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Subtitling Slam Poetry for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences

An Account of Specific Challenges and Solutions

1. Introduction

Article 27 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is devoted to everyone's right to access, participate in and enjoy art and any activity framed in the cultural life of their community. Accessibility is a powerful tool to grant this right for persons who cannot hear. The ideal way to approach accessibility when it comes to designing a new cultural event or product is to consider it from its conception, in the design phase [Bestard-Bou 2019; Greco 2019; Orero 2020]. This is, for instance, the approach adopted in accessible filmmaking [Romero-Fresco 2019], an alternative to traditional film production which encourages the integration

of translation and accessibility in the filmmaking process and fosters the hiring of persons with disabilities as media accessibility consultants at early stages of the process. Likewise, some music artists take accessibility into account by incorporating accessibility measures in their performances as part of the live show. Tamayo [2021] has explored such an artistic integration thoroughly by focusing on access services for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing audiences. To her many examples, let us add the case of El Pot Petit, a children's music group in Catalonia whose live performances include the presence of a Catalan Sign Language interpreter who is made as visible as the group leads (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Members of the music group El Pot Petit performing live, with a Catalan Sign Language interpreter on the right-hand side, as visible as the lead singers.

Source: El Pot Petit, YouTube.

This is, however, not always the case: it is common for new forms of artistic creation to arise with no prior consideration of the accessibility measures needed for them to be enjoyable by any person, regardless of their sensorial, physical, or technical abilities [Arias-Badia, Bestard-Bou *et al.*, forthcoming]. In these cases, access solutions are typically reactive, as in most products or services, beyond cultural activities. Measures are implemented once the product or service has been made available (at an *ex-post* stage) and need to be redefined to be improved over time, which tends to result in lower quality access solutions [Greco 2018: 213].

In this context, the present paper explores means to render a relatively new form of artistic creation and exhibition, i.e., slam poetry competitions, accessible for wider audiences. In these competitions, different poets perform live in front of an audience, from among which a panel of judges is randomly selected. This kind of competition has taken off in the past few years, with live events gathering an increasing number of attendees. Thus, in the public competition held monthly at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCCB), on which we focus in this paper, the audience amounts to 500-600 attendees at each event [Phillips 2018].

After an introduction to this underexplored text type from the point of view of audiovisual translation (AVT), this paper focuses on the challenges entailed in making slam poetry accessible for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing by means of intralingual subtitles added to pre-recorded sessions. The analysis is based on the authors' direct experience in collaboration with the non-profit organization Associació RED927 Literatura Oral responsible for the main slam poetry event in Barcelona.

2. Slam Poetry

As defined in the Introduction, slam poetry is a competitive performance in which poets, the main participants, deliver their own, short pieces (lasting a maximum of three minutes) and are judged by randomly chosen audience members [Burrows 2001]. Typically, this jury is made up of five people, who have to score the poems and performances of the poets, more commonly known as *slammers*, on a scale of 0 to 10.

The slam poetry format "is largely influenced by free verse, the musical style of Beat poets like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg" [Power Poetry s.d.], and its topics are varied, although poems dealing with political issues stand out. In his definition of slam poetry, Herzog [2011: 9] explains that this format pursues a mixture of emotions in the audience and performances are intended to seem spontaneous:

El Poetry Slam es poesía en escena. No es cabaret, ni rap, no es performance ni narración ni declamación. Es un poco de todo esto. Expresa espontaneidad, es sonrisa, tristeza, sorpresa, carcajada, la voluntad de sentir la vida entera en unos versos, unas palabras, unos gestos.

Slam poetry is stage poetry and is not cabaret, rap, performance, narration, or declamation. It is a little bit of all this. It is spontaneity, smiling,

sadness, surprise, guffaw and the will to feel the whole life in a few lines, words and gestures (Translated by the authors).

Slam poetry originated in Chicago in 1984 by the hand of the local poet and construction worker Marc Smith. However, it was only on July 25, 1986 that this spoken-poetry competition became an established event [Burrows 2001]. Since then, it has extended worldwide and become a popular and significant event for contemporary poetry, both nationally and internationally. According to Donat [2014], it is run by public organizations in many countries such as Israel, Ukraine, Nepal, South Korea, Morocco, Japan, India, Mexico, and Spain.

In Spain, the event is reportedly held in 21 cities [Phillips 2018], 18 of which belong to the cultural association Poetry Slam España, which organizes the National Championship of Poetry Slam Spain [Cullell 2018: 240]. The cities include Barcelona, Bilbao, Hospitalet, Madrid, Toledo, or Valencia.

The main aims of poetry slam competitions are making poetry more visible and motivating anyone interested in poetry to take their poems to stage in a dynamic and creative manner. Furthermore, this kind of event does not only promote the dissemination of poetry, creativity, culture and acting, but also interactivity and direct contact between the general public and the artists.

