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**SYNCHRONY IN THE VOICE-OVER OF POLISH FICTION GENRES**

**KEYWORDS:**

Audiovisual translation, voice-over, synchrony, synchronization strategies, fiction movies

**ABSTRACT:**

The increasing popularity of audiovisual translation in recent years has contributed to a better understanding of the audiovisual world. Nevertheless, some modalities such as voice-over have not received thorough attention. In Poland, where voice-over is the prevailing audiovisual, one voice talent reads out the entire dialogue list in a monotonous way. The translated version is subject to time and space restrictions, and both the original and the translated soundtracks are audible at the same time, making it interesting to analyze a key aspect of voice-over: the process of synchronization. Departing from a categorization which originated within the field of dubbing, and which

was later extended and applied to the voice-over of non-fictional products by Franco, Matamala and Orero, this article aims to assess whether voice-over isochrony, literal synchrony, kinetic synchrony and action synchrony are maintained in the voice-over of fiction genres in Poland, and if so, what strategies are used to achieve this. The corpus is made up of four 15-minutes samples from movies belonging to four different genres: a comedy (*Whatever Works*, directed by Woody Allen 2009), a drama (*Marvin's Room*, directed by Jerry Zaks 1996), an action movie (*Spy Game*, directed by Tony Scott 2001), and a musical (*Nine*, directed by Rob Marshall 2009). The study highlights the specificities of synchrony in fictional movies and opens the door for future research into this previously underestimated audiovisual transfer mode.

#### **MOTS-CLEFS:**

Traduction audiovisuelle , le voice-over, synchronie, stratégies de synchronisation, films de fiction

#### **Résumé:**

La popularité croissante de la traduction audiovisuelle pendant les dernières années a contribué à une meilleure compréhension du monde de l'audiovisuel. Néanmoins, certaines modalités telles que le *voice-over* n'ont pas reçu une attention minutieuse. En Pologne, où le *voice-over* est la modalité de traduction audiovisuelle la plus utilisée, un comédien lit la liste des dialogues d'une façon monotone. La version traduite est soumise à des restrictions de temps et d'espace, et les bandes sonores de l'original et de la traduction sont audibles en même temps, ce qui rend intéressant d'analyser un aspect clé de le *voice-over*: le processus de synchronisation. À partir d'une catégorisation qui

trouve son origine dans le domaine du doublage, et qui a plus tard été étendue et appliquée au *voice-over* des produits de non-fiction par Franco, Matamala et Orero, cet article vise à évaluer si l'isochronie du *voice-over*, la synchronie littérale, la synchronie cinétique et la synchronie d'action sont maintenues dans le *voice-over* des genres de fiction en Pologne et quelles stratégies sont mises en œuvre pour les atteindre. Le corpus est constitué de quatre extraits de 15 minutes de films appartenant à quatre genres différents : la comédie, le drame, l'action, et les films musicaux. L'étude met en évidence les spécificités de la synchronie dans les films de fiction, une voie qui peut certainement permettre de s'ouvrir à de nouvelles approches et à de nouvelles avancées dans la recherche de ce mode de transfert audiovisuel si peu traité jusqu'à présent.

## 1. Introduction

Voice-over is the prevailing mode of audiovisual transfer on Polish TV, so it would seem appropriate that it should merit particular and more detailed attention in Poland. However, this assumption bears little relation to the reality. Voice-over has been declared to be an “egregious hangover from the Communist system” (Glaser 1991: online) which persists only because “a lot of people in Poland have bad eyes and don't have enough money for glasses” (Glaser 1991: online). Indeed, some Polish scholars have forecast that this transfer mode has no future in film translation (Tomaszkiewicz 2007: 116). Nevertheless, the reality is that voice-over is still used (and accepted) on Polish television and, as Woźniak (2012) rightly points out, more systematic research into its aspects and nature needs to be carried out, particularly because this could lead to an improvement in the quality of the translations provided. This paper aims to contribute to this much needed research field by investigating one of the most relevant voice-over features: synchrony.

