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Exploring audiovisual translation practices in Poland: official vs unofficial translators

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the similarities and differences between official and unofficial audiovisual translators in Poland. The research examines seven main categories of interest, including basic information about the research group, education background, actual translation education, individual mastering of AVT skills through non-institutionalised self-education, translators' preferences for AVT, their workspace, and aspects of teamwork. The data collected from these categories were used to establish a multifaceted comparison of professionals working in the audiovisual translation field in Poland. The study is based on two online surveys examining almost 100 audiovisual translators in Poland. According to the acquired data, official translators are predominantly women, whereas unofficial translators are mainly men, and both groups are formed mostly by people below the age of forty. AVT is the most popular form of translation for both groups, with subtitling is the predominant AVT mode. The study highlights differences in the types of productions each group works on, the software they use in their work, and their collaboration with other specialists in the translation process.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, translation market, official translation, unofficial translation, audiovisual translator

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, research in the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) has gained significant attention. In this study, AVT is understood as “the transfer of multimodal and multimedial content across languages and/or cultures” (Pérez-González 2020: 30). To highlight this concept of multimodality, the term has been steadily gaining prominence over alternative labels like

film or screen translation (Palumbo 2009: 12). Despite its popularity, there are still various aspects of this domain that need further investigation to provide a broader understanding, one of which is the key player in this field, namely the audiovisual translator (AT). Furthermore, any attempt to describe the AVT market will be incomplete if it does not take into account the work of both official and unofficial translators. This view is supported by numerous studies focused on describing the phenomenon of the so-called non-professional or amateur translations, as well as fansubbing (Díaz-Cintas/ Muñoz Sánchez 2006; Bogucki 2009; Čemerin/ Toth 2017; Massidda 2020).

Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006) as well as Pérez-González (2007, 2014) were among the first scholars to address the topic, particularly the phenomenon of “fansubbing”. This term has been replaced in the study with a slightly broader concept of unofficial translation in order to allow for the investigation of translators working on other modes of AVT. Therefore, an official AT refers here to a translator who provides authorised AVT services that are commissioned by a legal person or entity with the legal authority to assign such tasks and hold official permission from copyright owners. On the other hand, the term “unofficial” or “unauthorised” translation is used to refer to any non-officially released AVTs. Consequently, the term “unofficial” or “unauthorised” AT describes any translator who provides AVT services without an official assignment from an employer who has the legal authority to assign such tasks (Organ 2018: 203–206). The popularity of this phenomenon in Poland has led to the formation of specific groups that bring together enthusiasts of unofficial AVT (Mika 2015; Hoły-Łuczaj/ Łuczaj 2014). However, the increased popularity of unofficial translations has drawn the attention of the authorities and institutions responsible for enforcing copyright laws (Bogucki 2013: 65–66).

The studies mentioned contended that unofficial ATs have a significant impact on the translation and distribution of audiovisual material, and their work should be acknowledged in research and practical applications. This observation is particularly relevant in the context of the increasingly blurred boundaries between unofficial translations and mainstream practices, as various deficiencies observed in the early stages of unofficial AVTs are gradually disappearing (Leksawat 2022: 118). The shift towards inclusion of translators in the centre of interest, consequently both official and unofficial ATs, is in line with recent trends in translation studies expressed by Vorderobermeier (2014).

Research dedicated to ATs usually focuses on various aspects related to their professional activities, as well as factors influencing their work. Among the dominant tendencies, several fundamental streams can be distinguished. By undertaking an examination of translators, we can depict their current demographic profiles and provide comparisons within spatiotemporal contexts. Investigating the educational background may help ensure quality control in

the AVT market (Thelen 2019), inform aspiring ATs about career development strategies (Nikolic/ Bywood 2021), identify areas where additional training or education may be needed (Bolaños-García-Escribano et al. 2021), and help establish industry standards and best practices (Pendersen 2020). The analysis of translation education may provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of training programs and can help identify areas where improvements can be made (Díaz-Cintas 2008), whereas the examination of the ways in which ATs master their translation skills may deepen knowledge of the translation process and update translator training programmes (Cerezo Merchán 2019). Studying the preferences of ATs can offer useful perspectives on the translation process, the decisions made by translators, and their impact on the final product (Deckert 2000). Depiction of translation workspace, including the tools and software ATs apply to perform their task, may in turn offer valuable data for the developers of new translation technologies and tools (Baños 2019; Díaz-Cintas/ Massidda 2020). Finally, the evaluation of different aspects correlated with teamwork may provide new data for further research focusing on collaboration in AVT (Fan 2020), quality assurance and workflow optimisation (Šincek 2022).

Overall, a brief summary of possible research areas stresses the need to study both official and amateur or unofficial ATs in order to gain insights into the motivations, practices, and challenges of these different groups, as well as the social and cultural implications of their work. By comparing official and unofficial translations, researchers can acquire a better understanding of the differences in quality, and strategies employed by various types of translators. Such research can contribute to the improvement of AVT by informing about the development of best practices and advancing the professionalisation of the field. Therefore, the following study will focus on comparing Polish official audiovisual translators (POAVTs) and Polish unofficial audiovisual translators (PUAVTs) working in a specific audiovisual market, namely Poland, to demonstrate potential similarities and differences between translators actively working in the field.

2. Method

The main purpose of this study is to investigate Polish ATs based on the “voices” expressed by the translators themselves. It entails an examination of research groups falling under previously mentioned seven main categories of interest. These categories include demographic data, educational background (including where translators studied, their fields of study, and the types of institutions they attended), actual translation education (covering institutionalised forms of training and specialisations studied), individual mastery of AVT skills through non-institutionalised self-education, translators’ preferences for AVT (encompassing the types of productions they work on and their favourite modes of

AVT), their workspace (embracing the types of software they use), and aspects of teamwork (such as how audiovisual projects are handled and whether translators collaborate with others). The data collected in these categories were used to establish a multifaceted comparison of professionals working in the AVT field in Poland.

