

The impact of labor division on audiovisual translation consistency - a study of streaming TV series

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to investigate the impact of labor division on translation consistency and quality in a streaming TV series by comparing Polish subtitles and voice-over. The study scrutinizes the translations of three series – *Santa Clarita Diet*, *Orange Is the New Black* and *Insatiable* – prepared using three labor division patterns: (1) translators change between seasons, (2) different translators prepare the subtitles and voice-over simultaneously, (3) several translators are assigned individual episodes of one season. The results are varied and depend on the division pattern. When translators change between seasons, there seems to be little to no difference in quality or consistency. When translators work simultaneously and independently on two modes, inconsistencies are likely to happen, and they could be detected if the audience switches between the modes when watching. Humour, register and vulgarity visibly vary between the translations, which can also potentially influence the reception of the translations. When different translators prepare individual episodes within the same mode, consistency suffers, and quality fluctuates. The results also reveal the beneficial effect of translator communication on consistency and quality.

Key words: collaborative translation, project management, translation division, translation consistency, quality assurance

1. Introduction

TV series tend to contain a voluminous amount of language material, and their numerous seasons can span several years of production. *The Simpsons* are the best example here, as the series has been running continuously since 1989, containing 692 episodes in 32 seasons at the time of writing this paper. It seems hardly feasible for a single translator to be able to cope with such extensive material, so it comes as no surprise that, for example, preparing a translation of these episodes for Polish television involved several translators. Such division of work could possibly lead to inconsistencies, but the TV audience had little opportunity to verify the translations, as re-watching older episodes are hardly possible on traditional TV.

The advent of VOD platforms has changed the situation dramatically. It introduced new viewing habits, like binge-watching, and gave viewers the possibility to watch and re-watch a series' episodes at any time and in any sequence. It also provided audiences with a choice regarding the preferred mode of audiovisual translation (AVT). In the words of Pedersen (2018: 83-84), “[t]oday, when streamed content is gaining more market shares ever, AVT choice can hardly be said to be a monolithic national choice, but rather is the choice of individual viewers. These days, viewing habits are many and diverse, and the services offered by online VOD stores, streaming platforms, social media etc., do their best to facilitate this by providing AVT for people to watch whatever they like, whenever they like.”

Providing all the episodes of a season at once – and not, for instance, one per week as it is the case on traditional TV – and in various translation modes has forced streaming platforms to shorten the translation time and divide the labor even further. Nowadays, different translators can render different seasons of a series or prepare different translation modes of the same season, and even individual episodes

can be assigned to different professionals. Campos & Azevedo (2020: 227-228) remark the following about the modern software used by streaming platforms:

[It] allow[s] multiple subtitlers to work on the same project simultaneously. All of the episodes of a series, for example, can be subtitled in a single day, each by a different translator. [...] To provide an idea of the complexity of the involved workforce, in a series of 12 episodes, there could be up to 24 professionals directly responsible for creating the subtitles, just counting one different translator and reviewer for each episode. Therefore, one impact of new media technologies is a greater fragmentation of the translation/subtitling task.

To counter any issues that may result from such labor division, localization teams strive to ensure consistency throughout the entire series, for instance, by creating glossaries, character lists, translation instructions, or introducing dedicated quality control. The present paper aims to investigate whether such measures are sufficient or whether translations are rife with inconsistencies if prepared by different professionals. It scrutinizes the Polish translations of three series available on Netflix, comparing subtitles and voice-over in each case. Three division patterns are analyzed. In the first one, the translator changed between the seasons. In the second one, the two modes of translation were prepared simultaneously by different professionals. In the third one, at least four translators worked on individual episodes of one season.

2. Literature review

Consistency in the translation of a series seems not to have been empirically researched yet, but several scholars have addressed the issue of dividing translation labor in their works. The topic has been most often discussed in the field of localization, where task division and collaborative projects are common. Systems of assuring quality and consistency have been described (for example, Matis 2012), and the attitudes towards labor division are generally favorable. For instance, O'Brien (2011) speaks of collaborative translation in glowing terms, claiming that it can lead to higher quality, improve the skills of junior translators, and decrease translation time. Certain scholars, however, do acknowledge the downsides of labor division. For example, Hartley (2009: 113) notes that "the fact that globalization has turned authoring and translation into team activities only heightens the risk of inconsistencies". As a result, translation fragments have to be unified since "the impact of defective terminology on customer satisfaction can be incalculable, from impairing the usability of a product [...] to compromising health and safety." Consistency tools and translator communication should thus be prioritized.

