perhaps for this reason, television companies have found themselves in a situation where they are publishing guidelines for translators, but also for newsreaders and scriptwriters. These guidelines or stylesheets deal with how to achieve an acceptable non-spontaneous oral register, in order that previous elaborated written language (that from the script) should sound as though it have

not in fact been written. Amongst these, it is noteworthy the dubbing and subtitling guidelines collected by Dries (1995). In the field of dubbing, in Spain, the following are worth highlighting: the *Manual de Estilo de RTVE* (RTVE Style Manual), written by Salvador Mendieta in 1993, and the more thorough *Criteris lingüístics sobre traducció i doblatge* (Linguistic Criteria for Translation and Dubbing), published by Televisió de Catalunya in 1997. In a synthesized effort, the Catalan corporation summarises what is meant by oral register in audiovisual media:

> La ficció s'acosta al màxim al llenguatge col·loquial, que correspon pròpiament al mode oral espontani. Però l'espontaneïtat desapareix quan el text s'ha pensat prèviament. Així doncs, els diàlegs de l'obra audiovisual recullen, però de forma controlada, gairebé totes les característiques del col·loquial [...] L'estructura sintàctica sí que prefereix frases curtes i juxtaposades i només aplica molt restrictivament les subordinades. Utilitza molt poc la construcció passiva i pot deixar frases inacabades. L'ordre dels elements de l'oració no és sempre el gramatical sinó que sovint situa en primer lloc l'element que interessa remarcar i hi subordina la resta (A mi que no em busquin / La pistola, ja la tens?). L'abundància d'informació contextual afavoreix les el·lipsis i augmenta la freqüència d'ús d'elements referencials. Per això els pronoms febles s'hi presenten en tota la seva complexitat i s'ha de posar atenció en els adverbis de localització espacial i temporal, com també en la distinció de temps en el verb. El fet més significatiu és l'existència d'estructures conversacionals estereotipades que corresponen a situacions comunicatives concretes: petició (què li faria res...?), afirmació (Ja t'ho pots ben creure...!), disculpa (Em sap greu que...), aprovació (I tant que sí). Totes les llengües disposen d'un repertori ric i genuí d'aquestes estructures que contribueixen decisivament a donar fluïdesa i naturalitat als diàlegs.
> La modalitat oral té també procediments expressius propis: expressions-crossa (Vull dir), falques conversacionals (Vejam / Eh que no?), onomatopeies, interjeccions, redundàncies pronominals (És un poble on hi plou molt), jocs de paraules i frases fetes. La pronunciació és més relaxada i practica algunes reduccions (per'quí, aneu's-en, 'nem! imperatiu) i suports vocàlics (ajupe't).

> El grau de formalitat és divers però sol ser baix. Això impli-
> ca que el lèxic i la fraseologia adequades varien consider-
> ablement segons quin sigui el registre donat. *(Televisió de*
> *Catalunya, 1997: 12-14, my underlining)*

In reference to subtitling, Gottlieb (1997: 112) had also put forward some of the factors mentioned by Televisió de Catalunya:

> In spontaneous speech (which may be 'artificial', as in feature films) the subtitler will often find:
> 3) Pauses, false starts, self-corrections and interruptions.
> 4) Unfinished sentences and 'grammatically unacceptable' constructions.
> 5) Slips-of-the-tongue, self contradictions, ambiguities and nonsense.
> 6) Overlapping speech, a feature very difficult to render in writing.

The synthesis made by the linguistic advisors of the Catalan corporation summarises what is understood by false oral register in television and cinema; in short, what norms prevail in the production of credible life-like dialogues in the target culture, in this case Catalan, but needless to say, in all other target cultures too. Once again, by not respecting the guidelines that shape the oral register in the target culture, the threshold of permissiveness is crossed, the norm is violated, and the previously mentioned tacit agreement is ignored. Whitman also views the issue in the same way when she refers to an experiment conducted by Herbst on the recognition of oral register:

> Artificiality is one of the main faults pilloried in denounce-
> ments of dubbed versions: the audience can *hear* that it is
> not an original. Dubbed language simply does not corres-
> pond to the way normal people talk. Herbst conducted an
> experiment in which he presented students with original
> and dubbed texts. The revealing findings indicated that
> the latter were clearly recognizable as such. No wonder
> the dubbing actors themselves take the brunt of criticism.
> (Whitman, 1992: 118)

Whatever the case, here we are dealing with a prefabricated, artificial, non-spontaneous oral register; in other words, one which does not exactly imitate the spontaneous oral register, but echoes many of its characteristics (Chaume, 2004b: 167 186).

Caillé had already taken this line, particularly considering the responsibility of the translator, who, if s/he did not produce a realistic oral text, later forced the actors into a false performance: *L'acteur, le comédien, ne peut donner sa mesure et avant tout 'jouer juste', que si le texte qu'il a à interpréter est lui-même nature* (Caillé, 1960: 107).