The investigation is established on two online surveys examining a total of nearly 100 official and unofficial ATs in Poland, as well as their profiles created by the author (Organ 2021; 2023). Due to the nature of the study, and particularly the predicted difficulties in reaching respondents, there were no rigid criteria for experience, time of work, or the frequency of delivered audiovisual renditions that would classify a survey participant as an AT. Therefore, a respondent was considered to be an AT if he or she had actually delivered this type of translation. This generalisation was particularly helpful in the case of unauthorised translators, as it was generally impossible to strictly validate and correlate translators with their renditions. For instance, many unauthorised subtitles are not signed, not even by nicknames, by their authors.

As part of the almost two-year study of Polish ATs, 46 unofficial translators and 47 official translators agreed to fill out one of the intended surveys, each containing 56 multiple choice questions. Each survey included 27 questions concerning the specific characteristics of a particular group of translators (e.g., questions regarding legal and ethical aspects in the case of unofficial translators), as well as 29 questions common to both groups. The responses to the common questions in both surveys form the basis of the analysis presented in the text. The online surveys were conducted between 2020 and the first half of 2021, and were shared on different discussion forums and popular social networking platforms to reach Polish ATs. In the case of unofficial translators, the survey was specifically distributed to members of various translation groups that bring together unofficial ATs, including Grupa Hatak, Project Haven, RebelSubTeam, Polish Team, and DarkProject. On the other hand, the study of official translators was facilitated by establishing contact with the Polish Association of Audiovisual Translators (STAW).

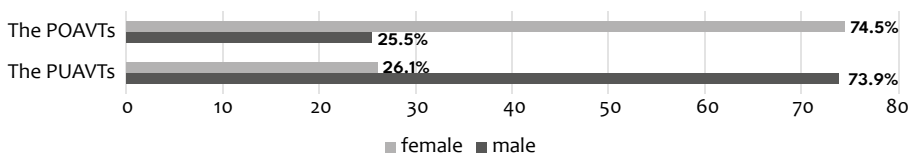
During the span of 18 months, a total of 46 unofficial translators successfully completed the questionnaire. Although this number may be considered low, it is important to take into account the sensitive nature of the subject matter being addressed. Translators involved in such translations cannot openly work or sign their translations with their real names. Instead, they rely on pseudonyms to protect their privacy, safety, and anonymity. Given the potential risks of exposing their true identities and the legal consequences they may face, unofficial translators are generally hesitant to engage and cooperate with individuals they do not know who may be seeking information about their translation and publishing activities.

Simultaneously, a total of 47 translators willingly participated in the study and completed the questionnaire. While the number of participants could have been higher, it can be attributed to the specific nature of the profession being investigated, which played a role in shaping the respondents' level of engagement. The profession of AT forms a distinct subgroup within the larger translation occupation. As their work relies heavily on computer technology, the internet, and specialised software, they may be hesitant to devote additional time to activities that involve the very tools they use to earn their livelihood.

The obtained survey data were presented using graphs and subsequently briefly described to highlight the most prominent differences and correlations observed within both investigated groups.

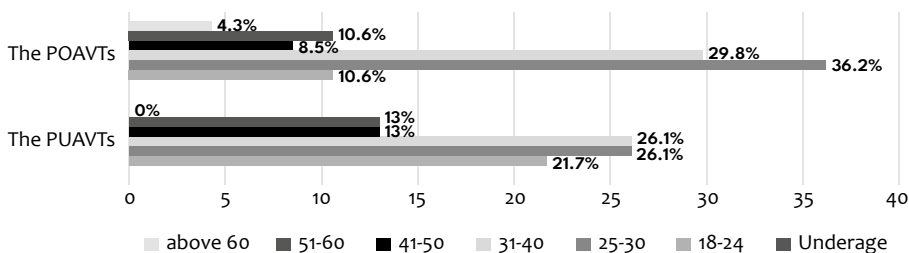
3. Findings

3.1. Demographic data



Graph 1: Gender distribution

Sex is one of the very basic determinants of the translators, and here, quite opposing declarations were submitted. The POAVTs reported that three-quarters (74.5%) are women, and one-quarter are men (25.5%), whereas the PUAVTs reported nearly the opposite, with three-quarters (73.9%) being men, and one-quarter (26.1%) being women.

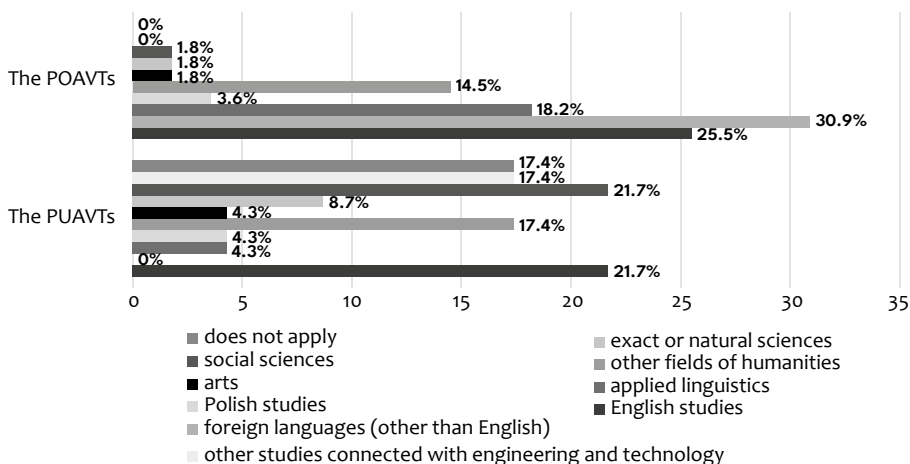


Graph 2: Age distribution

As regards the age range, a general tendency might be observed, which is common for both groups: the translators are relatively young people below