This article examines what types of synchronies are present in the voice-over of fictional genres into Polish, and more specifically attempts to establish whether the various types of voice-over synchronies are used in voiced-over fiction genres in Poland. Special attention is paid to the strategies used to achieve each type of synchrony. The types of voice-over synchronies observed are the four proposed by Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010: 74-83), described in Section 3 and largely based on the analysis of non-fictional programs.

This exploratory study, which will later be developed through more thorough research, is based on four 15-minutes samples from fictional films with Polish voice-overs which are available on DVD. It examines samples from a comedy (*Whatever Works*, directed by Woody Allen 2009), a drama (*Marvin's Room*, directed by Jerry

Zaks 1996), an action movie (*Spy Game*, directed by Tony Scott 2001) and a musical (*Nine*, directed by Rob Marshall 2009), using the genre categorization provided by The Internet Movie Database (IMDb). A comparison between the English and Polish dialogues was performed whilst carefully observing the visuals in order to see whether the four selected types of synchrony were used. Once key excerpts were identified, a more thorough analysis was conducted in order to determine the strategies used to achieve the selected synchrony type. It must be stressed here that this research does not intend to provide quantitative data, but instead adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach to the translational phenomena under investigation.

The article begins with some theoretical notions concerning synchrony in AVT (section 2), and more specifically voice-over (section 3). The results are then discussed, and proposals for further research outlined.

## **2. Synchrony in AVT**

Studies into synchrony in voice-over are scarce and those that do exist were only carried out very recently (Franco, Matamala and Orero 2010). However, the literature on synchrony in other oral transfer modes such as dubbing is more extensive and can help contextualize this research. This is why a summary of the main features of synchrony in dubbing will initially be presented, with the focus then placed on voice-over and the few references to this which are to be found in the literature.

Chaume (2004a: 36-42) presents a classification of all the literature on synchronisation and differentiates between four perspectives. The first, which he calls a

professional perspective, is represented by Martín (1994), Ávila (1997), and Gilabert, Ledesma and Trifol (2001), and aims to ensure “that the dubbed product sounds as though it were original” (Chaume 2004a: 36). The second perspective, defined as functionalist, includes Fodor (1976), Mayoral et al. (1988), Kahane (1990-1991) and Zabalbeascoa (1993). Despite presenting similar proposals to those of the first group, this group of scholars adopt a more academic approach to the topic. The third perspective is the so-called ‘polysystemic’ approach, represented by Goris (1993) and Karamitroglou (2000), who consider synchrony to be the most prominent feature of naturalization, which is in turn considered a translational norm in dubbing. The final perspective, named the cinematographic approach, includes the proposals of Chaves (2000), Bartrina (2001), Chaume (2003 & 2004b) and Bravo (2003), and analyses synchronisation as “one of a set of elements in the broad network of signs that make up the message, the film and the narration” (Chaume 2004a: 42).

Among these, the proposals presented by Fodor (1976), Whitman-Linsen (1992) and Chaume (2004a& 2004b) merit particular attention, as they have become references in the field.

In pioneering work into synchrony, Fodor (1976: 21-71) introduces the differentiation between phonetic, character and content synchronies. According to him, phonetic synchrony refers to the lip movement of the actors on screen, with character synchrony related to matching the voice of the dubbing actor to the film character actor, and finally with content synchrony taking into account the coherence between the translation and what is happening on screen.

Some years later, Whitman-Linsen (1992: 19) approaches the same topic, focusing not only on technical procedures but also on the professionals taking part in the synchronisation process. Whitman-Linsen’s classification distinguishes between

visual/optical synchrony and audio/acoustic synchrony. Visual/optical synchrony includes lip synchrony (also called phonetic synchrony), syllable articulation synchrony, length of utterance synchrony (also called gap synchrony or isochrony) and facial expression synchrony (also called kinetic synchrony). Audio or acoustic synchrony on the other hand refers to the idiosyncratic vocal type, paralinguistic elements (tone, timbre and pitch of voice), prosody (intonation, melody and tempo), cultural variations, accents and dialects.

More recently, in a widely accepted piece of work, Chaume (2004a: 72-73) differentiates between: (i) lip synchrony, which adapts the translation to lip movements of the characters on screen, particularly for certain vowels and consonants when clearly visible; (ii) kinetic synchrony, which requires a translation that matches the movements of the characters on screen, and (iii) isochrony, which adapts the length of the translated text to the length of the original text uttered by the actors.