Sharing translation work has also been addressed in literary translation studies. Adopting a rather theoretical stance, Cordingley & Manning (2017) consider it natural and positive, arguing that translation has always been a collaborative effort to a certain degree, much like an artistic creation. However, results of empirical research seem to highlight the advantages of solitary work over sharing it. Stylometric tools, for instance, allow scholars to distinguish between translators, which suggests that the target-language works of a given author are more stylistically consistent when rendered by the same person. In a fascinating study, Rybicki & Heyden (2013) use stylometric methods to analyze the Polish translation of Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*. It is an interesting case, as one translator rendered a part of the novel but passed away, and another translator took over the project and finished the text. Using stylometry, the scholars could accurately pinpoint the location in the text where this change occurred, proving that it is not stylistically uniform. However, they stress that this "does not necessarily condemn the translation as incoherent or disjointed" (Rybicki & Heyden, 2013: 715).

When it comes to the translation of pragmatic texts (legal, financial, medical, technical, etc.), Stupiello (2014) remarks that the division of translation labor, paired with increasingly shorter deadlines, makes it difficult for translators to feel responsible for the final outcome and blurs the authorship of the translation. Needless to say, this can negatively impact the target text, as translators might care less about the totality of the final product when they are only assigned its isolated pieces. Stupiello thus calls for more research into the attitudes of translators towards fragmented texts and into the translation process in such cases. Stupiello's ideas are further developed by de Mello (2017), who notices a curious paradox: although modern translation software was designed to ensure consistency, it has divided the texts and the labor, leading to inconsistencies it was supposed to prevent. Mossop (2014) offers various practical advice to assess and ensure consistency in pragmatic texts, stressing that arranging for texts to be consistently ahead of time is the ideal approach.

Consistency in the translation of a streaming TV series seems to be directly addressed only by Campos & Azevedo (2020). The two researchers posit that the fragmentation of the translation task leads to problems with "the consistency of the subtitles since the same term might be translated differently by different translators throughout the series, creating confusion for viewers." They advocate that "a more structured review process is necessary to account for the variety of different translation possibilities produced by different translators. In addition, closer dialogue between translators and proofreaders, as well as more specific instructions regarding a particular series or production, are required" (Campos & Azevedo, 2020: 228).

It should be noted here that streaming platforms should consider ensuring consistency not only within their subtitles but also between all the translation modes available for a given material. In Poland, for example, subtitles and voice-over are often offered together for the viewer to choose from. Research conducted by Szarkowska & Laskowska (2015) shows that although most viewers prefer one mode exclusively, some tend to switch between the modes, depending on the circumstances. They choose subtitles when they speak or learn the original language, feel rested, and are able to fully concentrate on watching or want to listen to the original actors. They select voice-over, however, when they are doing household chores or feel too tired to follow subtitles. This means that some viewers are likely to switch back and forth between the two modes over the course of watching a series and spot any inconsistencies between the two translations. Of course, some of these inconsistencies might be inevitable if they result from the inherent differences between the two modes, and some viewers might even be aware that they deal with two different translations and can expect certain variations. However, if the two translators produce considerably diverse texts, each of these versions can offer a distinct viewing experience.

Due to limited space, the present paper shall not discuss the process of preparing either of these modes, but detailed information on subtitling can be found in work by Díaz-Cintas & Remael (2014), and voice-over is thoroughly explained in the book by Franco, Matamala & Orero (2010).

3. Aims and materials

The aim of the research is to investigate the impact of labor division on translation consistency and quality in a streaming TV series by comparing Polish subtitles and voice-over. The study scrutinizes the translations of three series available on the streaming platform Netflix – *Santa Clarita Diet*, *Orange Is the New Black* and *Insatiable* – prepared using three-division patterns: (1) translators change between seasons, (2) different translators prepare the subtitles and voice-over simultaneously, (3) several translators are assigned individual episodes of one season.

The scrutiny of *Santa Clarita Diet*, whose translation was prepared using the first division pattern, involves seasons 1-3. The first two seasons were subtitled by Krzysztof Kowalczyk, but a different professional, Magdalena Adamus, stepped in to subtitle season 3. In the analysis, the subtitles for the 3rd season are compared against the translations of the previous seasons and against the voice-over to the 3rd season, which was also prepared by Kowalczyk. Personal communication with both translators revealed that Adamus had contacted Kowalczyk via the provided online platform to ensure consistency with the translations of the previous seasons.

The translations of *Orange Is the New Black* were prepared using the second pattern – by two teams of translators who worked simultaneously and independently of each other. The voice-over was prepared by Krzysztof Kowalczyk and Sylwester Misiołek, while the subtitles were provided by unknown professional(s), who did not sign their work.

