

Attitudes towards Dutch subtitling and dubbing

Exploratory research on the different attitudes towards Dutch subtitling and dubbing in the Netherlands: a case study



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MA Thesis

Linguistics: Translation in Theory and Practice

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07-07-2020

Abstract

The Netherlands is a country with a subtitling tradition. This tradition would suggest that Dutch viewers generally have a more positive attitude towards Dutch subtitling compared to Dutch dubbing. However, this subtitling tradition does not seem to have been established at the hand of the attitudes of Dutch viewers towards both modes, considering these attitudes have received nearly no coverage in academic work. This is problematic, since a lack of data on these attitudes makes it challenging for translators of audiovisual media to create translations that are suitable for a Dutch audience. Therefore, this thesis collected data on the attitudes of 53 Dutch participants towards Dutch subtitling and dubbing in the Netherlands through an online questionnaire.

The results show that the participants prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs, but also rate the overall quality of both modes in a similar manner and even list slightly more disadvantages for Dutch subtitles than Dutch dubs. There also appears to be a consensus amongst the participants that children are the main target audience for Dutch dubs, and most participants indicated that Dutch dubs are the most suitable for children's programs, cartoons and commercials. Furthermore, 69.8% of the participants believe that there is a negative stigma surrounding Dutch dubs and 88.7% of the participants stated that they do not desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch dubs. Additionally, 49.1% of the participants indicated they do not desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch subtitles either. Although 56.6% of the participants indicated they do not feel restricted by Dutch subtitles, the majority of the participants stated that they frequently disagree with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles. Finally, 66% of the participants indicated that they prefer English subtitles over Dutch subtitles. While these findings only represent the attitudes of 53 Dutch viewers, they can form a starting point for future research regarding attitudes towards both modes in the Netherlands.

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1 Introduction

Studying the reception of translation is fundamental to the translation market. In order for translators to know what translation strategies to apply, the opinions of viewers must be taken into consideration. The results of reception studies can help translators better understand the unique demands and needs of different target audiences and cultures, and apply these to their translations. Especially in the current age where new technology is constantly “creating new demands and new needs” (Gambier, 2018, p. 54), reception is particularly valuable to study. Not only is studying reception relevant for the translation market, but studying these demands and needs also adds to overall translation reception theory. Despite its significance, the reception of subtitling and dubbing in particular has mostly received academic coverage for major languages such as Chinese, German, and varieties of Spanish (e.g. Bardini, 2020; Chen and Wang, 2019; De los reyes Lozano, 2020; Orrego-Carmona, 2016; Widler, 2004). Similar studies are not as common for smaller languages, even though such studies would be especially valuable for these smaller languages since less original audiovisual content is created for these languages. This often results into a higher consumption of foreign, and thus translated, audiovisual media. For instance, Koolstra et al. found that in the Netherlands “about one-third of the television programmes come from abroad” (2002, p. 325). This number has likely increased significantly in recent years for all forms of audiovisual media, considering large online streaming platforms such as *Netflix* as well as the internet in general. These platforms have made foreign audiovisual media more accessible than ever before.

However, to my knowledge, the reception of Dutch subtitling and dubbing has received nearly no coverage in academic work. Hence, studying the reception of Dutch subtitling and dubbing will be the focus of this thesis. The research question that will be explored in this thesis is: How are Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by a mixed Dutch audience? In order to answer this, an online questionnaire was created based on six different hypotheses. The answers illustrate that 98.1% of the participants strongly prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs, although the majority of the participants also stated that they often disagree with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles. Additionally, the majority of the participants indicated that they prefer English subtitles over Dutch subtitles. Still, most participants stated that they do not feel restricted by Dutch subtitles. Furthermore, it became clear that the participants believed the main target audience for Dutch dubs to be children. Additionally, the majority of the participants indicated that they do not desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch dubs.

The following is a brief description of the structure of this thesis. This thesis consists of four chapters, excluding the introduction. First, the ‘theoretical background’ chapter will provide insight on reception theory, the subtitling versus dubbing debate, the advantages and disadvantages of both modes, how the modes are perceived in different countries, and the attitudes towards these modes in the Netherlands.

Second, the methodology chapter will explain the initial methodology, the methodology that was used, and the reasoning behind this methodology. It includes all six hypotheses and the full questionnaire of 31 questions.

Third, the ‘results and discussion’ chapter illustrates the elicited answers and explanatory hypotheses related to these answers. The full answers to all open questions can be found in appendixes B through F.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings from the results and discussion chapter and answers the overarching research question. The limitations of this study are also acknowledged in this chapter, and suggestions for future research are included as well.

Theoretical background

2.1 Reception in audiovisual translation

Within the field of translation studies, research on audiovisual translation (hereafter AVT) remained scarce until the 1990s. Only then, AVT began to receive more academic coverage (Díaz-Cintas, 2009, p. 3). The prolonged taking-off for research of AVT could be a result of the attitudes towards the medium at the time. Much of the research during the early years of translation studies focused on a “traditional aesthetic approach”, which disregarded any form of literature that was not considered to be “‘high’ literature”, and AVT did not fall under ‘high’ literature (Munday, 2016, p. 171). However, once AVT research took off, new approaches and methodologies were created specifically to study AVT. This allows AVT to now “claim the status of a scholarly area of research in its own right”, and for AVT to become a dominant “topic of books, postgraduate courses and international conferences focusing on the specificity of this field” (Díaz-Cintas, 2009, p. 7).

One of these focuses is the reception of AVT. Reception has been defined by Di Giovanni as: “the way/s in which individuals and groups interact with media content, how a text is interpreted, appreciated, remembered” (2018, p. 161). It is not the same as perception, which consists of viewer’s opinions on their viewing process, which are likely to alternate over time (Gambier, 2018, p. 56). Unlike perception, reception does not solely focus on the viewing process. Rather, it studies the different ways in which an (audiovisual) text is “processed, consumed, absorbed, accepted, appreciated, interpreted, understood and remembered by the viewers, under specific contextual/socio-cultural conditions and with their memories of their experience as cinema going” (Gambier, 2018, p. 56). This thesis will focus on reception rather than perception, and specifically the reception of Dutch audiovisual translation in the forms of subtitling and dubbing. In order to achieve this, the attitudes of a group of participants toward both modes will be collected through an online questionnaire. Rokeach defines the concept of an ‘attitude’ as “a package of beliefs consisting of interconnected assertions to the effect that certain things about a specific object or situation are true or false and other things about it are desirable or un-desirable” (1968, p. 16). Valdez and Vandepitte (2020) discuss a collection of studies by Bicchieri that expand on this definition, by clarifying what the term ‘beliefs’ encompasses. According to Bicchieri, there are three different types of beliefs. Firstly, there are the beliefs someone has about themselves. Secondly, the beliefs someone has about the actions of others and, thirdly, the beliefs someone has concerning the beliefs of others (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 3). These

different beliefs will be taken into consideration when designing the questionnaire for this thesis.

Studying reception theory is crucial within the field of translation studies, since it is essential for translators to know how their work is being received by the intended audience. For instance, a translator might apply a translation strategy that causes confusion for the audience, without being aware of it. Therefore, it is valuable to collect data on how translations are being received and perceived. Reception studies can help translators discover what translation strategies or procedures are the most appropriate for different target audiences. As explained by Brems and Ramos Pinto, the method of applying reception theory to translation studies allows for the translator to shift towards the role of translations within the cultural context of their target audiences (2013, p. 143). This is a different focus than that of other translation areas where the concept of equivalence in translation is the main reoccurring debate. Equivalence is essential in fields such as legal translation, where the target text must not reflect an ambiguous or incomplete meaning. In the field of AVT, however, equivalence is not the most prevalent element. As discussed by Díaz Cintas and Remael, equivalence in AVT “must be understood from a much more flexible perspective than in other spheres of translation” (2007, p. 11). This is due to all of the “inherent constraints” in AVT which must be taken into consideration by translators (Zolczer, 2016, p. 77). These constraints are a significant factor for translators of these modes of AVT since these create challenges besides the task of translation itself. These restrict the translator’s freedom and require translators to think of creative solutions. The results of reception studies, then, can help translators better understand the unique demands and needs of different target audiences and cultures, and apply these to their translations.

The aforementioned constraints consist of technical and linguistic constraints and are a result of the two ‘codes’ in audiovisual translation, sound and image. These codes make both subtitling and dubbing restricted mediums of translation since they require to be synchronized with the image on screen, as well as the sound and the timing (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 9). For instance, subtitles need to be altered in order to fit the width of the screen and are therefore often reduced to only the most important information for the viewer (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 9). For dubbing, Zolczer describes three factors that translators of dubbing need to take into consideration: Lip movements (especially noticeable are “bilabial and labio-dental consonants and open vowels”), bodily movements (which can convey emotions such as a surprised reaction), and the timing of the actor’s speaking (2016, p. 78). These examples certainly do not encompass the full extent to which these limitations affect AVT, and much

more could be said regarding this topic. Much research regarding these limitations of AVT has been done (e.g. Bogucki, 2004; Chaume, 1998; Haikuo, 2015; Okyayuz, 2016; Yahiaoui, 2016). However, these limitations of AVT will not be the focus of this thesis, although some constraints will be briefly explored in a later section when considering the advantages and disadvantages of both modes.

2.2 The two modes, dubbing versus subtitling

The two main forms of audiovisual translation in Western-Europe are subtitling and dubbing, which are the forms that will be discussed in this thesis. In terms of reception, the subtitling versus dubbing debate has been ongoing for several decades (Díaz-Cintas, 1999; Kilborn, 1993; Koolstra et al., 2002; Perego et al., 2015). However, both modes “satisfy different social needs” (Díaz-Cintas, 1999, p. 38). This makes it likely for both modes to continue to coexist globally. Díaz-Cintas states that scholars should move away from trying to answer the question of which mode is ‘better’, and argues that “both approaches can have their place in the world of film translation” (1999, p. 37). Hence, it can be argued that there is no superior mode. Arguments against or in favor of a certain mode often do not paint the full picture and leave out information. For instance, a study discussed by Koolstra et al. suggests that, in the Netherlands, viewers over the age of 50 can experience difficulty with reading subtitles (2002, p. 346). This would imply that subtitles are not as suitable for older viewers, which could convert into an argument in favor of dubbing for an older audience. However, a study by Perego et al. for a Lebanese-Italian language pair indicates that older viewers’ performance is “consistently lower” for both modes and that they can experience the same level of difficulty when trying to comprehend dubs (2015, p. 14). Thus, not all arguments against a certain mode are necessarily in favor of the other mode. Furthermore, a participatory study by Perego et al. of Italian native speakers illustrated that, in terms of appreciation, “no significant differences between dubbing and subtitling” was found for both older and younger adults (2015, p. 14). Still, people from different countries and cultures will have different preferences and perspectives regarding these two modes. Therefore, it is important to consider common arguments and attitudes regarding these modes since viewers “may model their behaviour to what they believe others expect of them” (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 4). For instance, people in dubbing countries might express negative opinions regarding subtitling, and vice versa, because these are normalized views in their countries and people from both subtitling and dubbing countries have a “clear conviction that their ‘own’ method is also the best” (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 326). Moreover, this thesis will by no means attempt to provide

a definitive answer for the dubbing versus subtitling debate. Both modes are capable of providing unique advantages for the viewers, and both modes also come with disadvantages as well. These, as well as different attitudes towards these modes, will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3 Dubbing

Dubbing refers to the “replacement of the original track of a film containing the source language dialogs, for another track on which translated dialogs in the target language are recorded” (Chaume-Varela, 2006, p. 6). Díaz-Cintas builds on this definition by stating that, for the process of dubbing, there is a focus on “ensuring that the target language sounds and the actors’ lip movements are synchronised, in such a way that target viewers are led to believe that the actors on screen are actually speaking their language” (2009, pp. 4-5). Dubbing is not the same as voiceover, which Díaz-Cintas defines as: “reducing the volume of the original soundtrack to a minimal auditory level, in order to ensure that the translation, which is orally overlapped on to the original soundtrack, can be heard by the target audience” (2009, p. 5). Furthermore, it should not be treated as a synonym for “lip-sync dubbing” either (Tang, 2014, p. 438). Chaume-Varela elaborates on this by explaining that there are three types of synchronization: “phonetic or lip synchrony”, “kinetic synchrony or body movement synchrony”, and “isochrony or synchrony between utterances and pauses” (Chaume-Varela, 2006, p. 7). According to Tang, kinetic synchrony is most frequently applied, but this can differ depending on the genre or target audience (2014, p. 438). He argues that target audiences consisting of children are far less demanding “regarding isochrony and lip synchrony” (Tang, 2014, p. 438). What adds to this seemingly undemanding perception of child audiences is that dubbed children programs are often animated series, and animated characters usually do not fully pronounce words but are only seen moving their lips randomly (Tang, 2014, p. 438). However, children’s undemanding attitudes towards dubbing are not the only reason that dubbing is used globally for making audiovisual media accessible for child audiences (Di Giovanni, 2018, p. 159). The main reason that even the “most unyielding subtitling countries” implement dubbing for child audiences is due to the reading abilities of young children, since they are often still pre-literate or slow readers (Di Giovanni, 2018, p. 159; Pedersen, 2010, p. 3). This could be considered as both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, this establishes a substantial place for dubbing in all different countries, preventing subtitling countries from permanently discarding the mode in their countries. On the other hand, considering the expense of dubbing, this might actually be disadvantageous

for child audiences in underprivileged countries and prevent these child audiences from being able to access a wide variety of audiovisual media.

2.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of dubbing

There are many other advantages and disadvantages that come along with dubbing. As previously discussed, a major disadvantage of dubbing comes from a financial perspective (Pedersen, 2010, p. 8). Furthermore, it can involve: “Incomplete or stretched translations”, “[b]ad translations because of lipsynchronicity”, “[u]nnaturalness through asynchronicity” and “[e]asy manipulation and censorship” (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). The first three disadvantages are a result of the constraints of dubbing where translators need to take into account the lip movements, bodily movements, and timing of speaking (Zolczer, 2016, p. 78). Moreover, since translations can be longer or shorter than the original, they do not always perfectly match the timing of the dialogue, which can result into translations being reduced or stretched out in order to fit this timing. Furthermore, since it is very challenging to create a translation that matches the lip-movement perfectly, dubs are often not perfectly synchronized with the visuals, which can be perceived as unnatural by viewers (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). The fourth disadvantage, regarding manipulation, is present in dubbing due to the fact that the original text cannot be heard, and so, in theory, dubs could be inserted that do not represent the original text at all. In this way, dubbing can be used to “repress innovation” and “wilfully distort and alter information contained in the original” (Díaz-Cintas, 2019, p. 183). The motives behind this can come from an economic and marketing perspective, or involve “a more ideological nature”, where elements such as politics, religion, and “moral or sexual motives” are altered in a way that suit the ideologies of, for instance, the target culture, the current political leaders, and so on (Díaz-Cintas, 2019, p. 184). While these ideologies may not necessarily portray the ideologies of the viewers, it can still be perceived as problematic that dubs are susceptible to manipulation to this extend.

However, dubbing also comes with a number of advantages. For instance, it allows for an easier process of creating an adaptation, and the dialogue can be understood without translation which makes it “easy to combine with other activities” (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). Furthermore, dubbing creates a familiarity for the viewers which could allow them to feel more engaged with the content they’re viewing (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 336). Finally, from a language-learning perspective, dubbing can incite the acquisition of new vocabulary in the viewer’s native language (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). When considering these elements, it appears to be the case that dubbing actually comes with more advantages than disadvantages.