Despite the presence of scientific works describing synchronisation in dubbing, there are few studies into the specific strategies employed. Chaume (2004a) and Mayoral (2003) list a number of strategies, and Matamala (2010) uses a corpus made up of the first reel of three films dubbed into Catalan and Spanish to describe how written translations of audiovisual products change during the dubbing process, focusing mainly on the synchronisation stage but also on other phases (namely language revision and recording). Matamala (2010: 105-106) identifies various strategies used by the dialogue writer to synchronise the translation: reduction (where the number of syllables of the original is reduced), repetition (where some words are repeated), amplification (where the text is made longer), modification (where the length of the utterance is kept the same but the sentence altered), changed order (where the same words are kept but in a different order), and deletion (where some parts of the utterance are deleted but the rest

kept the same). Although the constraints imposed by lip-synch dubbing differ considerably to those of voice-over, these studies are the inspiration for the classifications proposed for voice-over which are presented in the following section.

### **3. Synchrony in voice-over**

Descriptive research into voice-over and the synchrony strategies used in this transfer mode is not extensive. Grigaraviciute and Gottlieb (1997) analyse the potential semantic and stylistic loss when translating the Danish TV series *Charlot and Charlotte* for voice-over into Lithuanian at two levels: “that of structure and that of translational quality” (Grigaraviciute & Gottlieb 1997: 50). Three translation categories are considered for the first level: full translation, reduction and elimination. As for the second level of analysis, the authors establish a further three categories: full correspondence between translation and original, partial correspondence between the two and no correspondence at all. Examples from the series are provided by the authors to illustrate each of the aforementioned categories. One of their conclusions is that, as far as synchrony is concerned, some seconds are kept at the beginning of dialogues, although “the Lithuanian voices continue for as much as a couple of seconds after the Danish lines have been spoken” (Grigaraviciute & Gottlieb 1997: 48).

Also focusing on Lithuanian voice-overs, Aleksonyté (1999) conducts a case study of the Danish film *Breaking the Waves*, with the aim of analysing the amount of information lost in both the subtitled and voiced-over versions, and the strategies used to synchronise the original sound and the voice-over. Departing from Gottlieb’s (1997) proposal concerning subtitling strategies, Aleksonyté instead discusses the following



approaches: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion and resignation, providing examples and comparing the Danish subtitles with the Lithuanian voice-over. Another author who makes reference to synchronisation in voice-over is Krasovska (2004), who emphasizes that time and space are significant constraints in the voice-over process. She also points out that some reduction must be made due to the fact that only one speaker (or, in certain countries, two speakers) reproduces all the original dialogues.

Despite these isolated papers, the most thorough proposal to date is that of Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010), based on the work of Orero (2006) and inspired by the previous literature on synchronisation in dubbing. Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010: 74-83) mainly focus their research on non-fictional products, and define four types of synchrony for voice-over: voice-over isochrony, literal synchrony, kinetic synchrony and action synchrony. The first category of voice-over isochrony refers to the fact that the translation should fit the time available for the voice-over, which corresponds to the length of original utterance minus a few seconds at the beginning and at the end. The second category of literal synchrony means that a literal translation must be rendered in those seconds in which the original can be heard. The authors adopt a critical approach to this type of synchrony and state that a good translation is better than a translation which maintains literal synchrony. For the third type of synchrony (kinetic synchrony) to be achieved, translators must take into account the on-screen body language and adequately synchronize their texts so that, for example, if an actor nods affirmatively, a contradictory translation saying “no” is not heard. Finally, not only body movements but also actions and all on-screen elements must be adequately synchronized with the text, guaranteeing the fourth type of synchrony: the so-called

‘action synchrony’. This classification constitutes the theoretical basis for our analysis, the results of which will be presented under these four categories.