The subtitles to *Insatiable* were prepared using the third division pattern – by several translators who had been assigned individual episodes. The first season of the show is scrutinized here. It contains 12 episodes, and their assignment to individual translators is truly mind-boggling: Magdalena Adamus rendered episodes 1 and 3; Dorota Nowakówna – episodes 2, 4, 6 and 12; Kamila Krupiński – episode 5; Krzysztof Bożejewicz – episode 8; and episodes 7, 9, 10 and 11 remain unsigned, suggesting the presence of a fifth translator (or more). The resulting subtitles are scrutinized for inner consistency and are additionally compared against the translation by Krzysztof Kowalczyk, who was responsible for the voice-over for the entire season. Personal communication with the translators revealed that they had had no contact with each other.

Overall, the analyzed material constitutes a sizeable sample. Three seasons of three different series are scrutinized, and they total 35 episodes – 10 of *Santa Clarita Diet*, 12 of *Insatiable*, and 13 of *Orange Is the New Black*. In the case of *Santa Clarita Diet*, its first two seasons, 10 episodes each, are additionally used for context. At this point, it is also necessary to mention the episode running time of each series, as it will have some influence on the results. In *Santa Clarita Diet* the episodes are about 30 minutes long, in *Orange Is the New Black* – 50 to 60 minutes, and in *Insatiable* – approximately 45 minutes.

There are several reasons behind choosing the series above. First, in each case, their voice-over translations were prepared by the same person, Krzysztof Kowalczyk, who is a very experienced translator, and his work can serve as a good ground for comparison. Second, their renditions were prepared for the same content provider, Netflix, so the quality control should have been similar in all three cases. Third, it was possible to establish contact with most of the translators and enquire about consistency management. Here, personal communication revealed that in the case of *Santa Clarita Diet* and *Insatiable*, the translators received Show Guides with translation instructions and an online “Key Names and Phrases” list, which was editable and allowed them to propose equivalents to proper names and recurring phrases to ensure consistency. In the case of *Orange Is the New Black*, the translators received an offline consistency sheet that did not allow for communication. Finally, the series contains common cultural and linguistic features that require strategic decision-making and whose treatment in translation might impact the reception of the target text. The comedies *Santa Clarita Diet* and *Insatiable* as well as the comedy-drama *Orange Is the New Black* contain plenty of humor, vulgarity and slang, all of which are important plot-pertinent and genre-specific elements that can naturally vary between translations.

4. Procedure

As the materials contain diverse cultural and linguistic features, applying automated solutions such as corpora or consistency tools used in machine translations

would not yield satisfying results. Instead, I watched all the episodes constituting the research material and the context. I watched the context episodes with their Polish subtitles, and I played the research material with subtitles and voice-over simultaneously so that I could spot any considerable differences between the two translations and note them down. In the case of each significant diversion, I copied both translations into a table together with their respective time code. Whenever necessary, I would switch to the original English audio to verify if the differences stemmed from mistranslations. The entire process of gathering and analyzing the data lasted a full year – from January 2020 to January 2021.

It has to be stated here that if the subtitles and the voice-over were prepared by different professionals, the translations vary considerably – almost every sentence is somehow different. Most of these variations result naturally from the translation process – both translators render the meaning and style of the original correctly, only using different wording. Such instances were disregarded in the study. Instead, I noted down only the fragments where the differences affected the understanding of the scene or the cultural and linguistic properties of the material. Then, I grouped the fragments into several categories inspired by the typology of translation issues proposed by Díaz-Cintas & Remael (2014), which I further divided into sub-categories to reflect better the diversity of the material.

Meaning:

- Dialogue line meaning – fragments where the meaning of the dialogue line is different depending on the translation.
- Metaphor – diverse renditions of metaphors.
- Background translation – instances where the content in the background of a scene (e.g. TV, chatter, announcements, background written text, etc.) is treated differently (usually omitted in one translation).
- Terminology – diverse renditions of terminology (legal, scientific, etc.).

Translation of marked speech:

- Vulgarity – fragments where vulgarisms are present in one translation but absent in another or where one translation is evidently more vulgar than the other.
- Slang/colloquiality – instances where one translation is significantly more slangy/colloquial than the other.
- Register – other instances than slang/colloquiality where the register is significantly different in one translation (usually overly formal for the given scene or character).
- L3 – differences in treating the so-called third language, as understood by Corrius & Zabalbeascoa (2011).
- Character relations – different relations between the characters expressed through language, e.g., whether the characters speak to each other using formal or informal forms of address.

Translation of culture-bound items:

- Numbers/units – different handling of numbers, sizes, units, etc. (e.g., either recalculated into the systems used in Poland or not).
- Proper names – differences in proper name translation.
- Cultural items – diverse renditions of various cultural items that do not fit the above sub-categories.

Translation of songs:

- Song translation – instances where song lyrics were translated differently or left untranslated in one of the translations.