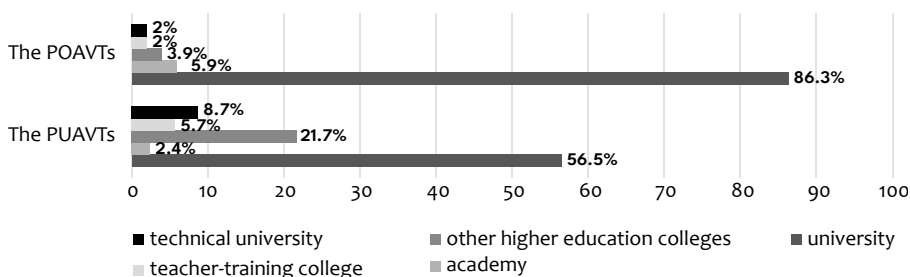
the age of forty. However, the PUAVTs are slightly more represented in the higher age categories.

3.2. Educational background



Graph 3: Completed and/or ongoing studies

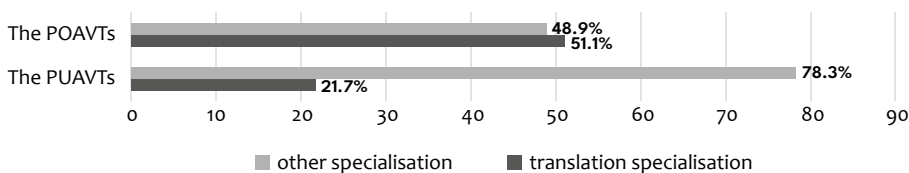
In terms of higher education, most of the POAVTs have either graduated or are continuing their studies in different fields of humanities, most commonly related to foreign languages. However, as the data reveal the situation is quite different among the unofficial translators. Even though the most popular educational path is correlated with mastering a foreign language, in this case English, the remaining groups of the PUAVTs have opted for other fields. In comparison to the official translators, one of the most striking differences is observable in the lack of the PUAVTs who studied other foreign languages than English. Similarly, the small share of those who had selected applied linguistics in their educational path is also noteworthy.



Graph 4: Type of higher-education institution

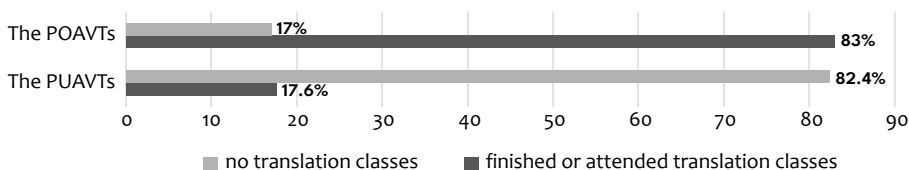
The POAVTs' inclination toward studying foreign languages is also reflected in the type of higher education that the translators have graduated from or are studying. Most commonly, the official translators correlated their professional careers with studying at universities. This issue is more diversified in the view of the PUAVTs, although universities are selected by more than half of them (56.5%), close to one-fifth (21.7%) selected colleges.

3.3. Translation education



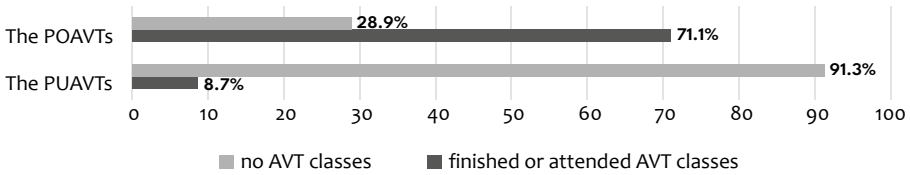
Graph 5: Specialisation

The characteristics of the educational paths outlined above allow us to focus more on actual translation education. Here, a clear difference may be noticed: nearly half (51.1%) of the POAVTs have graduated in or are still studying a translation specialisation, whereas such an educational path was declared by only one-fifth (21.7%) of the PUAVTs.



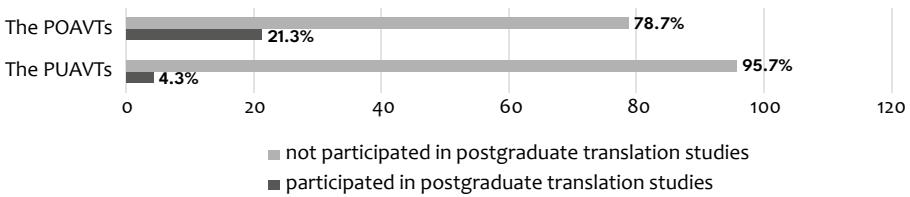
Graph 6: Translation classes

Nearly half of the POAVTs have completed or are continuing a translation specialisation, and it is not surprising that they have taken part in different translation courses. However, the answers indicate that translation courses are also organised within other specialisations, as more than four-fifths (83%) of all the official translators reported that they have completed or are currently attending them. In the case of the PUAVTs, the situation is quite different, as only less than one-fifth (17.6%) of them have covered or are attending translation classes within their studies.



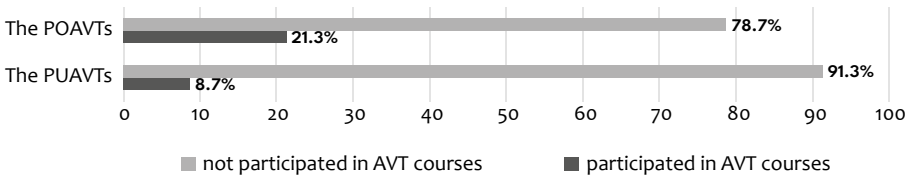
Graph 7: AVT classes

Translation education narrowed down to AVT reveals further serious discrepancies, as more than two-thirds (71.1%) of the POAVTs have covered university courses in this field, whereas in the case of the PUAVTs it is less than one out of ten (8.7%).