#### **4. Results and discussion**

Although the previously discussed proposal concerning voice-over synchrony is the most thorough to be published to date, it is mainly based on non-fictional products. However, in our research, the emphasis is on fictional movies voiced-over into Polish, and hence it will be relevant to see how the categories of the previous proposal apply to fictional movies and how the various types of synchronies are achieved, i.e. what strategies are used. The results are presented in four sub-sections, corresponding to each of the previously identified synchrony categories. As already mentioned, the analysis was based on four movies. However, in the comedy *Whatever Works*, synchrony posed a major challenge due to the abundance of overlapping dialogues, hence most examples presented in the article come from this movie.

##### **4.1. *Voice-over isochrony***

As already explained, voice-over isochrony refers to the fact that the voice-over translation has to be adapted so that it fits into the time available and allows for the original to be heard both at the beginning and at the end of the utterance. Naturally, this feature imposes many challenges on the translator, who usually has to reduce or change the utterance in order to be able to maintain this type of isochrony.

By analyzing isochrony in voiced-over documentaries, Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010: 74) noted that certain parts of documentaries depict a language which “is generally full of hesitations, false starts, syntactic anomalies and other oral features which have to be changed into precise discourse so that the final audience understands it”. In non-fictional products, these oral markers are generally used by so-called ‘talking heads’ and are often omitted from the translation because the information is considered more important than the reproduction of a spontaneous language. The presence of these oral markers is even more accentuated in fictional movies, which attempt to mimic spontaneous language by means of the so-called ‘prefabricated orality’ (Chaume 2004a: 168).

However, it remains to be seen whether the strategy employed in fictional voice-over is the same. Our hypothesis is that, in a similar way to with subtitling, time and space constraints will compel translators to omit these less informative units, contrary to what can be achieved in dubbing (Baños-Piñero and Chaume 2009). It is therefore expected that items such as tag questions, sound mimics, connectors, attention getters, confirmation seekers (Cordella 2007: 84), emphatic markers, interjections, incomplete sentences, hesitations (Rosa 1996: 324), phatic elements, mistakes (Orero 2001), and forms of address or repetition, will be removed in the voice-over version.

Our analysis of the movie fragments confirms that these elements are usually condensed or omitted in order to maintain voice-over isochrony. In examples 1 to 5, some instances of either total or partial reduction are presented, with the omitted or condensed elements highlighted in italics, with discussion as to how these omissions might affect other issues such as character definition.

Example 1 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:01:00	00:01:01	
<p>Boris: That's not what I'm saying, <i>you imbecile</i>. <i>God</i>, you <i>completely</i> misrepresent my ideas! Why am I <i>even bothering</i> talking to such idiots?</p> <p>Boris' friend: Boris, calm down.</p> <p>Boris: <i>No, don't tell me to...</i> I am calm.</p> <p>Boris' friend: Don't jump on us <i>just because we don't understand what you're saying</i>.</p> <p>Boris: <i>I didn't jump on you</i>.</p>	<p>Boris: Wcale tego nie mówię. Nie przekręcaj moich słów. Po co rozmawiam z idiotami?</p> <p>Przyjaciół Borysa: Borys, uspokój się!</p> <p>Boris: Jestem spokojny.</p> <p>Przyjaciół Borysa: Nie naskakuj na nas.</p>	<p>Boris: That's not what I'm saying, Don't twist my words! Why am I talking to such idiots?</p> <p>Boris' friend: Boris, calm down.</p> <p>Boris: I am calm.</p> <p>Boris' friend: Don't jump on us.</p>

In Example 1, the following elements are removed: a vulgar address form (“you imbecile”), an exclamation (“God”), a false start (“No, don’t tell me to...”), a clarification (“just because we don’t understand what you’re saying”) and finally a whole response by Boris (“I didn’t jump on you”). The reduction of these elements does not alter the informative content of the message, but it does modify the spontaneity of the messages transmitted. Nevertheless, as shown in Example 2, reduction sometimes only affects specific items such as repetitions, hence minimizing its impact.

Example 2 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:04:39	00:04:39	
Boris: With the horror <i>and</i> corruption <i>and</i> ignorance <i>and</i> poverty <i>and</i> genocide <i>and</i> AIDS <i>and</i> global warming <i>and</i> terrorism <i>and</i> the family-value morons <i>and</i> the gun morons!	Boris: Strach, korupcja, ignorancja, bieda, ludobójstwo, AIDS, globalne ocieplenie, terroryzm, bzdury o wartościach rodzinnych i o broni.	Boris: Fear, corruption, ignorance, poverty, genocide, AIDS, global warming, terrorism, nonsense about the family-value and about the gun!