Translation of humor:

- Joke rendered differently – instances where a source joke was rendered effectively using different means in both versions.
- Joke retained (more) effectively – instances where a joke was retained in one translation but skipped in the other, or where one translator retained a joke fully whereas the other retained it only partially. I try to be as objective in this criterion as possible, focusing solely on the degree of joke retention without assessing how amusing the two versions are.

I compared the subtitles and the voice-over using the above procedure for all the series comprising the research material. In the case of *Orange Is the New Black*, the comparison constitutes the crux of the study, but it is also useful when scrutinizing the other two division patterns. The comparison between the subtitles and the voice-over allows me to investigate whether there is a change in dealing with the cultural and linguistic features of the originals (humor, register, vulgarity, etc.) when translators change. Prepared by the same experienced professional, the voice-over version thus serves as a point of reference since it retains stable translation quality throughout all the episodes.

In the case of *Santa Clarita Diet*, where subtitlers changed between seasons, I also paid specific attention to proper names and terminology, which reappears throughout the entire series. In *Insatiable*, I investigated the internal consistency of the subtitles, focusing on both the content and the form. In the former, I paid special attention to proper names, recurring jokes and story coherence, and in the latter – to language correctness and subtitling style.

The procedure above is beset with several flaws. First of all, each diversion is treated equally, although its impact on the text may vary. For instance, skipping one swearword in translation is much less perceptible than skipping the rendition of a song in a scene when characters are seen performing it – and yet either of these cases is treated as one instance of diversion. Second of all, since the study focuses on differences between the translations and not on their similarities, it might not provide a full picture of how the analyzed renditions tally. Finally, there is a certain degree of subjectivity involved in assessing and categorizing translational differences. This pertains to the degrees of vulgarity, colloquiality and slanginess, but mostly to humor. As a result, if another researcher wanted to replicate the study, they might end up with slightly different numbers even though I tried to be as impartial and objective as I could. According to Bogucki (2019: 42), such subjectivity is inherent in AVT assessment. Consequently, I shall focus predominantly on the starkest differences between the translations, which should be evident to other researchers as well.

5. Results

In the beginning, it has to be re-stated that if the subtitles and the voice-over were prepared by different professionals, the translations do not tally on the literal level – almost every sentence is somehow different – which naturally stems from the translation process. However, this means that it is definitely perceptible to viewers that they are dealing with two different translations. By comparison, if the subtitles and the voice-over were prepared by the same professional (as it is the case in the first two seasons of *Santa Clarita Diet*), they are almost exact, with very slight and infrequent differences (usually omissions) resulting from the requirements of the given modes. In this case, it should be obvious to the viewers that they are dealing with the same translation, only expressed in different forms.

Since the aim of the paper is to investigate the impact of labor division on the scale of an entire season (or seasons), I shall focus primarily on the quantitative data, revealing extensive differences between the translations. However, for each case, I will also provide some specific examples of consistent or inconsistent translations to show more explicitly how the labor division impacted the target texts. These examples are accompanied by a close English back-translation in square brackets.

5.1. *Santa Clarita Diet* – a new translator stepping in-between seasons

The 3rd season of *Santa Clarita Diet* is a straight continuation of the events from seasons 1 & 2, so retaining consistency was key. The subtitles by Magdalena Adamus blend in very well with the previous translations by Kowalczyk. The proper recurring names (e.g. “Mr Ball Legs” translated as “Pan Nózka”) or neologisms (e.g. “hammer knife” translated as “młotkonóż”) remain exact in all the translations. The humor, slanginess and vulgarity are also on a similar level.

The comparison between the 3rd season subtitles and voice-over can serve as a proof of the above (Table 1). There are only 93 differences between the two renditions – the fewest in the entire study – pointing to a relatively high correspondence between the two modes. This low number could partially stem from the fact that the episodes have the shortest running time, but the two translations are indeed very consistent since Adamus sought contact with Kowalczyk via the provided online platform to ensure this consistency.

Category of difference	Number of differences
Meaning	
Dialogue line meaning	1
Terminology	1
Translation of marked speech	
Vulgurism retained in the subtitles, omitted in the voice-over	5
Vulgurism stronger in the voice-over	4
Vulgurism stronger in the subtitles	2
Subtitles more slangy/colloquial than the voice-over	5
Voice-over more slangy/colloquial than the subtitles	2
L3	2
Character relations	5
Translation of culture-bound items	
Numbers/units	2
Proper names	5
Cultural items	8
Translation of humour	
Joke rendered differently	31
Joke retained (more) effectively in the subtitles	11
Joke retained (more) effectively in the voice-over	9
TOTAL	93
Mean per episode	9.3

Table 1. The number of differences between the subtitles and voice-over to season 3 of *Santa Clarita Diet*.

