

36<sup>(1)</sup>

Avril 2024  
April 2024



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## Audiovisual translation and media accessibility in language education

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### 1. Situating audiovisual translation and media accessibility for didactic purposes

The uses and applications of audiovisual translation (AVT) and media accessibility (MA) in language teaching date back to the 1980s, when some scholars discussed the benefits observed when using subtitled materials to improve foreign-language skills in the language classroom. There has been growing scholarly interest in the application of AVT in language education since the seminal work of Vanderplank (1988), and much has been published in the last few decades (see Incalcaterra McLoughlin *et al.*, 2018; Lertola, 2019; Manfredi *et al.*, 2023; Talaván *et al.*, 2024, among others). Systematic research on the didactic use of subtitling and dubbing, among other practices, seems to have become considerably more robust lately, with a growing number of comprehensive research designs published in recent years (see Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Ávila-Cabrera & Corral-Esteban, 2021; Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2021; Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023a; Talaván *et al.*, 2016, among others). Hence, didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) has emerged as a prolific research field within the domains of translation studies, applied linguistics, and education (Talaván, 2020), and the articles included in this volume expect to contribute to its exponential growth.

This special issue focuses on DAT, which is hereby understood as the application of media localisation practices to language education. These practices include AVT modes often subsumed under captioning and revoicing as well as those related to MA practices. Scholarly inquiry on the AVT modes that can be applied to language education has been led by teachers and researchers in the last three decades, thereby leading to a substantial body of research. Intra- and interlingual subtitling and dubbing (including voiceover) have traditionally received significant attention from scholars, but MA practices – such as audio description (AD) for blind and partially sighted audiences and subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing persons (SDH) – have also been on the rise in recent years (e.g., Bolaños García-Escribano & Ogea-Pozo, 2023; Ibáñez & Escobar, 2021; Ibáñez & Vermeulen, 2015; Navarrete, 2018; Talaván, 2019a, among others).

Often neglected in applied linguistics and education sciences, the examination of DAT in educational settings clearly deserves further attention from the scientific community as well as language teachers and practitioners. Research findings have previously established that employing media localisation practices such as subtitling and dubbing can have an impact on language learning (Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023a; Talaván, 2020), not least because the

use of DAT activities arguably allows for a holistic enhancement of language competence in general, and mediation, production and reception skills in particular.

There are three reasons why further DAT research is needed in language education settings:

- it advances our understanding of theoretical models and provides evidence of how (pedagogical) translation and mediation can impact language learning positively (see Navarrete in this issue);
- it provides new insights into not only language education in general but also translation and interpreting curricula in particular. As suggested by Cruz-García in this issue, translator training programmes normally include dedicated foreign-language modules that enable would-be linguists to further hone their production and reception skills in preparation for specialist training. DAT can prove helpful in said training environments, thus advancing under-used research designs and techniques in translator and interpreter training settings; and
- it situates language learning and teaching as a socially relevant area (see Tinedo-Rodríguez & Lertola and Plaza-Lara & Bobadilla-Pérez in this issue), enriching the existing scholarship via empiricism and thereby creating future research avenues in both language education and translation and interpreting studies.

## **2. Current research trends in didactic audiovisual translation and media accessibility included in this special issue**

DAT methodologies are innovative and offer promising results when it comes to implementing research-led language teaching. By combining the latest research with classroom practice, DAT studies have strived to provide scholars, teachers and learners with an ever-growing body of research over the last twenty years or so. The existing scholarship has endeavoured to provide empirical evidence to prove the validity and potential benefits of using AVT and MA practices as didactic resources in language education environments (Lertola, 2019; Talaván, 2020). The present special issue draws on the existing literature in an attempt to further support this fact by showcasing the latest DAT research. The studies compiled in this volume are informed by classroom practice and constitute a way forward to underpinning the applicability of DAT in language education. As suggested by Buil-Beltrán in this issue, the current rise of DAT studies coincides with a period in which language instructors are keen to incorporate active revoicing and subtitling tasks into the language classroom. There is a sizable DAT-specific body of research that has endeavoured to prove how active media localisation tasks can be beneficial for the honing of reception and production skills. In a similar vein, the articles included in this special issue offer innovative ways in which DAT can be implemented in diverse language education contexts.

### **2.1. Captioning and dubbing**

Much research has stemmed from pioneering works on learning languages with audiovisual programmes, including those by Díaz-Cintas (1995), Price (1983) and Vanderplank (1988). The first explorations of how to use captioning – hereby understood as any form of inter- and intralingual subtitling – and dubbing in language learning settings visibly attached great importance to instances of interlingual transfer (i.e., translation) as well as intralingual rendering (i.e., transcription). Until the turn of the century, authentic examples were often taken from localised films and series to be used for language learning purposes, but hardly ever did students produce their scripts or subtitles using dedicated AVT software. The increasing importance of specialist AVT and MA training in translator and interpreter education in the last three decades or so (see Bolaños García-Escribano *et al.*, 2021) coincided with an ever-more

sizable number of publications on the uses of captions in the classroom as well as a progressive application of active subtitling and revoicing practice in language learning.

In the first article of this special issue, authored by Cruz-García and entitled “Learning specialised vocabulary through reverse subtitling in the context of translation and interpreting training”, the author reports on a didactic subtitling experience undertaken with 22 translation and interpreting trainees. The participants had no experience in either AVT or prose translation and were enrolled on a language module that focused on scientific and technical English. They completed a two-lesson project consisting of the Spanish-to-English subtitling of a documentary on nanotechnology. The author places particular attention to the nature of language learning within translation and interpreting programmes inasmuch as would-be linguists are expected to master both their native and foreign languages in specialised contexts. Therefore, she argues that the use of highly specialised documentaries for didactic subtitling activities has a twofold advantage since it exposes students to both AVT practices and specialised content. The questionnaire responses provided evidence that students perceive DAT tasks to be both enjoyable and useful for learning not only vocabulary and grammar but also translation techniques.

The article authored by Buil-Beltrán (“How to sell your product: A lesson plan on dubbing to foster students’ communicative skills”), constitutes a novel approach to the teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP) using didactic dubbing. Following a mixed-methods approach, the author conducted an experiment with 97 participants, who were allocated to an experimental and a control group, with the aim of ascertaining whether using didactic dubbing in the ESP classroom contributed to a better enhancement of oral production skills. Among her results is the fact that DAT activities are, at least, as effective as other exercises and techniques to work on speaking skills. She argues that further research efforts are required to ascertain how DAT can be used in ESP settings successfully; in particular, scholars ought to seek a better understanding of the role played by motivation and anxiety when it comes to fostering oral production skills.

## **2.2. Fansubbing and fundubbing**

The creation of subtitles and dubs by fans is an area of research that has traditionally attracted much attention in the AVT scholarly community (see Baños, 2019; Orrego-Carmona & Lee, 2017; Pérez-González, 2007, 2012; Vázquez-Calvo *et al.*, 2019, among others). Because of their very nature, amateur translations are often freely available on the internet and thus have the potential to be used by language learners. The use of fansubs, for instance, was explored by Bolaños García-Escribano (2017) with other scholars following suit (e.g., Beseghi, 2021), whereas studies on practices such as fun- and fandubbing are scarcer and often capitalise on prompting students to create or dub their own videos (e.g., Burston, 2005; Zhang, 2016), a methodology also replicated by scholars looking at creativity in language learning (see Talaván 2019a). In a similar vein, the article authored by Qiu (“The language learners’ reception of fansubs and raw machine-translated subtitles: a pilot study”) adds to the existing literature by investigating how learners of Chinese as a foreign language respond to and interact with fansubs and raw machine-translated subtitles, evaluating their effectiveness in facilitating vocabulary acquisition. In this study, 16 English-speaking participants, with varying levels of proficiency in Chinese, were asked to watch a nine-minute segment from a Chinese period drama. The research incorporated screen recordings, think-aloud protocols, vocabulary pre- and post-tests, and interviews. The findings demonstrate that the combined use of both fansubs and automatic subtitles had a positive impact on vocabulary learning, irrespective of the learners’ proficiency levels. Participants frequently underestimated the accuracy of machine

translation and linked incorrect subtitles to automated translation output, emphasising the need for heightened machine translation literacy. The study underscores the significance of learners' motivation and genuine interest in effective language acquisition and contributes to the ongoing discourse on the utility of subtitles in language learning, potentially expanding the array of learning resources available to learners and enhancing their overall learning outcomes. The article by Azurmendi Sánchez and Tamayo ("The impact of fundubbing on the attitude towards the learning of Basque in primary education: A case study") discusses the application of fundubbing to primary education and focuses on the enhancement of Basque as a minority language in Spain. Their study aims at analysing whether attitudes towards the learning of Basque can be improved with DAT. For this purpose, fundubbing was used in a public school where students are taught in Basque (Spanish and other modern foreign languages are offered as independent subjects). The students had a good understanding of the language (although levels varied among them). The participants (N=45) were 6<sup>th</sup>-grade primary students (11–12 years old), who were divided into an experimental group (n=22) and a control group (n=23). Pre-test and post-test questionnaires offered qualitative data that allowed Azurmendi Sánchez and Tamayo to shed light on the use of Basque by those students. The experimental group carried out a fundubbing project, whereas the control group did not participate in the project and continued with regular Basque language lessons. Additionally, data about the opinions on the process and results of the project were gathered and analysed in the experimental group after the project was concluded. The results demonstrate that students developed a more positive attitude towards Basque after experimenting with fundubbing in the language classroom, and are in line with previous literature that reports on the use of DAT which led to improved results in various areas, such as written competence, motivation or learner independence (e.g., Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Nicora, 2022; Talaván, 2019b). Therefore, this innovative case study (it is the first one conducted in DAT regarding Basque and primary education), which analyses the effect on the attitudes towards a minority language when using a fundubbing project, should be taken as a point of departure for future related research which could extend the focus to other DAT modes, minority languages, and educational levels.

### **2.3. Media accessibility: audio description and respeaking**

A quick glance at the literature reveals that MA is a well-established area of research both in translation and accessibility studies (Greco, 2018), with some scholars pointing to a certain independence from its sister discipline AVT (Romero-Fresco, 2018; Greco & Jankowska, 2019). The sizable number of publications on accessibility practices such as AD and SDH – though also sign language interpreting and respeaking as well as accessible filmmaking – is telling of how healthy this discipline is. As explained above and as can be derived from the articles detailed in this section, there is a considerable body of literature on the potential of MA practices, particularly AD and SDH, in language education settings.

Navarrete's article ("Converting semiotic signs into a linguistic code: Implications for language learners' oral skills") presents an experimental study that explores the potential of active AD in enhancing learners' oral skills. The author utilises quantitative data to illustrate the positive impact of didactic AD in a study carried out with a sample composed of 81 undergraduate students of Spanish as a foreign language at a British university. Over a ten-week period, participants engaged in collaborative AD tasks, and Navarrete employed several data collection tools such as pre- and post-questionnaires, alongside pre- and post-tests based on recorded spontaneous conversations, as well as observation notes and tailor-made rubrics. To ensure data triangulation and reliability, two observers reviewed data collection instruments, and

three external evaluators assessed the enhancement of oral skills in learners' pre- and post-tests. Notably, improvements were most significant in intonation, speed, and stress, while the reduction of prolonged pauses exhibited minimal progress, ranking the lowest among all evaluated features. Navarrete's results reinforce previous findings (e.g., Navarrete, 2018) on the potential of didactic AD to effectively contribute to the fostering of oral proficiency in spontaneous speech.

The article authored by Bausells ("Audio description and pronominal verb production in students of Spanish. An analysis of unexpected linguistic outputs") provides an exploratory analysis of the results from an experiment investigating the value of didactic AD, as opposed to interlingual translation, to promote pronominal verb (PNV) production in learners of Spanish as a foreign language. The pre-experimental design was embedded in a compulsory second-year Spanish language course at undergraduate level (B2 level, CEFR), with 95 participants being divided into two experimental groups. Two tasks were proposed to each group in a different order: whereas one started with an AD task and ended with an interlingual translation task, the other undertook those tasks in the opposite order. The production differences performed by the students in their AD tasks were explored quantitatively and qualitatively by task type, task order, and PNV type. Framed within an integrated form-focus instruction (IFFI) context, where learners are engaged in tasks where they must produce structure-rich, communicatively meaningful texts, the potential of didactic AD for PNV acquisition is confirmed. However, results suggest that interlingual translation is more effective for PNV production, although certain trends reveal that completing the AD first may enhance PNV frequency and correctness in a later task. Interestingly, the presence of 'unexpected' PNVs challenges previous findings regarding students' tendency towards pronominal omission or overgeneralisation, and raises questions about what originates students' awareness of pronominality requirements and whether visual-linguistic connections promote awareness. The author concludes that maximising the cognitive and the communicative dimensions of didactic AD could help stimulate learners' metalinguistic and pragmalinguistic awareness, and so provide meaningful communication-based tasks that could facilitate the acquisition and production of complex grammatical structures, such as Spanish PNV.

The case study presented by Bartolini and Maldina in the article entitled "The implementation of museum audio description in foreign language education: A pilot study" constitutes a much-needed attempt to embed didactic museum AD in the language classroom. The authors report on a teaching experience in which 40 advanced-level English-language students (including a visually impaired person) and two language instructors engaged with published AD scripts and audio tracks of artworks. The students produced their own scripts and delivered them in class. The authors identified a tangible development of soft skills, such as empathy, that enhanced not only students' language skills but also their sense of citizenship, critical thinking, and analytical and observational skills. To gauge the perception of both students and language instructors, the authors perused the students' AD scripts and utilised a variety of data-gathering methods including in-class observation, questionnaires and interviews. The results, which are overwhelmingly positive, showcase the potential that museum AD activities have for the fostering of reception and production skills (with an emphasis on vocabulary building) alongside transversal skills. Perhaps more importantly, the authors offer a series of recommendations for those who wish to incorporate museum AD into their language teaching. Because of its very nature as a form of live subtitling (employing speech recognition), respeaking has an untapped potential for language learning. Similarly to interpreter training, a respeaker requires solid reception (listening) and production (speaking and writing) skills. Hence, Belenguer's article ("The role of accessibility in language teaching: respeaking in the

FL classroom”) constitutes a necessary contribution to this under-explored area of study. The article provides an overview of the use of respeaking in language education, by describing the concept of accessibility applied to classroom practice through shadowing and intralingual subtitling in order to help the reader understand the potential of respeaking as a pedagogical tool. The author provides a thorough methodological proposal, with a proposal for specific procedures and related assessment for didactic respeaking, as well as sample guidelines for students and examples of possible respeaking tasks. Although no specific data are provided, the proposal for implementation is solid and replicable, and it constitutes a relevant preliminary approach for the didactic implementation of this MA mode in language education.

#### 2.4. Transmedia approaches

As multimedia products (e.g., films and series) are often intertextually linked to other creative products (e.g., literature), adaptations in general, and transmediation in particular, have attracted much scholarly interest in recent years (see Herrero, 2019). Transmedia studies serve as an invaluable catalyst for the augmentation of translation and mediation methodologies within the confines of the language classroom. As exemplified by Herrero and Vanderschelden (2019), there are relevant scholarly explorations of the role played by film and media (including adaptations) in language learning environments. Transmedia methods provide language learners with a cognitive apparatus to identify the nuanced narratives and interconnections of film and media products and literature, as well as other multimodal products such as graphic novels. Hence, innovative transmedia exercises encapsulate the multifaceted nature of transmediality by using multimedia and literary adaptations in language teaching scenarios. Díaz-Alarcón’s article (“Literary translator training through audiovisual adaptations of children’s albums”) presents a didactic case study, conducted in a French-to-Spanish literary translation module, that focuses on the translation of children’s albums. The study had two main objectives: first, the translation of children’s literature with a strong emphasis on linguistic and cultural subtleties, and, secondly, the adaption of the translations into a videobook format. In Díaz-Alarcón’s study, 49 participants (41 local and 8 Erasmus students) undertook a pedagogical exercise over the course of two weeks. During this exercise, they translated the children’s book *La Petite Casserole d’Anatole* from French to Spanish (Stage 1) and created a video with their own Spanish voiceovers (Stage 2). Following these activities, participants completed an online survey in which they shared their perceptions of the case study and its impact on their translation skills. Given the multimodal and transmedial nature of this learning experience, students then subtitled a French short film derived from the same literary source (Stage 3). The author thoroughly examines the characteristics of three products: children’s albums, videobooks, and short films. She discusses the intricacies of translation briefs and provides an in-depth analysis of the methods and materials used throughout the experiment, emphasising the pedagogical benefits of translating multimodal literary products. According to Díaz-Alarcón, this multifaceted approach not only enhances both passive and active bilingual language skills but also promotes cultural and digital literacy among students.

Igareda, in “Didactic transmedia storytelling: The case of *Josep* and the teaching of Catalan”, analyses how Aurel’s film *Josep* (2020) can be used in the Catalan-language classroom. *Josep* is a biographical movie inspired by the life of the Catalan communist artist Josep Bartolí, whose own illustrations were used in both the film and the subsequent graphic novel (also by French editorial cartoonist Aurel). Igareda’s case study is intriguing for two main reasons: first, she uses a multilingual animated film (Catalan, English, French, Spanish), and, secondly, she capitalises on the opportunities transmedia approaches create to emphasise and foster multilingualism skills. Igareda draws on the works of Ayonghe (2009), Incalcaterra McLoughlin

(2018), Kothari *et al.* (2004) and Kruger *et al.* (2007) to underline the potential of subtitles to promote not only bilingualism but also multilingualism. In diverse linguistic landscapes – such as the one in Catalonia –, where multilingualism and language convergence are widespread, flexible multilingual practices – e.g., code-switching – are the norm rather than the exception. The study of multilingual films and their translation into multiple languages highlights the complexity of this process and emphasises the importance of translators being aware of linguistic variations and their cultural, social, and political significance. The author further highlights that the transmedia component is reinforced by the fact that the graphic novel and the film, which were released concurrently, can be used in the classroom to expose students to different types of multimodal materials. These two distinct formats (i.e., audiovisual and visual-textual) provide comprehensive material to work on not only language competences but also on cultural awareness and historical knowledge. The scenarios offered by these materials are highly appealing and motivating for learners. This proposal seeks to contribute to the field by presenting the didactic potential of AVT (interlingual subtitling and dubbing) as a mediation tool in language teaching and the learning of Catalan. It does so by incorporating activities derived from the film and the graphic novel into various teaching and learning scenarios.

## 2.5. Training the trainers

Due to the increasing interest in DAT shown by teachers and learners of various educational contexts, especially in higher education, but also in primary and secondary schools, DAT teacher training deserves further attention and research. It is paramount to train teachers to apply these innovative approaches, once it has been confirmed through solid research during the last two decades that DAT is a field in urgent need of research, experimentation and description as well as guidelines for more systematic practice.

The article authored by Tinedo-Rodríguez and Lertola (“Training pre-service primary education teachers in didactic audiovisual translation: a case study”), reports on a small-scale experiment involving the use of DAT with six primary education teachers-to-be. The participants were exposed to a DAT sequence of 15 lesson plans and were then prompted to create their own teaching materials. This twofold condition allowed participants to experience DAT methodologies as both learners and instructors. Following a mixed-methods approach, the authors analyse the results obtained from the pre- and post-tests, which ultimately attest to the improvement of reception and production skills. They combine quantitative and qualitative data to examine the participants’ perception of their own progress; interestingly, the empirical results indicate that the results were slightly better than the authors initially thought. This work suggests that DAT can be effective for LE purposes in primary education, although further research is needed with larger sample sizes in the future to generalise these results.