For Caillé, above all else, a realistic text in the right non-spontaneous oral register is essential, once again more so than lip-sync:

> Pourvu qu'une phrase soit au rythme, qu'elle traduise l'original avec toute sa charge de sensibilité, de colère ou de tendresse, qu'elle garde la saveur, il n'est pas nécessaire, sauf dans certains cas de très gros plan, que toutes les labiales soient en place. [...] Si les voix des comédiens sont justes, si le texte doublé est juste, émeut ou divertit, la partie est gagnée. (Caillé, 1960: 107)

Although not all authors agree (Fodor, 1976; Kahane, 1990-91), it would appear that most publications on the issue of dubbing confer greater importance to realistic dialogue than to good lip-sync. If the gestures, the intonation and the dialogues are credible and natural, the audience will be more tolerant of any unsynchronized lip movements that may appear in the dubbing. Whitman sums this up in three sentences:

> As long as certain tolerance threshold is not overstepped in any of the different types, the illusion of authenticity can be successfully established. [...] Most researchers and professional dubbers alike lend the greatest priority to a believable, convincing dialogue. [...] What matters is the impression, the credibility of the artistic word viewed as an integral whole. Ultimately, Caillé claims, cinema is a factory of illusions. Dubbing attempts to give the illusion of an illusion. (Whitman, 1992: 54-55)

Achieving realistic dialogues also involves respecting certain more microtextual norms. In one of the most systematic studies on dubbing, Goris (1993) outlines his doctoral thesis, based on field work carried out on the translation norms for dubbing in France. Following an analysis of various North American films dubbed into French, Goris (1993: 169-190) discovers that during the translation process, substandard fragments of the original text tend to be standardized and culturally adapted (from the conversion of measurements into the decimal system to the adopting of the French equivalent of foreign place names, and the use of synchrony as a primary strategy for naturalization). He also reveals the tendency to explain any ambiguous fragments of the original text, in order to produce a uniform, easily understood text that comes close to the receiver culture. The norms identified by Goris are essentially repeated in the Spanish dubbing industry, as shown in the work of Ballester (2001) or Martí Ferriol (2003).

4. Cohesion and coherence in the target text

There is no point in pursuing further the fact that the target text should be coherent not only from the semantic, but also from the iconographic point of view. By maintaining the network of conceptual relations underlying discourse, we obtain a double guarantee of fidelity to the content of the source text, and of an overall understanding of the target text. Subtitles or dubbed dialogues may be incoherent not only from a linguistic or semantic perspective, but also from an iconic point of view. It is surprising to see how even today, there are still international projects, such as the MUSA Project, the main attraction at the "Languages and the Media" congress held in Berlin in November 2004, which set out to translate film dialogues using automatic translation software. These dialogues are previously transcribed using a voice recognition system. The programme's creators acknowledge, without a hint of embarrassment, that the automatic translation programme does not take the image into account, and translates the transcribed dialogues without any concern for the relations of coherence and cohesion between dialogue and image.

The work of Remael (2000), Diaz Cintas (2003), and Chaume (2004b) presents numerous situations in which the preservation of this coherence is threatened by the restrictions at work in dubbing and subtitling. The translator takes the image into account not only as an analogous component that constrains the translation process, but also as an aid to resolving these very restrictions (Martínez Sierra, 2004).

Adapting to the target language and culture goes through the process of producing a target text that is cohesive not only linguistically, but also semiotically (Chaume, 2001). Reduction in subtitling and synchronization in dubbing may force the translator to compromise the degree of cohesion in the target text. Hatim and Mason (1997: 78-96) note that in audiovisual translation interpersonal meaning is usually lost, pragmatic features that contain certain discursive elements, most of them semantically empty, are lost in translation. In the same way, constraints on dubbing and subtitling at times involve sacrificing the grammatical correctness of target text dialogues, which may sound somewhat strange to the receiver. Dubbing directors often insist that the target text be well written and easily understood, without complications or ambiguities. To a certain extent, we are dealing with the same norm of explicitation put forward by Goris in his study (1993): an attempt to make the target text even more cohesive than the source text, by removing ambiguity and explaining any obscure or difficult to understand fragments in the source text.

5. Fidelity to the source text

Another of the quality standards denoting good dubbing or subtitling is the faithfulness of the target text to the source text. The concept of fidelity has a long tradition in translation theory (Hurtado, 1990; Munday, 2001). However, it would appear that the shift in interest from the source text to the target culture as a reference point to assess translation has meant that the notion of fidelity has lost ground in the theoretical panorama of the discipline, or rather, it is understood as fidelity to the norms governing the target system. Whatever the meaning we

want to give it, what remains clear is that the viewer expects to see the same film that the audience saw in the source language; in other words, that the true story be told in terms of content, and on most occasions, of form, function and effect. Today's audience will not tolerate phenomena such as political, religious or sexual censorship, which were, lamentably, almost par for the course during Spain's fascist dictatorship.