The humour, which is the most important ingredient of any comedy, is on a very comparable level. No drop in humour retention should be perceptible between seasons 2 & 3, when the translators change. In the 3rd season, the subtitles retain

humor more effectively in 11 instances, and the voice-over in 9, making both renditions almost equally humorous, although the two translators tend to convey comedic elements differently. Table 2 contains some examples of jokes which were rendered effectively in both translations, albeit using different means.

Season, episode and time code	Original	Subtitles	Voice-over
Season 3, episode 4, time code 01:10	The little Helen who fell down the well'n How she got down there no one is tellin'.	Mała Helen do studni wleciała, nikt jej nie widział, tak była mała. [Little Helen fell down the well, nobody saw her because she was so little.]	Usłyszeli, że coś dudni, a to była Helcia w studni. [They heard something rumbling, and it was little Helen in the well.]
Season 3, episode 6, time code 04:08	Thinking of you as a knight is really greasing my engine.	Wizja ciebie w roli rycerza rozgrzewa mój silniczek. [The vision of you in the role of a knight is warming up my little engine.]	Na myśl o tym, że jesteś rycerzem naoliwia mi się silniczek. [The thought of you being a knight is oiling my little engine.]
Season 3, episode 9, time code 09:02	I smiled like an idiot, and answered every question with “Absotively, positutely.”	Szczerzyłem się jak idiota i ciągle odpowiadałem „Totalniuško”. [I grinned like an idiot and kept answering with “most def”.]	Szczerzyłem się jak głąb i odpowiadałem tylko „Absowicie, oczylucie”. [I grinned like a blockhead and kept answering with “absoviously, obviolutely”.

Table 2. Examples of how jokes are rendered effectively but differently in the Polish subtitles and voice-over to *Santa Clarita Diet*, season 3.

The first example involves a mocking rhyme about one episodic character. The text is rendered differently in both Polish versions, but the form and the content of the rhyme are retained. The second example contains double entendre – the phrase “is really greasing my engine” refers to being sexually aroused. The sexual innuendo is maintained in both translations using slightly different wording. In the last example, a character explains that he was so stressed he made a fool of himself during an interview at MIT, confusing the words “absolutely” and “positively”. The voice-over also contains a spoonerism, making use of the words “absolutnie” [absolutely] and “oczywiście” [obviously]. The subtitler, on the other hand, used the highly slangy expression “totalniuško”, which is in stark contrast with the formal context, thus retaining the humour through different means.

Vulgarity and slang, which are common in the dialogue, are also comparable in both renditions, with only marginal variations. Differences in the other categories are minor and episode-specific, so they should not be perceptible if the audience switches from voice-over to subtitles between episodes.

The only considerable difference between the two translations lies in the rendition of the recurring term “fracking”, which is important because blowing up a fracking site is a major subplot of seasons 2 & 3. Adamus uses the technical equivalent “szczelinowanie” in the subtitles, while Kowalczyk employs the general term “odwierty” [boreholes] in his voice-over. Interestingly enough, Adamus adopted her term from the renditions of the previous season by Kowalczyk, and Kowalczyk changed the equivalent in his translation of season 3. In personal communication he rightfully explained that the term “odwierty” suits the 3rd season better since the details of the plot to blow up the site are provided. Nonetheless, average viewers who have little knowledge about fracking are unlikely to spot this nuance. For them, the subtitles could seem more consistent with the previous translations, even though they were prepared by a different translator.

5.2. *Orange Is the New Black* – translators working independently on two modes

The contrast between the voice-over by Kowalczyk and Misiorek and the subtitles by the other translator(s) seems glaring (Table 3). There are almost 600 differences, with a mean of 45.5 per episode, which greatly surpasses the other series in the study. Partially, the contrast stems from the fact that the language of the series is very often marked, as the characters frequently speak slang or swear a lot, so there is simply more opportunity for difference in translation. Partially, though, it also results from actual differences between the two renditions.

Category of difference	Number of differences
Meaning	
Dialogue line meaning	27
Metaphor	27
Background translation	4
Terminology	8
Translation of marked speech	
Vulgarism retained in the voice-over, omitted in the subtitles	78
Vulgarism retained in the subtitles, omitted in the voice-over	62
Vulgarism stronger in the voice-over	39
Vulgarism stronger in the subtitles	16
Voice-over more slangy/colloquial than the subtitles	123
Subtitles more slangy/colloquial than the voice-over	18
Register	10
L3	17
Character relations	15
Translation of culture-bound items	
Numbers/units	4
Proper names	28
Cultural items	22
Translation of songs	
Song translated only in the subtitles	3
Translation of humour	
Joke rendered differently	47
Joke retained (more) effectively in the voice-over	30
Joke retained (more) effectively in the subtitles	14
TOTAL	592
Mean per episode	45.5

Table 3. The number of differences between the subtitles and voice-over to season 1 of *Orange Is the New Black*.