3. Slam Poetry Made (More) Accessible: An Overview of Current Practices in Live Performances

In this paper, following previous accounts [e.g., Matamala 2019: 41], we understand accessibility and audiovisual translation as overlapping elements, and adopt a broad definition of accessibility encompassing any form of translation that enables access to content to any person. Interestingly, the “accessibility” of poems performed at slams has been claimed to be one of the main features of this kind of text. As Ailes [2016: para. 4] puts it: “Successful poems at slams tend to actively work to engage the audience through energetic performance and through ensuring the poem is immediately accessible to audience members.” In keeping with this idea, Baker [2020: para. 7] notes:

I think in a live context you can immediately get what the performer’s trying to say and it’s kind of just an added level of accessibility there, because it’s in

front of you, it's the person who's written it saying it, and it gives it so much more context.

This idea of accessibility, therefore, is linked to the fact that the message of the performed poems is generally straightforward. However, as we will show in this section, the changes towards making such a message accessible for those who do not understand the language spoken in the performance or cannot access it through the aural channel are still scarce.

The fact that slam poetry events are held worldwide paves the way for language diversity in the texts produced by slammers. Such a language diversity can be seen both at local competitions, i.e., poets performing in Barcelona's competition may opt for any language, and at competitions held at a global level, such as the Slam World Cup, in which poets representing different countries perform by using either their native language or a foreign one.

Frequently, *ad hoc* solutions are provided to facilitate access to poems delivered in languages other than the audience's main language, as well as to make international competitions accessible to audiences from different countries. Such solutions typically involve the screening of the translated text, approximately divided into stanzas, on a static slide at the back of the stage. In Figure 2, we present an example in which English was used as a *lingua franca* in the translations of poems delivered at an international competition. Figure 3 portrays the methodology adopted at the last World Cup held with public attendance (in 2019): in this case, stanzas were displayed simultaneously in more than one language, i.e., an intralingual translation of the poem was provided, and poems were translated into French and into English, the official languages of the event. The three translations were presented at the same time using the mentioned methodology – static slides shown at the back of the stage.



Figure 2. Live poetry slam performance at the CCCB in Barcelona (Kosmopolis 15. Alice in Wonderslam: Gran Slam Barcelona). Source: CCCB.org.

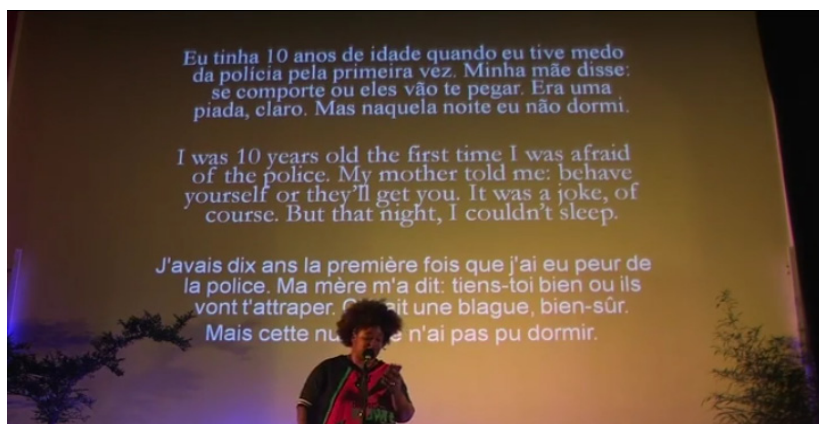


Figure 3. Live poetry slam performance at the World Cup 2019 in Paris. Source: Grand Poetry Slam International, YouTube.

From an accessibility point of view, it is worth highlighting a positive aspect of the approach adopted in events like those shown in Figures 2 and 3: in both cases, the presentations use contrasted colors in their design (black and white). This is in accordance with the recommendations made for accessible presentations, as reported by Greco [2017].

Despite the potential accessibility advantages of online competitions, the way translation is addressed at these events is usually very similar, as can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 from the 2020 Slam World Cup. The images show slammers performing via webcam and slides providing their texts in an intralingual translation, as well as in the two official languages of the World Cup: English and French.

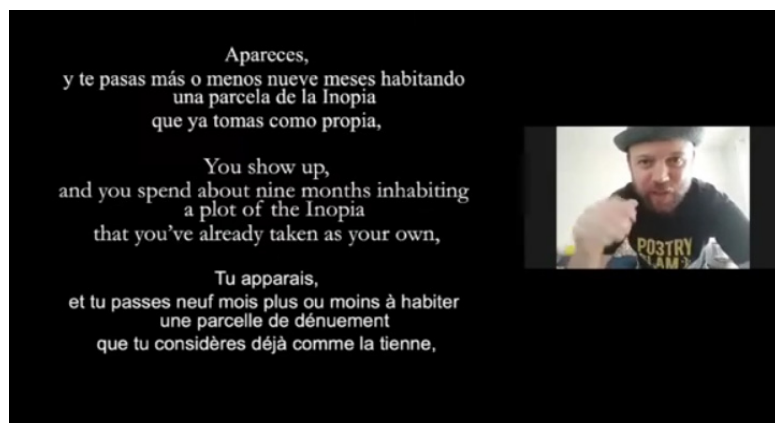


Figure 4. Live, virtual performance of a slammer reciting in Spanish at the World Cup 2020. Source: Grand Poetry Slam International, YouTube.