Considering these advantages, Di Giovanni claims that dubbing is “on the increase in a number of countries” and that it is implemented instead of subtitling “soon as there is a budget which allows to cover for its expenses” (2018, p. 159). Although more countries might become capable of funding dubbing, this does not necessarily mean that this instantly becomes the preferred mode of audiovisual translation for all audiences across the globe. In order to explore how desirable dubbing really is in the eyes of different audiences, the attitudes and perceptions of different audiences towards dubbing will be discussed in the next section. Firstly, the attitudes towards dubbing of two dubbing countries will be discussed, followed by attitudes towards dubbing in a variety of subtitling countries, and finally attitudes towards dubbing in the Netherlands will be discussed.

2.3.2 Attitudes towards dubbing in dubbing countries

In dubbing countries, audiences have grown used to the “credibility gap between the linguistic ‘reality’ produced by the soundtrack, and the cultural reality of the images and the content of the dialogue” (Pedersen, 2010, p. 7). Many of these dubbing countries have a nationalistic history where dubbing was presented as the norm, and other languages were sometimes not allowed to be presented on screen, which was the case in Italy (Pedersen, 2010, p. 8). Orrego-Carmona expands on this by explaining that for the majority of large European countries, the political situations “created the conditions for a generalized preference for this mode of audiovisual translation and the establishment of a solid dubbing industry” (2014a, p. 54). In this way, countries including “Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Spain” became dubbing countries (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 326).” Chaume-Varela expands on this by stating that dubbing is also the main mode of audiovisual translation in “Switzerland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey, Brazil, China, Japan, most Asian countries, and some North-African countries” (Chaume-Varela, 2006, p. 6). However, it should be noted that not all countries that would now be considered as dubbing countries have consistently implemented dubbing over subtitling throughout their history of audiovisual translation. Instances of this will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Despite the numerous advantages of dubbing, it is generally perceived in a negative manner and has a “worse reputation” than subtitling (Zolczer, 2016, p. 78). An example of this is described by Leszczyńska and Szarkowska who explain that many Polish people have an “aversion to dubbing” which could stem from the experiences they had with watching the Polish dubbing of television shows in the early 1990s, considering these were created with “limited financial resources” (2018, p. 205). This could suggest that the profession of dubbing

was not perceived as something that was worth investing in. This presumption is strengthened by the fact that Polish dubbing was discontinued for several years in the mid-1990s, when it was deemed financially unfeasible to create Polish dubbing on top of Polish subtitles and voice-overs, causing Polish dubbing to be temporarily discontinued as the most expensive option of the three (Leszczyńska & Szarkowska, 2018, p. 205). Polish dubbing was revived when the translator Wierzbicka decided to implement Polish culture in the dubbing of *Shrek*, marking the first time for translators of Polish dubbing to move away from translating faithfully and towards translating with the culture of the target audience in mind (Leszczyńska & Szarkowska, 2018, p. 205). Afterwards, Polish dubbing in general became more domesticated (Leszczyńska & Szarkowska, 2018, p. 205). This suggests that a domesticating dubbing strategy is preferred by the general Polish audience. Furthermore, it illustrates that the general Polish audience did not actually disfavor dubbing as a whole, but that they were not satisfied with the applied tactics and strategies in the Polish dubbing that was previously presented to them. In fact, recent research shows that subtitling is the preferred mode for only 8.1% of the Polish audience, and that 72.1% of Polish people deemed subtitling to be the “worst” AVT mode (Bogucki, 2004, p. 71). This also highlights the importance of reception studies within the field of audiovisual translation. In this case, Polish dubbing was revived only after it became clear to the Polish translators what translation strategy was favored for dubbing by a Polish audience.

Dubbing received a similar treatment in China. Although China Mainland had “developed a strong dubbing tradition”, subtitling quickly gained popularity during the late 1990s and 2000s after which people started to view dubbing as something that was “outdated and should be gradually abandoned” (Tang, 2014, p. 441). However, the Shanghai Film Dubbing Studio “regained popularity among movie viewers as the producer of the Mandarin dubbed version of *Kung Fu Panda*” (Tang, 2014, p. 441). The Cantonese and Taiwan Mandarin dubbed versions of *Kung Fu Panda* also became highly popular, possibly related to the celebrities that were hired to record the voices of the characters (Tang, 2014, p. 442). This, again, suggests that the Chinese audiences prefer to see elements of their culture in dubbed cinema, even if it is through something seemingly minor such as the involved voice actors. However, Tang also notes that viewers “amused themselves by commenting on the translation quality” of these professionally created dubbed versions (2014, p. 442). This could imply that these dubbed versions may not have gained popularity for solely positive reasons. Perhaps some viewers found certain translation choices or the quality of the synchronization to be unintentionally amusing. Whether this is the case or not could be explored through reception

studies. Still, it is notable that two languages with significantly different cultures attached to them experienced the same rise, fall, and resurrection of dubbing around the same period of time. In both cases, subtitling continued regularly while dubbing was either discontinued or not invested in as much as before. This could suggest that other countries and cultures experienced something similar as well, which could have affected the perception of dubbing for audiences globally. This presents yet another reason for the significance of reception studies, and illustrates that reception can shift drastically in a relatively short amount of time, and should therefore be continually studied. Reception studies related to dubbing have been carried out for languages with a large number of speakers, such as Spanish (e.g. de los Reyes Lozano, 2020; Romero-Fresco, 2020), but for relatively small languages, such as Dutch or Scandinavian languages, the reception of dubbing has hardly been studied, if at all. The next section will explore the role of dubbing in these languages.

2.3.3 Dubbing in subtitling countries

When considering these languages, such as the languages spoken in Scandinavia, it appears to be the case that “dubbing is almost exclusively found in films and TV programmes for pre-school children and cartoons and computer-animated feature films” (Pedersen, 2010, p. 9). Similarly, this is also the case in other subtitling countries, such as the Netherlands. This becomes apparent when viewing the available children’s movies in a Dutch movie theater. For instance, the currently available movies *Scoob!*, *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, and *Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway* are all available with Dutch dubs in the movie theater (Pathé). However, even for these movies, the original version with Dutch subtitles is available as well. Meanwhile, movies that are not specifically aimed at children, such as *La Belle Époque*, *No Time To Die*, and *Knives Out*, are only available in the original version with Dutch subtitles (Pathé). This suggests that translation companies working with audiovisual media in the Netherlands value subtitles over dubs, and assume that Dutch dubs do not appeal to a wider audience, but only to young children. It could also be a financial consideration since, as previously established by Leszczyńska and Szarkowska, dubbing is more expensive than subtitling or voice-over (2018, p. 205). Although it is unclear what exactly the reasoning is for the scarcity of Dutch dubbing, it is certain that the Netherlands does not belong on the list of “dubbing countries” (Pedersen, 2010, p. 7).

But Dutch audiences appear to be expected to outgrow dubbing after a certain age, after they have become literate, considering the lack of dubbed adult audiovisual media in the Netherlands. This could cause Dutch audiences to look down on dubbing. However, the lack

of research on the reception of Dutch dubbing and subtitling could also be one of the main causes for the lack of Dutch dubbing in audiovisual media. As previously discussed, Polish dubbing was revived once it became clear to the Polish translators what translation strategies appealed to a Polish audience. The same could be done for Dutch dubbing; if it appears to be the case that Dutch audiences do indeed prefer to see new strategies used in dubbing and for a wider variety of audiovisual content to be dubbed. As stated by Díaz-Cintas: “Much too often the public has been ignored in these issues, despite the fact that any source product will be ultimately incorporated into a target society or culture only with public approval” (1999, p. 37). Hence, the opinions of the Dutch audience regarding Dutch dubbing should no longer be overlooked. Therefore, the following section will explore current attitudes of a Dutch audience towards Dutch dubbing.

2.3.4 Attitudes towards dubbing in the Netherlands

As previously established, very little research has been done on the reception of Dutch subtitling and dubbing. Seemingly the only recent study on this was carried out by Geurts (2015) and focused on the reception of Dutch subtitles and dubs in video games by a native Dutch audience between the ages of 16 and 30 (pp. 23-24). Geurts found that the vast majority of the participants had an “overwhelming preference for videogames with subtitles” (Geurts, 2015, p. 60). However, this does not necessarily link to a disregard of Dutch dubbing in video games. Considering the fact that the majority of the participants agreed with the following statements: “I never play games in Dutch” and “[t]here is no other option; the game has only been released in English” (Geurts, 2015, p. 51) illustrates that their aforementioned preference for subtitled video games might not actually come from personal opinions, but from what has been made available to the participants. Since Dutch dubs are not implemented in all video games, the participants might have become used to English subtitles to the extent that the concept of Dutch dubs in video games no longer seem necessary or appealing to them.

Another factor that stands out in Geurts’ study is that the majority of the participants identified with the statement: “I want to play the game in the original language, in this case English” (Geurts, 2015, p. 51). This desire to view the original version of an audiovisual media product could, again, stem from the fact that the Netherlands is a subtitling country and that the participants are therefore simply used to viewing the original product. Geurts also remarks that the participants might have grown accustomed to specific video game terminology in English (2015, p. 45). Two participants even stated that “hearing Dutch interrupts the immersion” of their video game experience (Geurts, 2015, p. 62). This

occurrence of familiarity morphing into a preference could also apply to Dutch audiences' perceptions of other audiovisual media. However, it should also be taken into consideration that most of the participants in Geurts' study were university students and are therefore likely to be more proficient in English than the average Dutch person (Geurts, 2015, p. 24). This does indeed appear to be the case, considering many of the participants stated it is not difficult for them to understand games in English (Geurts, 2015, p. 45). Thus, this preference to view the original could stem from their capability of understanding the original without any subtitles or dubs provided at all, but it would be unfair to assume that this would be true for all Dutch speakers.

Considering the English proficiency of the participants in Geurts' study, a language preference, rather than a subtitling or dubbing preference, could also come into play. The majority of Geurts' participants disagreed with the statements "I think Dutch is a beautiful language", and "I do not think English is a beautiful language", suggesting the participants prefer English over Dutch in general (Geurts, 2015, p. 51). Although Geurts remarks that "respondents still considered both the attractiveness of the Dutch language and the unattractiveness of the English language to be 'very unimportant'" (2015, p. 46), the way in which these Dutch participants perceive both languages might affect their choices more than they realize. As explained by Valdez and Vandepitte, "what people express they 'believe' may or may not coincide with what they actually 'do'" (2020, p. 4). Furthermore, Valdez and Vandepitte state that the behavior and choices of individuals are actually predominantly based on "the shared beliefs, attitudes and expectations within a particular group that connote what is considered appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a specific situation embedded in a certain target culture, language, and system" (2020, p. 4). Thus, the shared belief of the Dutch participants that Dutch is not a beautiful language might withhold them from consuming Dutch dubs, and possibly even Dutch original audiovisual media.

Another shared belief tied to Dutch dubbing is that it is primarily for child audiences. This could also relate to the expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of Dutch dubbing by Geurts' participants. For instance, one participant explained that Dutch dubbing in video games can make them "sound strange and childish" (Geurts, 2015, p. 46). As previously discussed, Dutch dubbing is indeed almost exclusively done with child audiences in mind, and child audiences are not as demanding when it comes to dubbing quality as adults (Tang, 2014, p. 438). Thus, it is to be expected for Dutch adult audiences to perceive Dutch dubbing as childish. Fourteen participants also stated that they believe the synchronization of lip movement for Dutch dubbing is hardly ever done well, although two participants added to this

statement that they do not mind this as much for animated audiovisual media (Geurts, 2015, p. 62). This links back to Tang's statement that the lip movement of animated characters is looser which makes imperfect lip-synchronization less noticeable (Tang, 2014, p. 438). Lip-synchronization is therefore also a factor that might not be as distracting or irritating to children, since many children's programs are animated, and these synchronization issues might even go unnoticed by them. Further critique of Dutch dubbing from the participants regards the voices used for Dutch dubbing, which nine participants described as: "too over-the-top, artificial, fake, annoying, cheesy, or just plain "bad"", and eighteen participants even went as far as to say that "Dutch voice acting sounds terrible" (Geurts, 2015, p. 62). However, these over-the-top elements could actually be especially appealing to children. Although Geurts' participants seem to know that Dutch dubbing is primarily aimed at children, these factors of Dutch dubbing, which might be fine for child audience, still caused twelve participants to believe that not enough effort is put into the creation of Dutch dubs (2015, p. 62). Geurts also describes that the participants had come to a "general consensus that Dutch voice acting is inferior to the English version" and eight participants claimed that they "hate dubs or that they find them irritating" (2015, p. 62). Although Geurts' study was performed on a small scale and does not represent the attitudes of all Dutch speakers, the consensus between the participants does suggest that Dutch dubbing is perceived in a strong, negative manner, and that there is possibly even a negative stigma surrounding Dutch dubbing as a whole.

2.4 Subtitling

Subtitles are "condensed translations of original speech, which appear as lines of text usually positioned toward the bottom of the screen or vertically on the side of the screen" (Gambier, 2006, p. 258). Díaz-Cintas builds on this definition by clarifying that speech is not the only element that relates to subtitling, but that several other linguistic elements such as "inserts, letters, graffiti, banners and the like" as well as music can be often subtitled (2009, p. 5). The subtitling of these other linguistic elements is most commonly seen in intralingual subtitling, which is often aimed at the deaf and hard-of-hearing or learners of a language (Gambier, 2006, p. 258). In intralingual subtitling, a shift takes place from "the spoken mode of the dialogue in a film or TV programme to the written mode of the subtitles", which does not involve a translation to a different language (Pedersen, 2010, p. 2). Besides intralingual subtitling, subtitles can also be interlingual or bilingual. Interlingual subtitles provide a translation from one language to another, whereas bilingual subtitling provides a translation of

multiple languages, for instance in Belgium where both French and Flemish are the official languages of the country (Gambier, 2006, p. 258).

Interlingual subtitling is sometimes also referred to as “open caption” and intralingual as “closed caption” (Gambier, 2006, p. 258). Closed caption is optional and can be selected by the viewer, for instance on Netflix, while open caption is “a physical part of the film or the television picture” and cannot be removed by the viewer (Gambier, 2006, p. 258).

Furthermore, there are two types of subtitling worth discussing. The first type is referred to as reduced subtitling. Here, a brief summary is provided through the subtitles rather than a complete translation. This type of subtitling is commonly used for sport programs or the news (Gambier, 2006, p. 258). Secondly, there is live (or real-time) subtitling, where a translator provides subtitles for speech that is happening live, which is often used for interviews or debates (Gambier, 2006, p. 258).

Countries that have been labelled as “subtitling countries” include Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 326). However, even in countries where dubbing is the standard, such as Spain, subtitling has been “gaining popularity” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 54). This appears to be caused by the desire to gain early access to American series, for which the international audience is seemingly “willing to alter their audiovisual consumption habits” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 54). Still, 66% of the Spanish and Catalan participants in the study by Orrego-Carmona indicated that “they use dubbing very frequently or always” (2014a, p. 57). This percentage seems even more significant when considering that the majority of the participants stated that “half or more than half of all the audiovisual content they consume is not produced in Spain but imported from other countries” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 57). Hence, though subtitling might start to become more popular in dubbing countries, it is often opted for with a level of reluctance. Subtitling is even described by some as “necessary evil” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 58). Thus, it does not appear to be the case that subtitling will fully replace dubbing in dubbing countries, since Orrego-Carmona’s study suggests that the majority still prefers dubbed audiovisual media.