In their article entitled “Finding spaces for improvement in the didactic use of audiovisual translation in the EFL classroom: the case of the TRADILEX project”, Plaza-Lara and Bobadilla-Pérez report on empirical evidence obtained from students and teachers following the implementation of a three-year project. The authors examine relevant dropout rates at several language centres while looking for internal and external factors, both positive and negative, that had an impact on engagement and participation. Using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis via different collection instruments, the authors analyse data obtained from 44 students’ questionnaires, 30 teachers’ questionnaires and 6 semi-structured students’ interviews. They identified both (lack of familiarity with) technology and (insufficient) teacher training to be the two commonest internal weaknesses. To improve future implementation, they propose more instances of tailor-made training for both teachers and students (e.g., using the relevant revoicing and subtitling editors) and devise alternative

DAT activities without software. The external weaknesses mainly stemmed from the ways in which the sequences were introduced; for instance, whether language instructors made sequences compulsory and whether students were motivated enough to complete them. Additionally, some teachers had not completed the recommended DAT training course and did not monitor progress adequately. To address these issues, the authors put forward several solutions: enhancing extrinsic motivation for both teachers and students, acknowledging the role of former students, and turning DAT sequences into forms of summative assessment. Apart from the factors that contributed to dropout rates, the authors also discuss the strengths and opportunities observed at the language centres. These were consistent with the conclusions of previous research studies derived from the TRADILEX project (such as Plaza-Lara and Fernández-Costales, 2022, Plaza-Lara and Gonzalo Llera, 2022, or Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2022). Plaza-Lara and Bobadilla-Pérez conclude that DAT not only promotes language competence development but also facilitates the honing of digital and mediation skills, intercultural awareness, and independent learning.

### 3. Concluding remarks: What next?

DAT has traditionally been associated with translator and interpreter training and modern foreign language education. As seen in the literature, researchers have consistently emphasised the benefits of using AVT and MA practices in the language classroom, arguing that, when used effectively, revoicing and subtitling activities contribute to the honing of communicative skills (i.e., production and reception). Scholars have also demonstrated that vocabulary acquisition, intercultural awareness, and motivation can also be enhanced by employing DAT. Despite the fact that the existing research has provided substantial evidence of the beneficial effects of the pedagogical application of AVT in language education, there is still room for further exploration, and there are areas and practices that have not been sufficiently examined yet.

At the time of writing, there are virtually no accounts of the long-term impact of DAT practices, so longitudinal studies would be a welcome addition. Additionally, there is an urgent need for mixed-methods research designs that combine quantitative and qualitative data (see Bausells Espín, Navarrete, and Qiu in this issue). Such research studies would contribute to ensuring DAT methodologies are robust and empirically sustainable. There are other areas that have been overlooked and are therefore in need of further attention, such as respeaking, a highly technical practice that requires solid production and reception skills that resemble those needed by professional interpreters (see Belenguer). As demonstrated by Díaz-Alarcón and Igareda, combining literature with film and media in the language classroom has great potential that is currently being untapped by transmedia studies. These can be quite effective when it comes to minority languages, such as Catalan (see Igareda), though more traditional DAT practices such as dubbing can also be very helpful in this context (see Azurmendi and Tamayo). Although there are studies on fluency, such as Navarrete (2018) and Sánchez-Requena (2018), phonetics and intonation continue to be oral production elements that are worthy of further scholarly inquiry (Baeyens, 2023). A similar argument could be made for less studied AVT modes, such as videogame localisation (Calvo-Ferrer, 2023) or respeaking (see Belenguer), which are still under-explored in language learning education. Other areas are the use of didactic MA with visually or hearing-impaired language learners, which seems to have great potential (Hornero-Corisco & González-Vera, 2019), the possibilities of DAT adaptation to vertical videos produced by the learners themselves via social media video sharing, or applications to other less related areas, such as psychology or health, where DAT may be used in therapy (Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023b).

Additionally, DAT can be used in primary and secondary education. The limited number of studies in these areas have provided empirical evidence that supports the potential of subtitling and dubbing as teaching resources in English language learning for children (Fernández-Costales, 2021), but further attention should also be given to bilingual education. The acquisition of content through an additional language has significantly expanded through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in primary and secondary education schools as well as through English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes in higher education. In CLIL, students learn non-linguistic areas (or content subjects) through an additional language (i.e., any language which is not the L1 of the students), aiming to promote linguistic, cognitive and cultural dimensions (see Coyle *et al.*, 2010; Cenoz *et al.*, 2014; Banegas *et al.*, 2020; Fernández-Costales, 2023, among others). EMI is a rather recent trend in most non-Anglophone countries, referring to programmes that are entirely taught in English in higher education. By offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in English, tertiary education institutions aim to internationalise their academic offer and attract foreign students while acquiring greater recognition in higher education rankings (see Doiz *et al.*, 2013; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014; Dafouz & Smit, 2020, among others). In this context, DAT-focused teacher training (see Tinedo-Rodríguez and Lertola) is key to enabling further advancements in our discipline (Navarrete, 2023). Showing language instructors how to design and implement tasks is of utmost importance, especially for highly technical activities involving the localisation of audiovisual content. When integrating video materials in language education contexts, many instructors – particularly from primary and secondary education, though also sometimes in higher education – may not be familiar with DAT practices, not least professional AVT or MA (see and Plaza-Lara and Bobadilla-Pérez). DAT teacher training ought to expose instructors to the foundations of AVT modes (i.e., how to caption and dub a video) and provide technical guidance on and assistance in creating DAT tasks that are pedagogically sound and appropriate for language learning purposes. Teacher trainers should be provided with sample units and lesson plans so as to guarantee that DAT methods are replicated or adapted adequately.

In this special issue, we as editors set out to demonstrate that DAT constitutes a burgeoning field of interdisciplinary research. The works included herein showcase how DAT can be effectively integrated into modern (foreign) language education paradigms while suggesting how unlimited its potential can be within the domains of translation studies, applied linguistics, and (language) education. These works are a clear indicator of the benefits of DAT practices in language education in general, and students' academic experience in particular. Looking ahead, we expect to see alternative forms of DAT (including less traditional media localisation practices) as well as a greater availability of teacher training courses and ad-hoc learning technologies that allow learners to localise audiovisual content in pedagogically sound environments.

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### Acknowledgements

This Special Issue has been produced as part of the TRADILEX project (“La traducción audiovisual como recurso didáctico en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras”, PID2019-107362GA-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. For the production of this Special Issue, the first guest editor was supported by a “Margarita Salas” grant from Universitat Jaume I (MGS/2022/03) financed by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. We would like to thank Matthew Michael Foley-Ryan for kindly proofreading this introduction.

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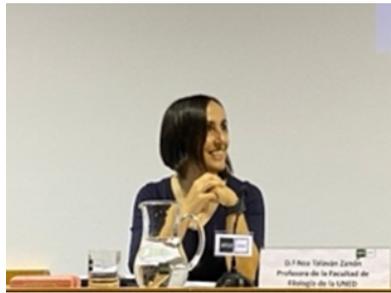


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## Learning specialised vocabulary through reverse subtitling in the context of translation and interpreting training

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### Abstract

This study explores the didactic role of active interlingual subtitling in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language for trainee translators and interpreters. It focuses on the acquisition of specialised vocabulary, particularly relevant in this context as preparation for mandatory courses in specialised translation that constitute the backbone of the 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the translation and interpreting degree at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. A classroom study is described in which students of an English-language course (B2+) produced reverse subtitles (from Spanish into English) for audiovisual material containing technology-related vocabulary. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in a set of pre- and post-tasks that helped compare their achievements regarding the use of technical terms before and after the subtitling work, as well as from a questionnaire about their feelings regarding the subtitling experience administered at the end of the activity. The results revealed that active reverse subtitling had a positive effect on the acquisition of specialised vocabulary. The combination of the practice of translation into English, the use of multimodal material, and the need to use a computer program played an important role in fostering students' interest in didactic subtitling.

### Keywords

Didactic subtitling, foreign language learning, translator and interpreter training, specialised vocabulary learning, audiovisual translation

## 1. Introduction

The teaching and learning of foreign languages (FL) have been dealt with at different educational stages using a variety of methodologies, ranging from traditional grammar-translation to more innovative approaches. Among the latest methods, audiovisual translation (AVT) is gaining ground as a motivating way of enhancing the experience of FL learning (Baños & Sokoli, 2015; Lertola & Talaván, 2022).

Subtitling has been used in FL learning for different purposes at different education levels. It has proved helpful in the acquisition of vocabulary (Díaz-Cintas & Wang, 2022; Lertola, 2012) and cultural knowledge (Borghetti, 2011), as well as in the improvement of grammar (Ghia, 2007). Other scholars have paid special attention to its use for the enhancement of written and oral comprehension and production skills (Ávila-Cabrera, 2021; Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban, 2021; González-Vera, 2022; Talaván, 2010; Talaván & Rodríguez Arancón, 2015). An extensive review of the literature on the many applications of active and passive use of subtitling can be found in Torralba-Miralles (2020), who highlights the benefits of active subtitling. Her emphasis on this method is because although both active and passive uses of subtitling have proved advantageous in the field of language learning, active subtitling implies direct involvement of the students in the learning process since, by undertaking subtitling tasks, they feel like and imagine themselves as subtitlers.

While in the initial education stages subtitling – and AVT modes to that extent – can contribute to the teaching and learning of FL, it can be very useful in tertiary education. Not only does it help improve the knowledge of the FL, but it can also be applied to specific professional contexts in which prospective graduates may develop their careers. The use of either intralingual (same language) or interlingual (from one language to another) subtitling greatly depends on the aim of the teaching and learning activities. Yet, it is the latter form that is commonly regarded as “translation proper” (Jakobson, 1959, p. 233) in the strictest sense.

As for translation as a didactic tool for FL teaching and learning, although it has long been rejected for many reasons (i.e., it recalls the criticised traditional grammar-translation method, it only fosters reading comprehension and writing production skills, and it can increase interference of the mother tongue in FL acquisition), “since the early 2000s, a significant increase in publications in this domain suggests its revitalisation as new approaches and conceptualisations of translation in the language classroom are being explored” (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 1). Together with these positive experiences, the inclusion of descriptors for mediation by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in its Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) has helped reinstate translation as a recognised and justifiable method. Among the ways in which mediation usually occurs, the CEFR distinguishes mediating a text, which “involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 91). This refers to mediation as a cross-linguistic activity which involves plurilingual competence. Translating a written text either in speech or in writing is one of the scales comprised by mediation activities.

The study described in this paper explores the active use of interlingual subtitling as a didactic tool in the teaching and learning of English as a FL for would-be translators and interpreters. Specifically, it aims to establish whether the classroom application of this AVT practice can help these particular students acquire specialised vocabulary, which constitutes a particularly relevant aspect in this training context as preparation for subsequent mandatory courses in specialised translation. The latter constitute the backbone of the translation and interpreting degree – particularly the syllabi for the third and fourth years – at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.

In this study, twenty-two students of an English course (level B2+ of the CEFR) produced reverse, interlingual subtitles, from Spanish into English. The audiovisual material used contained a substantial amount of vocabulary related to technology. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through both in-class observation and a questionnaire.

## 2. Translators and interpreters' needs and the role of specialised vocabulary

At the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, students are expected to acquire a series of competencies at the end of their studies that guarantee they are prepared for professional performances and the market. The role and relevance of lessons focusing on specialised vocabulary for these learners imply that any FL teaching methodological proposal ought to be aligned with the final aims of the degree. Generally speaking, translators and interpreters require excellent intercultural communication skills, enabling them to carry out their profession in a wide variety of contexts. To achieve this goal, students work towards the acquisition of the so-called *translation competence*, which, in turn, entails a set of skills and types of knowledge, including linguistic skills.

According to PACTE's (2003) model, translation competence consists of a series of interrelated sub-competences including (1) a bilingual sub-competence (pragmatic, textual, sociolinguistic and lexical knowledge in two languages), (2) an extralinguistic sub-competence (bicultural, encyclopaedic and subject knowledge in special areas), (3) a translation knowledge sub-competence (how translation works and its professional aspects), (4) an instrumental sub-competence (use of documentation resources as well as information and communication technologies applied to translation), and (5) a strategic sub-competence (this affects the other sub-competences and controls the translation process). Regarding the latter, Cerezo Herrero (2019a, p. 89) explains that "its role will vary depending on the directionality of the translation (direct or reverse translation), the pair of languages, the specialization (technical, legal or audiovisual texts, etc.), the translator's experience and the context where the translation takes place."

While translation knowledge, instrumental and strategic sub-competences are specific to translation competence, bilingual and extralinguistic sub-competences can also apply to those who master two languages as well as those who have extralinguistic knowledge and use the FL in a specialised professional area (e.g., economics, business, and law). However, translator and interpreter trainees' command of the FL necessarily goes beyond those requirements inasmuch as they may use the FL in contexts requiring a certain degree of knowledge in a range of specialist areas (Adab, 2008).

It is in this sense that FL teaching and learning in the context of translation and interpreting training is considered within the realm of languages for specific purposes (LSP). Cerezo Herrero (2019b, 2021), for example, considers that language teaching for translator and interpreter trainees should focus on a specific methodology as a branch of LSP. In the same vein, Clouet (2021, p. 62) states that language teachers in this training context "should quickly move from a general language approach to a more professional and specific approach, tailoring course contents to their students' needs." Consequently, the specific needs these students have regarding FL acquisition impose the use of teaching methods that focus on their future professional needs, including fostering awareness and command of the different text types and genres that translators and interpreters may have to deal with in their professional career, and contrasting the FL with their mother tongue at linguistic, phonological, textual and register levels (Cerezo Herrero, 2019a).

During the first and second years of the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, lessons are mainly devoted to language learning (both native language and FLs) as well as an introduction to theoretical and practical translation. In the third

and fourth years, compulsory specialised translation courses expose students to practical work in different fields such as tourism and business, finance and law, science and technology, and media, among others. This is the reason why second-year FL courses endeavour to address these fields and utilise text types, genres, vocabulary, and grammar that are appropriate for each of the above-mentioned fields of specialism.

Translation courses are designed so that students work out of FLs into Spanish. An optional course on reverse translation (out of Spanish into English) was introduced a few years ago. Although reverse translation usually requires more written production effort from the FL learners and may result in texts that present more language mistakes than direct translation, if the text to be worked on in the classroom is chosen according to the students' FL level, it can be a very effective learning method. Studies by Carreres (2006) and Pintado Gutiérrez (2020) have pointed to the usefulness of this practice as a motivating and helpful tool to enhance FL learning. Particularly, Díaz Alarcón and Menor Campos (2013) argue that reverse translation allows for faster development of the FL since learners become aware of the similarities and differences between the languages in contact and can thereby assimilate FL structures and vocabulary as well as identify language mistakes. Furthermore, in the practice of subtitling as a tool for language learning, reverse translation has proved efficient for the enhancement of writing skills (Ávila-Cabrera, 2021).

The second-year B2+ English-language course comprises units on a variety of specialised topics: academic English, legal English, English for economics and business, scientific and technical English, and English for the world of medicine, where students start to get acquainted with these fields. The focus on specialised vocabulary pursues the development of language competences with a strong focus on subsequent specialised translation work.

It is relevant to bear in mind that oftentimes didactic subtitling activities are practised in contexts where students will most probably not become subtitlers, their main aim being to learn specific linguistic aspects of English through this AVT mode as a motivating tool (Torralba-Miralles, 2020). However, the students participating in this study needed to produce professional subtitles and may, in the future, pursue a professional career in AVT. Hence, interlingual subtitling practice was beneficial for them in a twofold manner: first, by enhancing their FL learning and, secondly, by introducing them to AVT. This establishes a beneficial connection for their FL learning with subsequent courses on translation.

### **3. The study**

Twenty-two students participated in the preliminary study described in this section, which was carried out in the 2021–2022 academic year. The participants were undergraduate students enrolled in the four-year Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and attended this English-language course, which is the most advanced English-language module in the programme. According to the syllabus, the course aims to ensure the acquisition of a proficient, specialised level of spoken and written skills in English and ultimately enables students to work successfully in the translation and interpreting industries. Students' English proficiency is considered to be B2+ of the CEFR at this stage. Among the learning outcomes expected from students attending this course are the following: to understand a wide variety of complex texts; to use English fluently and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes; and to produce clear, well-structured, and detailed texts using complex language structures.

The sessions explained in this paper took place while students were working on scientific and technical texts. They had no previous subtitling experience, nor had they engaged in reverse translation practice. As an introduction to the use of active subtitling for language learning

purposes, students had to produce English subtitles for the first four and a half minutes of an authentic clip taken from the Internet (a 2012 French documentary entitled *Nanotechnologies : la révolution invisible*, by ARTE France, CBC Radio-Canada, Docside Production and NHK). A science documentary was selected because, as an instance of specialised discourse, it contained terms belonging to a specific field, and this specialised vocabulary “can oscillate from very specialised to rather popularized forms” (Vyzas, 2022, p. 50).

Although the selected documentary is a French production, the clip used had been dubbed in Spanish. The excerpt chosen had an audio track comprising the voice of a narrator (an off-camera voice in Spanish) as well as two monologues delivered in English and one in French. The latter had been rendered into Spanish via voiceover, meaning the Spanish translation was superimposed. The video combined static and moving images – i.e., figures, graphs, simulations of micro- and nanoscopic elements, people, streets, cities, futuristic scenes, and laboratory devices – all of which helped students link the vocabulary with how it was depicted on screen. The reason for choosing this particular video clip was because the specialised topic was related to the thematic unit they were starting at that moment (i.e., scientific and technical English). Moreover, dialogues and narrations had an adequate speed and required students to make an effort to reformulate and reduce utterances without being too challenging.

### 3.1. Description of the sessions

The proposed methodology relies on task-based learning, which, as Talaván (2013) puts it, helps both teachers and students to move from guided activities (focused on video and subtitling) to semi-guided ones, such as debates, and more autonomous subtitling activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Interlingual subtitling is useful not only by itself as a learning task but also because it can be complemented with exercises addressing skills such as speaking, writing, and mediation. In this study, pre-tasks were carried out before the subtitling exercise and aimed at contextualising and familiarising students with the topic at hand as well as with the basic aspects of subtitling software and practice. The post-tasks, proposed after completion of the subtitling activity, had a twofold aim: first, they allowed the teacher to observe the students’ performance in the creation of subtitles and their use of field-specific vocabulary, as well as to assess the vocabulary assimilation, which was the main purpose of the subtitling task; and, secondly, they allowed students to get feedback on their work and recommendations to improve, whilst also becoming aware of the different aspects and contents on which they worked.

Two in-class sessions were designed, lasting approximately four hours in total, with autonomous work to be completed between the sessions (see Table 1).

Session	Step	Description	Duration	Type
<b>One</b> (±2 h)	1	Speaking in English. General discussion on the genre 'documentary'	10 min	Pre-tasks
	2	Watching the video and taking notes in Spanish	15 min	
	3	Speaking in Spanish. General discussion about the content of the video	15 min	
	4	Writing a summary in English about the video	20 min	
	5	Downloading Aegisub and reading basic instructions about software and subtitling	25 min	
	6	Reverse subtitling (first minute of the video)	25 min	
<b>Autonomous work</b>	7	Reverse subtitling (second and third minutes of the video) at home	Time needed	
	<b>Two</b> (±2 h)	8	Reverse subtitling (last minutes of the video)	35 min
9		Speaking in English. Comment on subtitled versions produced by the students with a focus on specialised vocabulary	35 min	
10		Writing a summary in English about the video	20 min	
11		Vocabulary exercise (glossary)	15 min	
12		Filling in a questionnaire	5 min	

**Table 1.** Session plan (source: author)

The teaching and learning activities included autonomous work outside class hours, for which no time estimation is given. Students could work at their own pace and take as much time as needed. This independent work consisted of producing Spanish-into-English subtitles for the second and third minutes of the clip using the dedicated software.

### 3.1.1. Session One

*Step 1. Speaking in English.* As a warm-up task, and in order to develop text-type awareness among students, a general discussion was conducted on documentaries, which revolved around their features and function as well as the topics usually handled in scientific productions of this kind. Students shared their own experiences as viewers of audiovisual texts. Among the questions proposed during the in-class discussion were: Do you usually watch documentaries? What is a documentary? What are documentaries produced for? What is their main purpose? What are common topics in documentaries?