As has been explained, slam poetry advocates the power of the spoken word, and that involves the idea of immediacy. Therefore, it is safe to say that the approach adopted to date in the translation of slam poetry fails to meet the immediacy principle that constitutes the very essence of slam poetry: the texts displayed on slides cannot be rapidly edited if a poet makes any kind of improvisation on a line. They are also difficult to read, since the speech rates vary greatly not only among poets, but also within the same poem: this may be caused because slammers need to stick to a limited amount of time, and they may accelerate towards the end of the piece, or simply because the change in reciting speed is intended to have an artistic effect (e.g., showing anxiety or showing calmness). Semi-live subtitling, in which subtitles are created before a performance without fixed timecodes, to adapt to the staging [Díaz Cintas and Remael 2021: 22] seems a suitable translation solution for future slam competitions. Although this translation



Figure 5. Live, virtual performance of a slammer reciting in Hebrew at the World Cup 2020. Source: Grand Poetry Slam International, YouTube.

modality would also involve a medium conversion (from spoken to written), it would enable edits and the integration of spontaneous deviations from the text prepared by the poets.

In live performances, exceptions to the presented accessibility measures are rare. Generally, they are the result of artists adopting a proactive attitude towards making their texts more accessible while preserving the immediate nature of their poetic productions. Figure 6 provides an example in which slammer Isa García collaborated with another slammer, Laura Arch, who is proficient in Catalan Sign Language, to render her text accessible for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing by means of a live interpretation which had been previously rehearsed.

Finally, it is worth noting that some slammers report having had their works translated into different languages in printed format [González Sierra 2020]. This is relevant in terms of the increasing internationalization of slam poetry, but, again, fails to respond to the need of translation modalities that account for the immediacy of this form of art in live performances. Beyond live competitions and edited books, slam poetry is translated in recorded format. Increasingly, organizations devoted to this form of art, and even individual creators, share their videos on streaming platforms, such as YouTube. This is where the subtitling of slam poetry comes into



Figure 6. Live poetry slam performance with Catalan Sign Language interpretation.
Source: Poetry Slam Barcelona, YouTube.

play. In the following sections of this paper, we will be focusing on this means of making slam accessible.

4. Methodology

This article includes the results obtained in the study of an aligned monolingual corpus compiled by Macrea [2020]. The corpus includes the transcript and the intralingual subtitles for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) of four slam poetry performances held at Poetry Slam Barcelona: *Historia ibérica espídica*¹ [*History of Spain in 3 min*] by Dani Orviz (published on 21 January 2019; 3:33 min.), *Carta a una misma a los 15 años*² [*Letter to my 15-year-old self*] by Adriana Bertrán (published on 2 May 2016; 3:41 min.), *Siete millones*³ [*Seven millions*] by Dante Alarido (published on 22 January 2013; 3:58.), and *Nemini parco-Omnia moriar*⁴ by Marçal Font (published on 26 March 2012; 3:33 min.). The subtitles of the

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_v1EzugEGck&t=13s>, visited 9 March 2022.

² <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMLZETalmYg&t=35s>>, visited 9 March 2022.

³ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iJzEDp8QwE&t=3s>>, visited 9 March 2022.

⁴ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gq8nv96lwkU&t=25s>>, visited 9 March 2022.

poems were created by Claudia Ioana Macrea during her internship at the Associació Red927 Literatura Oral. The corpus contains a total of 3,821 words: 2,048 words belong to the source text (ST) and 1,773 words make up the target text (TT), which correspond to 244 subtitles. This information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Corpus of Four Slam Poetry Performances

Poem	Author	Date of performance	Duration
<i>Historia ibérica espídica</i>	Dani Orviz [DO]	21/01/2019	3:33 min
<i>Carta a una misma a los 15 años</i>	Adriana Bertrán [AB]	02/05/2016	3:41 min
<i>Siete millones</i>	Dante Alarido [DA]	22/01/2013	3:58 min
<i>Nemini parco-Omnia moriar</i>	Marçal Font [MF]	26/03/2012	3:33 min

This small corpus was compiled with the purpose of conducting an introductory study to describe specific subtitling challenges of slam poetry and effective strategies to address the translation of this text type.