2.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of subtitling

Although subtitling is often perceived in a more positive manner than dubbing, there are disadvantages that come along with this mode as well. Firstly, subtitling is an “overt type of translation”, making it highly susceptible to criticism from viewers (Gambier, 2006, p. 258). Secondly, it has been argued that reading subtitles requires a higher level of mental exertion than viewing dubs (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 332). Thirdly, since subtitles overlap

with the visuals, they can “reduce the visible area of the original picture” which can be experienced as distracting, or seen as a disruption between the “artistic unity of picture and sound” (Koolstra et al., 2002, pp. 331, 337, 344). Fourthly, due to the constraints of this mode of translation, some information can get lost in subtitles (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 328). As a result, some viewers might argue that this condensation in subtitles produces translations of poor quality (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 344). Fifthly, an argument against subtitling from a linguistic-political perspective is that subtitles could “strengthen the dominance of English” by keeping the original English audio intact, which could also lead to “more anglicisms and English interference” in other languages (Gambier, 2006, p. 262). Finally, from the perspective of translators, recent technology lends itself to the creation “fansubs”, where fans of foreign audiovisual media will create their own subtitles in order to make them accessible to a wider audience (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 26). A study by Orrego Carmona showed that, while participants claimed non-professional subtitling to be of lower quality, their scores for non-professional and professional subtitles were “highly similar” (2014b, pp. 88-89). Therefore, the pursuit of fansubbing could be perceived as threatening to professional translators who might lose out on jobs that have already been fulfilled for free by fans.

However, subtitling is still described as having “more advantages than disadvantages” compared to dubbing (Zolczer, 2016, p. 79). Firstly, it is not as big of an investment as dubbing, which, according to a study by Pedersen, is “15-times as expensive as subtitling” (2010, p. 8). Secondly, another advantage of subtitled audiovisual media is the possibility to view it with background noises (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). The act of reading subtitles also allows for viewers to process the information more efficiently, and reading subtitles can improve the viewer’s reading abilities (Koolstra et al., 2002, pp. 333, 340). Thirdly, the authenticity remains intact through the original voices of the actors, and in most cases “the condensed information in subtitles is of equal informational value as the original spoken texts” (Koolstra et al., 2002, pp. 344, 328). A complaint viewers might have regarding subtitles is the redundant nature of this mode. However, this can actually work in the favor of the viewers from a language-learning perspective, which brings us to the fourth advantage: subtitles can stimulate “foreign language acquisition” (Koolstra et al. 2002, p. 344). For second language learning, interlingual subtitles are “beneficial at all levels of language acquisition, from elementary to advanced, and can serve many language/culture goals by means of graded cross-linguistic and cross-cultural exercises” (Caimi, 2013, p. 169). However, reversed subtitles can also be effective for second language acquisition. For this type of subtitling, the audio is in the native language of the viewer and the subtitles provide a

translation into the foreign language (Caimi, 2013, p. 169). Another type of subtitling, intralingual subtitling, can be useful for language learning as well, provided the viewer is already on a higher level of proficiency in this language. Intralingual subtitles allow viewers to increase their “acquisition of pronunciation, intonation, orthography, vocabulary learning, idioms, cross-cultural and cross-linguistic expressions” (Caimi, 2013, p. 169). Fifthly, subtitles can improve reading skills (Gambier, 2006, p. 262). In subtitling countries, if viewers were to engage with all programs, they would “read more than 200 novels of 300 pages per year” (Gambier, 2006, p. 262). Even if viewers do not watch all available programs, viewing audiovisual media with subtitles still results into reading significantly more than viewers who watch audiovisual media with dubs. Finally, subtitling can help viewers’ “film comprehension and memory” in some aspects (Perego et al., 2015, p. 14). These advantages and disadvantages contribute greatly to the different attitudes towards subtitling.

2.4.2 Subtitling in dubbing countries

As previously established, attitudes towards subtitling are often more positive than attitudes towards dubbing. However, similarly to dubbing, subtitling is more negatively perceived in countries where dubbing is the standard mode, such as Spain. Orrego-Carmona (2014a) illustrates the negative attitudes Spanish people hold towards subtitles by discussing the Twitter responses of several Spanish viewers to *Game of Thrones*. This series was released with subtitles on a pay-television channel in Spain, which resulted into a negative response by many Spanish viewers. Two examples of these responses are: “In English? You bastards! #GameofThrones”, and “[s]o, Canal+ releases Game of Thrones and broadcasts it with subtitles and the voices in English? They’re joking, right?” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 63). These responses demonstrate just how strongly some Spanish viewers feel towards subtitles. To them, their preference for dubbing is so strong that they cannot accept the alternative mode of subtitling, even when this would provide them with earlier access to a series that they want to watch.

Still, even in a dubbing country such as Spain, some people are willing to defend subtitles. Díaz-Cintas believes that a “rather visceral rejection of dubbing” is present in countries such as Spain, and that this rejection comes from “a well defined part of society characterised by a higher degree of education” (Díaz-Cintas, 1999, p. 37). Although Díaz-Cintas does not elaborate on this statement, it could be rooted in the belief that higher educated people are more likely to be skillful readers, or that they have been exposed to foreign languages more frequently, and are therefore more accustomed to them. Another

possibility, proposed by Orrego-Carmona, is that subtitles can be a suitable option for “educated young people especially interested in language improvement” (2014a, p. 62). While the educational background of the Twitter users included in Orrego-Carmona’s (2014a) study is unknown, some did stand up against the viewers who complained about the subtitles in *Game of Thrones*. For instance, one Twitter user expressed: “I do not want to rail against dubbing, but the controversy about Game of Thrones and original versions proves how ignorant we are in this country” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 63). This illustrates an awareness that dubbing is not necessarily the superior mode, but simply the mode Spanish viewers are used to.

Still, such an awareness does not immediately translate to a preference for subtitles. As articulated by Orrego-Carmona: “A preference, or even a welcoming attitude, towards subtitling is far from being the first choice among the Spanish audience” (2014a, p. 62). Nevertheless, Orrego-Carmona predicts that dubbing countries will experience an increase in their consumption of subtitles because of changes that are developing at a global level, mostly related to the “constant innovation that companies like Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon are bringing to the industry” (2014a, p. 66). While “a full shift from dubbing to a generalized acceptance of subtitling is not likely” (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 62), viewers in dubbing countries might start consuming more audiovisual media with subtitles, even though it is might still be viewed as a “necessary evil” for now (Orrego-Carmona, 2014a, p. 58).

Another dubbing country, China Mainland, illustrates that the two modes might be able to coexist. Despite their dubbing tradition, there appears to be an inclination for subtitles among Chinese viewers as well. This becomes apparent through the number of voluntary amateur subtitling groups that create subtitles for foreign movies and series. While the exact number of these groups is unknown, it was estimated that at least 90 amateur subtitling groups were actively producing subtitles in 2009 (Tang, 2014, p. 442). These groups operate as non-profit organizations and consist of people from a variety of age groups and educational backgrounds (Tang, 2014, p. 442). One of these groups, YYeTs, rapidly grew from 19 members to 839 members over the timespan of six years, and had created subtitles for “over 300 foreign movies and over 3000 episodes of foreign TV dramas” by 2009 (Tang, 2014, p. 442). This suggests that there is a demand for subtitles within China Mainland, despite it being labelled as a dubbing country. In addition to amateur subtitles, movies are often released in China Mainland with licensed subtitles as well, such as *Kung Fu Panda* (Tang, 2014, p. 442). This could indicate that China Mainland is moving towards a more balanced distribution of dubs and subtitles. Other dubbing countries such as France and Germany

sometimes release movies with both modes available on DVD, which both countries did for *Spirited Away* (Adachi, 2016, p. 152). This might imply that more dubbing countries are warming up to the idea of subtitles. However, no conclusive statements can be drawn from this, especially considering the attitudes of Spanish viewers towards subtitles described by Orrego-Carmona (2014a).

2.4.3 Attitudes towards subtitling in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, roughly “one-third of the television programmes come from abroad” (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 325). Though, taking into account online streaming services that have gained traction in more recent years, this rate has probably increased. Still, such a big percentage of foreign audiovisual media in a subtitling country makes it an interesting place to study in terms of attitudes towards subtitling. In terms of attitudes, Dutch viewers are accustomed to subtitling and are therefore likely to believe that this is a better method than dubbing (Koolstra et al., 2002). Furthermore, many people in non-English speaking countries still develop English as their second language, making subtitles a smaller barrier (Koolstra et al., 2002, pp. 346-347). Koolstra et al. also found that very few, not even 5%, Dutch people between the ages of 15 and 49 experience difficulties with viewing subtitles, although 11% of Dutch people over 50 do find this challenging (2002, p. 346). However, it is likely that this age group would also have difficulty with following Dutch dubs.

The earlier section ‘Attitudes towards dubbing in the Netherlands’ already briefly touched on the attitudes of Geurts’ (2015) participants towards subtitles. Here, it was acknowledged that Geurts’ participants showed an “overwhelming preference for videogames with subtitles” (Geurts, 2015, p. 60). To expand on this finding, Geurts lists the advantages and disadvantages of subtitling that were observed by the participants. The following statements are some of the advantages that were observed: “subtitling keeps the original jokes and the game developer’s original ideas intact” by 14 participants, “[s]ubtitles are useful as support when there is too much background noise” by 10 participants, “I can practice my English by listening to the English soundtrack” by eight participants, and “I’m used to subtitles because of television” by eight participants as well (Geurts, 2015, pp. 63-64). The first observed advantage illustrates that Dutch participants appear to highly value the ‘original’ audiovisual media and want to keep this intact. This could also be related to the last advantage: the participants are accustomed to subtitles and therefore prefer being able to hear the original audio. As explained by Koolstra et al. (2002), the language is not the only element that changes when the original audio is replaced by dubs. In addition to the language change, there could also be a change in tone, hesitation, or other non-verbal elements that “might be

very important to the viewer's interpretation" (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 336). The second advantage, "[s]ubtitles are useful as support when there is too much background noise" (Geurts, 2015, p. 63), suggests that the participants do not frequently require a translation, but mostly use subtitles when it is difficult to follow the audio. Four participants indeed specified that they "do not need a translation because their English is good enough to understand everything" (Geurts, 2015, p. 62). Moreover, eight participants also stated that they prefer English subtitles over Dutch subtitles, suggesting they do not need a translation either (Geurts, 2015, p. 63). Furthermore, four participants stated that they would rather play video games without any subtitles or dubs whatsoever, implying that these participants are also highly proficient in English (Geurts, 2015, p. 60). It only becomes apparent from the third listed advantage, "I can practice my English by listening to the English soundtrack" (Geurts, 2015, p. 63), that some participants do need the translation. However, Dutch subtitles appear to be a somewhat rare option in video games (Geurts, 2015, p. 61). Therefore, the participants' stated preferences related to English subtitles might not actually reflect their preferences, but rather what they use more frequently, since Dutch subtitles are not always available.

The participants only observed two disadvantages for subtitles in video games. Firstly, five participants noted that they dislike when subtitles are incorrect (Geurts, 2015, p. 64). The participants specified that subtitles are often "too literal", frequently spoiling jokes or metaphors (Geurts, 2015, p. 60). This implies that these participants often understand the audio from the ST well enough to view its translation in a critical manner. Secondly, six participants stated that they experience subtitles as "distracting from the action on the screen" (Geurts, 2015, p. 64). One participant also noted that it can be distracting to hear a different language in the audio than the language in the subtitles, suggesting that this participant might also prefer English subtitles rather than Dutch ones. Furthermore, the majority of the participants agreed with the statement that the segmentation of subtitles is often done incorrectly, (Geurts, 2015, p. 71). This could be interpreted as another distracting element for subtitles. Nevertheless, despite these disadvantages, the majority of the participants still favor subtitles over dubbing. However, Geurts' study is not representative of all Dutch viewers' attitudes and opinions regarding subtitles and dubbing, and more research is required on this topic. In order to gather more insight on these attitudes, a methodology was designed focusing on the general attitudes of Dutch viewers towards both modes. This methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

Methodology

3.1 Initial methodology

Before the global pandemic of COVID-19, a methodology was established which could no longer be carried out once the pandemic hit. Initially, approximately 60 students attending the Segbroek College in The Hague would participate in this research. A clip involving humor of the animated movie *Shrek 2*, would have been shown to the participants. This movie was selected for several reasons. Firstly, in terms of accessibility, it was easily accessible through the online streaming service *Netflix* with both Dutch subtitling and dubbing, unlike the first *Shrek* movie of which the Dutch dubbing was unavailable on *Netflix*. Secondly, it is a relatively old movie dating from 2004, and the students may not have seen it considering they may not have been born yet when the movie came out. This could prove to be favorable for this research as this might prevent biased answers from the students based on their preexisting knowledge on the movie. Thirdly, since it is an animated movie, this could also prevent prejudice towards certain actors, and possibly also cause the participants to focus more on the audio and subtitles rather than the involved actors. Finally, it is a generally well-liked movie which could make it easier for the students to remain engaged with the shown clip as well.

The first group of 30 participants would have been presented with the *Shrek 2* clip including Dutch subtitles. Since the groups would consist of slightly older teenagers (ages 16 to 18), their level of English proficiency was likely to be higher than teenagers with ages ranging from 13 to 15, possibly allowing for the group to have been more critical of the Dutch translation choices. The second group would have been shown the same clip with Dutch dubs. Afterwards, a questionnaire inspired by Widler (2004) would have been distributed and filled in by the students. Finally, the answers of the groups would have been compared. This comparison would have been valuable, considering these classes would have different “shared beliefs, attitudes and expectations” from each other, influencing their answers (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 4).

However, as briefly explained before, this exact methodology could not be carried out since all high schools were closed without certainty of reopening again before the summer. Thus, the methodology was altered. The research question changed from: ‘How is the translation of humor in *Shrek 2* in Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by young Dutch viewers?’ to ‘How are Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by a mixed Dutch audience?’. The new aim focused on a wider audience where the only requirements for participating were

to be a native speaker of Dutch and to be at least 18 years old. The age requirement was added since minors would have required an additional consent form to be filled in by their parents, and minors would have been harder to reach as well since this contact could only have been established through teachers or parents. Furthermore, rather than focusing specifically on humor in one *Shrek 2* clip, this aim was changed to the attitudes of participants towards Dutch subtitling and dubbing in general. This change was made with the participants in mind, for both reasons mentioned above as well as possible accessibility issues. It would also have been more time-consuming for the participants to have to watch a clip as well as fill out a questionnaire, which could have led to fewer voluntary participants. Moreover, the opinions of participants to one short clip may not be representative of how they view Dutch dubbing and subtitling as a whole. These general attitudes and opinions are valuable to research since these can form the basis for translators to begin to understand the demands and needs of a Dutch audience. Once these attitudes have been established, research focusing on specific genres or translation strategies could be carried out, helping translators cater to Dutch audiences. The exact methodology will be explained in the following sections.

3.2 New methodology

Many studies in reception theory take an approach involving questionnaires, surveys and interviews. Surveys are the most favored tool and can quickly increase in value “by having the researcher observe behaviour, along with survey administration” (Di Giovanni, 2018, p. 162). However, under the current circumstances, observing the behavior of participants would create unnecessary risks for all parties involved. Hence, an approach involving the observation of participants’ behavior was ruled out for this thesis. This meant that the method of surveys could not be realized to its full potential for this research, and thus an alternative methodology needed to be established.