*Step 2. Watching the video and taking notes in Spanish.* Students watched the video clip twice while taking notes on the most significant aspects. This step aimed at contextualising the topic and familiarising students with basic concepts related to nanotechnology. Approaching the topic in Spanish made it easier for them to become familiar with the specialised field, in line with Larsen-Freeman's view that "the native language of the students is used in the classroom in order to enhance the security of the students, to provide a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and to make the meanings of the target language words clear" (2000, pp. 101-102).

*Step 3. Speaking in Spanish.* The students spoke about the general and specific ideas of the text. This task gave them the confidence to talk about a topic with which they were not yet fully familiar.

*Step 4. Writing in English.* The students wrote a summary (around 120 words) of an imaginary mediation situation in which they explained the content of this part of the documentary to an

English-speaking friend. No dictionaries could be used, so these summaries provided evidence as to students' ability to explain the content in English with some degree of precision before the subtitling task. This particular activity was essential to compare their command of specialised vocabulary before and after active subtitling.

*Step 5. Downloading and using the computer software.* The students used a free, desktop-based subtitling editor that cannot produce translations and transcripts automatically. Students were given basic subtitling instructions and guidelines (e.g., subtitle length, number of characters, segmentation and line breaks) as well as a tutorial on how to use the software (i.e., downloading the files into the software, inserting subtitles, checking the number of characters).

*Step 6. In-class reverse subtitling.* The students worked on the production of subtitles for the first minute of the clip. From here onwards, they were allowed to use dictionaries and other documentation resources and could exchange ideas with classmates. Bearing in mind that this was the first time they had used the software, translating a minute of the video, into their FL, proved challenging.

### **3.1.2. Autonomous work**

*Step 7. Reverse subtitling (individual work).* The students created subtitles for two more minutes' worth of video as homework. Individual work at their own pace helped them grasp the basic commands and functions of the subtitling software and workflow at an introductory level.

### **3.1.3. Session Two**

*Step 8. In-class reverse subtitling.* The students continued subtitling until the task was completed. Feedback between peers was allowed.

*Step 9. Speaking in English.* The students read the subtitles produced by their peers and commented on them whilst keeping in mind specialised vocabulary and grammatical correction. Students discussed strategies to keep the number of characters per second and per line within the required values while using specialised vocabulary in grammatically correct sentences.

*Step 10. Writing in English.* The students wrote a second summary of the video (around 120 words). After being exposed to the topic at hand, students were expected to employ specialised vocabulary in this activity, although they were not specifically instructed to do so. The ability to express the main ideas of the video clip and the number of technical terms used correctly were the main assessment criteria.

*Step 11. Vocabulary exercise.* The students were given an incomplete glossary containing the 36 terms used in the documentary extract they had watched, in which they were given the term in Spanish and had to provide the English equivalent. A range of terms and specialised expressions were included in the glossary (e.g., *atom addition, silicon atom, nano dimension, matter, quantum tunnelling, scanning tunnelling microscope, and probe*). This exercise allowed students to check and assess vocabulary acquisition. For the teacher, it was an instrument to determine their degree of assimilation of specialised vocabulary out of context.

*Step 12. Questionnaire.* Students were asked to fill in a short and simple opinion questionnaire containing one open-ended question ("What else have you learnt through the subtitling exercise?") and four closed-ended questions to gauge their perception. As for the latter, the predetermined responses were on a rating scale as follows: I strongly disagree, I disagree, I agree, I strongly agree, and I don't know. The Likert-scale questions were as follows:

- Did you enjoy subtitling?
- Did you enjoy translating into English?
- Do you think you have learnt new vocabulary?
- Do you think you have improved your grammar?

This questionnaire was helpful not only for the teacher as an instrument to determine whether vocabulary assimilation had been achieved but also for the students since they had to consciously reflect on the subtitling experience.

### 3.2. Results

The session plan described above produced different outcomes and results that provided evidence of the effectiveness of the whole experience.

The first summary produced by the students (N=22) showed their lack of vocabulary resources in relation to the topic of the video they had watched, and 77% of them (17) did not reach the number of words required (120 words). In general, they could use common expressions related to technological and scientific advances (e.g., *development, explore, expert, revolution, invention, evolution, advance, and experiment*), which are also found when talking about other topics in daily contexts. However, their summaries contained a mean of only three technical terms related to the main topic, and these were sometimes spelled incorrectly (e.g., “*tunel*” instead of “*tunnel*”; “*materia*” instead of “*matter*”; “*moleculs*” instead of “*molecules*”). The only word they all used correctly was the denomination of the specific topic (nanotechnology), which they had already seen written in French (*nanotechnologie*) on the screen as part of the title of the documentary.

Regarding the second summary, the number of nanotechnology-related terms used by the students in their writing varied between a minimum of four and a maximum of thirteen, with a mean of nine terms by summary. Crucially, 82% (18) reached the required number of words (120 words) and 63% (14) used 10 or more terms correctly in this exercise, which differs considerably from their performance in the first summary. Some of the specialised terms they included were scanning tunnelling microscope, nano dimension, atom addition, nanometre, and probe.

As for the glossary, a more guided exercise, the number of correct responses (out of 36 in total) varied between 20 and 36. It is worth noting that 73% of students (16) scored higher than 30. It is difficult to directly correlate the achievement of such good results with one sole factor. On the one hand, the sequence of tasks in the second session, once the subtitling activity had been completed, included a discussion and correction session, the writing of the summary, and then the completion of the glossary, which taken together constitute valuable repetition and consolidation of the specialised vocabulary. On the other, the nature of the glossary activity requires only the recollection of the specific English equivalent of the Spanish term rather than the context as a whole, a much more focused activity than the written production of a summary, which may also have contributed to the high scores observed.

Regarding the opinion questionnaire, the results for each close-ended question are given in brackets (Table 2). The students’ responses to Q1 and Q2, which asked them if they had enjoyed subtitling and reverse translation, respectively, showed that reverse subtitling had a motivating effect on them. At the same time, through Q3, they all recognised the effectiveness of the subtitling practice in learning new vocabulary. Finally, as an additional benefit of this learning experience, most of them (16 students) admitted to having improved some grammar aspects when answering Q4. This is the only question where negative responses have been provided (6 students). Although the activity was not specifically designed for learning or

improving grammar, producing subtitles in English requires the production of utterances that adhere to grammatical rules. The students' efforts to create grammatically correct structures will have forced them to pay attention to these aspects, although they may not have been as aware of the attention paid in this sense as they were of the acquisition of new specialised vocabulary, which is how the activity was framed.

Question	Answers
Q1. Did you enjoy <b>subtitling</b> ?	I strongly disagree (0), I disagree (0) <b>I agree (5), I strongly agree (17)</b> I don't know (0)
Q2. Did you enjoy <b>translating</b> into English?	I strongly disagree (0), I disagree (0) <b>I agree (6), I strongly agree (16)</b> I don't know (0)
Q3. Do you think you have learnt new <b>vocabulary</b> ?	I strongly disagree (0), I disagree (0) <b>I agree (5), I strongly agree (17)</b> I don't know (0)
Q4. Do you think you have improved your <b>grammar</b> ?	<b>I strongly disagree (3), I disagree (3)</b> <b>I agree (15), I strongly agree (1)</b> I don't know (0)

**Table 2.** Likert-scale questions 1 to 4 and answers (source: author)

The students' answers to the open-ended question ("What else have you learnt through the subtitling exercise?") revealed that they acknowledged that through this experience they learnt not only specialised vocabulary but also how to use the subtitling software (5 students), how to produce subtitles that fulfil a set of criteria, e.g., a limited number of characters per second and per line (11 students), how to condense and simplify sentences (7 students), and they acquired an awareness of the importance of mastering both the foreign language and the software (2 students), and of the difficulty of subtitling (4 students). The total number of responses is higher than 22 since some students gave more than one answer. Some examples of the students' open-ended responses include "I have learnt that translating subtitles is a stringent activity that requires not only proficiency of the language but also computer literacy", "How to condense sentences and make them clearer", and "I learnt some strategies to simplify a text."

These answers show that together with technical knowledge of the software and the basics of subtitling, the students became aware that (reverse) subtitling is a difficult task involving a variety of skills. Similar results have been found by Ávila-Cabrera and Corral Esteban (2021) in their study of the use of reverse subtitling for English learning in the field of commerce. The students understood the relationship between this FL learning methodology and a series of skills, including digital skills.

Subtitling was approached here at an introductory level, fostering students' interest in acquiring advanced knowledge not only of subtitling but also of other AVT modalities. As Koletnik (2020, p. 342) posits, the introduction of translation exercises "in future translators' additional language teaching, which complements monolingual tuition, is supportive of the development of their translation skills." From a different point of view, Boyko (2019, p. 123) argues that "the life-long process of language learning and translation are inextricable: the translator will never stop evolving as a language user and translation learner." The views of these two authors support the synergy between AVT translation as a tool for FL acquisition and

as a goal for the mediation of meaning, the latter being one of the core skills that prospective translators and interpreters need to develop.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study aimed to ascertain whether, and if so how, the active use of (didactic) active, reverse subtitling could help enhance translator and interpreter trainees' acquisition and use of specialised vocabulary in English as an FL. The training context of the study, the different steps of the session plan and the outcomes and results of the activity were described. Although didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) has been widely exploited for the acquisition of a variety of skills and knowledge, including vocabulary, the acquisition of specialised vocabulary through this means is still quite unexplored in the context of translation and interpreting training.

The results obtained from the observation of students' performance in the activities of the session plan, together with their responses to the short questionnaire, revealed that the practice of reverse subtitling had a positive effect on the acquisition of this type of vocabulary, as well as other additional learning outcomes. The students not only learnt and used specialised vocabulary related to nanotechnology but also stated they had learnt the basic functions of the subtitling software as well as how to condense sentences, among others.

The practice of reverse translation, together with the technological component introduced by the subtitling software, and the fact that this activity was different from the usual types of exercises students undertake may have created a motivating setting for the acquisition of specialised vocabulary. This constitutes an aspect of FL learning that students usually find tedious and tend to associate with memorising word lists. This finding regarding the motivational setting for learning corroborates previous studies including Neves (2004) and Sokoli *et al.* (2011). Another important factor is the fact that the training method responds to their professional needs, as detailed above. Through this experience, the students had the opportunity to envisage their future as professional translators. Consequently, although these activities can be time-consuming and students must first learn the basics of the subtitling software, which must be considered when designing this type of activity (Fernández-Costales, 2021), the upsides of efficient learning and motivation may well outweigh the possible drawbacks in terms of the time investment and preparation needed. The session plan designed for the study included a series of tasks that not only allowed the effectiveness of the training activities to be measured, but also increased students' awareness of their progress.

As a follow-up study, and in order to propose new research avenues, similar session plans could be extended to larger groups of students as well as applied over a longer period of time. For instance, it would be appropriate to develop activities where students have to use previously acquired vocabulary in speaking and writing exercises. This article has shown that active reverse subtitling can help students learn specialised vocabulary as well as acquire other types of knowledge related to their role as translator and interpreter trainees.

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## How to sell your product: A lesson plan on dubbing to foster students' communicative skills

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### **Abstract**

When learning a new language, improving speaking skills can prove challenging. Didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) has gained attention in the past decade for its potential in language learning, with extensive research validating its efficacy. However, application to English for specific purposes (ESP) is scarcer, despite demonstrated effectiveness (see, for instance, Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban, 2021; González-Vera, 2021; Talaván, 2006). This paper presents two lesson plans aimed to foster ESP students' oral production skills following a communicative approach. Whereas a control group (CG) followed a traditional approach to speaking skills enhancement, the experimental group (EG) undertook active dubbing tasks. The methodology and materials are presented with the tasks and rubric used in evaluating students' performance. Findings indicate that students encounter challenges, particularly in speaking activities. Meanwhile, DAT emerges as a promising approach to enhancing motivation, encouraging students to recognize its significance in improving speaking skills. Future studies should analyse dubbing sequences to gain further insights into the potential improvement of speaking skills among EG students.

### **Keywords**

Didactic audiovisual translation, dubbing, speaking, English for specific purposes, experimental approach

## 1. Introduction

Ever since the 1980s, scholars have undertaken research on the didactic potential of audiovisual translation (AVT) for foreign language (FL) acquisition purposes. However, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of scholarly works in the field in the last decade. This is the result of the introduction and the use of the diverse AVT practices for didactic purposes in the classroom.

The history of didactic AVT (henceforth, DAT) can be divided into old 'passive' studies and new 'active' approaches. Among the first works within the field was a monograph by Laks (1957), but the first teaching-focused developments can be traced back to the 1980s (Bolaños-García-Escribano *et al.*, 2021). These were mainly based on subtitling as a passive tool inside the classroom. Scholars like Price (1983) and Vanderplank (1988) focused their research on activities based on reading subtitles inside the class for pedagogical purposes. The turn came in the 2000s, a decade in which subtitles remained the primary focus of research, but with the addition that students started to become active actors in the classroom, producing subtitles. In this period, some of the most relevant scholars were Williams & Thorne (2000), Sokoli (2006) and Talaván (2006). In the 2010s, a new era of possibilities opened for DAT as scholars started to research the use of a wider range of AVT modalities. This was also a decade of flourishing projects, supported by new educational policies promoted by the Council of Europe, such as Clipflair<sup>1</sup> or Pluritav.<sup>2</sup>

Nowadays, DAT is experiencing its apogee, with researchers studying it as an active tool and incorporating all kinds of AVT modalities. The research ranges from more general uses of DAT to more specific ones such as listening skills, vocabulary acquisition or intonation (Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2021). Recent projects, such as TRADILEX<sup>3</sup>, explore the potential of DAT in language teaching through the creation of lesson plans that revolve around a wide variety of AVT modalities, from the more traditional ones – subtitling and dubbing – to accessibility modalities such as voice-over, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) and audio description (AD).

The aim of this paper is, therefore, to contribute to the field of DAT, studying its potential for the enhancement of English for specific purposes (ESP) students' oral production skills. To do so, a lesson plan based on dubbing was developed for the teaching of technical English at the University of Zaragoza's School of Engineering and Architecture.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This paper focuses on the use of dubbing as an active tool inside the classroom. Dubbing implies "replacing the original soundtrack containing the actors' dialogue with a target language recording that reproduces the original message, ensuring that the target language sound and the actors' lip movements are synchronized" (Díaz-Cintas, 2009, pp. 4–5). There is still limited research on didactic dubbing when compared to other practices such as subtitling. Yet, dubbing has numerous advantages as it is related to traditional acting (Wakefield, 2014) and can be beneficial for shy learners who may fear stage performance (Burston, 2005).

Dubbing as a pedagogical tool started to attract academic attention before the turn of the century (see, for instance, Duff, 1989). Dubbing is often used by language instructors to practise speaking (Talaván & Costal, 2017), so research has traditionally looked into how dubbing can foster pronunciation, intonation and fluency (Kumai, 1996). He and Wasuntarasoph

<sup>1</sup> See <http://clipflair.net>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://citrans.uv.es/pluritav>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://tradi.uned.es/en/proyecto-tradilex-2>.

(2015) investigated the effects of dubbing tasks for the enhancement of vocational students' pronunciation with remarkable results, especially on students' attitude towards the tasks. Sánchez-Requena (2018) published a pilot study in which she worked on fluency and pronunciation through dubbing tasks to enhance students' conversational skills and lower their anxiety levels. Other scholars have found additional benefits such as vocabulary acquisition (Danan, 2010).

English for specific purposes (ESP) remains an uncharted territory when it comes to using DAT methods in the classroom. This subcomponent of language teaching was developed to cover the specific communicative needs that some learners have as students' profiles and their necessities have been modified over the last decades (Fuertes Olivera & Samaniego Fernández, 2005). Research within this field and DAT is scarce, although several scholars have conducted studies to prove its effectiveness. One of the first pioneers in DAT for ESP teaching was Talaván (2006), who presented a language learning activity based on active subtitling to improve business English students' oral skills. Fifteen years later, Ávila-Cabrera (2021) published a study on the use of reverse subtitling in a business English class, which led to the SubESPskills project (Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban, 2021; Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez Arancón, 2021). The latest research has taken place in the field of architecture and engineering (see, for instance, González-Vera, 2021, 2022).

Nonetheless, even though academics are increasingly turning their attention to this branch of English language learning, there is still research to be done as this is an area that can greatly benefit from this new and innovative pedagogical tool as it creates "a context for students that would include real cases and simulations, through with [sic] students' attention could be drawn to the complexities of each situation" (Talaván, 2006, p. 317). Thus, this paper aims to evaluate the impact of DAT on oral production skills in ESP settings when compared to traditional communicative approaches.

### 3. Methodology

The present study gathers the results extracted from 97 students enrolled in the Degree in Engineering and Architecture who attended an elective module in technical English at the University of Zaragoza, Spain, in 2021–2022. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group (EG) with 50 students, and the control group (CG) with 47 students.

In order to pursue the aims of this study, three research questions (RQ) were proposed:

- RQ1. How do ESP students study English and, in particular, speaking skills, and how motivated do they feel to learn?
- RQ2. Do DAT activities enhance students' oral production skills to a greater or lesser extent than traditional activities?
- RQ3. What are students' final perceptions of DAT and traditional speaking activities upon completion?

With this in mind, a lesson plan was designed and implemented in this Technical English course to answer the research questions together with a pre- and a post-questionnaire. Thus, this paper follows a mixed-method approach in which quantitative and qualitative data is analysed and discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.1. Technical English and oral skills

The module, Technical English, had theoretical and practical sessions. The latter focused on oral production and were used for the experiment. The sessions were divided into six topics and sought to attain similar objectives in both groups, through different methodologies: traditional for the CG and DAT for the EG.

The instruments of the study were the following:

- a pre-questionnaire that enquired students about their understanding of language learning;
- oral reception and production tests at the beginning and end of the semester to monitor progress;
- a post-questionnaire to establish their perception of the lesson plans and the practical sessions; and
- six lesson plans focused on rising students' oral production and reception skills which counted with one or two graded post-tasks which were used as part of each student's final marks.

This paper focuses on one of the lesson plans on pitch presentations. The lessons were designed from scratch and implemented simultaneously in both groups.

### 3.2. Pitch presentations: didactic dubbing lesson plan

The lesson plan used in the experiment (Table 1) focused on pitch presentations, which constitute innovative ways to sell a product or sharing your idea in a two-minute presentation. The aims of the lesson were that, in the end, students were able to deliver a good oral presentation, acquire sequence connectors for presenting an idea and, ultimately, foster their oral production skills.

Aims	CG Activities/Tasks	EG Activities/Tasks
Delivering an oral presentation	<b>Warm-up</b> - Reading - Vocabulary acquisition	<b>Pre-viewing</b> - Reading - Vocabulary acquisition
Acquiring sequence connectors for presentations	<b>Main activities</b> - Reading comprehension - Listening - Class discussion <b>Practical task:</b> - Listening <b>Post task</b> - Speaking	<b>While-viewing</b> - Listening comprehension  <b>Dubbing (EN-EN)</b> <b>Post-viewing</b> - Speaking

**Table 1.** Lesson plan 4 aims and objectives (source: author)

The first stage of the lesson plan was the same for both groups. It started with a reading activity about pitch presentations, in which students had to identify true and false statements and explain the reasons for their answers. The aim was to introduce the topic while starting a class discussion to practice their spontaneous speaking. The second activity explored pitch structures and exposed students to new vocabulary. Finally, in the last activity, students had to decide between several statements about what to do and what not to do in a pitch presentation.

In the second stage, while EG students watched a video and answered questions, CG students undertook a reading activity after the visualization, and had a class discussion, monitored by the lecturers, which was the oral input they received. This change was primarily brought about by the fact that CG post-task varied, so it was considered essential to include more speaking practise at an early stage.