The subtitles included in the corpus follow the Spanish standard UNE 153010 [2012] for the creation of subtitles for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing audiences. Consequently, the criteria set out was a maximum of 37 characters per line, a maximum of 15 characters per second (cps), a minimum pause of 160 milliseconds between subtitles and a minimum duration of 1 second and a maximum of 7 seconds per each subtitle. Moreover, to identify the speakers, speaker labels had to be used, as YouTube has some format limitations and cannot reproduce the color tags when SRT format is used.

The research reported hereby adopts a descriptive approach to the corpus and was divided into two phases. The first task consisted in analyzing the decisions taken to create the subtitles following the SDH instructions and classifying them. The study started with the manual alignment of the corpus on an Excel spreadsheet and the identification of those subtitles that differed from a literal transcript of the ST, followed by the identification of the final solutions and the strategy used (Figure 8) – following Zabalbeascoa's [2000] terminological proposal, we will use both the terms

strategy and *solution* in this paper, since we have acted both as subtitlers and researchers of this audiovisual material.

	A	B	C	D
1	"Historia ibérica espídica" ("History of Spain in 3 min")			
2	SUBTITLE	SOURCE TEXT	SOLUTION (SDH)	STRATEGY
3	1	¡Historia ibérica en modo espídico! ¡Historia de España en tres minutos!	Historia ibérica en modo espídico. / Historia de España en 3 min.	Condensación: uso de cifras y símbolo
4	2	En el principio de la gran crónica	Al principio de la crónica	Condensación: uso de locución adverbial más corta. Omisión: se elimina el adjetivo «gran».
5	3	el gran Dios bíblico con pases mágicos crea un bucólico planeta esférico.	Dios, con pases mágicos, / crea un bucólico planeta esférico	Omisión: se prescinde de los adjetivos «gran» y «bíblico».
6	4	Y donde el Atlántico toca el Cantábrico	y donde Atlántico toca Cantábrico	Omisión: se eliminan los artículos determinados.
7	5	crea una tierra peninsulítica de hombres virilicos y hembras magníficas.	una tierra de hombres virilicos / y hembras magníficas.	Condensación: se elude el verbo repetido. Omisión: se elimina el adjetivo «peninsulítica».
8	6	Un edén mítico digno de cántico, lejos del ártico, cerca del trópico.	Un edén de cántico, / lejos del ártico, cerca del trópico.	Omisión: se eliminan los adjetivos «mítico» y «digno».
		Pasa el jurásico, pasa el triásico, mientras en	Pasa el Jurásico, el Triásico, / mientras en plazas taurínicas	Condensación: se evita el uso del verbo duplicado.

Figure 8. Sample of corpus alignment

The second phase consisted in analyzing the reading speed of the subtitles in cps (characters per second) and wpm (words per minutes). To do so, we ran the Word macro created by Martí Ferriol [2012] to measure the reading speed of subtitles. The output provided us with the following information: the subtitles, their identification number, their duration, their number of characters, and their reading speed in cps and wpm (Figure 9).

According to Roales [2017: 35-36], a 12-cps reading speed allows an average viewer to read quite comfortably and enjoy the movie at the same time. Furthermore, if we apply the six-seconds rule, this reading speed corresponds to a maximum of 74 characters (37 characters per line) and a range of 140-150 wpm, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael [2021: 109]. As the SDH audience is a very heterogeneous one, and not all people have the same reading skills [Zárate 2021: 21-38], a reading speed of 12 cps can also ensure comfortable reading for all groups of SDH audiences. With these data in mind, we established 12 cps as the optimal

Subtitle Number	Subtitle Text and Time (hh:mm:ss:ff)	Duration (secs)	Characters	Words	CPS	WPM
1	00:00:00:20 00:00:03:04 (Música electrónica)	2,344	20	2	9	51
2	00:00:30:18 00:00:32:22 Ahora que te doblo la edad	2,164	26	6	12	166
3	00:00:33:09 00:00:36:20 y triplico el amor hacia ti misma,	3,451	34	7	10	122
4	00:00:37:10 00:00:40:16 que me he sentado a tomar té / tantas tardes	3,246	41	9	13	166
5	00:00:41:00	2,533	33	7	13	166

Figure 9. Sample of the results obtained with the Word macro.

reading speed for this analysis. It is worth noting, however, that the standard UNE 153010 [2012] mentions that a maximum of 15 cps may be used to achieve more literal subtitles.

5. Specific Translation Challenges

According to Toda [2005], literary translation, and poetry translation in particular, is similar to audiovisual translation (AVT) since professionals make use of translation techniques typical of AVT to address its specific challenges connected to rhyme, rhythm, verse length, strophe type and number of syllables per line. In poetry subtitling, these restrictions increase as subtitling also has its own limitations – time and space constraints [Chessa 2018: 66]. What follows is a summary of specific challenges encountered in the process of subtitling the poems from our corpus, illustrated with examples.