A close substitute would be the questionnaire. Tuominen describes questionnaires as an “easy and flexible method of collecting smaller or larger amounts of data, particularly if the questionnaires can be distributed online to a population of internet users” (2018, p. 80). Considering the current climate, an online questionnaire seems to be the safest and most favorable method for this thesis. Although similar approaches are often discredited for their “lack of reliability”, they have resulted in “enriching contributions” within the research space of the humanities (Di Giovanni, 2018, p. 163). Saldanha and O’Brien argue that questionnaires are a good tool for “collecting exploratory data”, but not for explanatory data “unless they are followed up by more in-depth interviews” (2013, p. 152). As previously established, since the aim of this thesis is to collect exploratory data on perceptions of Dutch

subtitling and dubbing and it is difficult to conduct individual interviews in the current climate, questionnaires appear to be a suitable tool for this thesis. Still, there are some disadvantages to using questionnaires which need to be acknowledged.

Robert et al. (2019) discuss four different errors that are common in questionnaires. The first error regards population coverage. Here, “some part of the population is not included in the survey” (2019, p. 104). This is true for the questionnaire in this thesis since it primarily focuses on native Dutch speakers within the Netherlands. Although there are other places where Dutch is (one of) the official language(s), I do not have any connections to these places and was therefore unable to distribute this questionnaire outside of the Netherlands. However, the results will show that several bilingual people also participated in this research, suggesting that a few participants with different cultural backgrounds participated in this study as well. Still, it is impossible to include everyone. Hence, the results are not representative of everyone who consumes audiovisual media with Dutch subtitles or dubs.

The second error concerns sampling, where “some parts of the population have a higher probability of being included in the survey” (Robert et al., 2019, p. 105). Only children have been purposely excluded from this research for reasons previously discussed. Furthermore, for this study, it seems likely that many participants will be colleagues who are conducting research of a similar nature. Nevertheless, the results will illustrate that participants of nearly all ages and educational backgrounds have participated in this research.

The third error, the “non-response error”, refers to the possibility that participants may not fill in the questionnaire at all, or do so only partially (Robert et al., 2019, p. 105). It is probable that not everyone who came across this questionnaire has filled it out. Still, 56 participants filled out the questionnaire, of which 53 were valid.

The fourth and final identified error is the “measurement error” (Robert et al., 2019, p. 105). This error regards the level of truthfulness in the participants’ answers. For instance, these answers can be influenced by what a participant believes to be “appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a specific situation embedded in a certain target culture, language, and system” (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 4). In the case of this thesis, focusing on a subtitling country, participants likely have a shared belief that subtitles are superior compared to dubs. Another example of this type of error given by Robert et al. is the participants’ awareness that they are being studied (Robert et al., 2019, p. 105). However, this questionnaire was online and anonymous, which might have caused participants to feel more comfortable in sharing their truthful answers. Nevertheless, these errors should be taken into account when considering the results of this study.

3.3 *The online questionnaire*

An online questionnaire was created inspired by Widler (2004). The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions which were distributed into the sections: Consent form, questions regarding Dutch subtitling and dubbing, and personal information. In the consent form, the aim of this study was established as well as the number of questions and the estimated time it would take for participants to fill out the questionnaire. Furthermore, it was stated that participation in this research is voluntary and discretionary, and that all collected answers would be treated confidentially. In case the participants had any questions or complaints about the questionnaire or study as a whole, the contact information of the researcher was included. Finally, participants were asked to confirm their willingness to participate in this study and confirm that they had carefully read the consent form. The complete consent form can be found as appendix A of this thesis.

Furthermore, the main section regarding Dutch subtitles and dubbing starts with more comparative questions concerning, for instance, the genres participants deem suitable for one mode but not the other. Starting from question sixteen up to and including question twenty focus only on Dutch subtitles, followed by question twenty-one up to and including twenty-six which dealt with Dutch dubs. The final five questions concern personal information such as age, gender, and academic background. The majority of the questions were closed questions. This was decided since it would save time for the participants, and also paint a clearer picture of the number of participants' whose opinions were similar or different. Only a few open questions were added to give the participants the option to elaborate on some of their answers. The questionnaire was distributed via *Google Drive*, with the advantages that *Google Drive* calculates the percentages of the answers and allows you to view the individual answer sheets of every participant. The questionnaire was created in both English and Dutch. The purpose of the English version was to make it easier to discuss and analyze the questionnaire in this thesis without paraphrasing, while the Dutch version was the version being distributed to the participants, considering this questionnaire was targeted at native speakers of Dutch. The questions were based on the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The participants prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs, considering dubs generally have a more negative reputation.

Hypothesis 2: The participants that believe themselves to be proficient in English, or with a higher education, prefer watching English audiovisual media with English subtitles, avoiding Dutch subtitles and dubs altogether.

Hypothesis 3: The participants believe the main target audience of Dutch dubs are children, since Dutch dubs are usually only available for children's movies in Dutch movie theatres while all other movies are only provided with Dutch subtitles.

Hypothesis 4: The participants, as native speakers of Dutch, are accustomed to Dutch subtitles and will not feel these restrict their experience in consuming English audiovisual content, despite all the constraints that are inherent to subtitling.

Hypothesis 5: The participants often find themselves disagreeing with the provided Dutch subtitles in audiovisual media.

Hypothesis 6: The participants do not desire for more audiovisual media to be available with Dutch dubs.

Based on these hypotheses, and the research question 'how are Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by a mixed Dutch audience?' in mind, the following questionnaire was created:

1. How many hours a week would you say you spent watching audiovisual media online (including streaming services such as Netflix)?

- Less than one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- More than 10 hours

2. On average, how many hours a week would you say you spent watching television?

- Less than one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- More than 10 hours

3. How many hours a week would you say you spent playing video games?

- Less than one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- More than 10 hours

4. How many hours a week would you say you spent watching movies in the movie theater (pre-pandemic)?

- Less than one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- More than 10 hours

5. Do you personally prefer Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs?

- Dutch subtitles
- Dutch dubs

6. Please briefly elaborate on your previous answer:

7. For a general Dutch audience, do you believe it is more suitable/appropriate to provide Dutch subtitles, or Dutch dubs?

- Dutch subtitles
- Dutch dubs

8. Do you prefer English subtitles or Dutch subtitles?

- English subtitles
- Dutch subtitles

9 Please briefly elaborate on your previous answer:

10. Who do you think is the main target audience for Dutch dubs?

- Children (0-12 years old)
- Teenagers (13-18 years old)
- Young adults (18-30 years old)
- Adults (30-65 years old)
- Elderly people (65+ years old)

11. Who do you think is the main target audience for Dutch subtitles?

- Children (0-12 years old)
- Teenagers (13-18 years old)
- Young adults (18-30 years old)
- Adults (30-65 years old)
- Elderly people (65+)

12. What do you like about Dutch subtitles? Can you name a pro and con? (e.g. handle cultural references well, difficult to follow).

13. What do you like about Dutch dubs? Can you name a pro and con? (e.g. well-synchronized, easy to follow, distracting).

14. For which genre(s) do you think Dutch dubs are more appropriate instead of Dutch subtitles? (Multiple answers possible)

- Cartoons
- Superhero movies
- Commercials
- True crime series
- Nature documentary
- Children's show

15. And for which genre(s) would you choose Dutch subtitles instead of Dutch dubs? (Multiple answers possible)

- Cartoons
- Superhero movies
- Commercials
- True crime series
- Nature documentary
- Children's show

16. In general, how would you rate the quality of Dutch subtitles in audiovisual media?

- Bad
- Not very good
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

17. Where have you come across Dutch subtitles most frequently?

- Cartoons
- Commercials
- Children's shows
- Online streaming service (Netflix etc.)
- Movie theater
- Internet
- Other:

18. Would you like to see more Dutch subtitles available for all types of audiovisual media?

- No.
- Yes.

19. Do you often find yourself disagreeing with Dutch subtitles for certain translation choices?

- No, never.
- Yes, but it doesn't bother me that much.
- Yes, and it sometimes distracts me from enjoying the movie/series/etc.

20. Do you think Dutch subtitles restrict you from experiencing audiovisual media?

- No, I think Dutch subtitles are mostly helpful.
- Yes, sometimes I think there is important information missing in the Dutch subtitles.
- Yes, Dutch subtitles can be distracting from the visuals.

21. In general, how would you rate the quality of Dutch dubs for audiovisual media?

- Bad
- Not very good
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

22. Where have you come across Dutch dubs most frequently?

- Cartoons
- Commercials
- Children's shows
- Online streaming service (Netflix etc.)
- Movie theater
- Internet
- Other:

23. Do you think there is a stigma around Dutch dubs?

- No.
- Yes.

24. Please briefly elaborate on your previous answer:

25. Would you like to see more Dutch dubs available for all types of audiovisual media?

- No.
- Yes.

26. Do you think Dutch dubs restrict you from experiencing audiovisual media?

- No, I think Dutch dubs are mostly helpful.
- Yes, sometimes I think there is important information omitted in Dutch dubs.
- Yes, Dutch dubs can be distracting because they are often not perfectly synchronized with the visuals.

27. Age:

28. Gender: Male/female/non-binary/other

29. Native language(s): Dutch/English/other

30. School level (only select the highest level applicable for you):

- VMBO
- HAVO
- VWO
- MBO
- HBO
- WO (BA or MA)
- PHD

31. How would you rate your English proficiency?

- Not very good
- Fine
- Good
- Very good
- Fluent

Questions one up to and including four were included to paint a picture of the participants' habits and find possible relations between certain habits and other answers. For instance, participants who watch more TV series are exposed to different subtitles and dubs than participants who play video games with subtitles or dubs more frequently, and might therefore feel different about Dutch subtitles and dubs. These questions were inspired by Orrego-Carmona's study (2014a). The different types of audiovisual content Orrego-Carmona

used in his questionnaire were television, internet, DVD/Blu-ray, and cinema (2014a, p. 56). However, I do not believe DVD or Blu-ray are still frequently used means of consuming audiovisual media. Hence, this was replaced with video games. Furthermore, due to the current global pandemic surrounding COVID-19, movie theaters are closed. Hence, the phrase (pre-pandemic) was added to question nine for clarification. Question numbers 17 and 22 add to this information as well, illustrating where the participants most frequently come across Dutch subtitles or dubs.

In addition, questions five and six were included to answer the first hypothesis, whether the participants prefer Dutch subtitles or dubs. The following question, number seven, served to illustrate whether participants would deviate from their personal opinion towards these modes when considering a general audience. A participant might prefer subtitles, but at the same time believe that dubs actually make audiovisual media more accessible to a wider audience.

Moreover, questions eight, nine, 30 and 31 served to answer the second hypothesis. Although a specific scale exists relating to question thirty-one, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, not all participants will be familiar with this. Including an explanation of this framework would cost time for the participants to read and comprehend, and this might result into them becoming demotivated. Furthermore, those who are familiar with this framework may still not know exactly what category they fall under. Hence, in order to save the participants' time and keep the question simple, a scale was included ranging from 'not very good' to 'fluent'.

Furthermore, question 10, 11, 14 and 15 were included to answer the third hypothesis. These are similar questions which serve the purpose of illustrating whether the participants would remain consistent with their answers.

In addition, questions 12, 13, 16 and 21 do not directly relate to one of the hypothesis, but were included to gather more information with the overarching research question in mind. Meanwhile, questions number 18 and 25 were included to answer the sixth hypothesis, with questions 23 and 24 functioning as an indication of whether this possible stigma around dubs could influence the participants' desire for more audiovisual media with Dutch dubs.

Moreover, question 19 served to answer the fifth hypothesis, and question number 20 was included in order to answer the fourth hypothesis. In addition, question 26 was included to compare these answers to the answers of question twenty.

Finally, questions 27 and 28 were included to possibly find patterns between certain age groups or genders and correlating answers. Question 29 was included to make sure the

participants were native speakers of Dutch, assuming this would mean they are also familiar with a variety of Dutch subtitles and dubs.

On the morning of 13 April 2020, two test-participants filled in this online questionnaire to test if everything worked well and to see how long it would take to fill in. The first test-participant finished the questionnaire in a little over 12 minutes, while the second test-participant took a little over 14 minutes. Just to be safe and inclusive of slower readers, a time indication of 15 minutes was given to the actual participants. Furthermore, the test-participants provided feedback regarding the clarity of the questions and their preferred answering options (e.g. multiple choice). This feedback was incorporated in the online questionnaire.

After this feedback was incorporated, the online questionnaire was distributed on 13 April 2020 in several *WhatsApp* groups, including a group with fellow students, and it was encouraged to spread the link to the questionnaire. If not enough answers would have been collected after one week, other ways of distributing the questionnaire would have been applied, such as sharing the link on social media platforms. This was not done initially since the consent form includes personal information of the researcher, such as an email-address, which could have easily fallen into the wrong hands through open social media platforms. Fortunately, after one week, on 20 April 2020, 56 participants had filled out the questionnaire. This was deemed as enough responses for the analysis, and thus the questionnaire was closed, no longer accepting new answers. The results will be discussed in the next chapter.

Results and discussion

4.1 Profile of the participants

A total of 56 participants filled out the questionnaire. One participant was excluded because they did not confirm the acceptance of the consent form. Furthermore, two more answer sheets were excluded because they contained identical answers to the open questions of another answer sheet, suggesting these were accidentally uploaded multiple times. Thus, these duplicated answers were excluded from the results as well, resulting into 53 validly filled out questionnaires. Before discussing the hypotheses and the results of the questions regarding Dutch subtitling and dubbing, a profile of the participants' statistics will be presented. The following figure illustrates the different ages of the participants:

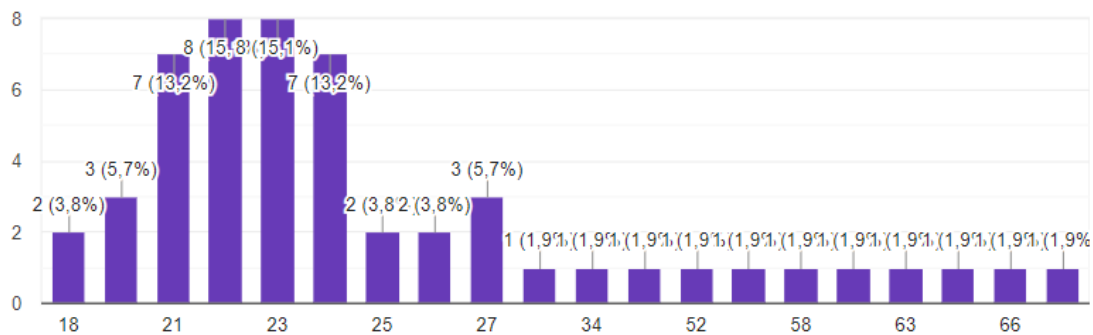


Figure 1 – Ages of the participants

Table 1 shows that over half of the participants were aged between 21 and 24 years old, making up 56.6% of the total 53 participants. Furthermore, two participants were 18 years old and three were 20 years old, comprising 9.43% of the total participants, while 16.98% of the participants were aged between 25 and 34, and 15.09% of the participants were aged between 52 and 67. Notably, only one person in their forties participated in this study, aged 41, making up 1.88% of the total number of participants.

Furthermore, figure 2 illustrates the gender distribution of the participants. A large majority of 41 participants indicated that they identified as female, while 10 participants identified as male. One participant identified as non-binary and one other participant chose not to specify their gender by filling in '-', which is represented by the green portion of figure 2.