A second difference was introduced in the practical tasks. CG students did a listening activity and answered related questions in a test-like exercise by introducing their answers in Google

Forms. Meanwhile, EG carried out an intralingual dubbing activity. Students replaced the original soundtrack with their own dubbing whilst keeping in mind synchronisation and pronunciation.

In the final stage, both groups were administered the same activity. Students devised an innovative idea related to their university degrees and did a pitch presentation. Students produced a recording using the web platform Vocaroo<sup>4</sup>, which was assessed by the lecturer.

This final task was worth 5 points out of 100 of the final mark. As stated, it was the same task for both groups: an oral task in which students demonstrated what they had learned during the lesson. For this reason, the marks extracted from it were used for the results analysis, resulting in a fair comparison between groups. The task was marked using a rubric (Table 2) based on previous prototypical models, in which four oral production aspects were analysed to obtain a final mark out of five.

<b>Use of vocabulary and expressions related to the topic</b>	<b>Use of English (grammar)</b>	<b>Fluency</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>Mark</b>
Talk about the suggested topic. Provide new ideas. Proper and extensive use of vocabulary about the topic	Grammar is consistently accurate and appropriate for the level	Thoughts expressed completely with no pauses or hesitations	Pronunciation is excellent; good effort at accent	1.25
Speaking about the topic without providing new ideas. Use of a variety of expressions and vocabulary about the topic almost always right	Grammar is mostly always accurate and appropriate for the level	Thoughts expressed completely with one or two pauses or hesitations	Pronunciation is very good; good effort at accent	0.87
Wrong or very limited use of some of the expressions or the vocabulary about the topic	Grammar is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level	Some hesitations but manages to continue and complete thoughts.	Pronunciation is good; some effort at accent, but some words are mispronounced	0.67
Incorrect or irrelevant vocabulary	Grammar is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level	Speech is choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses, most thoughts are complete	Many words are mispronounced; and no effort towards a native accent	0.37
Incorrect or irrelevant vocabulary, it does not meet the criteria to be evaluated	Grammar is almost never or never accurate or appropriate for the current level	Speech halting and uneven with long pauses or incomplete thoughts	Pronunciation is lacking and hard to understand; no effort towards a native accent	0
				<b>Overall grade out of 5</b>

**Table 2.** Assessment rubric for oral production (source: author)

<sup>4</sup> See <https://vocaroo.com>.

## 4. Analysis

This paper follows a mixed-methods research approach in which quantitative and qualitative data are used to obtain answers to the research questions. Quantitative data were collected through a pre-questionnaire, a post-task after the completion of the lesson plan and a post-questionnaire. Meanwhile, qualitative data were collected through the open-answer questions of the post-questionnaire and would provide additional clarification of the quantitative data.

### 4.1. Pre-questionnaire

The pre-questionnaire's aim was to ask students about their anxiety and motivation towards speaking and listening activities. As this paper focuses on speaking skills, the analysis will only account for the results of the questions that were related to this skill. Thus, the pre-questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first one contained questions about participants' general information and the second part was, at the same time, divided into six dimensions (utility, pleasure and motivation, anxiety, listening, speaking and methodology) following Auzmendi Escribano's (1992) questionnaire model; meanwhile, the dimensions counted with several items or questions. Table 3 shows the general information questions about participants<sup>5</sup>:

	Items	Answers
General information	Item 1 – E-mail	Open-answer
	Item 2 – Surname, Name	Open-answer
	Item 3 – Age	21–22 / 23–24 / 25–30 / More than 30
	Item 4 – Gender	Male / Female / Other
	Item 5 – You are taking the subject of Technical English in your...	3rd year / 4th year / Master year / Other
	Item 6 – You are doing a degree in...	Architecture Chemical / Engineering Computer Science Engineering / Electrical Engineering / Electronic and Automatic / Control Engineering / Industrial Design and Product Development / Industrial Technologies Engineering / Mechanical Engineering / Telecommunications Engineering / Master
	Item 7 – Native speaker of ...	Spanish / French / Italian / German
General information about their English	Item 8 – How long have you been studying English?	1–5 years / 5–10 years / More than 10 years/ Never
	Item 9 – As a whole, what level of English do you think you have (according to the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages)?	A1 (Basic) / A2 (Low-intermediate) / B1 (Intermediate) / B2 (Upper-intermediate) / C1 (Advanced) / C2 (Proficiency)
	Item 13 – How strong are your speaking skills in English?	A1 (Basic) / A2 (Low-intermediate) / B1 (Intermediate) / B2 (Upper-intermediate) / C1 (Advanced) / C2 (Proficiency)

**Table 3.** General information: pre-questionnaire items (source: author)

<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of the course, students were informed that their data would be used anonymously in research studies. They could opt not to participate in the project.

Participants in both groups, CG (N=47) and EG (N=50), were mainly male students (42, 88% in the EG and 35, 74.5% in the CG).<sup>6</sup> Most students were Spanish except for two Chinese-speaking students in EG and a Turkish-speaking student in CG. Their ages ranged between 21 and 30, with most of them being between the ages of 21 and 22 (29, 58% in the EG and 23, 48.9% in the CG). Students were also asked to specify the degree they were in to classify them and to know their interests. There was not a clear line of answers here as students were diverse, and there were students from Mechanical Engineering to Industrial Technologies Engineering, among others.

In terms of the participants' perception of their level of English, most of the students considered chose an intermediate level (20, 40% in the EG and 12, 25.5% in the CG) or an upper-intermediate level (15, 30% in the EG and 21, 44.7% in the CG). When asked to be more precise about their oral production skills level, the majority of EG students thought their speaking level was an intermediate level (23, 46%), while CG students' percentages were more spread: between intermediate (12, 25.5%) and upper intermediate (17, 36.2%).

The first dimension, utility (Table 4), attempted to assess the usefulness of English in general and the production of oral skills in particular. EG and CG students thought reading and writing were the most important skills in their studies and professional future, ranging speaking skills as "not important", which can be seen as students' perception of not developing their speaking skills during their academic years and, therefore, trying to pursue professional careers in Spanish companies where they would not need to use their English oral skills and where their communication in this language will be probably only through emails or reports.

	Items	Answers
Dimension 1 - Utility	Item 14 – Choose the order of the skills in terms of their importance for your studies	Ranking (Speaking – Listening – Writing – Reading)
	Item 16 – In my studies speaking skills are fundamental	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally disagree
	Item 18 – I consider reading and writing more important than listening and speaking	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 19 – In my professional future, listening and speaking will be the most important skills	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 20 – I hope to use a lot my speaking skills in my future career	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree

**Table 4.** Utility dimension in pre-questionnaire (source: author)

When asked about how fundamental speaking skills are for their studies and future careers, EG students considered oral skills more relevant than writing skills, with 27 (54%) of the students totally or strongly agreeing on its importance for their studies and 26 (52%) of them totally or strongly agreeing in its relevance for their future career. CG students' answers revealed similar results, as 34 (72.4%) students considered speaking skills fundamental for their studies, and 29 (61.7%) of them considered them essential for their professional future. This differs from the previous answer, reinforcing the idea of students' knowledge of the importance of English but not having enough resources to develop it.

<sup>6</sup> Number of participants' responses are followed by the corresponding percentage *N*, %.

Dimension 2 (Table 5), on students' anxiety levels, focuses on their confidence to speak in front of others and how they feel when they are at the centre of the learning process and have to communicate in English.

	Items	Answers
<b>Dimension 2 – Pleasure and motivation</b>	Item 25 – I think that speaking skills are pleasant and enjoyable	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 27 – Traditional speaking activities (for example, discussions with classmates or presentations), are not attractive	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 28 – I want to understand and be able to communicate with people in English	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 30 – I am not good at speaking activities	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree

**Table 5.** Pleasure and motivation dimension in pre-questionnaire (source: author)

Students in the EG and CG thought that speaking was pleasant and enjoyable, with 21 (42%) of EG students and 18 (38.3%) of CG students totally or strongly agreeing with the statement. At the same time, students rejected traditional speaking activities, as 25 (50%) of EG students and 28 (59.6%) of CG students agreed with item 27. When asked if they wanted to be understood and be able to communicate in English, in both groups, students seemed to agree. However, when asked if they were not good at speaking activities, students revealed that they were aware of their weaknesses in this skill, as 26 (52%) of students admitted to being somehow not good at speaking activities in the EG, and 28 (59.5%) of CG students admitted the same. This reveals their willingness to improve their speaking skills but not wanting to do it using traditional methodologies as they had already used them but are not confident with their skills after trying them.

Dimensions 3 (Table 6) reveal students' confidence to speak in front of others and how they feel when they tend to communicate in English. The total percentage of students who show little or no confidence in their speaking skills was 25 (50%) in the EG and 20 (54.7%) in the CG, which reinforces the idea of their willingness to learn the language but their low self-esteem when having to face real situations in which they have to be the centre and feel uncomfortable when they have to communicate in English.

	Items	Answers
<b>Dimension 3 – Anxiety</b>	Item 32 – I have self-confidence when I face a speaking activity	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 34 – When I try to communicate in English, I feel uncomfortable and nervous	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally disagree

**Table 6.** Anxiety dimension: items pre-questionnaire (source: author)

Dimensions 4 and 5 deal with specific questions about listening and speaking, respectively. However, as this paper only focuses on speaking enhancement, Table 7 shows the items of dimension 5. When asked about the time students spend practising speaking skills, students answered that they do not spend enough time practising it inside and outside the classroom.

This deficit of practice is more pronounced outside, presumably because they are Spanish students living and studying in Spain.

	Items	Answers
Dimension 5 – Speaking	Item 41 – The amount of time I spend practising my SPEAKING skills in CLASS is sufficient	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 42 – The amount of time I spend practising my SPEAKING skills OUTSIDE the classroom is sufficient	Totally agree / Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / Totally Disagree
	Item 43 – What kind of activities do you do to train or improve your speaking skills?	Discussions with friends or classmates / Interviews with a partner / Short talks / Oral presentations / Other
	Item 44 – How often do you practise your speaking skills?	Once a week / Twice - three times a week / Four - five times a week / More than five times a week

**Table 7.** Speaking dimension: items pre-questionnaire (source: author)

Regarding the materials students use to improve their speaking skills, most EG students marked the option short talks (19, 38%) followed by discussion with classmates (12, 24%), and similar results were shown by CG students as their preferred options were the same but reversed, discussion with classmates achieved a 36.2% (17) and short talks had a 34% (16). Thus, this demonstrates that students are used to traditional activities instead of trying new things. By contrast, a small group of students in both groups marked the other option, giving interesting responses such as “working for an American company” or “speaking with Erasmus students”, which demonstrates that they want to have real-life conversations. Finally, when asked about the time they spent practising their speaking skills in both groups, the highest amount was “once per week” (38, 76% in the EG and 39, 83% in the CG), consistent with previous perceptions.

Dimension 6 (Table 8) deals with students' previous experience with AVT materials inside and outside the classroom. When asked about the frequency of working with audiovisual materials in the English classroom, most students in both groups pointed out that they had used them at least once, twice or thrice a week. However, a high number of EG students (14, 28%) said that they had never used them.

	Items	Answers
Dimension 6 – Methodology	Item 45 – How frequently have you used audiovisual materials in English classes?	Once a week / 2 - 3 times a week / More than 5 times a week / Never use them
	Item 46 – I know the main types of audiovisual translation (subtitling and dubbing)	Yes/no
	Item 48 – The use of activities based on DUBBING may contribute to the improvement of...	Listening / Reading / Speaking Writing / Vocabulary acquisition / None
	Item 52 – Have you ever done an activity in your English class with dubbing?	Yes/no

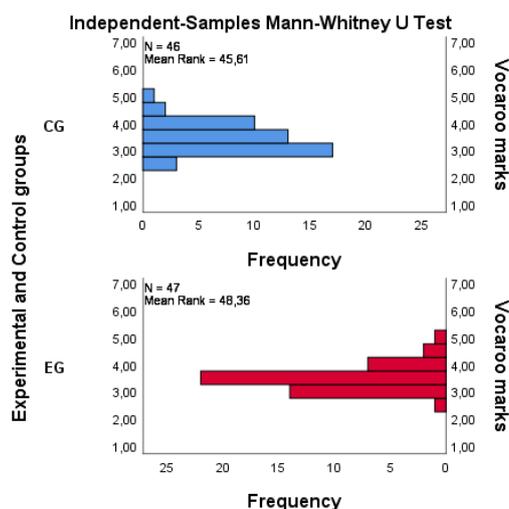
**Table 8.** Methodology dimensions: items pre-questionnaire (source: author)

More than half of the students in both groups (32, 64% in the EG and 39, 83% in the CG) claimed to know the main types of DAT modalities; however, 18 students in the EG (36%) stated that they did not recognise what these were. When asked about the benefits of dubbing,

CG students hardly selected the option “speaking skill”, which may imply that they see this modality as a final product in which the voices are in the target language and do not see the process and the benefits it may have for FL. Finally, none of the EG students had ever done any dubbing activities, and only a reduced percentage of CG students (6, 12.8%) stated that they had used them in the past.

#### 4.2. Speaking task results

At the end of the lesson, both groups had to perform a speaking post-task, pitching an innovative idea in their field of study, marked with 5 points. The results were then gathered and analysed through SPSS (Figure 1) to see if there was any difference in the students' speaking skills between CG and EG after the completion of the lesson plan.



**Figure 1.** Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test (source: author)

First, a symmetric distribution test was performed to measure the proximity of the data to the centre of the distribution; the results were, then, corroborated with a normality test and a P-P plot test. This will indicate if the data are symmetrically distributed or deviate from normality which will tell us the test that should be applied to analyse the data and compare the group (Field, 2009).

On average, in the EG, students' speaking results were 3.48 out of 5. The data show a positive value of skewness (0.871) which indicates a pile-up of scores on the left side of the distribution. This means that most of the data are on the right-hand side of the histogram, and the median is larger than the mean. Furthermore, the positive value of Kurtosis (1.425) indicates a heavy-tailed distribution, a pronounced deviation of the data. In the CG, students' average on their speaking results was 3.43 out of 5. The data show a positive skewness (0.576), which indicates a concentration of scores on the left side of the distribution; the positive value of Kurtosis (0.161) indicates a heavy-tailed distribution with a pronounced deviation of the data. These results, which were corroborated by a normality test histogram and a P-P plot test, imply that the distribution in both groups is not normal, and a non-parametric test ought to be used for comparison purposes.

Thus, in order to see if the results of EG and CG are significant, a non-parametric test for independent samples (the Mann-Whitney U test) was performed. The null hypothesis, which states that the distribution of EG and CG across categories is the same, should be maintained as the result was higher than 0.05. The average marks in the EG did not significantly differ from the CG ( $U=1017.000$ ,  $z=-0.517$ ,  $p<0.605$ ).

The marks in both groups were similar (Figure 1), varying from 2.5 to 5 points. The maximal difference between groups can be observed from 3.5 points upwards, where 31 EG students (red bars) stand out, opposite to the 26 students of the CG (blue bars). If we look deeper into this range of marks, both groups had a similar number of students with a maximum grade of 5 points. CG students obtained more 4.5 points than EG; however, this group also had a higher number of students with the lowest mark.

At the same time, Figure 1 also shows how CG students' marks ( $M = 3.43$ ) are spread, and the range is higher, while in the EG ( $M = 3.48$ ), the marks are gathered around the highest points. Thus, it is possible to conclude that both groups had similar grades and more tests are necessary to see an actual progression, although it is encouraging that results after just one dubbing lesson plan are this good. Future studies will compare all the lesson plans based on dubbing or traditional speaking activities to see if the gap is more pronounced under those circumstances.

### 4.3. Post-questionnaire

The post-questionnaire followed the same structure as the pre-questionnaire based on Auzmendi Escribano's (1992) model. However, this time, questionnaires from EG and CG were different as they focused on two methodologies, DAT or a more traditional communicative approach. Thus, the EG questionnaire had five dimensions, three of which focused on the usefulness and preferences of the methodologies, and two were specific about subtitling and dubbing. On the other hand, the CG dimensions were the same but without the dimensions of the DAT methodology. The questions gathered in this post-questionnaire were divided into qualitative and quantitative data. As this paper focuses only on Lesson Plan 4 and speaking skills, the items to be analysed will focus on those related to these two issues.

Dimension 1 in both groups focused on skills improvement after the course with the question "have you noticed any change in your speaking skills in English after completing the lesson plans?". In the case of speaking skills, the improvement was perceived similarly, as the most frequent answer in both groups was "big difference" (20, 48.8% in the EG and 20, 43.5% in the CG). Even more, no student in the EG marked the "no difference" option, proving that after implementing dubbing activities, students perceived an increment in their oral production skills, which was the aim of the study.

Dimensions 2 and 3 in the EG were about the DAT methodology students in this group had been following. In dimension 3, regarding the development of their English skills after the completion of dubbing tasks, speaking was, according to students' perception, the most developed skill, with 12 (29.3%) of "very well" answers and 14 (34.1%) of "well" answers to the question "how did dubbing help you develop your speaking skills?". This implies that students perceived speaking as the most developed skill, which could be related to the use of dubbing.

Dimension 4 in the EG and dimension 2 in the CG asked students about the lesson plans in general. Students thought the instructions in Lesson Plan 4 were clear-cut, as 28 (68.3%) students in the EG and 32 (69.6%) in the CG totally or strongly agreed. Thus, the lesson plans were easily understood by them.

When asked to rate the enhancement of their English skills (Figure 2 for the EG and Figure 3 for the CG), the skill that improved the most was speaking. However, EG students ranked it higher, with 32 (78%) of them placing it as their most developed skill compared to a 23 (52.2%) in the CG. Thus, this shows that dubbing tasks are perceived by students as a good source for improving their oral production skills. It can be related to the fact that students had to work on their pronunciation and speed through intralingual dubbing in this lesson.

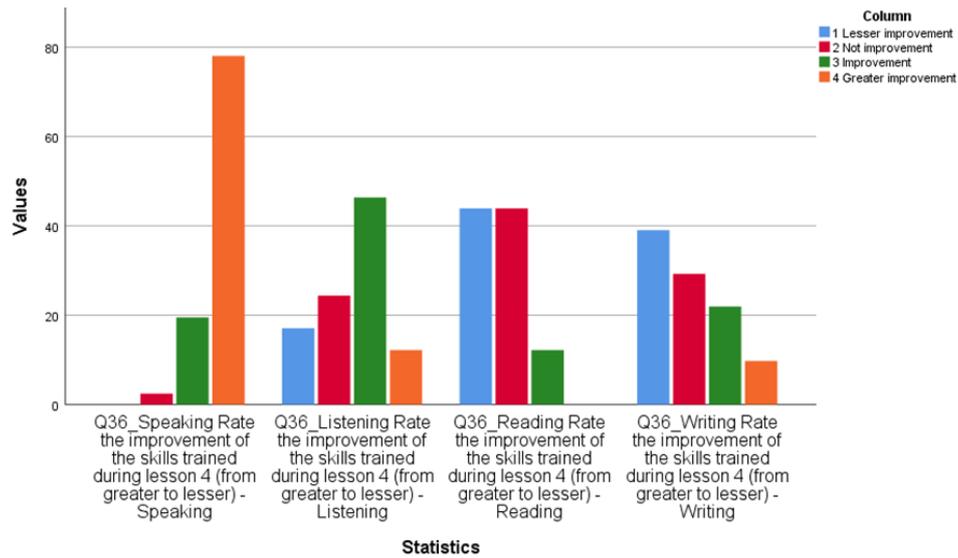


Figure 2. Question 36 descriptive statistics (EG) (source: author)

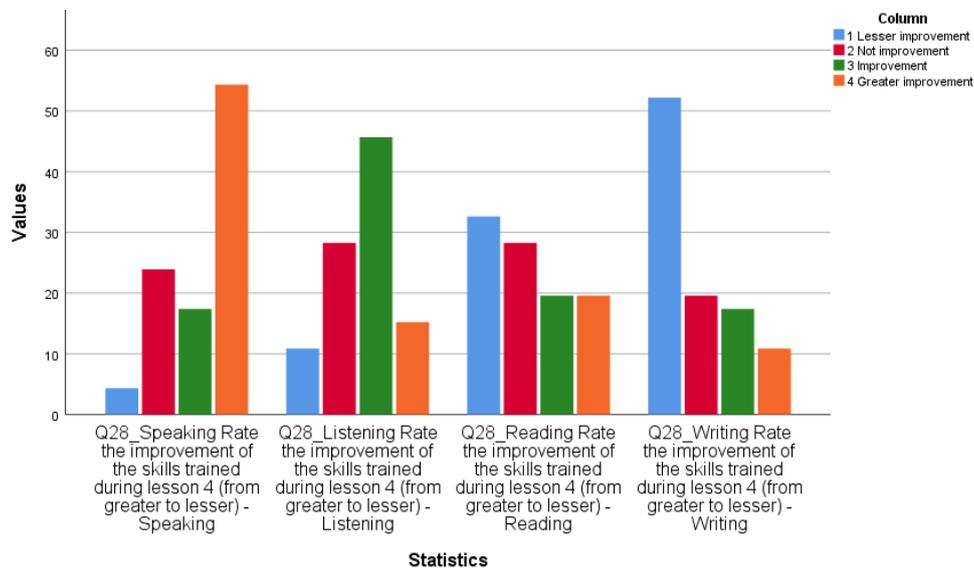


Figure 3. Question 28 descriptive statistics (CG) (source: author)

The last quantitative question in this dimension was related to the time students spent completing the different tasks to see if there was a difference between EG and CG. According to their answers, in the EG, most students felt that they spent between 1 and 2 hours completing the tasks (19, 46.3%), which is the allotted time. This was also the most common answer among CG students (21, 45.7%). However, the second most common answer in the EG (“between 2 hours and 3 hours”) differs from the one given by CG students (“between 30 minutes and 1 hour”). This can be related to the fact that a dubbing activity requires more time as students have to become familiar with software.