5.1. *Rhythm and Rhyme*

To our mind, the translation of performed poetry can benefit from the lessons learnt in song translation. As Low [2005] proposed in connection to the latter, singability [here, perhaps, *recitability* or *performability*], rhyme, rhythm, and naturalness are aspects linked to music and performance, and song or performed poetry translation call for a balance between dealing with them and conveying the sense(s) of the ST. In song subtitling, it is desirable to pave the way for viewers to notice that what they are reading on screen and what is audible is rhythmic [Chessa 2018].

The first poem in our corpus, *Historia ibérica espídica* by Dani Orviz, clearly illustrates the translation challenges that performed poetry may entail. The poem has a sharp consonant rhyme created by words stressed on the third-to-last syllable. This kind of words significantly increase the number of characters per subtitle line and the reading speed. See the lines reproduced in (1), which include four stressed on the third-to-last syllable words (*trágicas*/'tragic', *cíclicos*/'cyclical', *conservadóricos*/'conservatives,' and *progresísticos*/'progressives'). In fact, these two last words are invented in Spanish following common word formation patterns in order to maintain this kind of rhyme and the rhythm throughout the poem – the normative words for them being *conservadores* and *progresistas*, which are not stressed on the third-to-last syllable.

- (1) [DO] ST: Semanas trágicas y cambios cíclicos, / conservadóricos
y progresísticos. [00:01:36,473 00:01:40,999]
BT1: Tragic weeks and cyclical changes, / conservatives and
progressives.
TT: Semanas trágicas, cambios cíclicos, / conservadóricos,
progresísticos.
BT2: Tragic weeks, cyclical changes, / conservatives,
progressives.

5.2. *Lexical Creativity*

As noted by Hanks [2013: 226], “exploiting the norms of language in unusual ways can be an effective and persuasive way of getting the attention, interest, confidence, or consent of an audience.” In the context of slam poetry, where slammers do need to convince the panel that their piece is the best one to win the competition, it is no surprise that rhetorical tropes involving lexical creativity are found in poems. As noted above, Orviz

uses made-up word such as *conservadórico* or *progresístico* to convey his poetic message by following a marked structure. A further example of lexical creativity from our corpus can be found in (2), in which an anomalous collocation in Spanish (*descomunadamente escrito*/'enormously written') modifies the noun *rumbo*/'course.'

- (2) [DA] ST: fe en el rumbo descomunadamente escrito / en el vientre de una madre, [00:03:07,472 00:03:10,607]
 BT1: faith in the course enormously written / in a mother's womb,
 TT: fe en el rumbo enorme / del vientre de una madre,
 BT2: faith in the enormous course / of a mother's womb,

It is worth noting that creative lexical units and combinatorics may pose a specific reading challenge for SDH users. Indeed, easy-to-understand language guidelines tend to recommend writers to avoid unusual words to facilitate reading comprehension [IFLA 2010: 11].

5.3. Syntactic Structure

Slammers also employ syntactic rhetorical devices to improve the rhythm, increase sentiment, interest and beauty, and to make emphasis. Some of the marked syntactic structures that can be found in our corpus include parallelism, anaphora, and polysyndeton. Parallelism is a literary device that consists of repeating syntactical similarities. It can influence the grammatical structure of sentences but also the meaning of the thought and ideas presented. As can be seen in example (3), there's a repetition in the syntactical structure used.

- (3) [DO] ST: ¡Historia ibérica en modo espídico! / ¡Historia de España en tres minutos! [00:00:03,428 00:00:07,793]
 BT1: Iberian history in a speedy way! / History of Spain in three minutes!
 TT: Historia ibérica en modo espídico. / Historia de España en 3 min.
 BT2: Iberian history in a speedy way. / History of Spain in 3 min.

Anaphora is a literary device that involves repeating a word or sequence of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. We find an instance of anaphora in (3) above, as the word *historia*/'history' is

repeated at the beginning of both verses. Example (4) also shows a repetition of the group of words *la inercia del* ‘the inertia of’ at the beginning of each verse.

- (4) [MF] ST: La inercia del gris pudo contigo. La inercia del vértigo. La inercia del miedo. [00:00:58,314 00:01:02,449] La inercia del pan para hoy y el pan también para mañana, [00:01:02,609 00:01:05,333]
 BT1: The inertia of greyness overpowered you. The inertia of vertigo. The inertia of fear. The inertia of the bread for today and also the bread for tomorrow,
 TT: La inercia del gris te pudo. / La inercia del vértigo, del miedo. / La del pan para hoy / y el pan para mañana,
 BT2: The inertia of greyness overpowered you. The inertia of vertigo, of fear. / The one of today’s bread / and the bread for tomorrow,

Polysyndeton is a literary device that uses multiple repetitions of the same coordinating conjunction (the word ‘and’ is the most common) to achieve an artistic effect, as used in (5).