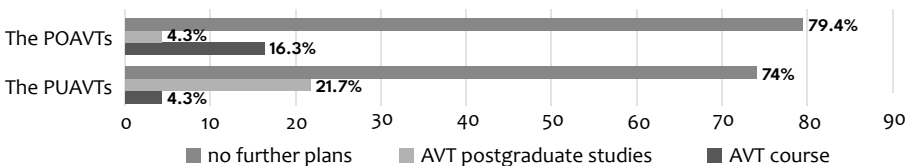
Graph 8: Postgraduate translation studies

Postgraduate studies are not very popular in either group, but the official translators are more likely (21.3%) to complete postgraduate studies in translation. Interestingly, all the POAVTs who decided to continue their education through postgraduate courses attended studies predominantly focused on AVT.



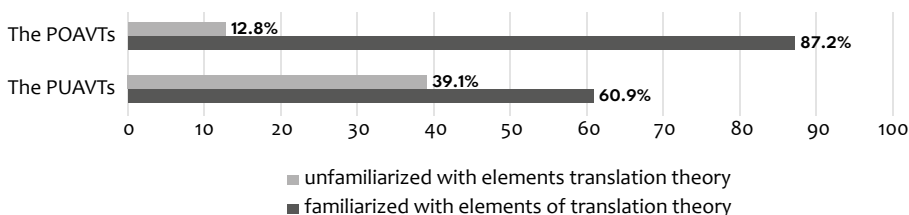
Graph 9: AVT courses

As is the case with postgraduate studies, only one-fifth (21.3%) of the POAVTs have participated in such training courses, whereas only 8.7% of the unofficial translators have completed an additional AVT course.



Graph 10: Plans for further education in AVT

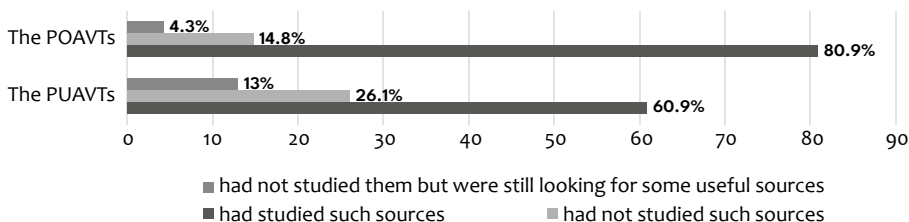
Plans for further educational development in terms of translation are rather limited. Only one-fifth of the official translators and one-fourth of the unofficial translators express a will to continue their institutional education in this field. However, the first group tend to prefer courses, while the second lean towards postgraduate studies.



Graph 11: Familiarity with elements of translation theory

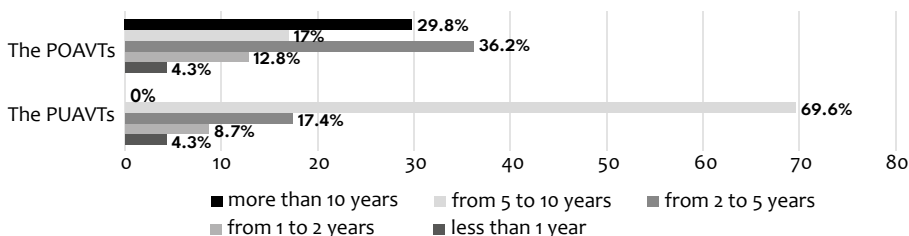
The knowledge of translation theory is common among the POAVTs, as 87.2% of them report being familiar with its elements, whereas such topics are known to fewer (60.9%) of the PUAVTs.

3.4. Mastering audiovisual translation skills



Graph 12: Individual use of different sources focusing on translation

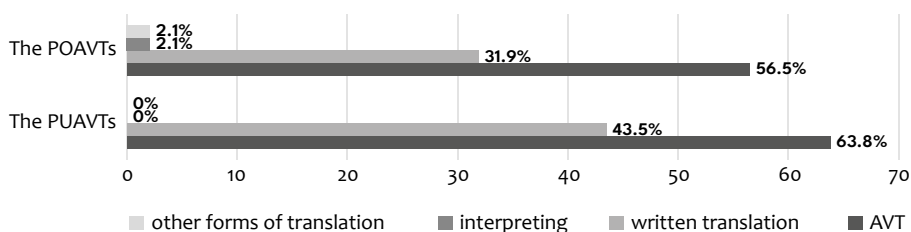
According to the data, the majority in both groups have used sources focused on translation, and four-fifths (80.9%) of the POAVTs declared that they make use of them, whereas the share of the PUAVTs in this matter is lower, but still exceeds half (60.9%) of them.



Graph 13: AVT practice

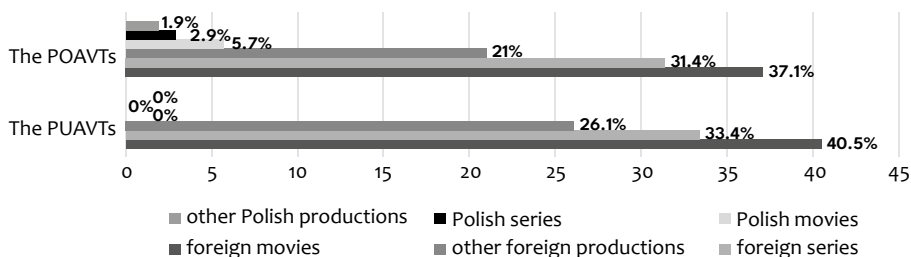
Both groups of translators represent a diversified landscape in terms of the average duration of professional practice within the scope of AVT. Nearly half (46.8%) of the POAVTs have more than five years of professional translation experience, and more than one-third (36.2%) of them have worked for two to five years. The PUAVTs are generally more experienced in terms of the duration of their AVT practice as 69.6% of them have been providing translations for more than five years, and less than one-fifth (17.4%) have been publishing their renditions from two to five years.