Open-question answers in this dimension dealt with students’ experience with the lesson plans. In order to analyse students’ answers to Lesson Plan 4 responses, the answers were gathered through QDA Miner Lite<sup>7</sup>, and descriptive codes were assigned and classified as positive, negative and neutral responses (Figures 4 and 5).

<sup>7</sup> This is a free-version software for computer-assisted qualitative analysis.

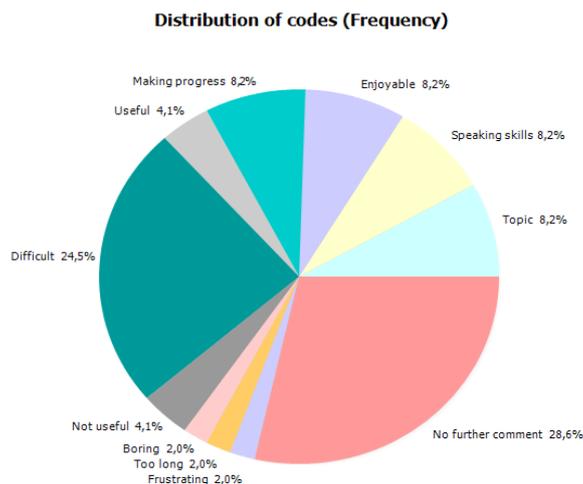


Figure 4. Q38 codes frequency: case study (EG) (source: author)

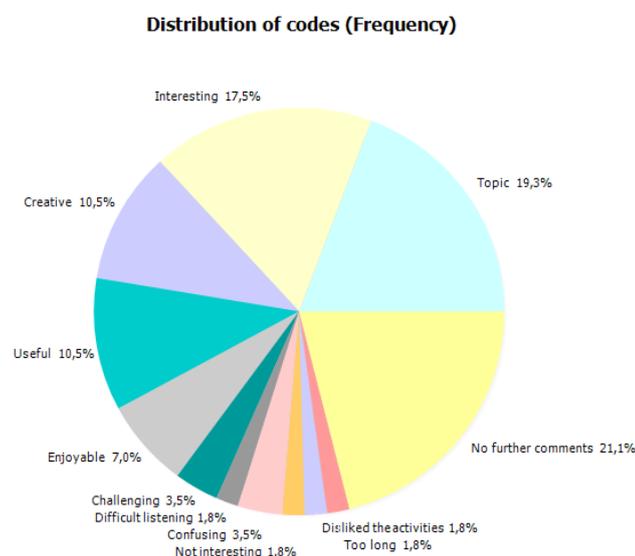


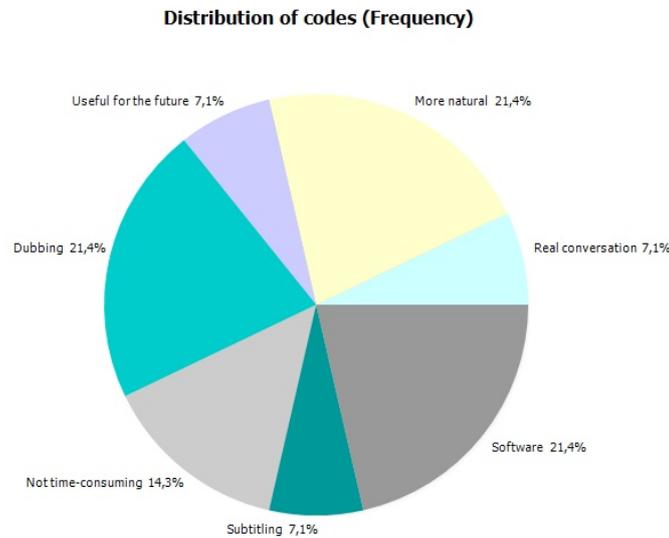
Figure 5. Q24 codes frequency: case study (CG) (source: author)

Figure 4<sup>8</sup> shows the answers given by EG students, while Figure 5 does the same with the answers by CG students. In the EG, positive and negative comments have similar results (36.9% and 34.6%, respectively). One of the most recurrent answers was the difficulty of the video, which can be related to students' perception of having spent more time than the allotted one. However, students also alluded to their speaking skills enhancement and the enjoyability of the activities, proving that DAT activities can reduce students' anxiety levels which results in a better perception of their skills' enhancement.

In the CG, most students thought the topic was interesting, and the creative part was useful. However, on a more negative note, some students expressed that the lesson plan was challenging and that the activities were confusing and not interesting. The latter may be related to the fact that all the activities were traditional tasks, which suggests that students want something more innovative in their studies.

<sup>8</sup> In the data Figures, QDA Miner Lite indicates the decimal marker using a comma by default, but following English grammar and punctuation rules, it should be a period.

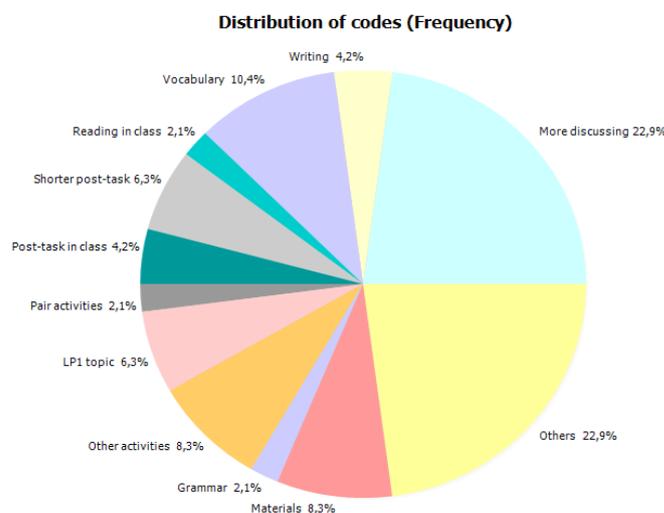
The last dimension questions had the same purpose in the EG and CG, to see students' methodological preferences after completing the lesson plans. However, the questions were phrased differently for each group.



**Figure 6.** Q57 distribution of codes: traditional method category (EG) (source: author)

First, students were asked if they thought the time invested in their post tasks was less or more according to the methodology they had used. Students in both groups considered having worked slightly more (34.1% in the EG and 41.3% in the CG) than if using a different methodology. However, as noted above, it was the EG students who perceived spending a higher amount of time on their post-task in Lesson Plan 4. Then, students were asked about their methodological preferences. More than half of EG students (65.9%) stated that they would repeat the experience of using a DAT methodology. Meanwhile, CG students preferred not to try a new method and to continue doing traditional activities.

When asked to be more specific with an open-answer question, EG's responses of not wanting a new methodology (Figure 6) show that their main reasons were that activities in a more traditional approach were more natural and less time-consuming. Some students proposed blending both methodologies and incorporating more class discussions and group activities.



**Figure 7.** Q46 distribution of codes changes category (CG) (source: author)

Meanwhile, CG students who chose to try a new method (Figure 7) did it because they wanted to try dubbing activities and felt that a DAT methodology would imply more speaking enhancement and more realistic situations.

Finally, students commented on any elements to be improved. The EG answers were coded in changes and no changes, as some of them thought the lesson plans did not need any improvement. One of the most recurrent answers was to change the software. However, students were free to use any of their choices, which was, by contrast, what some of the students highlighted: the liberty to choose the dubbing software that best suited them. Another change was related to the time they spent doing the post-tasks. Most of the students claimed to spend the allotted time on their autonomous work, so this could imply students' reluctance to do extra work. In the CG, the categories were the same, with changes and no changes, and students suggested how to improve the lesson plans. Some argued that having more discussions in class was necessary to improve their speaking skills, while others pointed to having readings aloud to improve their pronunciation.

## 5. Findings

The pre-questionnaire revealed the obstacles students find when studying English (Research Question 1), and in particular when dealing with speaking activities. Students are willing to make themselves understood in real-life conversations and consider speaking skills highly important for their future careers. Yet, traditional activities were a constant in students' responses, and it could be argued that these lead to a lack of motivation and anxiety. Moreover, most of the students felt that oral communication was significant in their future, although many of them demonstrated a lack of confidence. Thus, this implies that the teaching of speaking skills in ESP must be rethought, and didactic dubbing opens new possibilities.

In the speaking task (Research Question 2), both groups obtained remarkable marks (EG  $M=3.48$ , CG  $M=3.43$ ). The speaking results from the EG were favourable, with all receiving more than half of the possible points and most with marks between 3.5 points and 5 points out of 5. However, the comparison between groups proved that there were no significant differences between EG and CG, which means that it is not possible to demonstrate tangible differences between DAT and traditional activities. This is a limitation to be addressed in the future with a full sequence, which would offer more data to establish whether there is a clear improvement among EG participants.

Finally, students' final perceptions (Research Question 3) indicated that DAT constitutes an opportunity to enhance motivation. EG students' perception towards new methodologies was highly positive, especially for improving their speaking skills. Moreover, once they had tried it, most students aimed to keep studying English with this method, which proves that even with its drawbacks, students' preferences for the methodology are clear. One of the drawbacks is students' time perception, as they feel that they spend more time than necessary doing the dubbing activities. However, this phenomenon is likely due to the disinclination of some students towards autonomous work, as it is important to note that CG students also perceive that they have dedicated more time to these activities than EG students. Thus, it could be argued that once students try DAT, reactions are highly positive, and the great majority consider that this methodology is fundamental to their speaking skills enhancement.

## 6. Conclusions

Following the scarce studies on DAT in ESP settings, the aim of this paper was to fill in this gap by presenting a study that took place at the University of Zaragoza, Spain, with students enrolled in a Degree in Architecture and Engineering. An experiment was conducted to ascertain what the

benefits of dubbing were when it came to enhancing oral skills. ESP students' low self-esteem and motivation may be partially due to the use of traditional activities. The implementation of a more innovative lesson plan based on DAT has lowered students' anxiety levels and raised their confidence while facing speaking activities.

Although increasingly common and necessary, ESP courses are still elective modules. The study was conducted with limited time available to implement the methodology, so future studies should be carried out over longer periods to see if this improvement in learning is greater over time. As this paper focused on one lesson plan, it has not been possible to extract far-fetching conclusions about how significant the differences among students' marks are. Still, both groups obtained high marks. As a result, it could be argued that DAT activities are, at least, as effective as traditional speaking activities.

Further studies should investigate how didactic dubbing can be introduced in the ESP classroom to foster not only oral production skills but also oral reception skills. Apart from speaking skills, research is needed on written skills improvement, as students also write scripts during dubbing tasks. Moreover, future courses should emphasise the use of DAT for this skills' development by introducing other modalities of AVT, such as AD through voicing tasks in which speaking is combined with the other skills.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the work of the members of the TRADILEX research group for the fulfilment of this project (<https://tradi.uned.es/en/proyecto-tradilex-2>).

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## The language learners' reception of fansubs and raw machine-translated subtitles: A pilot study

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### **Abstract**

This study explores how learners of Chinese react to and engage with fansubs and raw machine-translated subtitles and whether the two modes of subtitling are effective in facilitating vocabulary learning. Sixteen L1 English speakers with middle and high levels of proficiency in Chinese were invited to watch a nine-minute clip extracted from a Chinese period drama. Screen recordings, think-aloud protocols, vocabulary pre- and post-tests, and interviews were used. The results show that the combination of both modes of subtitles had a positive effect on vocabulary learning, regardless of proficiency levels. Learners often underestimated the quality of machine translation and associated erroneous subtitles with machine translation output. This highlights the need for increased machine translation literacy. The study emphasises the importance of learners' motivation and genuine interest for effective language learning. Additionally, it sheds light on the ongoing discussion about the use of subtitles in language learning and can potentially broaden learners' range of learning resources and improve their overall learning outcomes.

### **Keywords**

Machine translation, audiovisual translation, language learning, viewing habits, motivation

## 1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is an essential tool that enables learners to think about language in an enjoyable and holistic way (Neves, 2004). Research has explored the impact of different subtitle conditions on language learning, including no subtitles, intralingual subtitles, interlingual subtitles, and bilingual subtitles (e.g., Baranowska, 2020; Kruger & Steyn, 2014; Liao *et al.*, 2020). However, much of this research has focused on videos subtitled from English into other languages. Subtitling from other languages into English is less commonly studied.

Moreover, the use of subtitles in language learning has experienced notable transformations in how learners interact with media content, owing to the increasing popularity of fansubs and the continuously improving accuracy of machine-translated subtitles (MTS). Fansubs have emerged as widely accessible and freely available resources on various online platforms, offering learners a diverse range of subtitled content spanning various genres, languages, and cultures. Many language learners and translation students use fansubbing to improve their language skills (Liu & De Seta, 2014; Lakarnchua, 2017). Automated subtitling, on the other hand, has undergone significant advancements. In 2019 Google introduced Live Captions, which provide automatic intralingual subtitles on users' phones. The captioning happens in real-time, completely on-device without using network resources (Tadmor-Ramanovic & Bar, 2019). In the same year, Viki, a video-streaming platform targeting fans of Asian TV shows, collaborated with the Rakuten Institute of Technology to introduce automated subtitling—Vikibot (Zhan, 2022). Given these changes, it has become crucial to investigate the potential learning benefits of fansubs and raw MTS.

A comparison in learning effects between fansubs and raw MTS is made to see whether fansubs have better effects on language learning than raw MTS and whether language learners can tell the difference between the two modes of subtitling. The participants' performance in vocabulary tests as well as their use and perception of raw MTS can provide insights into the didactic potential of raw MTS for language learning. The results of this study also have significant implications for language educators, providing clues about how to incorporate raw MTS into language training and how to help language learners approach machine translation (MT) in a critical and informed way.

## 2. Fansubs and MTS in language learning

Fansubbing is often regarded as a form of user-led production because fansubs are created by fans and for fans. In fansubbing, the translator's notes are used to explain "untranslatable" cultural references or other culture-specific elements in audiovisual materials (Díaz-Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez, 2006). The presence of the translator's notes not only increases the visibility of fansubbers but also helps the audience who wants to know more about the background or contextual information (Wang, 2017). Previous research on translator's notes in fansubs often explores their effect on comprehension, but the question of whether translator's notes can be helpful in vocabulary learning is not closely examined. For example, Künzli and Ehrensberger-Dow (2011) found that the translator's notes did not have a significant effect on comprehension. Caffrey's (2012) research showed that using a translator's note with a one-line subtitle can facilitate better understanding, but a translator's note with a two-line subtitle does not yield the same beneficial effects.

Benson and Chan (2010) investigated language-related interactions in the comment section of a fansubbed clip of the 2008 Olympics song on YouTube. They found that the fansubs and *pinyin* provided in the subtitle area help language learning. The comment section is also useful for language learners to ask questions about language-related and culture-related issues and receive answers from others. Bolaños García-Escribano (2017) explored the potential benefits

of using fansubs as a didactic resource in English as a foreign language (EFL) education. Views on the application of fansubs in EFL classrooms varied significantly. Recurring translation errors, lack of professionalism, literal translations, and synchronisation errors caused problems in language learning, but fansubs can be used for comparative translation analysis, error-solving, and proofreading.

Similarly, the pedagogical application of MT in subtitling has also not been closely investigated, partly because the subtitling industry is not ready for the comprehensive implementation of automation (Karakanta, 2022). For example, Chan *et al.* (2019) compare the effects of auto-generated intralingual subtitles and corrected intralingual subtitles on cognitive load and learning. The findings indicate that neither auto-generated nor corrected intralingual subtitles had a significant impact on performance in the post-test or self-reported cognitive load. Chan *et al.* (2019) suggest that this could be two factors. First, the low quality of auto-generated intralingual subtitles may cause distractions. Second, the speed of corrected subtitles is significantly faster than automated subtitles, leading to comprehension difficulties. Malakul and Park (2023) compared auto-subtitles, human-translated subtitles, and no subtitles to assess the impact on learning. The study involved 79 Thai secondary school students who took English listening and video content-learning comprehension tests, as well as cognitive load and learner satisfaction scales. The results showed no significant difference between the auto-subtitles and human-translated subtitles groups in terms of comprehension, cognitive load, and satisfaction.

The present study investigates a relatively underexplored aspect: subtitling from Chinese into English. Furthermore, this paper presents an innovative examination of how language learners' perceptions of MT and their consumption habits of subtitled audiovisual content influence their use of MTS.

### 3. Methods

The questions driving this research are: (1) How do fansubs and MTS affect vocabulary learning?; and (2) How do language learners perceive MT in subtitling?

I hypothesise that fansubs facilitate better vocabulary learning outcomes than MTS. I assume that errors and other problematic aspects have the potential to divert the viewer's attention and create difficulties in construing the contextual meanings of certain vocabulary items. Since pure MTS contain more errors than fansubs (see examples in Table 1 below), MTS are more likely to disrupt the vocabulary learning process.

#### 3.1. Design

The study employed a comprehensive research methodology, which included the administration of questionnaires, vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests, think-aloud protocols, screen recordings, and post-hoc interviews (see sections below for details). The research design and methodology have undergone a rigorous review and received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Melbourne.

##### 3.1.1. Materials

The clips shown to participants were extracted from the Chinese period drama *Nirvana in Fire* (Lang Ya Bang, 琅琊榜) Season One (Kong & Li, 2015). The clip used in the pre-experiment questionnaire was extracted directly from the original show, with Chinese subtitles only and the original soundtrack. The clip lasts 100 seconds. The plot is carried out by conversation between characters, so audiences need to have at least middle levels of proficiency in Mandarin to understand it. Further, the images and scenes in the video offered little help when the viewers had to choose the correct answer in the pre-experiment survey.

The clip used in the main experiment lasts 9 minutes and 19 seconds. This clip introduces the background of the entire drama. The subtitle content of the clip is divided into two, based on duration and plot. A logical break in the storyline was selected as close as possible to the halfway point (04:30) of the overall duration of the clip. One half of the clip is the online fansubbed version and the other half is the machine-translated version. Two separate groups were given two different versions of the combined modes of subtitles (see Table 3 below for details). The fansubbed version I used in the research was subtitled and timed by the Viki fansubber team, and the MTS were generated by DeepL.