- (5) [AB] ST: se acuestan y se levantan, / se acuestan y se levantan, y en medio charlan de fútbol [00:01:52,320 00:01:55,447]
 BT1: go to bed and get up / go to bed and get up, and in between talk about football
 TT: se acuestan y se levantan, / y charlan de fútbol.
 BT2: go to bed and get up, / and talk about football.

5.4. Immediacy and Speech Rates

Performing factors connected to the limited time slammers have to recite their poems, such as slammer’s speech rates, immediacy, short pauses in speech, improvisation and emotionality, also raise constraints and subtitling difficulty. Macrea’s [2020] analysis confirmed that the speech rates of slammers are above the speech rates described in mainstream audiovisual products such as television series. While a series like *The Mentalist* shows a speech rate of 129 wpm [Arias-Badia 2020: 135], the slammers’ rates range from 132.6 wpm (Poem 2) to 173.80 wpm (Poem 3) and are, for the most part, above 150 wpm (see Chart 1).

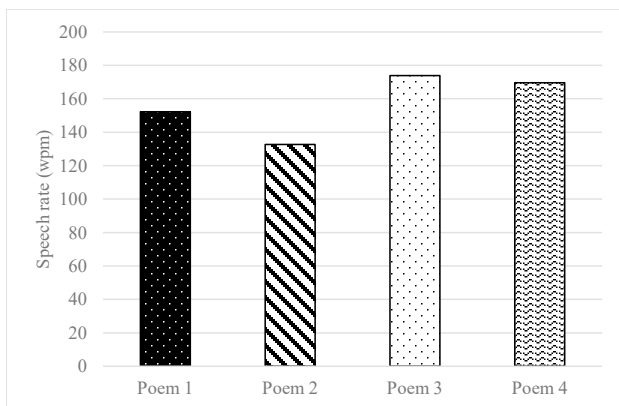


Chart 1. Speech rates of each poem (wpm)

These speech rates call for the implementation of condensation and reduction strategies in subtitling. The next section focuses on these translation strategies.

6. Translation Strategies: Results and Discussion

In the proposed translation, the subtitles of all performances reach the maximum reading speed limit (15 cps) recommended by the standard UNE 153010 [2012] in most subtitles (see Chart 2). For instance, the reading speed limit is reached in 31 of 56 subtitles from the first poem, 32 of 70 subtitles from the third one and 29 of 62 subtitles from the fourth one.

However, the second poem contains fewer subtitles with the maximum reading speed accepted than the others, and the highest number of subtitles with 12 cps, which is considered ideal for a comfortable reading speed [Díaz Cintas and Remael 2014; Roales 2017].

Considering this data, we can affirm that the first (50 of 56 subtitles), third (61 of 70 subtitles) and fourth (50 of 62 subtitles) poems have more subtitles with a reading speed over 12 cps.

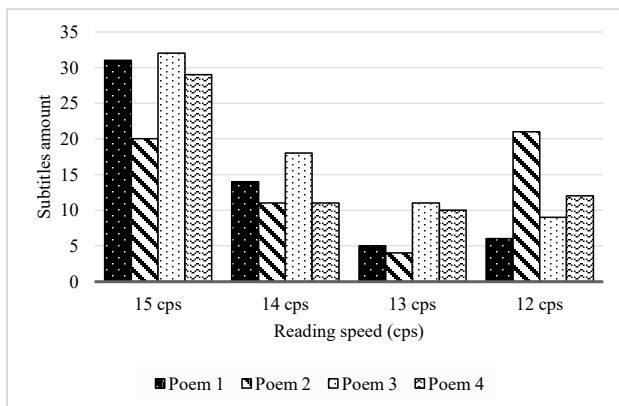


Chart 2. Reading speed (cps)

On the other hand, if we compare the reading speed measured in words per minute (see Chart 3), the highest reading speed reached by three of the poems is over 200 wpm. Moreover, the second poem reaches a reading speed of up to 226 wpm, much higher than the interval 140-150 wpm (12 cps) proposed by Díaz Cintas and Remael [2014] and Roales [2017]. If we consider mean reading speeds, only poem 3 is above this interval (Chart 4).

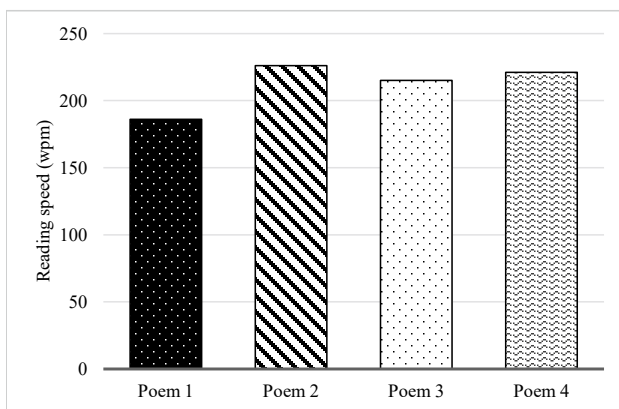


Chart 3. Highest reading speed (wpm)