In Example 2, the deleted element is the conjunction “and”, which in the original version is repeated nine times but in the voice-over version only appears once. A simple elimination of a repeated conjunction spares some time which is used to transmit the informative content of the message. Apart from deleting oral markers and repetitions, analysis of the corpus shows that reduction can affect other traits which contribute to character definition. A clear example of this is to be found in the movie *Nine*. Although the movie is in English, most of the characters in this musical are from Italy or France, and they often use isolated Italian or French words as a means of highlighting their origin. The strategies used towards these words are various, as shown in Examples 3 and 4.

Example 3 (source: *Nine*)

Original	Polish translation	Back translation
00:30:14	00:30:15	
Pierpaolo: <i>Maestro</i> ...Claudia's agent...	Pierpaolo: Agent Claudii.	Pierpaolo: Claudia's agent.
Guido: Did she like the script? <i>No no no no - impossibile - are you telling me</i> she didn't get <i>the script</i> ?	Guido: Spodobał się jej scenariusz? Niemożliwe. Nie dostała go?	Guido: Did she like the script? Impossible. She didn't get it?

Example 3 is very interesting if we focus on the insertion of Italian words. On the one hand, the repetition (“no no no no”) and the form of address (“Maestro”) are simply omitted in the Polish. On the other hand, however, the Italian word “impossibile” is literally translated. These two strategies mean that the origin of the characters vanishes in the Polish voiced-over version. The strategy of omission is also applied in Example 4, although the effect is different.

Example 4 (source: *Nine*)

Original	Polish translation	Back translation
00:34:02	00:34:03	
Lilli: <i>Ah, Bon soir, bon soir, bon soir. Je suis la vedette des Folies Bergère. Vedette, it means 'star.'</i>	Lilli: Dobry wieczór! Jestem la vedette des Folies Bergère. Vedette znaczy gwiazda.	Lilli: Good evening! I am la vedette des Folies Bergère. Vedette means 'star'.

In Example 4, the original version brought French into play in order to underline the French atmosphere and introduce a sudden relocation to the Paris music hall of “Folies Bergère”. In the Polish version, only a small French element is kept: “la vedette des Folies Bergère”. However, the first two expressions of “bon soir” are perfectly audible, meaning that the function of those foreign greetings is maintained. A deliberate omission and accurate synchronization allows for the maintenance of the French flavor, which shows the importance of experimenting with sound levels and tempos in voiced-over productions. As Wozniak (2012:213) points out:

in fictional programs (...) the translation has to take into account two parallel levels of communication and to lexicalise the conversation within the frame of visual message. However, from a purely technical point of view the dialogue structure in fictional programs is more complicated and polyphonic (i.e., the original text

is distributed among many voices) on the one hand but it usually offers more possibilities to find pauses between utterances on the other hand

Another similar instance is to be found in Example 5, in which the word “cretino!” is perfectly audible.

Example 5 (source: *Nine*).

Original	Polish translation	Back translation
00:31:15	00:31:15	
Guido: Pierpaolo! Claudia didn't get the script! Send her another one. <i>For Chrissake</i> . Send her two! Pierpaolo: Yes, I'm sorry. <i>Right now</i> . Guido: <i>Cretino!</i>	Guido: Pierpaolo! Claudia nie dostała scenariusza! Wyslij jej kolejny. Nawet dwa. Pierpaolo: Przepraszam.	Guido: Pierpaolo! Claudia didn't get the script! Send her another one. Send her two! Pierpaolo: I'm sorry.

Character definition can also be based on the language register, and Example 6 from the movie *Whatever Works* presents a different strategy used to keep a slang unit in the voiced-over version whilst maintaining voice-over isochrony by deleting other oral features.

Example 6 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:01:19	00:01:19	
Boris: What <i>the hell</i> does it <i>all</i> mean anyhow? Nothing. Zero. <i>Zilch</i> .	Boris: Jakie to w końcu ma znaczenie? Żadne, zero, null.	Boris: What does it mean anyhow? Nothing. Zero. Null.