### 3.1.2. Participants

Snowball and convenience sampling methods were used to select participants. Sixteen students at the University of Melbourne were selected after pre-experiment tests. They were intermediate or advanced learners of Chinese who were native English speakers aged between 18 and 34. Apart from A01 and A08, the remaining fourteen participants were currently enrolled in Chinese courses at the University of Melbourne (Chinese 3, Chinese 5, Chinese 7, and Master of Translation in the Chinese language).

To test the possible correlation between scores in the pre-experimental listening comprehension test and the language levels of Chinese indicated by the courses that respondents currently took, I excluded test results given by A01 and A08 who were not currently enrolled in any Chinese courses at the University of Melbourne because these two participants' language proficiency was not measured by the same standards set by the University of Melbourne. It turns out that higher scores in the pre-experiment language test correlate with higher levels of education in Chinese ( $r(13) = .60, p = .022$ ).

### 3.1.3. Pre-experiment survey

The pre-experiment questionnaire was used to select potential participants for the experiment. The pre-experiment questionnaires first asked all respondents about their age, gender, educational background, and language background. This was followed by a listening comprehension test.

The language learners watched a 100-second clip first and then answered five multiple-choice questions based on what they had heard in the soundtrack and what they had read in the Chinese subtitles. Once a participant clicked Next to see the questions, the action was irreversible. Any form of screen-based activity while watching was prohibited. If they did not follow the instructions, their test results were considered invalid. The questions had three options: one correct answer, one incorrect option, and an I-don't-know option. Each question was worth one point, making five points in total. Based on the number of correct answers, the participants were divided into three groups: low (0-2 correct answers), intermediate (3-4 correct answers), and high (5 correct answers). Those who scored between 3 and 5 were selected to participate in the experiment: they knew the basic vocabulary of Chinese and could pick up some information from the original Chinese soundtrack, but they still needed English subtitles to fully understand the storyline and plot.

Eighty-nine learners of Chinese provided complete answers to the pre-experiment questionnaires. Sixty-five were native English speakers aged between 18 and 34. Twelve responses were excluded because they had screen-based activities during the test. That is, their scores on the language test may have failed to represent their actual listening comprehension skills. The remaining fifty-three responses were considered valid. Thirty-seven respondents scored between 3 and 5 in the listening comprehension test. Of the 37 respondents, 25 left their email addresses and expressed their willingness to participate in the experiment. Sixteen of them agreed and took part in it.

### 3.1.4. Screen recordings and think-aloud protocols

Screen recordings are used to capture the participants' screen-based activities. Think-aloud protocols can provide clues about their thought process and sense-making process at certain points in time during viewing. Some of their verbalisations can also showcase their reactions and responses to problematic subtitles. The entire viewing process from the participant's situated perspective was recorded via Zoom. Meanwhile, when participants enabled the audio and video functions on Zoom, their verbalisations and facial expressions could be captured at the same time.

The participants were asked to start screen-sharing when they were ready to watch the clip provided to them. The screen-based activities were limited to pauses, skips, going back, and fast-forwarding. Other activities, such as rewatching the entire clip or posting comments, were prohibited. The participants were informed that the screen-based activities were not mandatory. They could take those actions whenever they wanted.

The time for thinking aloud was unlimited. To mitigate the participant's possible anxiety, I provided a demonstration accompanied by a practice session, showing them what kinds of screen-based activities were allowed and how to verbalise their thoughts while watching. The practice sessions helped participants to familiarise themselves with the research process. Therefore, the practice session with demonstrations was provided to (1) make sure the screen-sharing function on Zoom worked well on the participant's device, and (2) remind participants that they needed to verbalise their thoughts while viewing the clip.

The participants communicated their thoughts to the researcher, making the thinking-aloud process an ongoing conversation between the researcher and the participant. Prompting ("yes", "okay", or "oh") and nonverbal responses (smiling or nodding) were used simply to encourage participants to talk more, instead of pushing them to verbalise their thoughts. Sometimes, participants asked me a question regarding the plot or the meaning of a specific phrase during viewing. If it was a simple yes-or-no question and was not related to the vocabulary test, I would answer them directly; if the question requires a detailed explanation, I would say "We can talk about this later" or "What do you think".

### 3.1.5. Vocabulary tests

Vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests are widely used in accessing language learning in AVT (Baranowska, 2020; Chan *et al.*, 2019; Peters *et al.*, 2016). However, the vocabulary test in the present study serves as a prompt to encourage active attention from the language learners towards both the subtitles and the original soundtrack, rather than solely testing whether the learners can pick up new vocabulary items.

The questions in the pre-test and post-test were the same: eight Chinese vocabulary items in the clip. The first four vocabulary items appear in the first half of the clip, and the remaining four are in the second half (see Table 1).

No.	Time	Vocabulary items	Literal translation	FAS <sup>1</sup>	MTS <sup>2</sup>
1	00:03	文	unit of currency	wen-unit of currency	word
2	00:48	大	great	da- honorific, lit. the Great	da
3	01:42	诊脉	check pulse	check pulse	feel pulse
4	03:21	哥哥	term of endearment for older males	gege-endearment for older males	brother

<sup>1</sup> FAS: fansubs.

<sup>2</sup> MTS: raw machine-translated subtitles.

5	04:32	姐姐	term of endearment for older females	jiejie-endearment for older females	sister
6	05:51	长进	progress	progress	improve
7	06:28	休养	recuperate	recuperate	rest
8	07:46	江湖	rivers and lakes	the pugilist world	around the world

**Table 1.** Eight Chinese phrases presented in the vocabulary test (source: author)



**Figure 1.** A translator's note (source: Viki)

“文” (1), “诊脉” (3), “休养” (7), and “江湖” (8) are mistranslated in the MT, although the translation of the last phrase in fansubs could also confuse viewers. The MT of “大” (2) uses the character's *pinyin* without further explanation. “哥哥” (4) and “姐姐” (5) literally mean “older brother” and “older sister” respectively, but they do not necessarily indicate a familial relationship. The two terms in the clip are suffixes after a person's given name to show admiration and proximity. The machine translations of the two terms are inadequate in the context. Thus, except for “长进” (6), the translations of the remaining seven phrases in the MTS are inadequate or even incorrect.

Vocabulary items 1, 2, 4, and 5 are selected because they are explained in the translator's notes (see an example in Figure 1). The purpose is to assess whether these translator's notes aid language learners in grasping the contextual meanings of these four vocabulary items. Since vocabulary tests have the potential to naturally increase the language learners' attention towards the subtitles, problems in subtitles may be more likely to be identified. Thus, adding mistranslations in the vocabulary tests can not only examine how mistranslations impact the interpretation of specific phrases but also explore how language learners react to problematic subtitles.

Further, repetition can help language learners pick up new vocabulary items. Vocabulary items 3, 6, 7, and 8 are chosen from the video specifically because they appear at least twice within one back-and-forth conversation. The last vocabulary item “江湖” (8) is special because it appears in both the first half and the second half of the video, so all language learners encountered fansubbed and machine-translated versions. The fansubbed version has been widely discussed in the viewers' comments on Viki. This cultural-specific item is thus selected to explore whether language learners can make sense of “the Pugilist world” with the help of MTS.

The pre-test was given to participants before they watched the clip. In this test, the participants were presented with the vocabulary items one at a time, on the screen. They were required to

verbally explain the meaning of each item. The language learners were aware that they would be asked the meaning of the eight words again after they had finished watching.

The questions were adopted from the Revised Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Zhao & Macaro, 2016). A participant's knowledge of a vocabulary item is categorised according to three levels: (1) they have not seen the word before, (2) they have seen the word and know the word is related to a certain field, and (3) they know the meaning of the word. One point is given to level one, two points to level two, and three to level three. Of the eight vocabulary items, four have specific meanings (“文”, “大”, “哥哥”, and “姐姐”) in the context. One extra point would be given to participants who identified the contextual meanings. Thus, the total score for both pre-test and post-test was 28.

### 3.1.6. Interviews

All the interviews were conducted individually and recorded on Zoom. The interview sessions not only supported and complemented the screen recordings and verbal reports, but also delved into language learners' attitudes toward MTS and their effectiveness in language learning.

The interview was semi-structured. I asked participants open-ended questions and raised some follow-up questions based on their responses, so this phase lasted from 10 to 20 minutes. I arranged the interview based on two themes:

- (1) Can they identify which part is subtitled by MT and which part by humans?
- (2) Would they consider using MTS to learn Chinese?

### 3.2. Procedure

Participants in the experiment were divided into two groups based on their scores in pre-experiment tests. The number of participants in the two groups is uneven (nine in Group A and seven in Group B) because I need to make sure the mean of the scores in both groups is the same (see Table 2). This is to avoid the possible effects of differences in listening comprehension skills on the group comparison. Participants in the two groups would encounter the clip with the same content and two modes of subtitles in reversed sequence (see Table 3 for details).

Group	Participants	Test score	Mean
A	01	3	4.0
	02	3	
	03	4	
	04	4	
	05	4	
	06	4	
	07	4	
	08	5	
	09	5	
B	01	3	4.0
	02	3	
	03	4	
	04	4	
	05	4	
	06	5	
	07	5	

**Table 2.** Participants' scores in the listening comprehension test (source: author)

Participants	Group A	Group B
Number of participants	9	7
Subtitle sequence	FAS+MTS	MTS+FAS

**Table 3.** Number of participants and the sequences of subtitle modes used (source: author)

When the participant was ready to proceed, I started recording the process. Each participant responded to the vocabulary pre-test before watching the clip. They could pause, skip, go back, and fast forward whenever they felt necessary during viewing. In terms of verbalisation, they did not need to click "Pause" before articulating their thoughts, but they were allowed to do so if they wanted to. In this sense, participants were watching the clip at their own pace and verbalising in their chosen manner. After they finished watching the clip, it took approximately five minutes for language learners to complete the vocabulary post-test. They then began the interview sessions, which lasted 10 to 15 minutes and were audio-recorded.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Test results

A t-test was used to explore whether the research material helped the participants to learn new Chinese vocabulary items. There was a significant difference in vocabulary scores between before watching the research material ( $M = 19.50$ ,  $SD = 3.12$ ) and after watching it ( $M = 24.06$ ,  $SD = 2.69$ );  $t(15) < -.001$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It means that the clip shown to participants in the main experiment had a positive effect on vocabulary learning. As shown in Table 4, the highest progress rate was 29.17% (A03 and A06) and the lowest progress rate was 7.14% (B06).

No.	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement (%)
A01	18	24	25.00
A02	19	24	20.83
A03	17	24	29.17
A04	19	25	24.00
A05	15	21	28.57
A06	17	24	29.17
A07	24	27	11.11
A08	22	27	18.52
A09	23	25	8.00
B01	17	19	10.53
B02	18	22	18.18
B03	18	25	28.00
B04	17	19	10.53
B05	19	24	20.83
B06	26	28	7.14
B07	23	27	14.81

**Table 4.** Language learners' scores and improvement in the vocabulary test (source: author)

The pre-experiment test for the language learners was used to measure the participant's listening comprehension skills, and performance in the pre-experiment test also correlated with their levels of proficiencies in Chinese indicated by the Chinese course they enrolled in (see 3.1.4 for details). There are significant positive correlations between language learners' test results in the pre-experiment language test and their performance in the vocabulary pre-test ( $r(14) = .73$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and post-test ( $r(14) = .67$ ,  $p = .004$ ). In other words, participants with higher levels of proficiency in Chinese were more likely to receive higher scores in the vocabulary pre-test, and a positive linear correlation also occurred in the post-test results.

However, there was no significant correlation between the progress rate and performance in the listening comprehension test ( $r(14) = -.37, p = .152$ ). This does not necessarily indicate that the vocabulary-learning effects of watching the video are not associated with language learners' levels of proficiency in Chinese. For instance, participant B206 achieved the highest scores in both the pre-test and post-test, resulting in a lower progress rate due to limited room for improvement. Conversely, participants with lower performance in the vocabulary pre-test had greater potential for improvement.

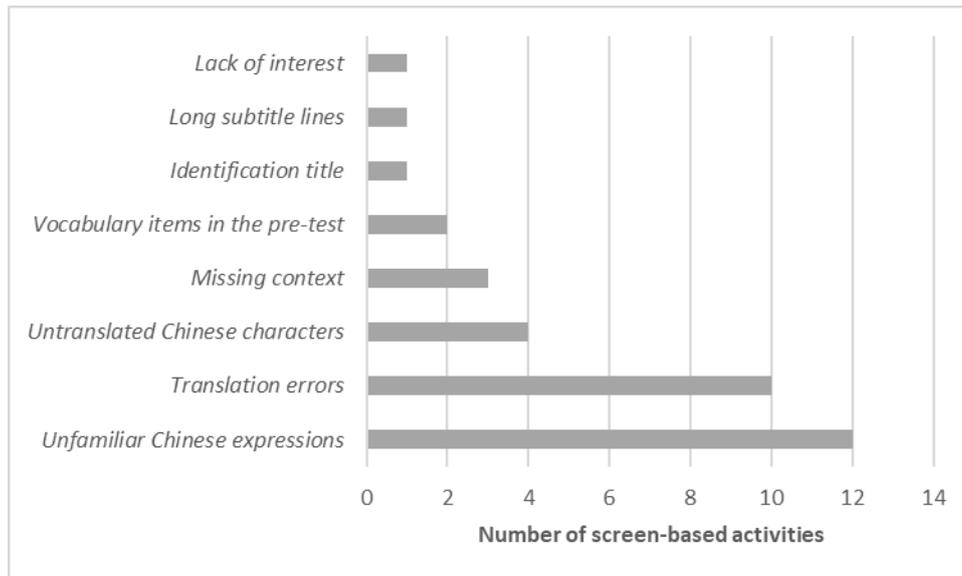
No.	First half	Second half
A01	15.38	36.36
A02	7.69	36.36
A03	21.43	40.00
A04	15.38	33.33
A05	30.77	25.00
A06	15.38	45.45
A07	13.33	8.33
A08	13.33	25.00
A09	0.00	16.67
B01	8.33	14.29
B02	15.38	22.22
B03	15.38	41.67
B04	8.33	14.29
B05	7.69	36.36
B06	0.00	15.38
B07	6.67	25.00

**Table 5.** Language learners' progress rates (%) in the first and second half of the clip (source: author)

For inter-group comparison, two t-tests were conducted for the first half of the video and the second half respectively (see Table 5 for details). In the first half, there was no significant difference in the mean progress rate between Group A ( $M = 14.75\%$ ,  $SD = .08$ ) and Group B ( $M = 8.83\%$ ,  $SD = .05$ ;  $t(14) = -1.71$ ;  $p = .109$ ). In the second half, there was still no significant difference in the mean progress rate between Group A ( $M = 29.61\%$ ,  $SD = .12$ ) and Group B ( $M = 24.17\%$ ,  $SD = .08$ ;  $t(14) = -.95$ ;  $p = .361$ ). This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in the progress rates between the two groups neither in the first half of the vocabulary test nor the second half. There is no evidence suggesting that one mode of subtitling is more effective in facilitating vocabulary learning than the other. However, no matter whether for Group A or Group B, the mean progress rate in the second half is higher than the first half ( $t(8) = 1.86$ ,  $p = .008$ ;  $t(6) = 1.94$ ,  $p = .006$ ). It is possible that the language learners were inclined to remember more vocabulary items in the second half, as restrictions in working memory may reduce a person's processing capacity (Sweller *et al.*, 2011).

#### 4.2. Screen-based activities and verbal reports

Six participants had screen-based activities and initiated 34 screen-based activities in total. In the main experiment, B03 did not verbalise her thoughts and three participants (A05, A07, and A09) had minimal verbalisations (uttered fewer than five statements) during the viewing process.



**Figure 2.** Reasons for screen-based activities by participants (source: author)

Figure 2 presents the eight self-reported reasons that trigger screen-based activities. The two screen-based activities regarding the two vocabulary items (“休养” meaning recuperate and “长进” meaning improvement) and in the pre-test were initiated by the same participant (B07). The other vocabulary item “文” (unit of currency) is mistranslated as “word” in the MTS. Although it did not trigger screen-based activities, three participants commented on it during viewing:

B04: Is she really saying it costs 20 words? Because I heard 文. Does she mean *yuan* [the official currency of the People’s Republic of China]?

B06: Looks like there was a bit of a mistake they made with the subtitles 10 words. But let’s pretend it wasn’t.

B07: Ten words. That doesn’t make any sense.

The scene is where Yan asks the girl standing beside the market stall how much a musical instrument is and the girl replies, “ten wen”. Clearly, *wen* must be a unit of currency. In the machine-translated version, *wen* (文) was translated as “word” because “文” can be interpreted as “文字” (word) in some contexts. Although the three participants did find the term “word” out of place, they did not have problems making sense of the term.

Unfamiliar expressions in the original soundtrack triggered most screen-based activities. The twelve pauses and rewinds were initiated by four participants. Some of their statements are as follows:

A08 [pausing 2 seconds at 00:48]: What... 大渝 [Country name]. Okay, I have no idea...

B02 [going back from 08:32 to 08:27]: When they say 请, the subtitle is this way. I don’t know 请 can mean this.

B07 [going back from 00:20 to 00:17]: I didn’t catch that part. “午膳时分” [during lunchtime] Okay, it seems that he is using an old way to talk about time here.

Their verbalisations indicate that pauses and rewinds gave them a second chance to listen to and respond to unfamiliar expressions in semi-classical Chinese. After they had picked up

what was uttered in the dialogue, with or without the assistance of the researcher, they tried to locate the translation of the expression in the subtitles.

### 4.3. Interview results

In the experiment, the participants did not know that there were two modes of subtitling in the clip and, therefore, which of the two modes were combined. In the interviews, they were informed that one-half of the clip was subtitled by fansubbers and the other half was by MT. Then they were asked to identify which part had been subtitled by MT and which part by humans.

Of the sixteen participants, twelve (75%) were able to identify which half had been subtitled by MT. Two aspects of the subtitles helped them locate the MT half. First, they tried to recall when the translator's notes appeared in the clip. Since they were aware that MT systems can only generate what is in the original text, the part containing the translator's notes must have been subtitled by human translators, and thus, the other half would be by MT. Second, participants who picked up translation errors in the subtitles automatically classified the part with errors as MTS.

However, of the twelve participants, A05 stated that she did not have much knowledge of MT. Her correct selection of the MTS was a fluke. A09 chose the incorrect half. He believed MT tended to make mistakes in complex phrases, while fansubbers were more likely to make errors when dealing with grammatical and syntactic issues. Since he did not find grammatical errors in the first half of the clip, he thought the first half had been subtitled by MT. In fact, the first half he watched was subtitled by fansubbers and the MTS in this clip contained translation issues related to lexicon, grammar, and syntax. Three participants said "I don't know" when they were asked to locate the half with MTS. A02, B02, and B04 reported that they could not tell the difference between the subtitles in the two halves because the subtitles read well. The participants' answers to this question not only reflected their opinions on the subtitle quality but also manifested their perceptions of MT output in general. It seems that the quality of MT was underestimated by many. Conservative attitudes toward MT predominate in the two groups.

The last question for language learners was: Would you consider using MTS to learn Chinese? As the language learners had some knowledge of the Chinese language, MTS may have provided a reference, especially when the participants encountered unfamiliar phrases. However, most language learners voiced conservative views on MT. Only two learners of Chinese, A03 and B05, reported that they used MTS in daily viewing. A03 said she used Google Translate frequently. However, a problem she had when using MT was that her level of proficiency in Chinese enabled her to sense there was something wrong with the machine-translated text, but she did not know exactly *what* was wrong. In those cases, she needed to ask for help from someone with a higher level of proficiency in Chinese. Another language learner, B05, was a seasoned watcher of Chinese TV shows. She watched Chinese dramas on Netflix with Language Reactor. It is a language-learning Chrome extension that provides viewers with an advanced subtitle panel, supporting different subtitle conditions to meet language learners' needs. This enables her to include *pinyin*, intralingual subtitles, and side-by-side MT during viewing. She believed it helped improve her listening skills.