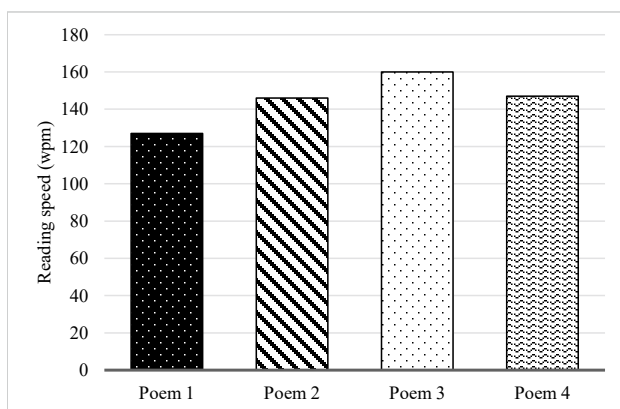


Chart 4. Mean reading speed (wpm)

To meet adequate SDH reading speed standards and provide solutions to the text challenges, two types of reduction, described by Díaz Cintas and Remael [2014: 145] and Roales [2017: 62], were employed: partial reduction (condensation of the ST) and total reduction (deletion or omission of lexical items from the ST). After analyzing the strategies applied in each poem and their results, they were classified into three main groups: condensation, omission, or a combination of both because, in some cases, both types of ST reduction were used.

As shown in Chart 5, the poem that required most changes was Poem 1, since reduction strategies were employed in 44 out of 56 subtitles (78.57%), and the one that needed least reduction was the second one, *Carta a una misma a los 15 años* by Adriana Bertrán, in which these strategies were employed in 20 subtitles out of 56 (35.71%).

As shown in Chart 6, the combined use of both reduction strategies in Poem 1 (45.45%) stands out, whereas in the other three condensation prevails. The omission strategy also prevails in the first poem (36.36%). Although it is well known that this strategy must be carefully employed in order not to delete relevant information for message comprehension, it was deemed necessary to adopt it to comply with reading speed standards. So, the high percentage of changes and the lack of literality in the translation of this poem are due to the poet's speech rate, the short pause between verses and the increase in the number of characters because of the stressed on the third-to-last syllable words, as illustrated in Section 5.

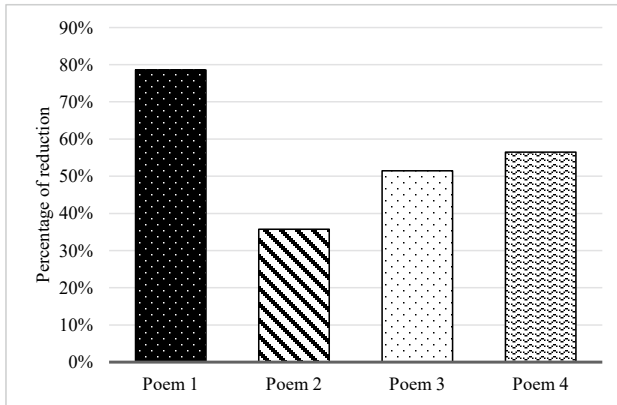


Chart 5. Percentage of reduction in each poem

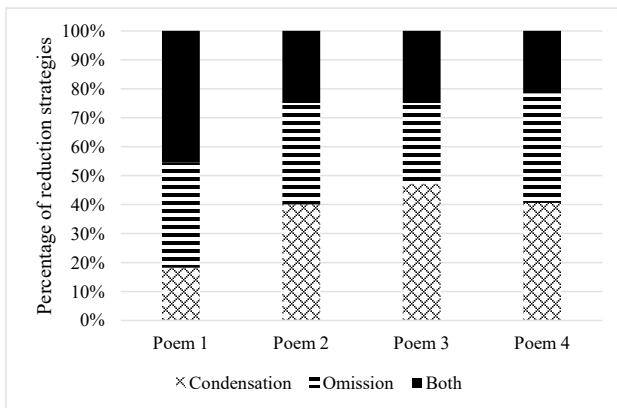


Chart 6. Occurrence of condensation and omission in the subtitles

In contrast, Poem 2 did not require too many changes and therefore could preserve most of its literality. In this poem, condensation was used in eight subtitles (40%), omission in seven (35%) and both strategies were used in five subtitles (25%). Regarding the other two poems, we can point out that condensation was employed in most of their reduced subtitles (47.23% and 40.54%), followed by omission (27.77% and 37.84%) and the combination of both types of reduction (25% and 21.62%) respectively.

As shown in Chart 7, the dominant strategy in the corpus is condensation, as it is applied in 48 subtitles (35%), while omission is used in 47 subtitles (34%) and the combination of both strategies is used in 42 subtitles (31%). Therefore, we can confirm that this poetry format calls for a balanced use of both strategies.