In Example 6, items such as the intensifiers “the hell” and “all” are deleted, whilst the word “zilch” (which in slang means “zero”) is substituted in the Polish with the German word “null” which is often used in Polish colloquial language. Both strategies help maintain both the register and the voice-over isochrony. Although reduction is the main strategy used to achieve voice-over isochrony in the analysed corpus, transformation of whole utterances is also employed, as shown in Example 7.

Example 7 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:09:46	00:09:47	
Boris: <i>Do me a favor.</i> <i>Don't send that cretin to me</i> <i>anymore.</i>	Boris: Koniec lekcji.	Boris: No more classes.

In Example 7, the content is transmitted by using totally different words in a neutralized sentence which removes introductory statements such as “do me a favor” and impolite words such as “cretin”, which again contribute to the characterization of Boris.

Finally, it has been observed that voice-over isochrony is sometimes not maintained, with the transmission of all the information prioritized. This is the case in Example 8, where the voice-over begins one second before (not after) the original version.

Example 8 (source: *Marvin's Room*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:39	00:03:38	
Where's the what 'cha-ma-call-it?	Gdzie ja mam ten..	There is the....



Anticipation constitutes a very useful (and sometimes the sole) resource for the translator and the voice-over artist in fictional movies, where many characters can make short utterances in overlapping or fast-paced dialogues. In this case, every second is precious and leaving any second at the beginning of an utterance may be simply impossible. This is the case in Example 9, where the voice-over again begins before the original dialogue.

Example 9 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original 00:01:45	Polish voice-over 00:01:44	Back translation
Boris: I didn't jump on you. It's not the idea behind Christianity I'm faulting, or Judaism, or any religion. It's the professionals who've made it into a corporate business.	Boris: Nie ganię idei chrześcijaństwa, judaizmu czy innej religii. Chodzi o zawodowców, którzy zrobili z Boga dochodowy interes.	Boris: It's not the idea of Christianity I'm faulting, Judaism, or any religion. It's the professionals who've made God into a corporate business.

Example 9 is a continuation of a dialogue between Boris and Boris' friends. Due to the fast exchange of utterances that preceded the fragment and the speed of Boris' monologue, the voice-over artist begins reading the text one second before the original.

All in all, this analysis shows that so far, in order to maintain voice-over isochrony in the English>Polish combination, total or partial reduction are the main strategies employed, with some examples of transformation also to be found. However, voice-over isochrony is not systematically kept, as shown in the final two examples. Indeed, professionals sometimes resort to anticipation and experimenting with sound and voiced text in order to enhance comprehension and maintain characters' defining

traits. In this regard, Woźniak (2012) comments on the importance of another type of feature which is not analyzed in this corpus but which undoubtedly would merit further investigation: that of ‘voice-in-between’. According to Woźniak (2012:225), the “anticipation tactic not only helps to find more pauses between the lines of original speech, but can also help viewers - among other things - to *understand* the lines of the dialogues that follow”. This is the reason why Woźniak considers that voice-in-between would provide “a better access to the original soundtrack and to information in the voice-over, more comfort in the reception of the film and even support in foreign-language learning” (Woźniak 2012:225).

#### 4.2. *Literal synchrony*

According to Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010: 80), “the translator must take into account that a few seconds might be left at the beginning and even at the end” of the utterances in order to make the first and last words or speech units audible. But as Luyken et al. (1991: 141) point out, “the first and the last words will not only be heard by the audience but very often be understood by some of them”. Hence, some authors advise translating those audible fragments literally, in order to enhance credibility and maintain the so-called ‘authenticity illusion’. Achieving this type of synchrony in non-fictional products, which are often structured using long narrations interspersed with monologues by experts and some isolated dialogues or incidental speech, might be relatively easy. However, it remains to be seen whether fictional movies, which in the words of Juel (2006: 13) aim to “entertain, amuse, distract, conform or confirm”, allow for literal synchrony to be maintained. It is our hypothesis that it will be difficult to systematically achieve this type of synchrony in fictional products. Indeed, as Wozniak (2012: 212) points out,

whatever rules and strategies have been established for voice-over translation in non-fiction genres, they will probably be of little use to feature films

The analysis shows that there is not a single strategy regarding literal synchrony, as demonstrated in Examples 10 and 11.