B04 and B06 said they would use MTS only when no human translation was available. A05, B01, and B02 stated they would read several machine-translated lines first to see if the subtitles were accurate and then decide whether to use them. B02 further added, "If you go on YouTube, for English [translation], they're pretty inaccurate. So, I wouldn't trust it very much." Her previous experience with watching YouTube videos with closed captions made her distrust MT in general.

Nine language learners (56%) stated that they refused to use MTS, mainly because MT is not always accurate. Of those nine, A02, A07, and A08 claimed that they watched Chinese TV shows for entertainment only. They did not view subtitles as learning materials, let alone MTS. Moreover, A04 and B07 were graduate students majoring in translation. Although they took courses related to MT and knew about different MT systems, they still held pessimistic views of MTS. They reported that using MT in translation practice is different from using it to learn a language. They still preferred reading non-translations in language learning.

Clearly, the language learners' perception of MT and of subtitles as a learning tool and their levels of proficiency in Chinese affected how they read and use subtitles. Most language learners had negative attitudes toward MT and thus would not use it to learn a language.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Accuracy in subtitles: a key to vocabulary acquisition?

My initial hypothesis was that fansubs lead to better outcomes in vocabulary learning than MTS. However, the quantitative results show that there is no significant correlation between the modes of subtitles and improvement in the vocabulary test. In other words, the effect of MTS and fansubs are comparable and both have a positive effect on vocabulary learning. I will combine participants' test results with their verbal reports and screen-based activities to sketch out why the hypothesis is refuted.

First, the language learners often read subtitles selectively. The language learners' verbalisations indicate that they tended to skip subtitles when they thought they understood what had been said in the original soundtrack. For example, most participants did not pay attention to the translations of “哥哥” and “姐姐” because they already knew that the former means the elder brother and the latter is the elder sister. However, they did not realise that the two terms do not always refer to blood-related siblings, so they failed to receive extra points in the post-test even though they encountered the part in fansubs with the translator's note. This echoes Orrego-Carmona's (2015) and Malakul and Park's (2023) finding that viewers with higher proficiency in the language have more flexible reading processes, without fully relying on the subtitles, whereas those with lower proficiency tend to follow the subtitles more closely.

Second, other channels of information, such as the acoustic (soundtrack) and visual (images) channels, can make up for misinformation in the problematic subtitles. For example, when B06 saw “诊脉” (checking pulse) in the pre-test, he could gather that the term is related to a practice in Chinese medicine. When he encountered the scene where a doctor is checking the male lead's pulse, he shouted, “This is 诊脉!” before the subtitle line with the term appeared.

Third, although the fansubs contain fewer linguistic errors than MTS, fansubbers are still unable to provide a detailed explanation of culture-specific items within a few lines. Even when the participant's language proficiency in Chinese was good enough to gain a gist understanding of the clip without English subtitles, there were culturally embedded terms and idiomatic expressions in Chinese that they would rarely encounter in a textbook or daily conversations. For instance, the term “江湖” (*jianghu*) is translated as “the Pugilist world” in the fansubbed version. B06 commented on the translation in his verbalisation: “The pugilist world? That's an interesting translation for ‘江湖’”. Later, he figured out the contextual meaning of *jianghu* in the post-test, based on an educated guess. B07 also tried to construe the meaning of “the Pugilist world”, saying “‘江湖’ the pugilist world. Like a commoner? I must say the subtitles are not very helpful.” B07's interpretation of “江湖” was limited. In *Nirvana in Fire*, *jianghu* refers to the world outside of the imperial court: the people who live in *jianghu* are not bound by the imperial laws and rules. Although “the Pugilist world” fails to convey the meaning and

implication of the notion of *jianghu*, this translation is commonly accepted and used in fansubs and fanfictions. For newcomers like B06 and B07, it was difficult to construe even though they are advanced learners.

## 5.2. What affects the effectiveness of vocabulary learning?

Based on the results of the vocabulary tests, all learners of Chinese picked up at least one new vocabulary item. The clip extracted from *Nirvana in Fire* had a positive effect on vocabulary learning ( $p < .001$ ). This is in line with previous research in the field: exposure to subtitled audiovisual materials correlates positively with foreign language acquisition, no matter what kind of subtitle is used (intralingual, interlingual or bilingual) (Caimi, 2006; Frumuselu *et al.*, 2015; Liao *et al.*, 2020; Baranowska, 2020). However, since the vocabulary test only included eight Chinese vocabulary items selected by the researcher, the phrases that the language learner acquired might not appear in the vocabulary test.

The participants' verbal reports and interview responses also provided clues about other elements that affect language learning. Firstly, different language learners' viewing habits can lead to different effects of subtitles on the degree of vocabulary learning. Of the sixteen language learners in the experiment, five (A03, A04, B02, B06, and B07) learned vocabulary items in the clip with *conscious* effort. They asked the researcher questions about the meanings of the vocabulary items. When they paused or went back, they re-listened to the original soundtrack, matching each phrase in the Chinese segment with the English subtitles. Then they were able to locate the translation of the unknown phrase. Alternatively, when they looked at the English subtitles, they would mentally translate them back into Chinese. If the Chinese soundtrack was not what they expected, they went back to listen again. This process helped them pick up the new expression in Chinese. For example, A04 reported, "When I saw the subtitle saying 'improvement', I thought the word for improvement would be '进步'. I was listening for that, and I didn't hear it, so I... [went back to listen again] Turns out it was '长进'." However, intentional learning did not necessarily indicate better learning outcomes. Not all five of these participants are among the top five in terms of test performance or the ones who have made the greatest progress. This could be related to the fact that they had different levels of proficiency in Chinese.

Apart from these observable engagements, A05 and A09 claimed that they intentionally focused on the audio channel, trying not to look at the translated subtitles. The language learners' positive perceptions of exposure to Chinese TV shows motivated them to use Chinese audiovisual products to learn the language. Their progress rates in the vocabulary tests were nevertheless relatively low, which may be attributed to their viewing pattern.

However, not every language learner regarded Chinese audiovisual materials as learning tools. A02, A07, and A08 said that they watched Chinese TV shows mainly for entertainment. Although these three participants generally watched Chinese shows for fun, they still actively looked for unfamiliar Chinese phrases and tried to learn them in this experiment. Their progress rates in the vocabulary test were 21%, 11%, and 19% respectively, not the lowest among all language learners. However, according to Hulstijn (2001), the announcement of a test (as when I told the participants that they were going to be tested) is a sign of intended vocabulary learning. In the testing environment, regardless of the language learner's level of interest in subtitles and language learning, their primary objective might be to achieve a good performance in the vocabulary post-test. Therefore, language learners may make a conscious effort to perform well in the tests, but this can disrupt the immersive experience and may not fully reflect language learning in the daily viewing experience.

### 5.3. Are language learners ready to embrace MTS?

Although most of the participants agreed that the MTS were acceptable, they still focused on the negative aspects. The accuracy of MTS was thus possibly underestimated. Moreover, MT tools are free and easily accessible, making it simple to use MT in a non-reflective way. If language learners are not fully aware of the evolving capacity of MT, they may not use MT in an informed and critical way.

Interestingly, the participants' sceptical views on MT stem from completely different levels of knowledge of it. A04, studying translation at the postgraduate level, did not trust MT because he knew how a MT system processes texts. Although he praised the MT of the phrase “可不是一般人能比的” as “it's not for the faint-hearted”, he still insisted that he trusted human translators more than MT. He did not think the algorithms for neural MT could always arrange those segments of human translation in a sensible order. Another language learner, A05, did not trust MT due to her limited knowledge of it. Since the participants were not aware of the presence of MTS during viewing, they used the same standard in mind to evaluate all subtitles. The two cases show that the participants expected the translated subtitles to be error-free and be able to fully convey the meanings in the original text. Therefore, for them, MT can be a risky undertaking, especially if unfamiliar vocabulary items or phrases are mistranslated. Since they presumed that MT is less accurate than human translation, they did not want to take the risk.

Further, the use of MT can also be associated with the user's level of proficiency in the language being learned as indicated in 4.3. Beginners may be easily misled by machine-translated texts since they do not have enough knowledge to identify whether the translation is acceptable. For intermediate learners, MT in the subtitles may serve as a reference to help them pick up unknown phrases, but they can be misled by mistranslations without realising it. In terms of advanced learners, non-translations seem more effective.

In order to equip language learners with the necessary skills to utilise MTS effectively and critically, it is imperative to cultivate their MT literacy. Williams (2006) posits that language teachers should introduce MT tools to their students as a means of promoting both language awareness and electronic literacy. Bowker and Ciro (2019) propose that language learners need to understand how MT systems process text, and when and how to use MT appropriately. Additionally, learners should know what types of texts can be easily translated by machines and possess the necessary skills for pre-editing and post-editing. By developing proficiency in these areas, language learners can be more flexible towards the use of automated subtitling in didactic scenarios.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has explored the didactic potential of raw MTS by comparing them with fansubs in terms of their effect on vocabulary learning and investigating language learners' perception of MT in subtitling. The results show that the combination of both types of subtitles had a positive effect on vocabulary learning, regardless of language learners' proficiency levels in the language being learned. Moreover, no significant difference was found between the effects of fansubs and MTS on vocabulary learning. This suggests that language learners can benefit from watching audiovisual content with either type of subtitles, and that the number of linguistic errors in subtitles is not a critical factor for vocabulary acquisition. Language learners who were motivated to learn the language through watching subtitled shows and who were interested in the audiovisual genre were more likely to initiate screen-based activities while watching the clip.

The study also reveals that language learners often underestimate the quality of MT and

associate erroneous subtitles with MT outputs. Only a few language learners reported using MT while watching Chinese audiovisual products. The participants' sceptical views on MT seemed to stem from their different levels of knowledge about it, highlighting the need for increased MT literacy among language learners.

Due to the small sample size and the limited number of vocabulary items in the language tests, my findings are preliminary and further studies with larger samples are warranted to validate the initial hypothesis on a larger scale. Another limitation of this study is that it did not include a later vocabulary post-test to determine whether the learned vocabulary items entered the learners' long-term memory. Therefore, the study cannot conclusively assert that watching audiovisual products is an effective method for stable vocabulary acquisition. Future studies could address this limitation and investigate the potential of using both types of subtitles in long-term vocabulary retention. The two vocabulary tests were initially designed to encourage language learners to pay more conscious attention to the original soundtrack and to the English subtitles, and even to provoke screen-based activities such as going back to check the meaning of a phrase or pausing to read certain phrases. Some participants might opt to initiate more screen-based activities than they actually needed to have better performance in the vocabulary test. Their screen-based activities could affect their scores on vocabulary post-tests.

As Baranowska (2020) proposes, audiovisual materials should be available in different subtitle conditions to meet diverse learning objectives. The materials may have added value in language learning and entertainment if language learners are able to access different kinds of subtitles and combine two or three conditions as they want.

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## The impact of fundubbing on the attitude towards the learning of Basque in primary education: A case study

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### **Abstract**

This article presents a fundubbing project carried out in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade primary education class in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital city of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC). The study aims at analysing whether attitudes towards Basque, a minority language in Spain, can be improved by the use of audiovisual translation (AVT), specifically fundubbing. Qualitative data about the use of Basque by the students were gathered through pre-test and post-test questionnaires based on Lasagabaster (2003) to measure attitudes towards Basque, both in an experimental group (n=22) that carried out the fundubbing project, and in a control group (n=23). Additionally, data about the opinions on the process and results of the project were gathered and analysed in the experimental group after the project was concluded. The results demonstrate that students developed a more positive attitude towards Basque after experimenting with fundubbing in the language classroom. Students principally highlighted the motivation provided by technology in the classroom, which aligns with previous research on didactic AVT (Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Fernández-Costales, 2021). These findings bring a clear didactic implication with them, as they indicate that fundubbing could be considered a valuable tool in the development of positive attitudes towards minority languages in young learners.

### **Keywords**

Audiovisual translation, didactic audiovisual translation, fundubbing, Basque, language attitudes

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<sup>1</sup> This work was part of the UnivAc project (ref. TED2021-130926A-I00), funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by the European Union "NextGenerationEU"/PRTR. It was also part of the research project Qualisub, led by Universidade de Vigo and funded by Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (ref. PID2020-117738RB-I00). It is also part of the on-going work by the research group TRALIMA/ITZULIK (GIU21/060, UPV/EHU).

## 1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is one of the many ways of integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the classroom; more specifically, into the language classroom. Many authors have highlighted the potential of AVT in language learning (e.g., Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Burston, 2005; Chu & Chow, 2017; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Lertola, 2019; Navarrete, 2013; Talaván, 2019), which may be due in part to the motivating and engaging nature of the activity, boosting both students' performance and self-confidence. Recently, many studies have been conducted in the realm of AVT with didactic purposes (see Talaván, 2020), and these have principally been carried out in the area of learning and teaching Foreign Languages (FL). The majority, excluding very few studies (e.g., Chu & Chow, 2017; Fernández-Costales, 2021) have been conducted at university level.

The aim of the present study is to analyse the effects of a fundubbing project in students' attitudes towards Basque in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade primary education class in Vitoria-Gasteiz. Literature and experimental research on didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) in primary education are scarce and, moreover, literature and experimental research on DAT and Basque are, to the knowledge of these authors, non-existent. The particular characteristics of the experiment i.e., primary education and Basque, make this contribution a first step forward in implementing DAT in primary education within the Basque Autonomous Country (BAC). In fact, Basque is a language that, although very present in primary schools in the Basque Country, is not often used outside the language classroom (Becker, 2020); something that could be improved by introducing the language into areas that usually motivate students outside of school, such as audiovisual products.

In the following section, we look into fundubbing as a didactic tool in the language learning environment, briefly introduce the Basque education system and language use, and review existing literature on attitudes towards Basque. In the third section the methodology of the study is explained. We focus especially on explaining the participants' profile, ICT resources, data gathering and the procedure of the experiment. The fourth section presents the results and analysis of the data. Finally, in the fifth section a set of conclusions is offered.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Fundubbing as a didactic tool

Currently, with the latest developments in the technological realm, the AVT field has begun to be redefined, and is more than ever at the centre of the translation studies (TS) field (Perego & Pacinotti, 2020). There is an increasing amount of literature on the use of AVT for (language) teaching and learning, also known as DAT. Within this subfield, fundubbing (with an <a>) is a common form of User-Generated Translation (UGT) (Remael, 2010), in which fans try to replicate an audiovisual product as accurately as possible, preserving the essence of the original material. This article, however, will focus on *fundubbing*, sometimes referred to as "parodic dubbing" by authors such as Baños (2019), or as creative or fake dubbing and which is designed as a humoristic AVT mode (Talaván, 2019). Of note is that the fundubbing phenomenon receives a wide audience online, with many videos becoming "viral" (Baños, 2019). Several examples of this kind of AVT mode can be found on the YouTube channel *Bad Lip Reading*<sup>2</sup>, in which humoristic fundubs are presented and which has more than eight million subscribers (Talaván, 2019). Nevertheless, as Baños (2019) points out, the "virality" of these videos is in contrast with the lack of representation this discipline has in the academic community.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/c/BadLipReading>

Various studies have analysed the possible benefits of promoting revoicing projects for the development of a foreign language (e.g., Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Burston, 2005; Danan, 2010; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Navarrete, 2013). More specifically, in the realm of fundubbing, Ávila-Cabrera (2022) conducted a study with 20 Business undergraduate students, in which the participants had to creatively dub two film trailers. The participants expressed their willingness to take part in similar future projects, as they felt that their self-perception towards their English oral skills had improved. Additionally, they received better marks than the control group in the English for Business subject. Fernández-Costales (2021) carried out a study in eight primary education schools in Asturias (Spain), in which 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students used fundubbing and subtitling on clips of children's movies, in their Science and Social Science subjects, which they studied in a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) framework. To evaluate the project, a questionnaire was administered to the 31 teachers who took part in the experiment. After working on revoicing and captioning projects, the teachers concluded that fundubbing was more suitable and effective than subtitling in the promotion of language skills within primary education in a CLIL environment.

Nevertheless, some studies have revealed that these projects can also have several limitations – for instance, the revoicing process can be a very time-consuming activity, sometimes taking longer than expected (e.g., Burston, 2005; Danan, 2010; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Navarrete, 2013). In addition, dubbing can bring technical issues to the classroom, as the projects' success relies partially on the use of ICT (Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Fernández-Costales, 2021). Therefore, technological training for teachers is needed (Danan, 2010), together with training on the ability to select suitable audiovisual material, which is vital for students' motivation (Burston, 2005).

Despite the technical or methodological issues revoicing can bring into the language learning environment, the existing literature highlights that the advantages outweigh the limitations (Lertola, 2019). The motivational and fun aspect of the activity seems to be the most widely mentioned advantage in revoicing projects. Teachers in the study by Fernández-Costales (2021) reported that the main advantage of using dubbing in the CLIL classroom was that it triggered students' motivation while encouraging oral communicative skills. Alonso-Pérez and Sánchez-Requena (2018), who conducted a study with 56 teachers from 15 countries across different levels (not including primary education), reported that "motivation" and "fun" were the most commonly used words by teachers when talking about the inclusion of AVT activities in their FL classrooms. Similarly, in a study carried out with 19 students of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade primary education who had just moved to China, Chu and Chow (2017) reported that revoicing activities not only improved creative writing skills in students but also their motivation. Additionally, in the CREATE project, which aimed at assessing creative dubbing and subtitling in language learning, Talaván (2019) highlighted motivation as a strong advantage. In addition, Navarrete (2013) used dubbing as a didactic tool with 20 English Year 9 students of Spanish (14 and 15 years old) and remarked that this AVT mode was both highly motivating as well as producing positive results in language learning.

## **2.2. The Basque education system and its language use**

Over 40% of the Spanish population lives in a region or community that has more than one official language (Huguet, 2007; Lasagabaster, 2017) with the BAC being one of these regions. Located on the North coast of Spain, it has two official languages: Castilian Spanish and Basque, or Euskera. During the Franco dictatorship, which lasted from 1936 to 1975, the Basque language was tremendously oppressed, which resulted in a severe language loss (Valadez *et al.*, 2015). However, in the 1978 Constitution of Spain the multilingual character of the Spanish

State was recognised, and Basque began to receive attention from the state (Valadez *et al.*, 2015). In 1982, the Basque Government passed the Law of Normalisation of Basque, allowing students to receive education in Basque as well as in Spanish. This has led to the creation of three different linguistic models in education, depending on the degree to which Basque and Spanish are present in the teaching practice. The models are the following, as described by Lasagabaster (2017):

- In model A, Spanish is the vehicular language of teaching, and Basque is only taught as a subject, usually for 4 or 5 hours per week. The students' first language (L1) is Spanish.
- In model B, both Basque and Spanish are used for instruction. Usually, the students' L1 is Spanish, and the model is heterogeneous. The process of learning how to write and the Mathematics subject are often taught in Spanish, although this may vary depending on the school's sociolinguistic context, or the availability of Basque teachers.
- Model D<sup>3</sup> is a total immersion programme for students. In this model, Basque is the vehicular language, and Spanish is only taught as a language, usually for 4 to 5 hours each week.