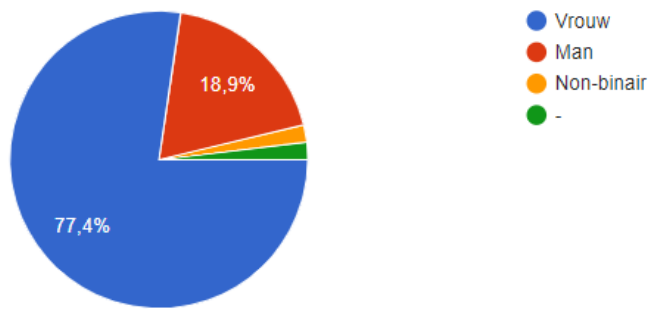


Figure 2 – Gender of the participants

As for educational backgrounds, it can be seen in figure 3 that the nearly half of the participants, 26 participants, have studied or are currently studying at a university level. The next largest group consists of 16 participants and represents the (former) HBO students. Three other participants indicated that they were (former) MBO students, and one participant answered they were a (former) PHD student. The final seven participants indicated they did not (yet) pursue education after high school, one of whom did VMBO, five did HAVO, and one did VWO. Thus, 46 out of the 53 participants pursued education on a higher level after high school, though on different difficulty levels. It should be noted that especially for universities in the Netherlands, it is required to be fairly proficient in English, considering a large part of the readings and lectures are given in English for many different degrees. Hence, the majority of these participants are likely to have a relatively high proficiency in English.

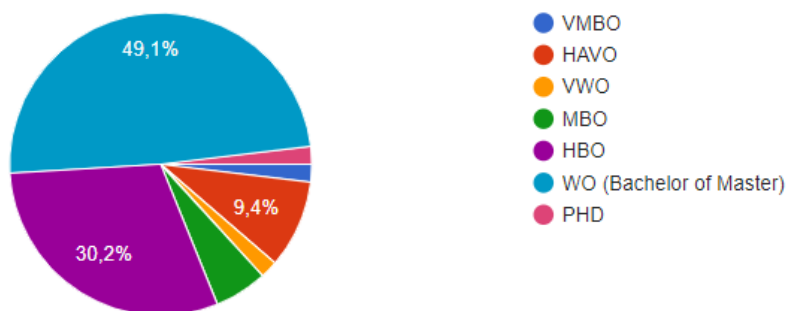


Figure 3 – Level of education of the participants

The participants' level of English proficiency is illustrated in figure 4. Roughly half of the participants, 27, indicated that they were fluent in English. Moreover, 13 participants stated that their English is very good, but not fluent, while eight participants deemed their English skills to be simply 'good'. Only five participants expressed that their English was 'okay', and not a single participants viewed their English abilities to be 'not so good'. It should be noted that this is a subjective indication of the participants' own English

proficiency level, and that the following figure should not be interpreted as anything other than an estimation:

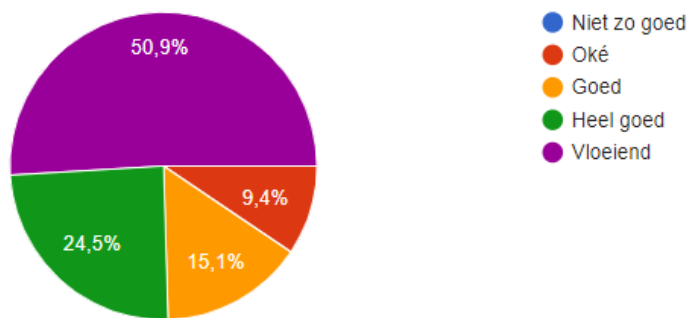


Figure 4 – English proficiency level of the participants

Two participants did signify that English is one of their native languages. But overall, all participants are native speakers of Dutch. Furthermore, one native speaker of French and one native speaker of Chinese also participated in this research, as can be seen in figure 5:

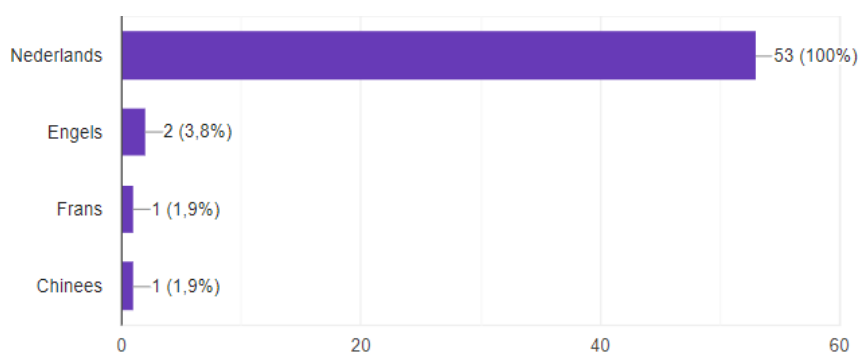


Figure 5 – Native languages of the participants

Taking this information into consideration, it should be noted that this is a small-scale study and that these results are not representative of the opinions of all Dutch people. The following results represent the attitudes and opinions of a small group of Dutch participants, consisting mostly of female (former) students who either did a bachelor or master at university level, and have a high level of proficiency in English.

Amongst these participants, online streaming services appear to be the most popular platforms to consume audiovisual media, followed by television, video games, and finally the movie theater. The exact distribution is illustrated in table 1:

	Less than 1 hour	1-3 hours	4-6 hours	7-9 hours	10+ hours

Online streaming services	11,3% (6)	24,5% (13)	34% (18)	17% (9)	13,2% (7)
Television	37,7% (20)	24,5% (13)	15,1% (8)	9,4 % (5)	13,2% (7)
Video games	52,8% (28)	13,2% (7)	9,4% (5)	5,7% (3)	18,9% (10)
Movie theater	94,3% (50)	5,7% (3)	-	-	-

Table 1. Weekly consumption of audiovisual media in terms of time and platforms

It is notable that as many as ten participants indicated that they spend at least ten hours per week playing video games. However, this may not impact their exposure to Dutch dubs as much as to Dutch subtitles, since many participants in Geurts study stated they never play games in Dutch (2015, p. 52). Figure 6 illustrates where the participants have come across Dutch subtitles most frequently, related to question 17 in the questionnaire:

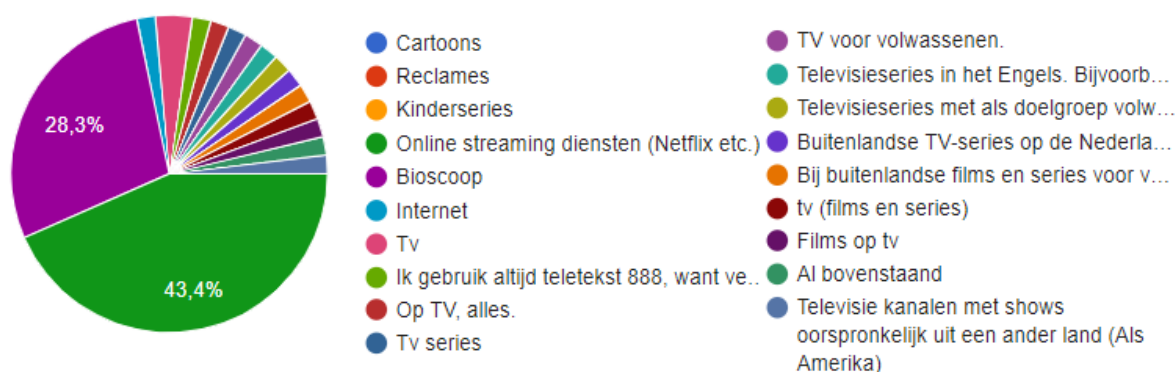


Figure 6. Most frequent encounters with Dutch subtitles

The online streaming services option was selected the most, by a total of 23 participants. The next most popular option was the movie theater, chosen by 15 participants. The participants were given the opportunity to add their own answer as well, and nearly all of the added answers involved television. These were added by 13 different participants, or 24.52% of the 53 participants. Furthermore, one participant added 'internet' and another participant filled in 'all of the above', referring to the given options cartoons, commercials, children's programs, online streaming services, and the movie theater. Thus, the attitudes of the participants towards Dutch subtitles are mostly based on the Dutch subtitles available for online streaming services, movie theaters, and television. In addition, figure 7 shows where the participants have come across Dutch dubs most frequently:

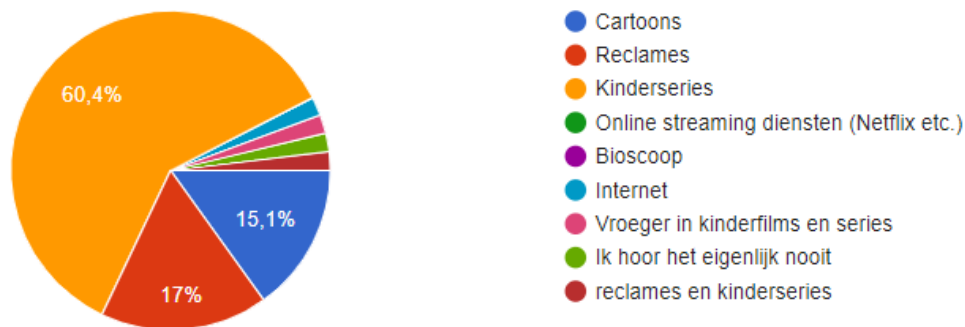


Figure 7. Most frequent encounters with Dutch dubs

The majority of the participants, 32, indicated that they have come across Dutch dubs most frequently in children's programs. Two participants who added a new option also mentioned children's programs and films in their answer, increasing the total percentage for children's programs to 64.15%. The second biggest category turned out to be commercials, with nine participants selecting this category, and one participant referring to it in an additional answer, bringing the percentage for commercials to 18.86%. Thirdly, eight participants chose cartoons as their answer. While cartoons could also be classified as children's programs, many cartoons have a much wider demographic, and therefore this was included as a separate category. One participant added the broad answer: 'internet'. What exactly this refers to is unclear. Finally, one participant stated that they never come across Dutch dubs. Considering these answers, the attitudes towards Dutch dubs that will be discussed in later sections of this chapter are mostly based on Dutch dubs in children's programs, commercials, and cartoons.

4.2 Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs

Figure 8 illustrates the participants' preferred mode, Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs. Only one participant preferred Dutch dubs, while the other 52 participants indicated they prefer Dutch subtitles. Hence, the first hypothesis, 'the participants prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs, considering dubs generally have a more negative reputation', was confirmed.

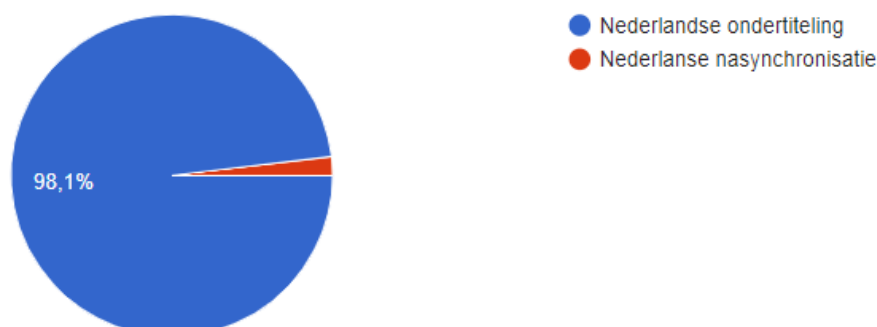


Figure 8 – Preferences for Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs

The participants were given the opportunity to expand on their answer for this question. The answers in full will be included as appendix B to this thesis. The most common answers were divided into four main categories. Firstly, a sense of wanting to maintain the ‘original’. For some participants this meant the original voices of the actors, while other participants specified they wanted to hear the original language or dialogue. One participant also stated they want to be able to perceive the original emotions of the actors. The participants likely value the original audiovisual product to this extent because they are used to subtitles and thus used to the original audiovisual product remaining intact. Secondly, many participants expressed a dissatisfaction with lip-synchronization in Dutch dubbing. Again, this probably relates to the participants being accustomed to subtitles. Furthermore, as previously established, Dutch dubbing is almost exclusively done for audiovisual media aimed at children. Dutch children might be satisfied with the lip-synchronization in Dutch dubbing, as they probably are less likely to pick up on these errors. However, the Dutch adults who participated in this research are not the target audience for Dutch dubs, and it is therefore not surprising that they are dissatisfied with the quality of the lip-synchronization in Dutch dubs. Thirdly, a number of participants stated they are dissatisfied with the voice casting in Dutch dubbing. Several participants expressed that they often hear the same Dutch voice actors on rotation for different movies and series, which can break the immersion, and some participants also stated that the selected Dutch voices often do not suit the characters. Similarly to the previous category, the participants might feel this way since they are not the target audience for Dutch dubs. Young children might not notice that the same voices are used for many different pieces of audiovisual media, but this is more noticeable to adults. Finally, the fourth most common statement in the participants’ answers concerned them simply being accustomed to Dutch subtitles, shaping their preference for this mode. While not all participants explicitly mention this category, it appears to be connected to many of the other categories. For this category, many participants stated that it is difficult for them to immerse themselves in the audiovisual media with Dutch dubs, and sometimes went as far as to say that it feels ‘wrong’ or ‘unnatural’, to consume audiovisual media with Dutch dubs. The distribution of all four categories is illustrated in table 2. It should be noted that some participants included multiple categories in their answer:

Category	Number of participants
Sense of wanting to maintain the 'original'	49,05% (26 participants)
Dissatisfaction with lip-synchronization	30,18% (16 participants)
Accustomed to subtitles	28,3% (15 participants)
Dissatisfaction with voice casting	13,2% (7 participants)

Table 2. Most frequent reasoning for preferring Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs

Other notable elaborations include references to humor. Four participants included humor in their answer, three of which regarded negative experiences with translated jokes. However, one participant stated they enjoy translated jokes in subtitles, since it simultaneously provides them with two jokes, an audible one and one in text format. Moreover, two participants did state that Dutch subtitles can sometimes be distracting from the visual element, but one of these participants still preferred Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs. This participant also mentioned that they want to improve their English and that they value the original voices of the actors, which could be the main reasons for them to prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs after all. In addition, one participant stated that they do have nostalgic attachments towards certain Dutch dubbed programs from their childhood, but prefer subtitles for all other audiovisual media.

Furthermore, three participants indicated they prefer Dutch subtitles because they want to improve their English listening abilities. It is noteworthy that, despite being a commonly used argument in favor of subtitles, only three participants mentioned second language learning in their answer. A possible explanation for this is that the majority of the participants already have a relatively high English proficiency level, and may not frequently come across English words or phrases they do not understand. Finally, two participants already indicated that they prefer English subtitles over both Dutch subtitles and Dutch dubs, which links to the second hypothesis regarding English subtitles and will be discussed in section 1.3.

For question seven, whether the participants believe Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs are more suitable for a general Dutch audience, some participants strayed from their personal preference. As illustrated in figure 9, seven participants believed Dutch dubs to be more suitable for a general Dutch audience. These participants likely took young children, illiterate people, and people with decreasing vision into consideration. Still, the majority of 46 participants believed Dutch subtitles to be the most suitable mode for a general Dutch

audience, probably since most Dutch people are accustomed to Dutch subtitles and not Dutch dubs:

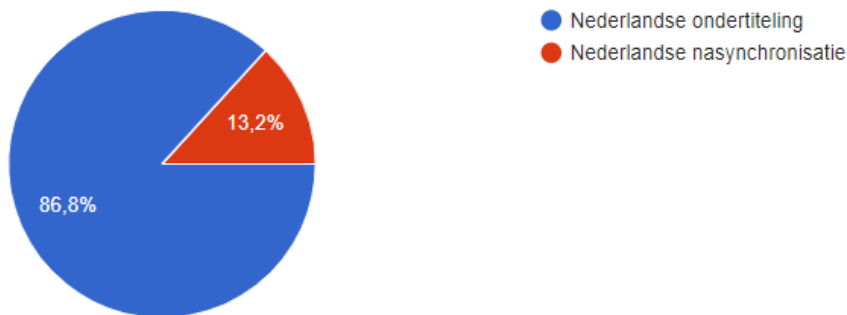


Figure 9. Dutch subtitles or Dutch dubs for a general Dutch audience.