First and foremost, the voice-over is much more slangy/colloquial than the subtitles, as there are 123 such instances. This is also perceptible when watching the series, as the register used by the characters in the subtitles is relatively neutral (excluding vulgarisms), and they seem quite well-spoken for prison inmates. This difference might be noticeable to the audience if they switch between the modes. Table 4 contains three representative examples of how the original slang/colloquiality is neutralized in the subtitles and retained in the voice-over.

Season, episode and time code	Original	Subtitles	Voice-over
Season 1, episode 1, time code 22:06	My cousin's being a bitch, so I'm thinking about dropping her.	Moja kuzynka jest wredna, więc chyba ją pominę. [My cousin's mean, so I'll leave her out.]	Oleję kuzynkę, bo jest szmata. [I'll blow my cousin off, because she's a bitch.]
Season 1, episode 1, time code 32:34	Just got out of SHU a week ago.	Tydzień temu wyszła z izolatki. [She got out of the solitary cell a week ago.]	Tydzień temu wyszła z nory. [She got out of the hole a week ago.]
Season 1, episode 3, time code 17:39	She ain't dookied the whole time she been locked up.	I ani razu nie zrobiła kupy. [She hasn't pooped even once.]	I nie postawiła kloca, odkąd tu jest. [She hasn't taken a dump since she came here.]

Table 4. Examples of how slang/colloquialisms are neutralised in the Polish subtitles and retained in the voice-over in *Orange Is the New Black*, season 1.

Another difference that should be clearly visible to the audience lies in the proper names. There are several of them that reappear throughout the season but are treated differently in each mode: "Miss Claudette", the nickname "Crazy Eyes", "Little Boo", "Women's Advisory Council", and the nickname "College". There are also two recurring phrases and one terminology item ("edging") whose renditions vary between the two translations. In total, there are, therefore, eight items that appear in different episodes and were rendered diversely in both modes. Such dire variations are almost absent in the other analyzed series, which might suggest that the online "Key Names and Phrases" list, which allows for communication between translators, is superior in ensuring consistency when compared with the offline consistency sheet.

The other variations that could possibly affect the perception of the entire season are not so major. The voice-over is slightly more vulgar, as its authors used fewer omissions and chose strong equivalents more often. However, the subtitles abound in strong swearwords as well, so this difference is unlikely to be detectable. The voice-over is also a little more humorous. It preserves the jokes better in 30 cases, while the subtitles retain them more effectively in 14 cases, but the two renditions are still comparably amusing, and the humor is often expressed similarly well but through different means (47 instances). Quality is also comparable, although there are several obvious mistranslations in the subtitles that affect the meaning of the dialogue.

However, the sense variations in dialogue, as well as the differences in the other categories, are limited to their respective episodes.

Overall, the two renditions diverge quite significantly, with numerous notable variations in translation. As a result, re-watching the same episode in a different mode can be a disparate experience, and the inconsistencies could even be perceptible when switching the mode between episodes.

5.3. *Insatiable* – one season divided between several translators

Although the subtitles were prepared by four or more professionals, they are fairly consistent as far as the proper names are concerned. Most recurring proper names and nicknames – “Fatty Patty”, “Wiener Taco”, “Miss Bareback Buckaroo”, “Miss Magic Jesus”, “Tampazzle” – were rendered in the exact same manner in all the episodes. Similarly, the running joke based on modifying the name “Bob Barnard” was preserved in all the episodes. The only proper name that differs within the subtitles is “wiernmobile”, which is rendered either as “parówkomobil” or “parówkowóz”, depending on the episode (in the voice-over, “parówkowóz” is used consistently in all the episodes).

Consistency, however, suffers in other aspects. In episode 11, subtitled by an unknown professional, one of the characters, Regina, opens a letter and reads its content aloud. In episode 12, translated by Nowakówna, the same letter is read aloud by another character, Nonnie, and its wording is entirely different, which stems from the fact that the two translators had no contact with each other and did not agree on one uniform version. The result could be detectable to viewers, especially if the two episodes are watched immediately one after another. Needless to say, the letter sounds the same in both episodes of the voice-over version. Table 5 contains these translations.