3.5. Translation preferences



Graph 14: Most popularly delivered forms of translation

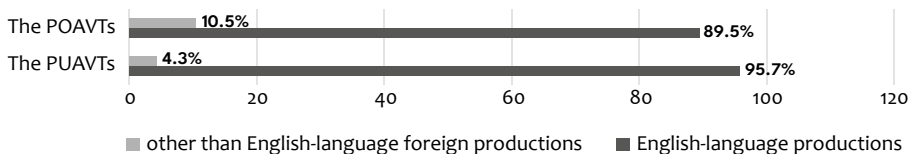
It is not surprising that both groups reported AVT as the most commonly delivered form of translation, with over half of the POAVTs (63.8%) and PUAVTs (56.5%) choosing this option. Written translation is the second most popular form, with nearly one-third (31.9%) of the official translators and well over one-third (43.5%) of the unofficial translators selecting it. Interpreting (2.1%) and other forms of translation (2.1%) are only marginally undertaken by the POAVTs, and are not represented at all among the PUAVTs.



Graph 15: Most commonly translated audiovisual productions

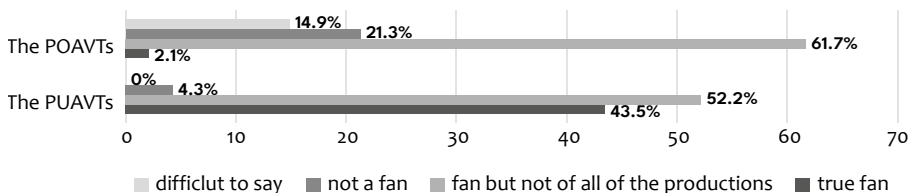
Taking into account the type of audiovisual materials, both groups predominantly translate the same categories. Here, both groups most commonly translate foreign movies, the second most popularly rendered type is series,

and the last are other foreign productions. Interestingly, none of the PUAVTs provided translations for Polish productions, and only a small minority of the POAVTs delivered such translations.



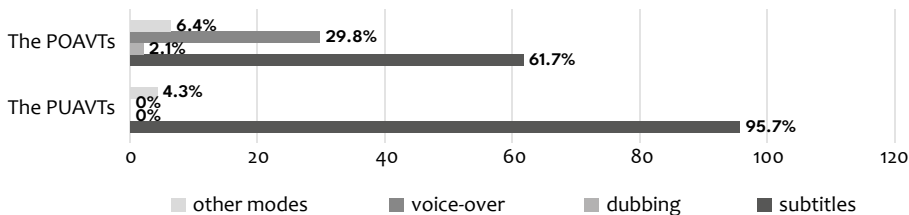
Graph 16: Translation of foreign productions into Polish

Both the POAVTs and PUAVTs specialise in translating English-language productions, with only a small minority of translators taking on the task of translating into Polish from languages other than English.



Graph 17: Attitude towards translated productions

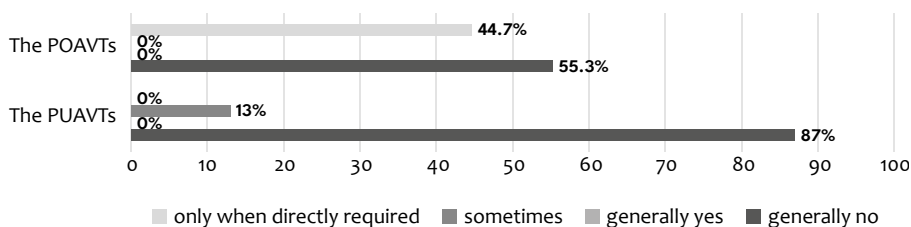
Not surprisingly, a large proportion (43.5%) of the unofficial translators declared themselves to be true fans of the productions they translate, whereas only a small fraction (2.1%) of the official translators provided a similar answer. However, a majority of both groups view themselves as fans but not necessarily of all the productions they work on.



Graph 18: Most commonly translated modes of AVT

Both groups most frequently render subtitles, with more than half (61.7%) of the official translators predominantly translating this mode of AVT. However, it truly reigned supreme among the unofficial translators as nearly all (95.7%) of them primarily focus their activity on this form of translation. Apart from

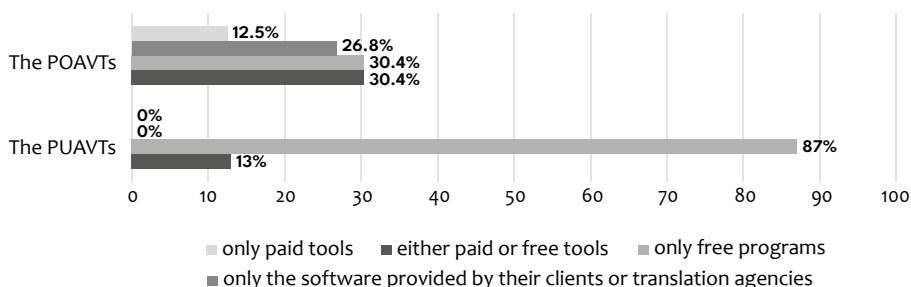
subtitles, nearly one-third (29.8%) of the POAVTs prepare target language texts for the needs of voice-overed versions of various productions, which may be explained by the relative popularity of this particular mode in Poland.



Graph 19: Adding supplementary information into the target text

The inclusion of supplementary aids is only present when directly stated by the commissioner of a given translation. The official translators admitted to incorporating such elements when required, but generally they do not add any extra beneficial aspects to the texts of their translations. Moreover, the majority (87%) of the PUAVTs do not introduce such elements even though they are the translators and commissioners of the translations, and they decide on the form, text, and other aspects of their work.