4.3 English subtitles or Dutch subtitles

The second hypothesis was: ‘the participants that believe themselves to be proficient in English, or with a higher education, prefer watching English audiovisual media with English subtitles, avoiding Dutch subtitles and dubs altogether’. It should be noted that the second hypothesis cannot actually be rejected or confirmed because, as previously discussed, the majority of the participants has an established educational background and high English proficiency level. Therefore, there is not enough data to compare participants who are proficient in English to participants who are not. Still, the participants’ answers could provide insight on whether this hypothesis is plausible. According to this hypothesis, the majority of the participants would prefer English subtitles. In figure 10, it can be seen that this is indeed the case, with 35 participants showing a preference for English subtitles, and 18 participants for Dutch subtitles:

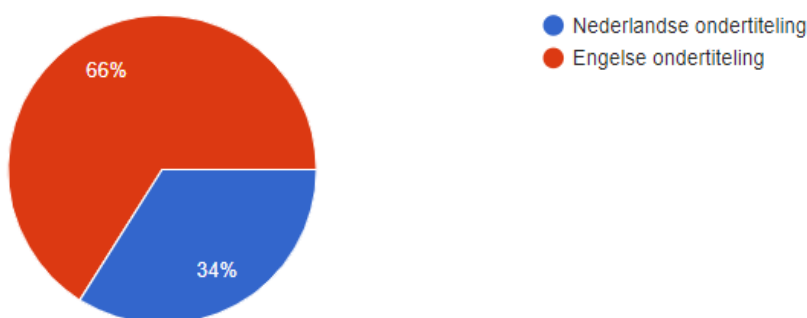


Figure 10 – Preferences for English subtitles or Dutch subtitles

The elaborations to these preferences will be discussed in the next few paragraphs, and again it should be noted that some participants mentioned several categories, so the total number of participants might appear to be higher than 53. The full answers are included as

appendix C to this thesis.

For the participants who indicated they prefer Dutch subtitles, the most common elaboration was that they are used to Dutch subtitles and think these are slightly easier to follow. This was described by six out of the 18 participants. These participants might feel this way because Dutch is their native language and therefore it could be less taxing for them to read subtitles in their native language, and easier to understand since they are familiar with any expressions or other linguistic elements which might be more difficult to follow in English. Three participants also mentioned that they feel indifferent and do not have a clear preference, but still opted for Dutch subtitles, which could be a choice based on habit since they did not have a strong preference. One participant elaborated that they actually prefer to watch audiovisual media without subtitles, but also chose Dutch subtitles, possibly out of habit as well. The second most common elaboration regarded an actual need for translation, mentioned by five participants. Furthermore, two participants believed that Dutch subtitles help them with learning English.

Less common answers among this group of participants include the following: Believing that it is excessive to have both English audio and English subtitles, enjoying seeing how certain words or phrases are translated, being hard of hearing, and disliking subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. The latter two answers do not necessarily correspond to the question. For the third answer, this participant may have misread the question. Moreover, the participant who responded with the fourth answer mistook English subtitles for English subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, which are not the same thing. For the participants who mentioned enjoying seeing how certain things are translated, it is likely that these are translation students since this questionnaire was distributed in a WhatsApp group of translation students, amongst other groups. As for the first answer, finding it excessive to have both English audio and subtitles, the participants who included this in their answer might find it distracting to have both when they can already understand and comprehend the audio well enough.

For the participants who indicated they prefer English subtitles over Dutch subtitles, the following most common answer categories were identified. Firstly, many participants stated they simply want to follow the audio properly, and do not necessarily require a translation. Several of these participants referred to heavy accents, mumbling, or dialects in their answers. Some also stated that they were hard of hearing. Secondly, a sense of wanting to remain close to the original was reiterated. Thirdly, various participants elaborated that they believe English subtitles to be of better quality than Dutch subtitles. Given reasons for this

sentiment include the belief that Dutch subtitles are often too general, and do not cover all the most important elements of the audio. Fourthly, a number of participants expressed they feel indifferent, but still opted for English subtitles. Finally, some participants mentioned that they believe English subtitles help them with improving or maintaining their level of English. The distribution of these five most common categories is illustrated in table 3. Again, some participants included multiple categories in their answer:

Category	Number of participants
To follow the audio properly (related to volume, accents, mumbling and dialects).	20,75% (16 participants)
Sense of wanting to remain as close to the original as possible.	16,98% (9 participants)
Better quality than Dutch subtitles.	11,32% (6 participants)
No strong preference, indifferent.	7,54% (4 participants)
English subtitles help with improving or maintaining level of English.	7,54% (4 participants)

Table 3. Most frequent reasoning for preferring English subtitles over Dutch subtitles

The dissatisfaction with the quality of Dutch subtitles is related to the constraints of subtitling. Subtitles often cannot include everything that has been said because they need to fit the width of the screen and can therefore only be “32 to 41 characters per line in a maximum of two lines” (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 9). However, this constraint does not only apply for Dutch subtitles, but for all languages, including English. A possible reason the reductions might stand out more in Dutch subtitles could be related to the average word length of Dutch. Marian et al. found that the average word length for Dutch words is 8,41, while it is 7,26 for English (2012, p. 5). Although this may not appear to be a big difference, it likely results into more omission due to the character limitation in subtitles, and these omissions might therefore be more apparent in Dutch subtitles.

Furthermore, three participants stated they would rather watch audiovisual media without subtitles altogether, but would opt for English subtitles if they had to choose. Moreover, three participants elaborated that they find English subtitles less distracting than Dutch subtitles. The participants might find Dutch subtitles distracting because they find themselves disagreeing with the provided translations, or because they are more accustomed to English subtitles. One participant did indeed specify that they are used to English subtitles because they frequently watch Japanese series with English subtitles. In addition, one

participant also referred to a loss of humor in Dutch subtitles. As previously discussed, humor is one of the most challenging genres to translate, and adding the constraints of subtitling to the equation makes it even more challenging to translate. Although humor might be omitted or changed in English subtitles as well, this could be less noticeable to the Dutch viewers who can still understand it through the audio.

Finally, one participant stated that they like the English language more than Dutch. Looking at Geurts' study, the majority of the participants there indicated that they do not think Dutch is a beautiful language, but they do think English is a beautiful language (2015, p. 51). Even though only one participant specified preferring the English language over the Dutch language in this case, it does not seem unlikely for other participants to share this sentiment considering Geurts' (2015) results. In the case of this participant, their preference for the English language also results into their preference for English subtitles over Dutch ones. If other participants share this view, whether that be consciously or subconsciously, this could be an influencing factor for their subtitling preferences as well.

4.4 Target audience for Dutch dubs and subtitles

The third hypothesis was: 'The participants believe the main target audience of Dutch dubs are children, since Dutch dubs are usually only available for children's movies in Dutch movie theatres while all other movies are only provided with Dutch subtitles'. Figure 7 already established that the participants most frequently came across Dutch dubs in children's programs. This makes it seem even more likely for the hypothesis to be confirmed. Indeed, as presented in figure 11, the vast majority of 47 participants believe that children up to the age of 12 are the main target audience for Dutch dubs:

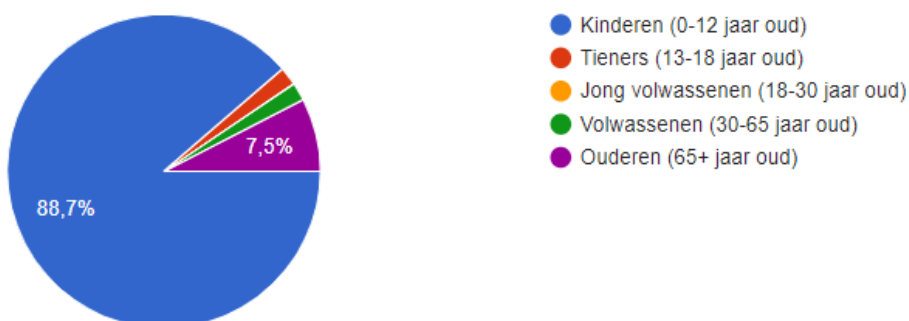


Figure 11. Main target audience for Dutch dubs

Still, four participants believe elderly people aged 65 and up to be the main target audience for Dutch dubs. This could be related to the viewing habits of older viewers, who

appear to pay more attention to the pictures than the subtitles, making audiovisual media with subtitles more difficult for them to follow (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 346). Another possibility could be the regression of elderly people's vision, which would make it more taxing for them to follow subtitles. In addition, the English proficiency level of elderly people is generally believed to be lower. It was not as common for people to pursue academia at higher levels after high school, and since the internet was not yet around when they were young, they would have had less access to foreign texts and types of media. Thus, the participants who selected elderly people might have thought that this age group has a lower English proficiency level and would therefore prefer Dutch audio. Noticeably, one participant selected teenagers and another participant selected adults. The participant who selected teenagers might have considered that this age group could still be accustomed to Dutch dubs, since they are not far removed from having viewed children's programs. Furthermore, since teenagers will have grown up with the internet, they might be used to multitasking consuming audiovisual media. Choosing Dutch dubs would mean they do not have to pay attention to subtitles while they are simultaneously consuming another work of audiovisual media, such as a video game. As for the adults, this could also be related to their level of English proficiency, which might again be lower than that of teenagers who grew up with endless access to English texts and media through the internet. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants believed children to be the main target audience for Dutch dubs.

Considering the fact that the participants gave more divided answers on where they most frequently encountered Dutch subtitles, it is not surprising that the answers to the question 'who do you think is the main target audience for Dutch subtitles?' were much more divided as well. This can be seen in figure 12:

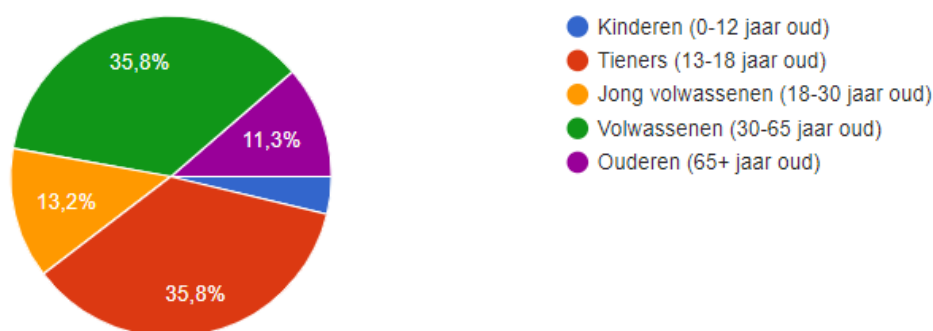


Figure 12. Main target audience for Dutch subtitles

Only two participants believed children to be the main target audience for Dutch subtitles. It is likely that these participants were thinking of children closer to the age of

twelve since much younger children would not have the reading speed to keep up with the subtitles, or might even be illiterate. Furthermore, six participants chose elderly people as the main target audience for Dutch subtitles. However, this does not seem likely either, for the same reasons why elderly people might prefer Dutch dubs. Two of the participants who chose this demographic also indicated that they came across Dutch subtitles most frequently on television, which could be related to their answer. With the rise of the internet and online streaming services, new generations are less likely to watch traditional television. Thus, these participants might associate television and Dutch subtitles with an elderly audience. The same could be said for one participant who most frequently encountered Dutch subtitles in the movie theater. Due to these streaming services, younger viewers might be less likely to visit the movie theater, and therefore associate this with an elderly audience as well. However, three of the participants who chose elderly people also indicated that they most frequently encountered Dutch subtitles through online streaming services. It is unclear why these participants would associate Dutch subtitles with an elderly audience. A more likely target group might be young adults, as selected by seven participants. Young adults are likely to be capable and fast readers, and thus subtitles seem to be a suitable mode for this age group. This is not unlike the age group of adults, which was selected as the main target audience by 19 participants. It is notable that this many participants chose this demographic, considering the indicated age for this group ranges from 30 to 65, adjacent to the group of elderly viewers. The same number of participants selected teenagers as the main target audience for Dutch subtitles. This is also notable, since it could be argued that teenagers are the age group closest to children, and might therefore still be somewhat accustomed to Dutch dubs. At the same time, 43.4% of the participants indicated they came across Dutch subtitles most frequently in online streaming services. Since streaming services are relatively new compared to television and the movie theater, participants might associate these with teenagers, and thus believe them to be the main target audience for Dutch subtitles. Another possibility could be that the participants believe teenagers might have the most time and freedom to consume audiovisual media out of all the presented age groups. Thus, considering the Netherlands is a subtitled country, this would make Dutch teenagers the main audience to consume Dutch subtitles.

In addition to these questions, the participants were also asked to choose what genres of audiovisual media they deemed most suitable for Dutch subtitles and dubs. The answers regarding Dutch dubs are presented in figure 13. The vast majority of the participants selected children's programs, followed by commercials and cartoons. These answers align with figure 7, thus it is likely that the participants believe Dutch dubs are the most suitable for these

genres since they are accustomed to encountering Dutch dubs in these genres. Noticeably, 16 participants also believed nature documentaries to be suitable for Dutch dubs, despite this being a more ‘mature’ genre. The participants who chose this probably envisioned a lack of talking people in these documentaries, which would rule out any possible dissatisfaction with lip-synchronization. The other more ‘mature’ genres, superhero movies and true crime series, were not chosen by any of the participants, probably because the participants are used to viewing these with subtitles.

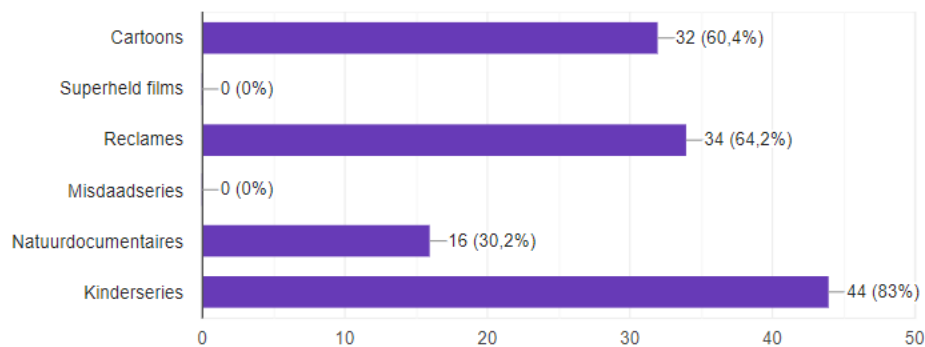


Figure 13. Most suitable genres for Dutch dubs

For Dutch subtitles, nearly all participants selected true crime series and superhero movies as suitable genres, as illustrated in figure 14. Furthermore, nature documentaries were selected by 66% of the participants. Since this genre is also catered towards an adult audience, these documentaries hardly ever get dubbed in the Netherlands and thus the participants are probably used to viewing nature documentaries with Dutch subtitles. Notably, 35.8% of the participants chose cartoons as a suitable genre as well. It is likely that these participants had ‘mature’ cartoons in mind, such as *Rick and Morty*, which has an age restriction of 16+ and has no Dutch dubs available on Netflix. Finally, the genres that were chosen the least are commercials and children’s programs. It has already been established that children’s programs are usually dubbed, but this is not always true for commercials. However, commercials might not stand out as a suitable genre for subtitling since they are usually short and informative, making it more challenging to fit all the relevant information into the subtitles and less convenient for the viewers.