Season, episode and time code	Original	Subtitles	Voice-over
Season 1, episode 11, time code 34:15	Dear Patty, I love you. I see the real you. And I'm never letting you go... Love, Christian.	Droga Patty, kocham cię. Widzę cię taką, jaka jesteś, i nigdy cię nie zostawię. Buziaki, Christian. [Dear Patty, I love you. I see you the way you are, and I will never leave you. Kisses, Christian.]	Droga Patty, kocham cię. Widzę cię prawdziwą i nigdy nie pozwolę ci odejść. Kochający Christian. [Dear Patty, I love you. I see the real you and I will never let you go. Your loving Christian.]
Season 1, episode 12, time code 10:49	Dear Patty, I love you. I see the real you. And I'm never letting you go... Love, Christian.	Droga Patty, kocham cię. Widzę prawdziwą ciebie i nigdy nie pozwolę ci odejść. Twój Christian. [Dear Patty, I love you. I see the real you, and I will never let you go.	Droga Patty, kocham cię. Widzę cię prawdziwą i nigdy nie pozwolę ci odejść. Kochający Christian. [Dear Patty, I love you. I see the real you and I will

		Yours, Christian.]	never let you go. Your loving Christian.]
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Table 5. Disparate translation of the same letter in the Polish subtitles to *Insatiable*, season 1, episodes 11 and 12.

The subtitles to episode 12 also contain two mistranslations that are in stark contrast with the events of the previous episodes. Interestingly enough, one of the mistranslations stems from an error present in the English subtitles, which served as the subtitle template. In one of the final scenes, Christian tries to convince Patty to kill Magnolia, giving the argument that Patty had already killed a homeless man. His dialogue line is misrepresented in the English subtitles, suggesting that they did it together, which is entirely false. The Polish subtitler copied the error into her translation, perhaps due to the fact that she was unfamiliar with the full story of the season, and could not spot it and correct it. The voice-over version contains a proper rendition of the original dialogue line, as seen in Table 6.

Season, episode and time code	Original audio	English subtitles	Polish subtitles	Polish voice-over
Season 1, episode 12, time code 38:00	You killed that homeless guy.	We killed that homeless guy.	Zabiliśmy tego bezdomnego. [We killed that homeless guy.]	Zabiłś bezdomnego. [You killed a homeless man.]

Table 6. A mistranslation in the Polish subtitles to *Insatiable* stemming from an error in the English template.

Subtitle quality also fluctuates depending on the episode. Some episodes contain punctuation errors even though similar sentences are punctuated properly in other episodes. The usage of suspension dots varies, and so does correctness. The first episode contains two spelling errors, while the last episode – six errors: one idiom mistranslation, one spelling and two grammatical mistakes, and the two consistent mistranslations mentioned above. The voice-over, on the other hand, retains stable translation quality throughout all the episodes.

When the subtitles are compared against the voice-over (Table 7), one can notice that there are many more differences than in the case of *Santa Clarita Diet*, which was translated by a single subtitler. The voice-over is moderately more slangy and humorous. Interestingly enough, when the two modes are compared, humor retention in the subtitles can be differentiated between the translators. Out of 14 instances where a given joke was retained more effectively in the subtitles, 8 (57%) appear in the translation by Adamus, even though she only rendered two episodes out of twelve (16%). One type of joke also stands out in the analysis – double entendre. In 13 instances, such jokes were retained in the voice-over and omitted in the subtitles even though they constitute a vital stylistic feature of the original. There are also six fragments where they were preserved in the subtitles and omitted in the voice-over – five by Adamus and only one by the other subtitlers. Overall, sexual innuendo, which is an important element of the series' comedy, was better preserved in the voice-over than in the subtitles. Nonetheless, the subtitles are still amusing, and the two renditions often retain humor using different means.

Category of difference	Number of differences
Meaning	
Dialogue line meaning	4
Metaphor	2
Terminology	1
Translation of marked speech	
Vulgarism retained in the voice-over, omitted in the subtitles	5
Vulgarism retained in the subtitles, omitted in the voice-over	3
Vulgarism stronger in the voice-over	3
Vulgarism stronger in the subtitles	2
Voice-over more slangy/colloquial than the subtitles	33
Subtitles more slangy/colloquial than the voice-over	14
L3	2
Character relations	8
Translation of culture-bound items	
Numbers/units	2
Proper names	6
Cultural items	6
Translation of songs	
Song translated only in the subtitles	2
Translation of humour	
Joke rendered differently	44
Joke retained (more) effectively in the voice-over	32
Joke retained (more) effectively in the subtitles	14
TOTAL	183
Mean per episode	15.25

Table 7. The number of differences between the subtitles and voice-over to *Insatiable*, season 1.