Interestingly, thresholds of permissiveness can once again be seen in certain settings, which we would consider intolerable in others. While the spectator would not consent to changes in the plot and content of an audiovisual work (as with the astounding case of *Mogambo,* incredibly censored in Spain fifty years ago, fortunately now retranslated), changes in other areas would be tolerated. These include acceptance of linguistic censorship and self-censorship –practised to a greater or lesser extent by most television channels and dubbing and subtitling studios, as well as by translators themselves–, mismatched registers, translations that, because of the inclusion of lexical and structural calques from the source language, sound nowhere near idiomatic –particularly overbearing in productions aimed at the adolescent market–, the astonishing changes to some film titles, and even the semiotic distortions provoked by the use in the translation of certain characteristic features of the target culture (over adaptation) in a typically foreign atmosphere and place (in Spain, the cases of *Sabrina,* or *The Prince of Bel-Air*). It therefore remains to define which thresholds of permissiveness are tolerated by the audience and which are not. Here perhaps, the reviled concept of audiovisual genre has its raison d'être and will be seen as a useful parameter in defining this threshold: certain audiovisual genres allow what would never be acceptable in others.

6. Overacting and underacting

Overacting is without a doubt one of the reasons that also cause the spectator to cross this tolerance threshold we refer to in this paper. Dubbing actors, in their enthusiasm to dramatize the target text dialogues, or perhaps also because of their origins and training in the theatre, emphasize intonations and

pronunciations to such an extent that if we hear a conversation from any big screen or television film, without knowing where the sound is coming from, we immediately know that they are cinema or television dialogues, and not real conversation. Whitman explains:

> (...) role interpretations are overdone, over dramatic, overladen with emotion. The voices sound phony and theatrical and out of keeping with body expression. Everyday conversations are enacted as if they were dealing with tragic deaths of family members and the outbreak of atomic wars. People just do not speak like dubbers seem to imagine they do. Whether aimed at over- or underacting, the criticism is often justified. (Whitman, 1992: 47, my underlining)

The Spanish case tends more towards overacting, which is particularly evident in home-produced Spanish series, although underacting can also be found in the dubbing of certain films. The initial rejection by the public of Canal 9 Televisió Valenciana (Valencian regional channel) during its first year of broadcasting was due, amongst other things, to the overacting with which the actors, then novices, interpreted the actors and actresses in the original version. Whatever the case, the dramatization of the dialogues does not fall within the translator's responsibilities, although s/he may make an adequate performance more easily achievable by employing a realistic oral register in the dialogues.

7. The sound technician: the final step to achieving a realistic effect

As we have already mentioned, the recording and mixing of the translated dialogues put down by the dubbing actors and actresses also seeks to achieve a realistic effect and to fulfil the technical and acoustic conventions that characterize the activity of dubbing in Spain. This means that dialogues from the original version must never be heard (when this happens, the spectator notices and "loses track" of the film); in a voice-over, we do expect to hear the source text although this should never be louder than the target version; dialogues are recorded in soundproof studios

(as with the source text dialogues, in a process known as post-synchronization), so their acoustic quality is extremely good and enables the dialogues to be appropriately received; the volume of the voices is also higher than normal volume, to facilitate greater comprehension; certain sound effects such as reverberation are used in cases in which the characters have their backs to the camera or are at a distance, to create the effect of a slight echo etc. Everything is designed to create a realistic effect and is added to the standards for good translation and good dialogue writing expounded above. The translator can do very little to help in this field, although if s/he works on the text synchrony and dialogue wrtiting, symbols or comments can be added that will help the technician to employ the right sound effects at the right moment (BC to indicate that the character has his back to the camera, FC for far from the camera, etc.)

Within Spain, many voices have called for greater attention to be given to the role of the receiver in audiovisual translation (Fuentes, 2001; Mayoral, 2001; Bartrina, 2004). Díaz Cintas (2003), for example, devoted the whole of his excellent comprehensive manual on subtitling to a proposal for quality standards in that field of audiovisual translation, taking as his starting point respect for an ideal receiver. The ESIST is also working extensively on proposals for a normative set of quality standards for subtitling. We will most likely have to continue defining which fields of the target text should be adequated to the source text, and which other fields should be adjusted to the norms of the target system. Reception theory, the aesthetics of reception, considers it unacceptable that the analysis of a work be the ultimate objective of the research. In light of this, this paper offers some ideas as an initial tentative proposal for quality standards in dubbing, highlighting the presence of the *receiver* who is given a more ambitious role, understood as the dialogic *other* that will explain any attempt to resolve the problems thrown up in audiovisual translation.

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