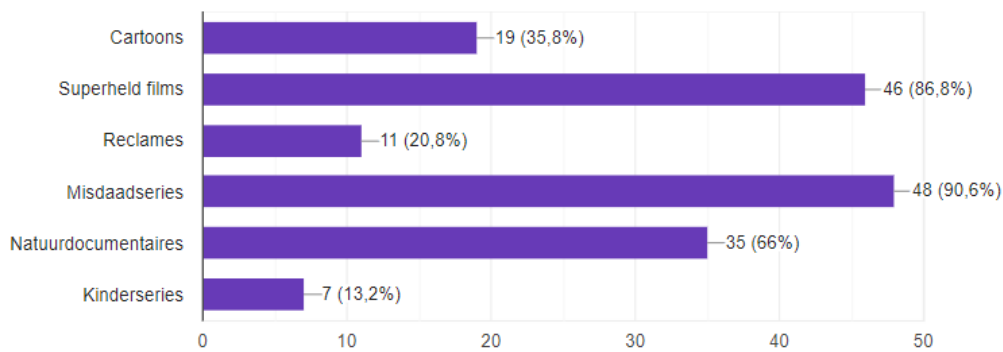


Figure 14. Most suitable genres for Dutch subtitles

4.5 Estimated quality of Dutch subtitles and dubs

The participants were asked to rate the overall quality of Dutch subtitles and dubs. Although this had no direct relation to the hypotheses, it was of interest to gather this data in relation to the overarching research question: ‘How are Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by a mixed Dutch audience?’. The answers related to the overall quality of both modes are illustrated in table 4:

Quality level	Dutch dubs	Dutch subtitles
Bad	3.8% (2)	1.9% (1)
Not very good	32.1% (17)	20.8% (11)
Good	39.6% (21)	47.2% (25)
Very good	24.5% (13)	26.4% (14)
Excellent	0% (0)	3.8% (2)

Table 4. Overall quality levels of Dutch dubs and subtitles

Dutch subtitles received slightly more votes for ‘good’, ‘very good’, and ‘excellent’, while Dutch dubs received more votes for ‘bad’, and ‘not very good’. However, the ratings are not drastically different. Despite their overwhelming preference for Dutch subtitles, many of the participants still acknowledge that Dutch dubs are not bad in terms of quality. It is likely that the 21 participants who rated the quality of Dutch dubs ‘good’, and the 13 participants who rated it ‘very good’, were considering the target audience for Dutch dubs. As shown in figure 11, the large majority of the participants believed children to be the main target audience for Dutch dubs. The participants might be aware of the fact that child audiences are far less demanding when it comes to “isochrony and lip synchrony” (Tang, 2014, p. 438), and thus rate the quality of Dutch dubs quite high in relation to its function. Furthermore, since children’s programs often consist of animated characters who move their

lips randomly (Tang, 2014, p. 438), the pictures are not going to represent natural speech either way, whether it be the original or dubbed version. Knowing this, the participants might deem the quality of the Dutch dubs to be quite good, since it is not so different from the original children's programs.

Although the overall quality of Dutch subtitles were rated slightly better than the quality of Dutch dubs, it is notable that 12 participants were not satisfied with the overall quality of Dutch subtitles. These participants might interpret any missing or changed parts as errors, while these are present in all subtitles because of the constraints of this mode. Another possibility is that these participants could very well be translation students who might be more critical of translations presented to them. Still, even non-translation students might be critical towards Dutch subtitles since the participants are accustomed to subtitles and will be quick to notice any errors. Furthermore, since the level of English proficiency among the participants is very high, the majority of the participants would be capable of comparing the original audio to the translation in the subtitles. Thus, the quality of Dutch dubs and subtitles were rated similarly, but probably for different reasons.

4.6 Disagreement with the translation choices in Dutch subtitling

As previously addressed, subtitles do not always perfectly resemble the dialogue of the original audio due to the constraints inherent to subtitling, and some participants might interpret any missing or changed parts as errors. This relates to the fourth hypothesis: 'The participants often find themselves disagreeing with the provided Dutch subtitles in audiovisual media'. The participants' attitudes towards this is illustrated in figure 15:

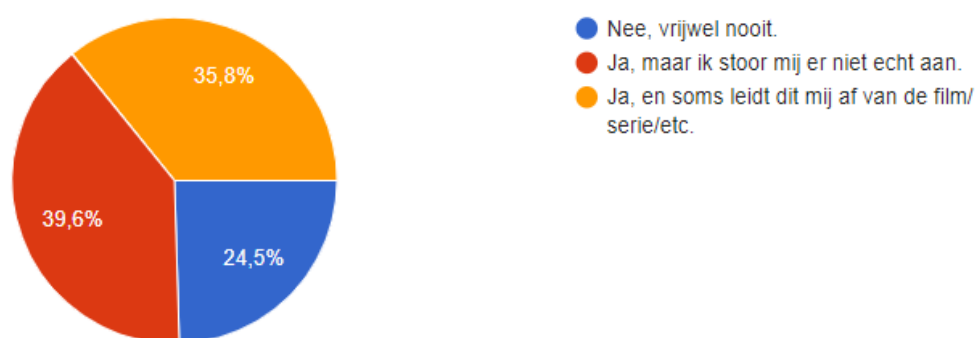


Figure 15. Disagreement with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles

On the one hand, only 13 participants indicated that they hardly ever find themselves disagreeing with provided Dutch subtitles. Out of these participants, four indicated that their English proficiency is just 'okay', which would make it less likely for them to pick up on any

possible changes or errors in the subtitles. For the other nine participants, they might not pay as much attention to the subtitles or simply do not recall disagreeing with Dutch subtitles often.

On the other hand, 40 participants indicated that they do often find themselves disagreeing with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles. Out of this group, 21 participants stated that it does not bother them much, while the other 19 participants said it sometimes distracts them from the audiovisual media they are trying to watch. Thus, considering the majority of the participants did often find themselves disagreeing with Dutch subtitles, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed. Linking back to quality, the participants who rated the quality for Dutch subtitles as ‘bad’ or ‘not very good’ might base this on how frequently they personally disagree with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles.

4.7 Desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch subtitles or dubs

This recurring disagreement with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles might also explain why roughly half of the participants did not feel the need for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch subtitles, as illustrated in figure 16. It is likely that these participants did not express this desire since the majority of foreign audiovisual media is already subtitled in the Netherlands. Another explanatory hypothesis is that many of the participants do not actually require a translation when viewing English audiovisual media and, when they do use subtitles, prefer English ones (figure 10). Still, the other 27 participants indicated they would actually like to see more audiovisual media available with Dutch subtitles, which could be related to Dutch subtitles not always being available for all types of audiovisual media, such as video games (Geurts, 2015, p. 61).

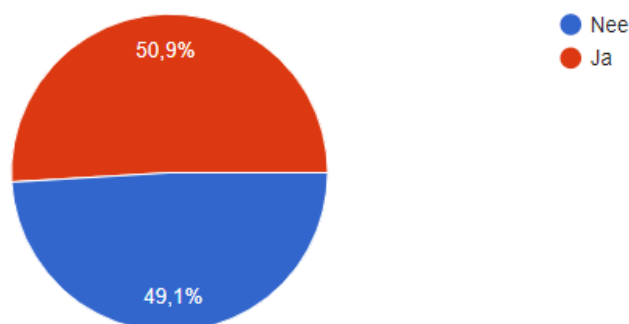


Figure 16. Desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch subtitles

However, considering this explanatory hypothesis, it would seem likely that the participants would like to see more Dutch dubs available for all types of audiovisual media as well, since these are rarely available except for audiovisual media that is aimed at children.

But the majority of the participants appears to have no desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch dubs, as can be seen in figure 17. The most feasible explanatory hypothesis is that the participants are accustomed to subtitles and have lost the need for Dutch dubs. Out of the six participants that indicated they would like to see more Dutch dubs, one was 64 years old and said that his English was just ‘okay’. This was also the only participant who expressed that they prefer Dutch dubs over Dutch subtitles in general, and stated that they often miss the pictures because they spend a lot of time reading the subtitles. This correlates with Koolstra’s finding that Dutch viewers over the age of 50 struggle more with keeping up with subtitles (2002, p. 346). The other five participants did indicate that their English proficiency level was either ‘very good’ or fluent. An explanatory hypothesis for their choice could be that they are curious to see what Dutch dubs would look like for a mature audience. The participants might believe that the overall quality of Dutch dubs might increase when they are created with an adult target audience in mind. Another possibility is that Dutch dubs could make it slightly easier for the participants to multitask, since Dutch is their native language and they would not need to translate anything in their mind or experience difficulty with understanding unfamiliar English dialects or accents. Still, considering the majority of the participants does not share this desire, the sixth hypothesis ‘the participants do not desire for more audiovisual media to be available with Dutch dubs’ was confirmed.

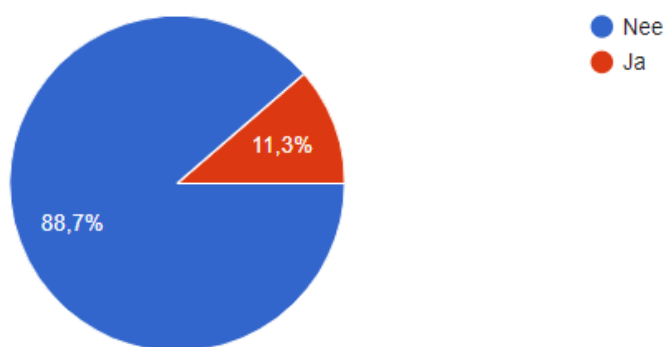


Figure 17. Desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch dubs

4.8 Dutch subtitles or Dubs as restricting the viewing experience

The fifth hypothesis was: ‘The participants, as native speakers of Dutch, are accustomed to Dutch subtitles and will not feel these restrict their experience in consuming English audiovisual content, despite all the constraints that are inherent to subtitling’. However, since many of the participants indicated that they want the ‘original’ to remain intact (table 2), some might experience subtitles as restricting to their viewing experience.

Figure 18 illustrates the answers of the participants to the question ‘Do you think Dutch subtitles restrict you from experiencing audiovisual media?’:

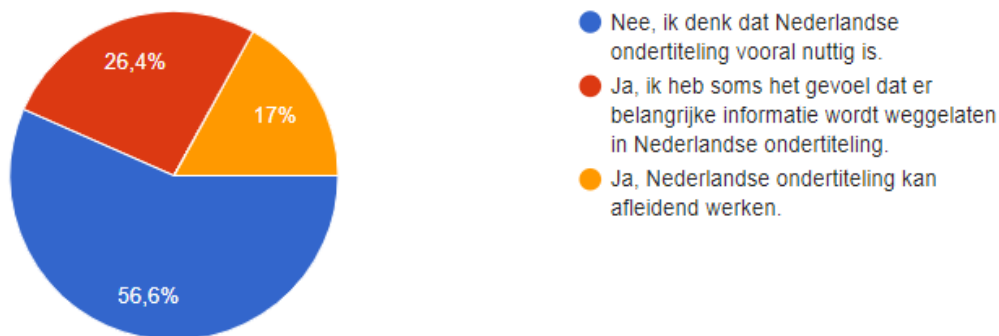


Figure 18. Experiencing Dutch subtitles as restricting or not

The majority of the participants, 30 out of 53, stated that they do not experience Dutch subtitles as restricting and believe them to be mostly useful. As stated in the hypothesis, the participants are accustomed to Dutch subtitles, which is likely the explanatory hypothesis for why most participants do not experience them as restricting. Meanwhile, 23 participants indicated that they do find Dutch subtitles restricting. Out of this group, 14 participants believed that important information is often left out in Dutch subtitles, which is most likely related to the aforementioned constraints of subtitling. The other nine participants felt that Dutch subtitles can be distracting, which can be related to slower reading speed. Furthermore, three participants already indicated in the section ‘English subtitles or Dutch subtitles’ that they would rather view the original English audiovisual media without any subtitles whatsoever, suggesting they are already accustomed to this and find any subtitles distracting.

The same question was asked regarding Dutch dubs, these answers are shown in figure 19. The vast majority, 44 participants, indicated that they experience Dutch dubs as restricting since they can be distracting, for instance due to imperfect lip-synchronization. Although lip-synchronization might not be perfect in dubbing countries either, the viewers there are accustomed to it and therefore might not notice it as much. Furthermore, six other participants also believed Dutch dubs to be restricting to their viewing experience since they think important information is often left out in Dutch dubs. Only three participants indicated that they think Dutch dubs are mostly useful, and not restricting to the viewing experience. Since the majority of the participants selected children as the main target audience for Dutch dubs, an explanatory hypothesis for these to believe Dutch dubs are mostly useful is that they took into account this target audience that cannot read yet. Furthermore, it might be less taxing to view audiovisual media with dubs instead of subs, as argued by Koolstra et al., which could

be a reason for these participants to acknowledge usefulness of Dutch dubs (2002, p. 332). Still, the vast majority of the participants experience Dutch dubs as restricting, but most do not feel this way about Dutch subtitles. This confirms the fifth hypothesis.

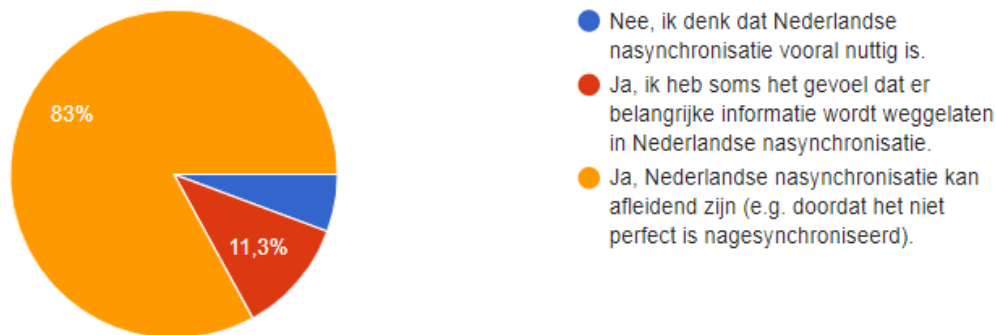


Figure 19. Experiencing Dutch dubs as restricting or not

4.9 Stigma surrounding Dutch dubs

Since the Netherlands is a subtitling country, Dutch dubs are not the preferred mode for the majority of Dutch viewers (figure 8). For some, this is because they strongly dislike Dutch dubs. For instance, eight participants in Geurts' study stated that they "hate dubs or that they find them irritating" (2015, p. 62). Since this is not an uncommon attitude, it could result into a negative stigma around Dutch dubs. Thus, the participants were asked whether they believed there to be a negative stigma surrounding Dutch dubs, and to elaborate on their answer. These full elaborations are included as appendix F to this thesis. The initial answers are illustrated in figure 20:

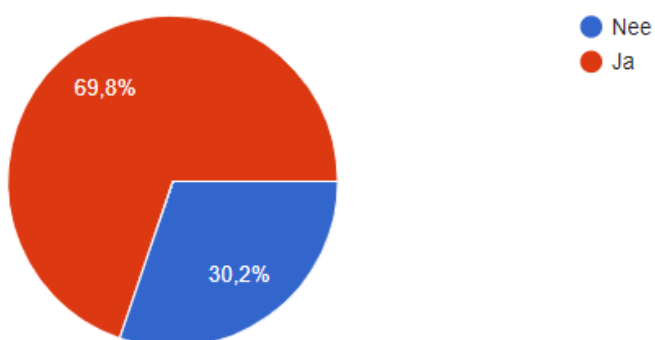


Figure 20. Stigma around Dutch dubs

Thirteen participants did not believe there was a negative stigma surrounding Dutch dubs. Out of this group, six participants elaborated that they think Dutch dubs are suitable for the few mediums where they are used. Five other participants stated that they do not think

there is a negative stigma regarding Dutch dubs since they have never heard anyone talk about it. Furthermore, four participants did not elaborate on their answer. One of these four participants stated that it “sounds stupid”. This would suggest that this participant meant to answer ‘yes’ to the stigma question, with the elaboration that Dutch dubs sound stupid. Another participant elaborated that they actually do believe there is a negative stigma surrounding dubs in general, but not Dutch dubs in particular, which is why they initially answered with ‘no’. Finally, one participant stated that they do not believe there is a negative stigma, but that Dutch dubs simply “do not function properly”.