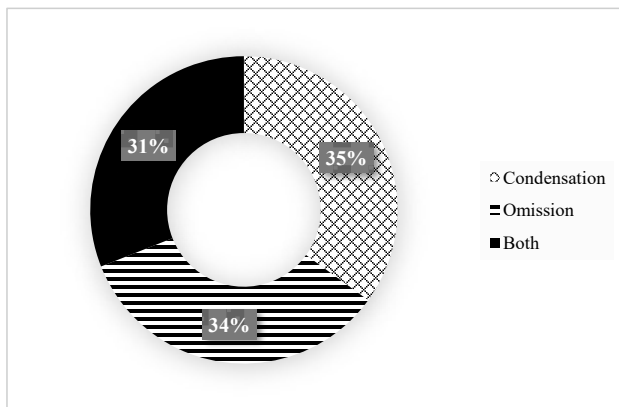


Chart 7. Types of solutions or strategies

Finally, it must be noted that some of the changes implemented affected literary style. In the first poem, for example, the sharp rhyme in the verses was not preserved in the subtitles. Moreover, some new stylistic devices were introduced in the TT. For instance, as can be seen in (6), the polysyndeton turns into asyndeton as the conjunction *y*/‘and’ is deleted. In (7), the elements of an enumeration become non-definite by omitting the article in Spanish.

- (6) [DO] ST: *Semanas trágicas y cambios cíclicos, / conservadóricos y progresísticos.* [00:01:36,473 00:01:40,999]
 BT1: *Tragic weeks and cyclical changes, / conservatives and progressives.*
 TT: *Semanas trágicas, cambios cíclicos, / conservadóricos, progresísticos.*
 BT2: *Tragic weeks, cyclical changes, / conservatives, progressives.*

- (7) [DO] ST: los hemofílicos, los sifilíticos / los endogámicos y los mongólicos. [00:01:25,620 00:01:29,049]
 BT1: hemophiliacs, syphilitics, / inbreds, mongoloids.
 TT: hemofílicos, sifilíticos, / endogámicos y mongólicos.
 BT2: hemophiliacs, syphilitics, / inbreds, mongoloids.

7. Conclusions

The previous sections have illustrated the main challenges entailed in subtitling slam poetry for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing by means of a small corpus analysis, as well as relevant strategies to tackle such challenges. Namely, the specific challenges include speech rates, the preservation of the poems' rhythm and rhyme, the use of lexical and syntactic rhetorical devices (hyperboles, parallelisms, anaphora, polysyndetons), immediacy and ad-libbing.

As regards translation strategies, it is worth noting that omission tends to be preferred over paraphrase in SDH, under the assumption that users familiar with lip reading may find it difficult to follow spoken utterances in subtitling if major linguistic shifts are implemented in phrasing. However, the decisions made allowed us to convey the content of the poems and to maintain structure and style as far as possible.

In the case of slam poetry, in which the ST author's writing and reciting style plays a major role, we deem it necessary to balance the meeting of SDH standards with the input of slammers as regards linguistic shifts made on their own work – whenever possible. We had the chance to gather feedback from some of the authors of the pieces analyzed, which allowed us to make changes in the subtitles by considering their own perspective as authors of texts. Their suggestions were especially useful when it came to making decisions on reduction affecting style. Their comments could not be implemented in all cases, since sometimes they meant preserving expressions literally to the extent that it was not possible to meet the requirements of the Spanish standard UNE 153010 (2012). Nevertheless, in these cases, they approved the changes made after an explanation of why literality was not possible and how SDH works.

The boom in slam poetry has been made evident in recent years, and the amount of related audiovisual material is increasing. Consequently, the urge to find AVT/accessibility solutions to cater for the needs of users of this type of content is growing as well. This paper is a first step towards

filling the present gap in the literature regarding the translation of this type of content.

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ABSTRACT

Slam poetry is a competitive performance in which poets deliver their own, short pieces, and are judged by randomly chosen audience members. This form of performed poetry is an underexplored text type in audiovisual translation (AVT). To fill in this gap, this paper provides an introductory account of current practices in the translation of slam poetry, both at local and international competitions held onsite and online. After that, the paper describes the challenges entailed in making slam poetry accessible for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing by means of intralingual subtitles added to pre-recorded sessions. The focus of the analysis is placed on the translation of literary style constrained by the immediacy inherent to this form of performance, in which speech rates are typically high. Translation challenges and solutions are illustrated with examples taken from a small corpus of four poems. The study is based on the authors' experience in collaboration with the non-profit organization Associació RED927 Literatura Oral responsible for the main slam poetry event in Barcelona (Spain).

Keywords: slam poetry, spoken word poetry, poetry translation, subtitling for the d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing, audiovisual translation