Example 10 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:16	00:03:17	
Boris: <i>Why</i> would you want to hear my story?	Boris: <i>Czemu</i> chcesz ją poznać?	Boris: Why do you want to know it?

Example 11 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:01:40 -00:01:45	00:01:40 – 00:01.44	
Boris: Which is they're all based on the fallacious notion that people are <i>fundamentally decent</i> .	Boris: Opierają się na błędnym założeniu, że ludzie są z <i>gruntu</i> <i>uczciwi</i> .	Boris: They're based on the fallacious notion that people are <i>fundamentally decent</i> .

In Example 10, the voice-over artist begins reading the Polish version one second after the original soundtrack, making the first word of the original perfectly audible. This word (“why”) is literally translated using its Polish counterpart (“Czemu”). In Example 11, the voice-over artist finishes reading the text one second before the original version, making the last two words (“fundamentally decent”) audible. Again, this audible fragment is also literally translated in the Polish version. However, due to problems with voice-over isochrony, this approach cannot always be followed. In Example 12,

the possessives are deleted to fit the translation into the time available, which does not permit the provision of a literal translation of the first words.

Example 12 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:04:04 – 00:04:07	00:04:05 – 00:04:06	
Boris: <i>Your</i> portfolio, <i>your</i> children, health.	Boris: <i>Pakiet</i> akcji, dzieci, zdrowie.	Boris: Portfolio, children, health.

To summarise, the examples presented in this section show that there is not a unified trend and, depending on the utterance, literal synchrony is sometimes maintained and sometimes lost.

#### 4.3. *Kinetic synchrony*

Orero (2006: 257) points out that “in voice-over the message read by the voice which delivers the translation must match the body movements which appear on the screen”, in other words, it must keep the so-called kinetic synchrony. In our corpus this type of synchrony is found, although it does not pose problems to the translator and a literal translation is often enough to achieve it, as shown in Example 13.

Example 13 (source: *Whatever Works*).

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:48	00:03:38	
Boris: Not me. I have a vision. I'm	Boris: Ja jestem inny. Mam wizję.	Boris: I'm different. I have a vision.

discussing you.	Rozmawiam z wami.	I'm discussing you.
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When Boris says “me” and “I”, he points at himself, but when he utters the pronoun “you”, he directs his hands towards the camera, as if addressing the audience. This gesture emphasizes that the line of communication is flowing from him to the audience (“you”). In the Polish version, the sentences and pronouns are literally translated and kinetic synchrony is easily maintained. In Example 13, however, this correspondence between body movements and translated text is not as tight as in the original. In this particular scene, a boy is passing by on the street and sees Boris talking to himself. The boy then says “mom, that man’s talking to himself” whilst pointing his finger at Boris.

Example 14 (source: *Whatever Works*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:37	00:03:38	
Boy on street: Mom, <i>that man's</i> talking to himself!	Chłopiec na ulicy: On mówi do siebie!	Boy on street: He’s talking to himself!

In Example 14, the gesture clearly identifies the person to whom the boy is making reference, and supports the verbal output. In the Polish translation, there is no direct indication and the demonstrative pronoun is substituted with the personal pronoun “he”; a less cohesive but still totally understandable device.

All in all, maintaining kinetic synchrony is not especially problematic in our corpus, and translators solve the few instances where this type of synchrony has to be kept without further problems.

#### 4.4. Action synchrony

Action synchrony aims to offer a translation which is totally coherent with the visuals. Discussing voice-over in non-fiction, Franco, Matamala and Orero (2010:82) state that “if the interviewer refers to an element on-screen, the translation must keep the synchrony and refer to this element as it is shown”. However, it remains to be seen whether action synchrony is as frequent in fictional movies as in non-fictional products. In fact, in our entire corpus, there are only two situations in which action synchrony can be detected. The first situation is when the image complements the translated text. Example 15 shows how the image can sometimes substitute the verbal expression and still be completely understood by the audience.