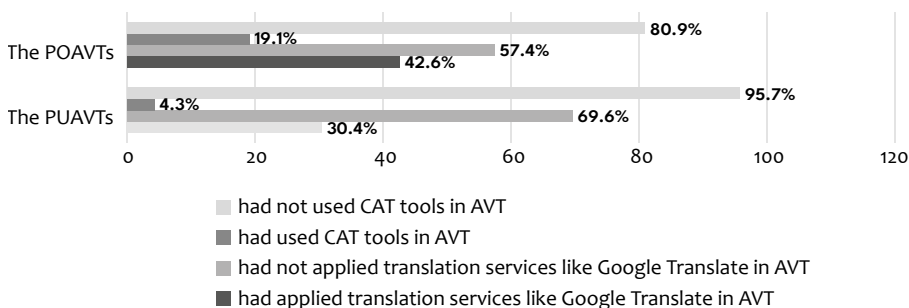
3.6. Translators' workspace



Graph 20: Types of software used in AVT

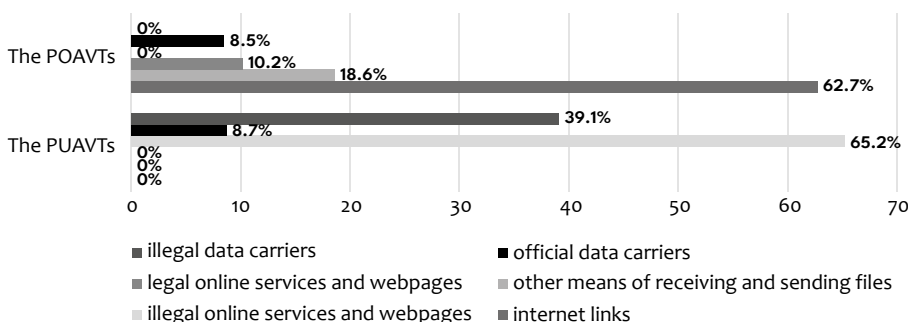
Among the POAVTs, the use of different software is more diversified than in the case of the PUAVTs. The official translators tend to adjust the software used for a given translation project, and therefore, one-third (30.4%) of them apply either paid or free tools, while exactly the same number of them (30.4%) predominantly translate using only free programs. Moreover, one-quarter (26.8%) admitted to using only the software provided by their clients or translation agencies they work for, and 12.5% solely work with paid AVT tools. On the other

hand, the great majority (87%) of the POAVTs only apply free software in their work, whereas the remaining minority (13%) of the unofficial translators adhere to the needs of their projects and use both paid and free programs.



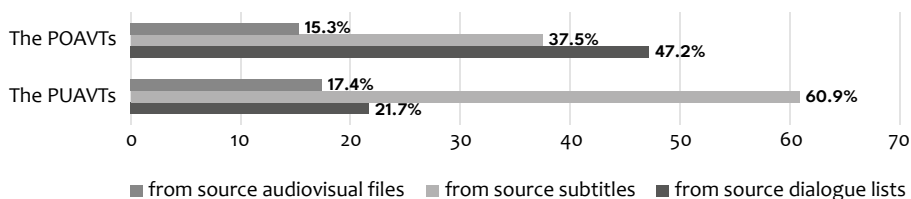
Graph 21: Machine translation and CAT tools in AVT

Services like Google Translate are largely unused by the POAVTs, with over half (57.4%) not employing them at all, and even more (69.6%) of the PUAVTs do not consider such services valuable for AVT. Similarly, advanced computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, many of which are equipped with special plugins designed to meet the needs of ATs, are not frequently applied in AVT practice. Here, the majority of both groups do not use them in audiovisual projects, as such translation aids are not employed by four-fifths (80.9%) of the POAVTs and almost all (95.7%) of the PUAVTs.



Graph 22: Means of acquiring files

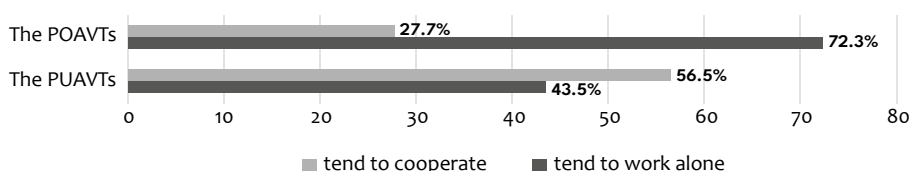
The way in which the files are generally obtained is different for both groups of translators. The POAVTs predominantly acquire and return them via internet links sent by the commissioners (62.7%), or use other means of receiving and sending files (18.6%). On the other hand, the PUAVTs most commonly download illegal files from various websites and online services (65.2%) or acquire unofficial versions of audiovisual productions on data carriers (39.1%).



Graph 23: The way translators usually acquire texts for audiovisual productions

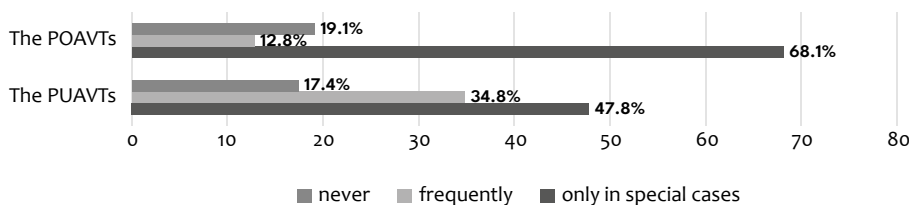
Almost half (47.2%) of the POAVTs base their translations on the source dialogue lists, and more than one-third (37.5%) of them rely on the source subtitles. On the other hand, the PUAVTs mostly (60.9%) make use of the source subtitles that already have time stamps, or deliver translations based on the source dialogue lists (21.7%). Nearly the same share of the official (15.3%) and unofficial (17.4%) translators sometimes have to rely on their listening skills because they have access solely to audiovisual material without any correlated files containing the written source text.