Moreover, a majority of 37 participants did indicate that they believe there is a negative stigma surrounding Dutch dubs. While six participants gave incomplete or ambiguous elaborations, eight participants elaborated that they believe Dutch dubs are only for children, and therefore often seen as childish. One participant expressed that everyone is expected to outgrow Dutch dubs, and therefore believes there to be a negative stigma surrounding it.

Furthermore, six participants elaborated that they believe there is a negative stigma because they have heard people talk negatively about Dutch dubs. Out of these six, one participant specified that their parents always expressed to them that they found Dutch dubs horrible. Additionally, two participants stated that there is a belief that Dutch dubs are inferior to Dutch subtitles. One other participant mentioned the subtitles versus dubs debate, which they experienced to be highly present in the discussion of anime translation, and observed that subtitles appear to ‘win’ over dubs more and more frequently in these discussions. Finally, one participant expressed that Dutch dubs are seen as an insult to the viewers’ intelligence, and thus believes there to be a negative stigma surrounding them.

Additionally, five participants elaborated that they believed there to be a negative stigma because Dutch viewers are not used to Dutch dubs. One of these participants expressed that they do not believe there is a demand for Dutch subtitles, and another one stated that dubbing does not suit Dutch traditions. Furthermore, two participants expressed that Dutch dubs feel unnatural to them, and one described coming across Dutch dubs as weird. Not being accustomed to Dutch dubs is likely the root of this feeling of unnaturalness and/or weirdness, and might be the root for other negative beliefs surrounding Dutch dubs as well. For instance, three participants elaborated that they cannot take Dutch dubs seriously since they cause an unintentionally comedic effect, and three other participants believed Dutch dubs to be of poor quality. One of these three participants stated that Dutch dubs are often too exaggerated, while the other two participants mentioned poor lip-synchronization and an assumed lack of effort

to make Dutch dubs look realistic. A different participant noted that Dutch dubs are often experienced as distracting, which, again, is likely rooted in Dutch viewers not being accustomed to Dutch dubs. Notably, one other participant stated that, while Dutch viewers claim to prefer the original, they have never actually given Dutch dubs a fair chance. In a possible attempt to change this, *Nickelodeon* experimented with Dutch dubs for programs aimed at teenagers such as *iCarly* (2007-2012) and *Victorious* (2010-2013), as observed by this participant. Since *Nickelodeon* is a popular network, this decision could have led to a generation (at least partly) of Dutch teenagers who would have been more accustomed to Dutch dubs rather than subtitles. These teenagers would now be around the age of 20. Considering many of the participants in this study are in their early twenties, it could have been possible that some of them would view Dutch dubs more positively since they would have been slightly more accustomed to it. However, the participant who mentioned these *Nickelodeon* productions with Dutch dubs also indicated that they did not think these dubs were well-produced. The participant stated that “this caused me (and many of my peers) to automatically think negatively of dubbing”. Additionally, *Nickelodeon* would air the same programs with the English audio and Dutch subtitles at night for *TeenNick*. Hence, the viewers had the opportunity to compare the Dutch dubbed versions to the Dutch subtitled versions of these programs. This opportunity could have made it easier for viewers to notice any imperfections in the dubbed versions, since they also had access to the ‘original’. Thus, this could have resulted into a stronger preference for Dutch subtitles for some participants (figure 8).

Furthermore, two participants only linked the negative stigma to the way Dutch dubs sound. One of them said that Dutch dubs “sound so stupid”. As previously discussed (table 2), the same voice actors are often used for many different programs, making the audiovisual product less believable in its target language. Additionally, elements such as tone or hesitation might be altered in a way that does not perfectly match the pictures, possibly changing the viewer’s interpretation (Koolstra et al., 2002, p. 336). Take for instance the participant who believed Dutch dubs to be too exaggerated, this suggests that Dutch dubbing voices might frequently be too expressive and loud compared to the pictures.

Finally, two participants related the negative stigma to language. One of these participants expressed that there is a consensus that all Dutch people speak English nowadays, suggesting that there is therefore no need for Dutch dubs anymore. The other participant stated that they believe Dutch is being neglected as a language in general, and expressed that the treatment of Dutch in audiovisual media is similar to that of a dialect, implying that it is

hardly represented at all.

Considering these elaborations, it can be concluded that there is a lot of negativity surrounding Dutch dubs. However, whether this takes the shape of an actual negative stigma is unclear, since not all participants mentioned how they think Dutch dubs are viewed by a general Dutch audience. Although the majority of the individual answers suggests that this negative stigma is present, more research is needed in order to confirm this.

4.10 Advantages and disadvantages of Dutch subtitling and dubbing

In order to give the participants an opportunity to articulate any attitudes they may not have had the chance to express previously, the participants were asked to name an advantage and disadvantage for both Dutch dubbing and Dutch subtitling. All given answers will be included in appendix D and E, but only the most frequently mentioned elements will be included in this section. This is by no means an attempt to demonstrate what mode is ‘superior’, and it should be recognized that “both techniques have their own ontological status and satisfy different social needs” (Díaz Cintas, 1999, p. 37). Furthermore, it should be noted that some participants only gave an advantage or a disadvantage, and some participants did not fill in anything. The most frequently mentioned advantages are illustrated in table 5, and the disadvantages in table 6:

Advantages of Dutch subtitles	Advantages of Dutch dubs
Helps with language learning (16).	Accessible for a wider Dutch audience, including children (16).
Easy to follow (11).	No requirement to read, which is especially favorable for slow readers or those who are illiterate (16).
Accessible for people who do not speak the language of the original dialogue (6).	Easy to follow and understand (6).
The original remains intact (5).	

Table 5. Advantages of Dutch subtitles and dubs

Disadvantages of Dutch subtitles	Disadvantages of Dutch dubs
Often contain incorrect or strange translation choices (12).	Distracting (18).
Subtitles are a reduced version of the original dialogue (10).	Imperfect lip-synchronization (16).

Often fails to fully represent humor, expressions, slang, and other cultural elements from the original dialogue (10).	Limited number of voice actors who voice everything (6).
Can be difficult to follow or understand, mostly due to the subtitles disappearing too fast (7).	
Viewers are required to divide their attention between the subtitles and pictures, this can be experienced as distracting (5).	

Table 6. Disadvantages of Dutch subtitles and dubs

It is notable that a wider variety of disadvantages was mentioned for Dutch subtitles than Dutch dubs. While this might suggest that the participants think Dutch subtitles are ‘worse’ than Dutch dubs, it has already been established that this is not the case. An explanatory hypothesis for this phenomenon is that, while the participants are critical of the translation choices in Dutch subtitles (figure 15), there is still a general consensus that subtitles are ‘better’ than dubs. Because of this consensus, the disadvantages of subtitles are less likely to be frequently discussed, which results into more unique and individual answers rather than the repetition of common beliefs.

Moreover, since there is often a gap between what people claim to believe and what they do (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 4), the participants might not actually think that positively of Dutch subtitles, despite claiming they strongly prefer them over Dutch dubs. Living in a subtitling country such as the Netherlands often translates to growing up in a culture that rejects dubbing. Therefore, it does not seem unlikely that many participants “model their behaviour to what they believe others expect of them” by speaking negatively about Dutch dubbing (Valdez & Vandepitte, 2020, p. 4), while they simultaneously list more disadvantages for Dutch subtitling.

While these advantages and disadvantages do not directly relate to any hypothesis, they do illustrate that both modes can make audiovisual media more accessible to different audiences and are therefore not mutually exclusive no matter what the traditional mode of a country is. As expressed by Díaz Cintas, the dubbing versus subtitling debate “could be settled with a mere rephrasing: ‘Dubbing and subtitling: end of the dilemma’” (1999, p. 38). The next chapter will illustrate how this relates to the overarching research question.

5 Conclusion

The research question of this thesis was: ‘How are Dutch subtitling and dubbing perceived by a mixed Dutch audience?’. It should be taken into consideration that the participants consisted largely of (former) students who identify as female and have a high English proficiency level. Hence, the results are not representative of a mixed Dutch audience. This is most likely related to the fact that the questionnaire was only distributed through WhatsApp groups. While it was encouraged to distribute the questionnaire further in these groups, it still mostly reached female students. This demonstrates that WhatsApp is not the most favorable method to distribute a questionnaire when the aim is to reach a mixed audience, and is thus not recommended for future research. A better alternative would be to distribute a questionnaire through academic forums or social media platforms that reach a wider audience.

The answer to the research question consists of different layers relating to the six hypotheses. Before considering these conclusions, it should once again be noted that these are not representative of all Dutch viewers, but specifically relate to the 53 participants of this study. Firstly, it became apparent that all except one participant preferred Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs. This confirms the first hypothesis: ‘The participants prefer Dutch subtitles over Dutch dubs, considering dubs generally have a more negative reputation’. The main elaborations included: a sense of wanting to maintain the ‘original’, a dissatisfaction with lip-synchronization and voice casting, and being accustomed to Dutch subtitles.

Secondly, it was established that 66% of the participants preferred English subtitles over Dutch subtitles. However, the second hypothesis, ‘the participants that believe themselves to be proficient in English, or with a higher education, prefer watching English audiovisual media with English subtitles, avoiding Dutch subtitles and dubs altogether’, could not be confirmed or rejected. This is due to the fact that the number of participants with a high English proficiency was disproportionate compared to the number of participants who were not proficient in English. Thus, further research is required regarding this hypothesis.

Thirdly, 88.7% of the participants indicated that children are the main target audience for Dutch dubs. Similarly, 83% chose children’s programs as the most suitable genre for Dutch dubs. This confirms the third hypothesis, which predicted that the participants would view children as the main target audience for Dutch dubs.

Fourthly, 75.47% of the participants indicated that they frequently disagree with the translation choices in Dutch subtitles. Out of this group, only 19 participants stated that they

experience this as distracting, whereas 21 did not find it distracting. Nonetheless, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed.

Fifthly, the fifth hypothesis predicted that, despite the constraints inherent to subtitling, the participants would not experience Dutch subtitles as restricting to their viewing experience. The results illustrate that 30 participants did not experience Dutch subtitles as restricting, whereas 23 participants did. Out of the participants who indicated that they do find Dutch subtitles restricting, 14 believed that important information is frequently omitted in Dutch subtitles, and nine expressed that Dutch subtitles can be distracting. However, the majority indicated they do not think Dutch subtitles are restricting, confirming the fifth hypothesis.

Sixthly, the sixth hypothesis: ‘the participants do not desire for more audiovisual media to be available with Dutch dubs’ was also confirmed with a majority of 88.7%. Additionally, 49.1% of the participants stated they do not desire for more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch subtitles either.

Overall, the quality of Dutch subtitles and dubs were rated similarly (table 4) and, despite the participants’ overwhelming preference for subtitles, the participants also listed slightly more disadvantages for this mode (table 5&6). However, more advantages were listed as well. Still, these listings demonstrate the awareness of most participants that there is no ‘superior’ mode regardless of their personal preferences.

Although most of the hypotheses were confirmed, these results are based on a small sample of 53 filled out questionnaires and should therefore not be considered as representative of all Dutch viewers of audiovisual media. Furthermore, this small sample did not include children or people above the age of 67. Additionally, no participants who spoke a different variety of Dutch, such as Flemish or Afrikaans, participated in this research. Moreover, nearly all participants were proficient in English, likely influencing their attitudes towards both modes. Finally, no interviews were carried out for this research. This may have been unfavorable for the results since not all participants chose to elaborate on their answers, or did so in an ambiguous manner, which could have been clarified through in-person interviews.

Hence, for future research, it would be valuable to include participants of a wider age range, more participants who are not proficient in English, and participants who speak different varieties of Dutch. This could be achieved by distributing the questionnaire via a variety of public social media or academic platforms. Furthermore, the used methodology could be improved by carrying out interviews with the participants. Additionally, considering this study focused on general attitudes, it would also be relevant to study viewers’ attitudes

towards Dutch subtitles and dubs in specific works of audiovisual media. Such a study could also help translators gain insight on the viewers' preferred translation strategies for certain platforms or genres. Finally, research on the extent to which Dutch people like their native language compared to other languages could prove to be valuable as well. Geurts' research suggests that many Dutch people do not think Dutch is a beautiful language (2015, p. 51). Although a specific question regarding this was not included in the questionnaire for this thesis, when considering the answers to, for instance, question 8 where the Dutch participants had to choose between English or Dutch subtitles, the majority opted for English subtitles. While only one participant elaborated on this question stating that they like the English language more than the Dutch language, this could be true for other participants as well.

Although the participants were significantly more negative towards Dutch dubs, tables 5 and 6 illustrate that the participants can still recognize that there is no superior mode since both modes come with their own unique advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, despite all the negative attitudes towards Dutch dubs and the possible negative stigma surrounding it, this does not eliminate a future for Dutch dubbing. As shown in figure 17, six participants did express an interest in more audiovisual media to become available with Dutch dubs. Other Dutch viewers might share this curiosity, but more data needs to be gathered in order to confirm this. If more Dutch viewers do express a desire for an increase in Dutch dubs, this could present an opportunity for the Dutch dubbing industry to branch out towards adult audiences as well. The attitudes towards Dutch dubs that have been expressed in this study suggest that there is much room for the Dutch dubbing industry to improve and expand. In order for this to happen, more research is required on attitudes towards Dutch dubbing. But even before that, in order to be able to collect valid data on the attitudes of Dutch adults towards Dutch dubs, there should be a more balanced distribution of Dutch subtitles and dubs in audiovisual media for adult audiences. Once Dutch dubs are being created for adult audiences, it would also be possible to study the preferred translation techniques in Dutch dubs for different genres and platforms. The results of such research would allow for the Dutch dubbing industry to cater more towards the demands and needs of a wider Dutch audience. This could result into more positive attitudes towards Dutch dubs and a higher demand for Dutch dubs, further developing the Dutch dubbing industry. As previously discussed, Poland and China Mainland both experienced a dip and resurgence of dubbing in their own respective countries (Bogucki, 2004; Leszczyńska & Szarkowska, 2018; Tang, 2014). In the case of Poland, dubbing even became the preferred mode of the majority (Bogucki, 2004, p. 71). Thus, the results of this thesis are by no means conclusive and the

attitudes of Dutch viewers are likely to change over time. These attitude changes largely depend on the amount of research that will be done on attitudes towards both Dutch dubbing and subtitling in the future, since implementing the results of such research will help the Dutch subtitling and dubbing industry develop and cater towards Dutch viewers.

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