6. Discussion

Dividing a series between different translators does have its consequences on the target texts, but they depend on the situation. As far as the analyzed material is concerned, the results show that if a new translator steps in to translate a new season of a series, their work is on par with the previous renditions. One could speculate here that in the analyzed case of *Santa Clarita Diet* it would be highly unlikely for the audience to realize that the translators changed between the seasons, although a dedicated reception study is necessary to corroborate this claim. It also seems that if different translators are assigned individual episodes of one season, consistency takes its toll and quality suffers. Finally, assigning different professionals to subtitles and voice-over yields diverse texts, which would definitely be noticeable to the viewers if they re-watched the episodes in the other mode. Assigning the same professional, on the other hand, results in the same text being prepared to meet the requirements of the two modes.

It is also visible in the results that lack of communication between translators is detrimental to their work. The direct differences in the analyzed material clearly resulted from the fact that the translators had no contact with each other and no possibility to agree on a uniform version. On the other hand, the most consistent translation in the study also happens to be the one where the two professionals communicated with each other – *Santa Clarita Diet*. Similarly, the online “Key Names and Phrases” list, which allows a translator to propose equivalents to other

professionals working on the same material, ensured higher correspondence of target texts than the offline consistency sheet. Moreover, the results offer some evidence that integrating CAT tool functionalities – translation memory and termbases – into AVT software would ensure better consistency between texts, especially if these functionalities were cloud-based, allowing simultaneous work of several translators and instant translation memory updates. Then, some issues present in the analyzed material – like varying proper names and terminology or the inconsistent renditions of the letter in *Insatiable* – could be eliminated. However, other issues like differences in the rendition of humor or style would persist.

When dividing the translational labor, another aspect that should be taken into consideration concerns the skills and aptitudes of individual translators. The analysis results indicate that some translators managed to retain the linguistic features of the originals (such as slang or verbal humor) better than others. Although this conclusion is not surprising on its own, it has significant implications when labor is divided. Then, differences in translators' individual aptitudes become visible within one text, and the retention of the given feature may fluctuate. Consequently, it seems beneficial to assign one translator to an entire text, especially if they are tried and tested in the given genre, rather than several select translators whose skills and aptitudes may vary.

Finally, it must be stated that the present study focuses on differences between translations, some of which are visible mainly due to the comparison of texts. It is debatable whether, for instance, a moderate drop in vulgarity or humor retention in subtitles would be detectable without a corresponding voice-over acting as a reference point and whether the audience would actually spot the inconsistencies and rate such translations as inferior. Therefore, although this study shows the impact of labor division on target texts, further reception studies are necessary to assess its impact on viewer experience.

On a side note, it can be added that some of the differences between the subtitles and voice-over in the analyzed material are mode-specific. They mostly concern background content (which is often omitted in voice-over), the third language, and song translation. In the subtitles to the analyzed series, the third language is usually translated into Polish together with the first language, but the original remains audible, so the audience can notice the difference. In voice-over, the third language is also translated, but the voice talent reads the translation in sync with the original, making the third language in the soundtrack inaudible and the difference hardly perceptible. This can be detrimental to the text since the third language can be plot-pertinent. This is the case, for instance, in *Orange Is the New Black*, where tensions between Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking Latinos are an important subplot. In personal communication, Kowalczyk claims that an experienced voice-over translator recognizes the presence of the third language and writes less target text to ensure that there are gaps in the target audio and the original is audible at least for a moment. Yet, despite his efforts, the voice actor covers most of the original, making the third language hardly perceptible.

As far as songs are concerned, their lyrics can sometimes be subtitled but are almost exclusively omitted in voice-over. Instead, on Netflix they are considered “forced narratives”, which means that their translation in the form of subtitles should appear on the screen even if voice-over is the chosen mode. In practice, the subtitler flags the song subtitles to make them appear in the voice-over version – even though the subtitles and the voice-over text can be done by different professionals, and only the latter one is mentioned in the closing credits. However, sometimes this procedure is not performed, and such omission can be detrimental to the reception of the material. For example, the final episode of season 1 of *Orange Is the New Black* features a long scene of the prisoners performing a sung Christmas play, and no translation is provided in the voice-over version.

7. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of translational labor division on translation consistency and quality in a streaming TV series by comparing subtitles and voice-over. The study revealed that this impact depends on how the work is divided. The effect seems to be the least visible when a new translator steps in-between seasons, whereas assigning different translators to different modes or to individual episodes leads to more significant diversions and can take its toll on consistency and quality. Some of these variations are inevitable as they stem from the fact that two translators will naturally render a text differently. Some, like differences in the rendition of proper names, running jokes or recurring phrases, can possibly be reduced by more detailed, comprehensive instructions regarding the translation process, but it can be argued that such documents will never be fully complete and all-encompassing, given the complexity of certain texts. As a result, communication between translators should be enabled and encouraged, as it seems highly beneficial to consistency. If a project manager wishes to prioritize consistency, though, it is best not to divide the translational labor, but assign the entire text to one professional.

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