3.7. Team work



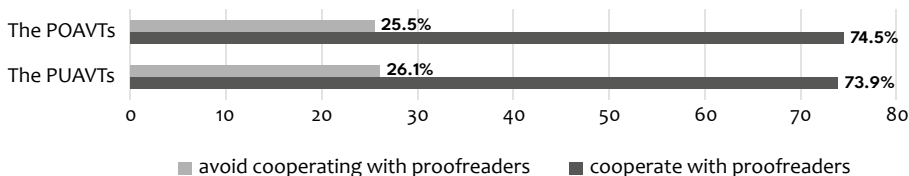
Graph 24: Cooperation in AVT projects

The POAVTs are more individualistic, as nearly three-fourths (72.3%) of them work alone on commissioned audiovisual projects. On the other hand, the unofficial translators are more divided in this matter as they are more inclined to work collaboratively. Slightly more than half (56.5%) of them actively cooperate with other specialists in their translation projects, while a sizable minority (43.5%) generally work alone and do not seek any assistance with different aspects of AVT.



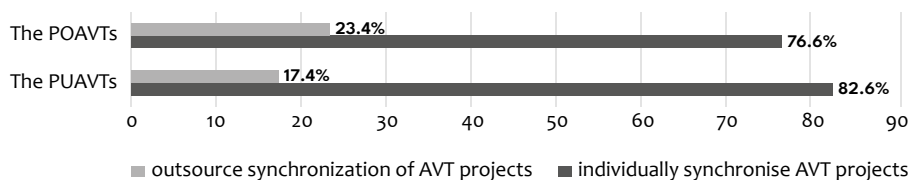
Graph 25: Asking other translators for advice

Most commonly, both groups of translators, with the vast majority (68.1%) of the POAVTs and almost half (47.8%) of the PUAVTs, consult other translators only in special cases when their own efforts have come to nothing. However, 12.8% of the official translators and as many as one-third (34.8%) of the unofficial translators frequently cooperate with other translators. On the other hand, a similar share of the translators, nearly one-fifth (19.1%) of the POAVTs and 17.4% of the PUAVTs, do not seek any aid from other translators and prefer to find an answer to the emerging complications by themselves.



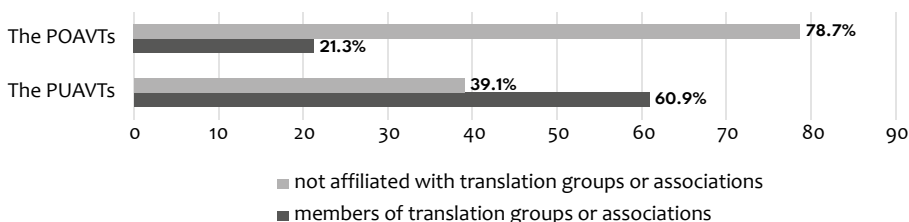
Graph 26: Collaboration with proofreaders

The importance of proofreading, whether done on a regular basis or only for selected projects, is equally vital for both the official and unofficial translators. In this regard, the majority of both the POAVTs (74.5%) and PUAVTs (73.9%) collaborate with specialists to improve the accuracy of their translations.



Graph 27: Synchronisation of AVT projects

As synchronisation requires technical expertise, this task may be delegated to specialists who can correlate and adjust the target text with appropriate shots and timing. However, some translators may not consider this task essential, may not be commissioned to complete it, or may prefer to synchronise translations



Graph 28: Membership in translation groups or associations

themselves. Both the POAVTs (76.6%) and PUAVTs (82.6%) typically do not collaborate with synchronisation professionals.

Only one-fifth (21.3%) of the official translators consider themselves members of specialist translation teams or associations, whereas more than half (60.9%) of the unofficial translators collaborate within such translation groups.

4. Discussion

In the context of demographic data, the main difference between the studied groups is based on the self-declared gender of the respondents. The results are directly opposite in the two studied groups. In the case of the official translators, the majority consists of women, whereas among the unofficial translators, men dominate. The obtained data seem to reflect the landscape of Polish humanities, where the majority of students in fields traditionally associated with translation are women. As graduates of such programmes tend to seek employment related, at least to some extent, to their specialisation, statistically, it is often women who strive for translator positions, including in the field of AVT. It is worth noting that the opposite gender distribution among the PUAVTs can be explained by the nature of unofficial translation itself. In general, they provide translations for reasons other than financial gain, suggesting that their studies and everyday work may not be directly linked to translation, and translation itself is more of a form of entertainment or hobby. Therefore, people engaged in unofficial translation do not necessarily have to pursue studies typically associated with a higher percentage of women enrolled in them.

In terms of education, the analysis demonstrates that compared to the PUAVTs more POAVTs have participated in translation and AVT classes, suggesting that specialised training is more common among the official translators. This rather evident observation aligns with the declared education of translators, where a fundamental difference can also be observed. The vast majority of POAVTs have received language-related education, increasing the probability of becoming familiar with the specifics of AVT during their studies. As only about a third of the PUAVTs pursued language studies, their participation in exercises related to AVT must be smaller. Classes addressing the field within Polish higher education institutions are still rare, even within language studies. Therefore, it is not surprising that the low participation of the unofficial translators in such activities is evident, as the presence of such classes within non-language-focused programs would be even rarer for obvious reasons. Interestingly, both groups show little interest in further institutionalised education in the field of AVT, with only a minority planning to pursue postgraduate studies or enrol in courses on this subject. Given the relatively low availability of such programs and training in Poland, as well as the high costs associated with participation, the desire to

enhance their skills may be significantly limited. More than half of both groups of translators claim to have knowledge of selected elements of translation theory. While this observation is not surprising for the official translators who may have become acquainted with theory during their language studies, the declared familiarity with theory among the unofficial translators may indicate their own pursuit of further understanding the essence of translation. A problematic aspect remains the extent of their knowledge and the sincerity of their responses, as translators in both groups may feel uncomfortable admitting to any gaps in their knowledge. Another issue is distinguishing between sources that discuss translation theory and practice, as for some respondents, this distinction may be blurred, and as such, it appears to be a valuable element for further analysis.