Example 15 (source: *Spy Game*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:44	00:03:45	
You've got ten minutes to fix the electrical. Ten minutes, <i>do you hear me?</i>	Masz 10 minut, żeby to naprawić. Dziesięć minut, jasne?	You've got ten minutes to fix it. Ten minutes, clear?

In Example 15, the image shown on screen along with this line is an electrical. In the Polish translation “the electrical” is substituted by the demonstrative pronoun “to”, which means “this”. This demonstrative pronoun - a short translation proposal which facilitates voice-over isochrony - is perfectly synchronized with the image. Hence, the cohesion between the voiced-over text and the image onscreen is guaranteed and enhances comprehension. The second type of situation in which action synchrony has been identified deals with written text on screen, as shown in Example 16.

Example 16 (source: *Marvin's Room*)

Original	Polish voice-over	Back translation
00:03:15	00:03:15	
Janine: Dr. Surabh is on vacation.	Janine: Doktor Surabh wziął urlop.	Janine: Dr. Surabh is on vacation.
Bessie: See Dr. who?	Bessie: Kto przyjmuje?	Bessie: See Dr. who?
Janine: I'll be right back.	Janine: <i>Doktorze Wallie, odchodzę.</i> Zaraz wracam.	Janine: Dear Dr. Wally, I quit. I'll be right back.

In Example 16, in the receptionist named Janine in the original version is typing a letter which reads “Dear Dr. Wally, I quit”. This written text is integrated in a diasemiotic Polish voice-over (to use Gottlieb’s (2005) terminology) which maintains action synchrony. As the text is shown on screen, the voice-over artist simultaneously reads the Polish translation, allowing the audience to access the full English audiovisual text and maintaining the cohesion between the image and the text. Other similar examples are to be found in the movie *Spy Game*, which opens with a written caption reading “Su Chou Prison Foreign and Workers respond to suspected cholera outbreak, Apr. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1991”. Again, a diasemiotic voice-over which is well synchronized with the written text is provided in the Polish version.

## 5. Conclusions and further research

Audiovisual translation has always been characterized by a combination of images and spoken texts. However, in voiced-over movies, the visual channel is accompanied by a double audio channel. This implies that the audience is always exposed to two dialogue lists, one in the original language and another in the target language. This simultaneous

coexistence of two soundtracks makes synchrony one of the most relevant issues in translating for voice-overs, an issue which has nonetheless not been thoroughly researched. This exploratory study has attempted to answer whether or not the synchronies described in the bibliography, which deal mainly with non-fiction products (Franco, Matamala and Orero 2010), are to be found in fiction genres and how the various types of synchronies are achieved in a corpus of movies voiced-over into Polish. The analysis has found examples of all synchrony types, with a significantly higher prevalence of voice-over isochrony. Total or partial reductions have been identified as the most frequent strategies employed when trying to achieve isochrony, particularly in scenes with many characters talking in overlapping dialogues. The consequence is a loss of meaning at some points and also a toned down version of the character, whose words lose some of their idiosyncratic features in the target language version.

On the other hand, the analysis shows that synchrony can be a useful resource. If the translator and the voice-over artist skillfully manipulate the audio in terms of synchronization, both the image and the two audio soundtracks can work together towards facilitating film comprehension and enjoyment in a complementary way. As demonstrated, the voiced-over soundtrack transfers the most relevant information from the original, not only from the oral language but also from written texts (such as the previously discussed resignation letter from *Marvin's Room*), and this can be achieved as long as synchrony is maintained. At the same time, some audible elements from the original can complement the information (such as the comprehensible excerpts in French in *Nine*), and synchrony is again essential for letting those specific words be heard. It remains to be seen, however, whether this effect is to be found in any language combination or whether the source language determines the different approaches to the voice-over of non-fictional products.



To summarise, this small-scale piece of descriptive research has shown that all the synchrony types previously identified for non-fiction find their way into fictional products voiced-over into Polish, although to differing degrees. In addition, a fifth type of synchrony (voice-in-between) proposed by Woźniak (2012) may be particularly relevant in fictional products. More research is undoubtedly needed into this area, and ideally this would better define the current practices in Eastern Europe, describe how professionals approach voice-over in terms of translation and synchronization strategies, and how audiences receive the final product.

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