In both groups, experienced translators with more than five years of work stand out, with the PUAVTs taking the lead in this regard. Regarding the demographic data, it can be generalised that Polish ATs are relatively young individuals with substantial experience related to AVT practice. The observed dominance of the unofficial ATs can be reasoned by their early entry into the field, which is likely linked to market demands. Their work is not governed by market requirements, and if someone wishes to unofficially and anonymously share their translation, regardless of its quality, they can largely do so at any time without having to undergo numerous educational, training, recruitment, verification, and professional processes. In the case of the official ATs, the initial outcomes of their work, such as the dissemination of authorised translations, usually result from years spent in institutionalised language education, job search, client acquisition, professional development, etc.

Translations of foreign productions, primarily in English, dominate. Rendering Polish audiovisual productions is a rarity, and this task is solely undertaken by the POAVT. These data not only illustrate the prevailing trends in the Polish AVT market, but also indirectly describe the state, significance, and broad popularity of Polish cinema. The decision of the PUAVTs to translate into the source language may also stem from their desire to watch a particular production in Polish or to promote its popularity.

Most of the translators are primarily engaged in subtitle translation, with the unofficial translators almost exclusively focusing on this mode of AVT. Only one-third of the official translators create texts for voice-over versions. This popularity distribution of AVT modes seems to correspond to the preferences in the Polish audiovisual market. The availability of programs for creating and translating film subtitles is not without significance, as many of these software solutions are freely accessible. The very low percentage of dubbing can be explained by its relatively low popularity and the significantly greater complexity associated with the translation process and the adaptation of its effects to the requirements of a given audiovisual production.

The presence of self-declared fans of the productions being translated among the PUAVTs is not a major surprise, as they act as both clients and translators themselves. They have the autonomy to decide what, how, and when to translate, allowing them to freely choose among the productions they enjoy, making the translation process a pleasurable experience for them.

Taking into account the types of software applied by translators, two distinct trends can be observed. Firstly, the unofficial translators overwhelmingly rely on free applications. This choice seems to be a direct consequence of their non-profit-oriented work, where they do not incur additional costs associated with their unpaid labour. Additionally, the capabilities of these free programs often match those of their paid counterparts. On the other hand, the official translators employ a variety of software, including both free and paid options, as well as platforms provided by their clients. More advanced translation tools are not widely utilised by translators, and the relatively low percentage of CAT tools usage may be attributed to the high costs of purchasing professional software and the relatively low familiarity with their operation. It is worth noting that CAT tools are not commonly associated with AVT. Only recently have manufacturers of such technologies introduced additional modules to enhance the translation of film subtitles, and translators themselves may not have encountered them in their practice yet. Another issue is the relatively low employment of services enabling the use of machine translation, such as Google Translate. This state of affairs may stem from both objective factors related to the quality of the provided content and more subjective factors associated with a reluctance to admit using such tools.

Technology also affects the way files are obtained for translation, most likely due to legal reasons, primarily copyright law, and both groups of translators typically rely on completely different solutions. The PUAVTs who undertake the task of translating a production that does not yet have an official Polish version often utilise various websites and online services that provide illegal versions of audiovisual productions, or they rely on data carriers containing pirated copies. This significantly impacts the availability of files that serve as the basis for translation, as the unofficial translators usually acquire the audiovisual file along with the source subtitles, which serve as their foundation for translation. On the other hand, obtaining the text for translation is relatively easy for the POAVTs, as they typically receive a web link directly from the client, which redirects them to the source files. However, the diversity of these files is greater, which is associated with different types of assignments.

In the context of teamwork, both groups demonstrate distinct tendencies regarding collaboration with other translators. The POAVTs tend to work independently on AVT projects more frequently, acting as freelancers focused on efficiently completing the task. Simultaneously, they aim to maximise their own profits while exerting the greatest influence on the final outcome of the target

text. The matter of reputation in the translation market is not insignificant, as the official translators who can boast a track record of completed translations have a greater chance of receiving subsequent assignments. Cooperation with other translators differs somewhat in the case of unofficial translation, where a greater inclination towards collaboration and task sharing in the translation process can be observed. This can be attributed to the desire for a smooth and timely delivery of the target version in order to make it available before the official translation is released. Additionally, the matter of reputation and receiving subsequent assignments takes a secondary role, as the authors cannot provide their personal details in the target texts.

These data also reflect a greater tendency among the PUAVTs to seek potential assistance from other translators. However, the overwhelming majority of all ATs restrict such consultations to a minimum, which can be correlated with their extensive experience and the desire to independently overcome the difficulties encountered. The almost identical indicator representing a high inclination towards assigning the proofreading of target texts to professional proofreaders attests to professionalism and a commitment to delivering high-quality translations. Equally similar data pertain to the synchronisation of target texts, with translators in both cases typically handling this task independently. This can be ascribed to the most common form of AVT, namely subtitles, which often come with embedded time codes. By utilising such files and modern software equipped with character counters, translators are informed whether a given line of dialogue “fits” within a specific time frame.

The findings presented in the course of the conducted analysis could be related to other studies on AVT practices and translators’ profiles in different countries and contexts. For instance, studies on AVT in other countries might reveal differences or similarities in translators’ gender distribution, educational background, specialisation, and tools and resources used. Additionally, research on freelance translation practices and teamwork dynamics in AVT could provide further context for understanding the differences between official and unofficial ATs in this regard. Further studies may additionally focus on comparing the quality of translations produced by official and unofficial translators in the context of AVT, the role of proofreading and quality control in AVT delivered by different groups of translators, or the factors influencing the decision to specialise in AVT among translators, etc.

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