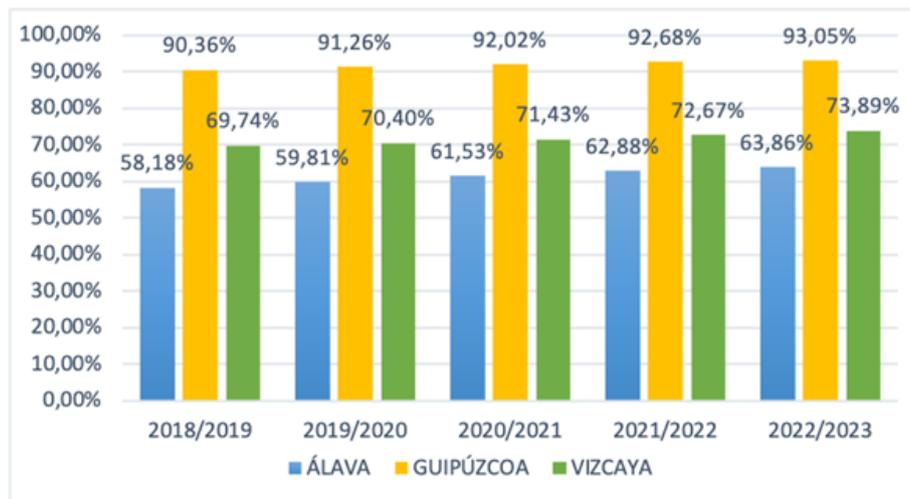
Since the creation of this Normalisation Law, the use of Basque has grown enormously, as Basque institutions have supported and promoted the language (Lasagabaster, 2003). In fact, as Lasagabaster (2003) points out, many people with Spanish as their mother tongue have learnt how to speak Basque thanks to the changes in the education system, but some differences can be found when comparing territories. In Guipúzcoa, more than 51% of the adult population is bilingual in Basque and Spanish, while in Vizcaya and Álava the percentage is much lower, with 30,6% and 22,4% of bilingual adults, respectively (Basque Government, 2023).

Despite the relatively low percentage of bilingualism reported for Álava when compared to other territories, enrolment in the D model in schools in Álava (the province where Vitoria-Gasteiz is located) has grown steadily over the last three decades, and continues to do so as indicated in Figure 1, demonstrating that importance is given by families to the learning of Basque in the school context, especially in Guipúzcoa, where the percentage of enrolment in the D model has been over 90% in the last five years (Basque Government, 2022).

Nevertheless, when looking at the actual usage of Basque, it appears to be very limited, for example, in social gatherings, whereas Spanish appears to be the preferred language, as presented in the last Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa [Sociolinguistic Survey], conducted by the Basque Government in 2021 (Basque Government, 2023). This, however, can vary depending on the area, as people from larger towns and cities habitually use Spanish, whereas people in small Basque speaking areas tend to use Basque (Lasagabaster, 2007).

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<sup>3</sup> Note that there is no "Model C" in the Basque educational system. This is so because the letter <c> is not used in Basque, except for transcribing from other languages.



**Figure 1.** Evolution over the years in enrolment in the D model in different Basque territories (source: Basque Government, 2022)

Nonetheless, it appears that language policy makers have principally centred their attention on promoting Basque in an educational atmosphere (Moriarty, 2010), and this is still the main communicative environment in which many students develop their linguistic competence in a language that is not Spanish (Huguet, 2007). It seems vital therefore, to bear in mind that in order to motivate the use of the language, the family, neighbourhood and social context need to be taken into consideration (Lasagabaster, 2003). Furthermore, more projects that promote the enjoyment of the language need to be implemented (Lasagabaster, 2017).

### 2.3. Attitudes towards Basque

When examining attitudes, one aspect of great importance, especially in the case of minority languages, is the language policies implemented by governments (Lasagabaster, 2003). Indeed, language policies determine important aspects of how a language is treated in society, including the number of lessons taught in that language, the starting age of language learning, or the choice of teaching materials (Moriarty, 2010). This connection between language policies (in the form of linguistic models) and attitudes towards a minority language can be clearly perceived in the case of Basque. Becker (2020) conducted several interviews in Vitoria-Gasteiz with primary school teachers who were teaching in the three linguistic models (A, B and D) to measure their attitudes towards Basque as well as to gather their reflections on students' attitudes. In general, teachers' attitudes about Basque were positive, but there were certain concerns about the language. For instance, the connection between the language and a speaker's own cultural identity is supposed to be a motivating factor towards Basque learning, but it may also bring feelings of embarrassment for someone that identifies themselves with the minority culture but does not speak the language, or does not have a high proficiency level. This may well be the case in Vitoria-Gasteiz, where over 90% of the population claims that Spanish is their native language, but less than 20% of adults are bilingual in Basque and Spanish (Becker, 2020). The principal conclusion of the study is that a greater promotion of Basque outside the school environment is vital (Becker, 2020). Similarly, Lasagabaster (2017) claims that bilingualism is highly valued in the BAC, but again, more importance should be given to the social aspect of the language, rather than solely the academic.

The disconnection from the minority language could bring feelings of anxiety both for teachers and students, and, consequently, may have a negative effect on their attitudes. Students' attitudes, as reported by teachers in this study, were negative in A model students, who barely

spoke Basque, whereas students enrolled in B and D models had a more positive attitude. It is noteworthy that the hours of exposure and types of activities in B and D models may be crucial to the attitude of students. In fact, a certain amount of exposure to the language is a vital aspect towards ensuring a positive attitude in children (Campos-Bandrés, 2017). Moreover, classroom activities that promote communicative situations are also encouraged to engage children in the learning of the language (Dörnyei, 2009). Another aspect of interest in Becker's (2020) study is that even model D students, who can speak Basque fluently, use Spanish outside the classroom with their friends, and are more comfortable and proficient in Spanish.

Bearing all the above in mind, the experiment reported in this contribution aims at promoting the social aspect in an educational environment, and at analysing the potential of a fundubbing project in Basque to see if such use of DAT might have positive effects on the attitude towards Basque in primary education students.

### **3. Materials and methods**

#### **3.1. School and participants**

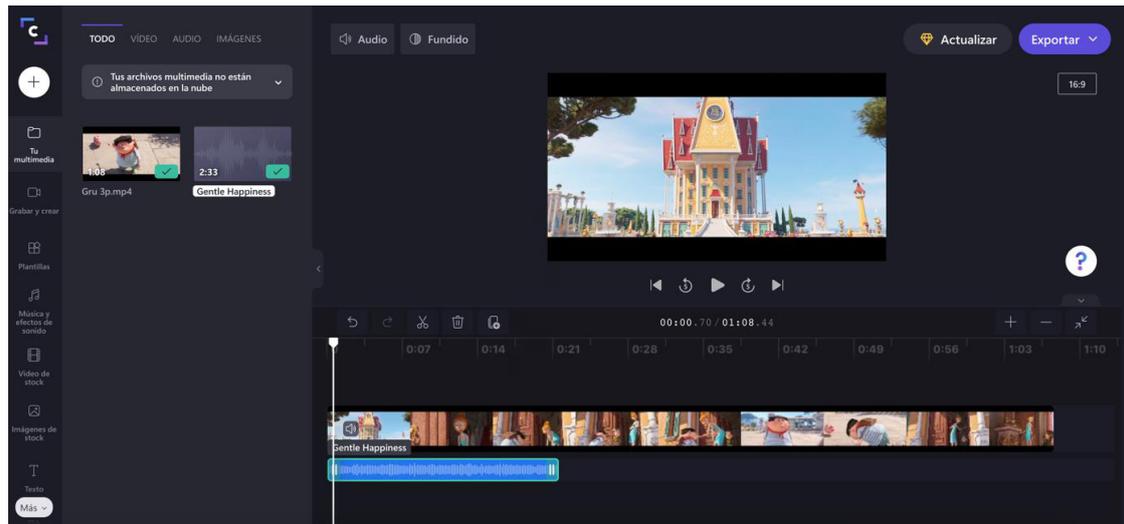
This paper presents a fundubbing project carried out in a public school in Vitoria-Gasteiz. The school offers education from nursery until the last year of primary education, and it has three different groups in each level. The school follows a D model, i.e., all subjects are taught in Basque, except for the Foreign Language (English) and the Spanish Language subjects. Basque is very present in the school, and children have a good understanding of the language, although levels vary among students.

The participants were 45 students from 6<sup>th</sup> grade primary education (11-12 years old), divided into an experimental group (n=22) and a control group (n=23), explained in Section 3.3 below. It was assumed that the children were old enough to understand a project that involves fundubbing, that they had the technological knowledge and that they were able to learn how to use a video editing programme. The study was conducted in a primary school due to the lack of studies at this educational stage (Fernández-Costales, 2021). Moreover, as Uranga (2013) reported after analysing 35,000 students' use of language in the BAC, the use of Basque both inside and outside the classroom significantly decreases when students go from primary to secondary education. Therefore, to analyse how attitudes towards the minority language may be fostered during the last year of primary education, when students are about to proceed onto the next educational stage, may prove useful.

#### **3.2. ICT resources**

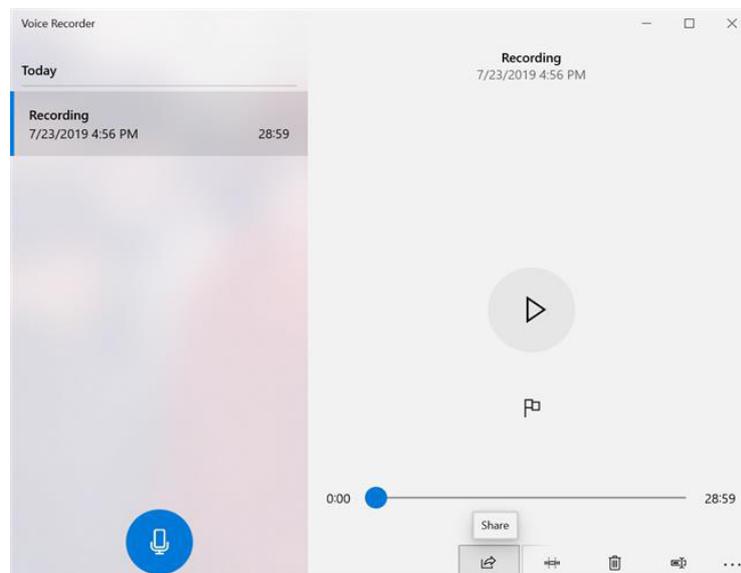
In general, the use of technology has increased in the classroom environment, prioritising student participation and motivation through the use of audiovisual materials, which also enhance the students' media literacy and digital skills (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). Before taking the fundubbing project to the classroom, the ICT resources were chosen and agreed upon with the teacher of the experimental group.

Regarding the video editing programme to be used during the project, several options were considered. Technological reasons made the researchers discard previously used ICT resources such as Clipflair (used, for example, in Baños & Sokoli, 2015 and Navarrete, 2013) or Movie Maker (used, for example, in Talaván, 2019 and Fernández-Costales, 2021). Administrative restrictions on computers in the classroom made researchers opt for an online video editing programme —Clipchamp, which is free of charge (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Clipchamp online video editor (source: Clipchamp)

Due to a shortage of microphones and headphones in the classroom, the teacher asked the students to bring their own from home. This allowed the students to record their voices and sound effects in the video. For the purpose of recording their voices, they used the Windows Voice Recording App, as seen in Figure 3. The students found it very intuitive, and they learned how to use it without any problems.



**Figure 3.** Windows Voice Recording App interface (source: Windows' Voice Recorder)

### 3.3. Procedure

The fundubbing project was carried out during the first three weeks of February, 2022, and it took 9 hours to complete, over 7 different days.

Before going to the classroom to work with the students, the videos to be used as part of the project were selected. All were downloaded from YouTube and edited to meet the desired requirements for the project. The videos had to appeal to the students and be easy to work with. This meant that the videos had to be child-themed, age suitable and humorous, so that the students would be motivated to work with them and to be creative. In addition, all characters in the videos had a similar amount of participation, permitting all students to do a similar

amount of work when revoicing. Additionally, the videos shared certain characteristics that made them comparable with each other. All videos were approximately one minute long, as revoicing is an activity that can be quite time consuming (Burston, 2005; Danan, 2010; Lertola, 2019). As Navarrete (2013) suggests, self-contained scenes were selected, so that students would not feel that something was missing, allowing for a conclusion within the short story.

The selected clips included excerpts from *Frozen* (Buck & Lee, 2013), *Up* (Docter & Peterson, 2009), *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Columbus, 2001) and *Despicable Me 3* (Balda *et al.*, 2017). Students, working in pairs or groups of three, selected their preferred video.

After selecting the clips, the project was taken to the classroom. The intervention plan was carried out in 7 sessions, each of them lasting 1 hour and 15 minutes. During the first session, pre-test questionnaires (explained below) were administered to both the experimental group (n=22) and the control group (n=23). The control group did not participate in the project and continued with regular Basque lessons. Sessions 2 to 6 were used to carry out the project. During these sessions, one of the researchers and the teacher acted as facilitators of the project, guiding and correcting students when necessary. Students wrote the script, rehearsed and recorded their voices. Isochrony, kinetic synchrony and humorous effects were encouraged throughout the creation process. During the last session, all videos with the fundubs were projected on screen and a post-test (explained below) was administered both to the experimental group and the control group. The control group did not answer the open-ended questions of the post-test, as they were specifically related to the project.

### 3.4. Instruments

According to Lasagabaster (2003), the most typical way to measure language attitudes is through either interviews or questionnaires. The instruments used to measure students' attitudes before and after the project were in the form of questionnaires: one pre-test and one post-test. Both were based on the questionnaire used by Lasagabaster (2003), who analysed language attitudes towards Spanish, English and Basque of 1,000 university students from the University of the Basque Country. This questionnaire was based on that created by Baker (1992), which measured attitudes towards minority languages. Some items on the questionnaire used by Lasagabaster were removed, as they were not suitable for young children; for example, the ones related to work.

Both tests were carried out in Basque, as it is the principal language these students use in their daily lives at school. The teacher confirmed that all students' skills were good enough to understand the questions in Basque and respond to them adequately.

The first part of the pre-test involved gathering information about students' language use, such as with whom they speak the Basque, and about the language they use outside school and in their leisure activities (see Annex 1). The rest of the questions which were going to be analysed were identical in both the pre-test and post-test (see Annex 1 and Annex 2<sup>4</sup>). The first block of questions consisted of close-ended questions related to the importance of Basque in different areas. Students had to answer by marking the most accurate answer for them according to their experience on a 4-point scale (see Figure 4). This is a replication of the tests used by Lasagabaster (2003) to measure language attitudes towards Spanish, English and Basque.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this publication, both Annex 1 and Annex 2 have been translated from Basque into English. The items in the annexes have been numbered to facilitate the understanding of the Figures.

IS BASQUE IMPORTANT...	YES	QUITE	A LITTLE	NO
To make friends?				
To read?				
To write?				
To watch TV?				
To have a good job?				

**Figure 4.** Questions about the importance of Basque (translated from Basque into English for the purposes of the article) (source: authors)

Subsequently, a second block of close-ended questions measured agreement with certain statements using a 5-point scale, as can be seen in Figure 5. These questions were created specifically for this study and include a neutral answer to report cases of neither agreement nor disagreement with the statements, hence the difference between this scale and the scale used by Lasagabaster (2003) and replicated here to measure importance. The post-test also included several specific items about the project in this part (see Annex 2).

	I COMPLETELY AGREE	I AGREE	I DON'T AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DON'T AGREE	I COMPLETELY DISAGREE
The sound of Basque when someone speaks it is beautiful.					
All kids in the Basque Country must learn Basque.					
I like speaking in Basque.					
Learning Basque is easy.					
Learning Basque is useful.					
I prefer learning in Basque rather than in Spanish.					

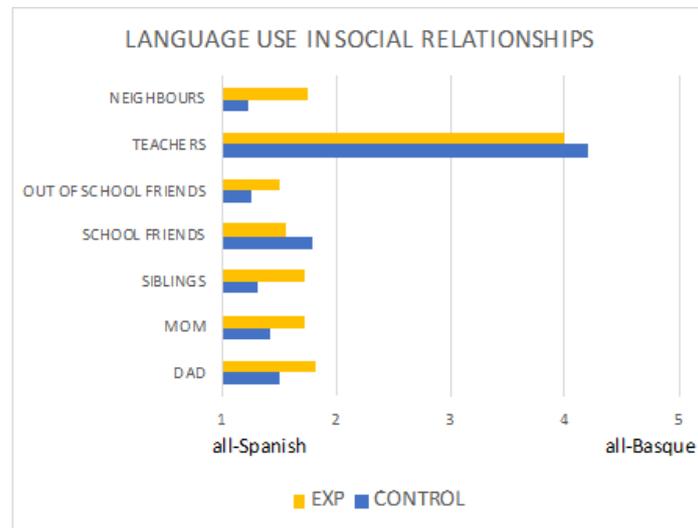
**Figure 5.** Statements about different aspects of Basque (translated from Basque into English for the purposes of the article) (source: authors)

The third block of the tests contained open-ended questions. In the pre-test, there was one question of this kind, in case the students wanted to add anything else about their use of languages. The post-test included more open-ended questions, created by the researchers, to measure the students' personal evaluation on specific aspects of the fundubbing project. Two versions of each test were created, with the elements in a different order, to prevent response fatigue from influencing the results. One version of the pre-test and another one of the post-test are available as Annex 1 and Annex 2.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Language use

With regard to the use of the Basque language in their social circles, the participants reported the following results, portrayed in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Language use in social relationships (source: authors)

This figure shows the average use of Basque in the different areas of social contact, as reported by students. In order to quantify and measure the results, a number from 5 to 1 was given to each option, respectively. This way, a 5 would represent an all-Basque relationship and a 1 an all-Spanish relationship.

As can be seen, in both groups all values are under 2, except for the relationship with the teacher, which reaches 4 points in both cases. Thus, on average, the children use Spanish more than Basque in all relationships except for those with their teachers, which take place in Basque more than in Spanish. This is in line with the results from previous studies, which showed that Basque was more widely used in academic settings rather than in social ones (Becker, 2020; Lasagabaster, 2007).

Figure 7 shows the results for the use of Basque in leisure activities such as watching television, listening to music, using the mobile phone, using the computer and reading. No average score reached three points, which indicates that no option reached the equal use of Basque and Spanish, let alone a superior use of Basque. Thus, and in line with previous research (Becker, 2020; Lasagabaster, 2017; Moriarty, 2010), it appears that Basque is not as popular as Spanish in leisure activities.

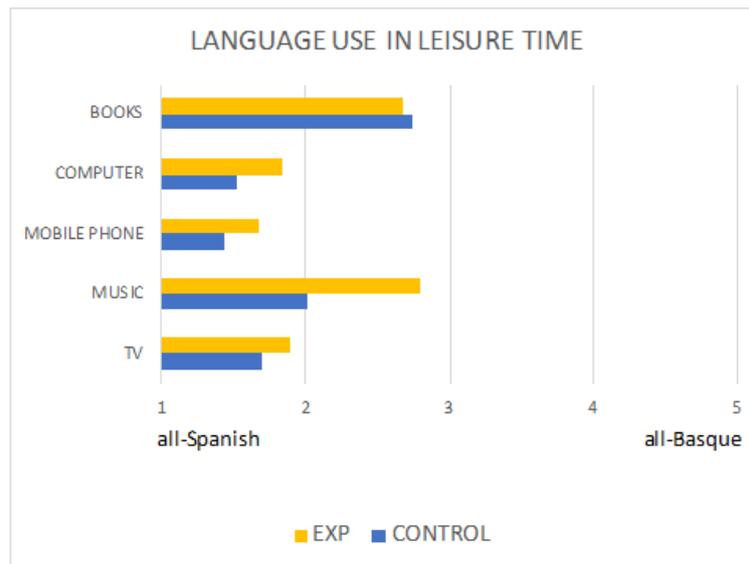


Figure 7. Language use in leisure activities (source: authors)

#### 4.2. Attitudes towards Basque

Using a qualitative analysis, the differences between pre-test and post-test were examined as to the averages of each item in the two groups. The results in the control group revealed minimal differences, indicating no change in their attitudes towards Basque over time and, thus, validating its purpose as a control group. The items in both sets of questions were numbered following the order of the pre-test (shown in Annex 1).

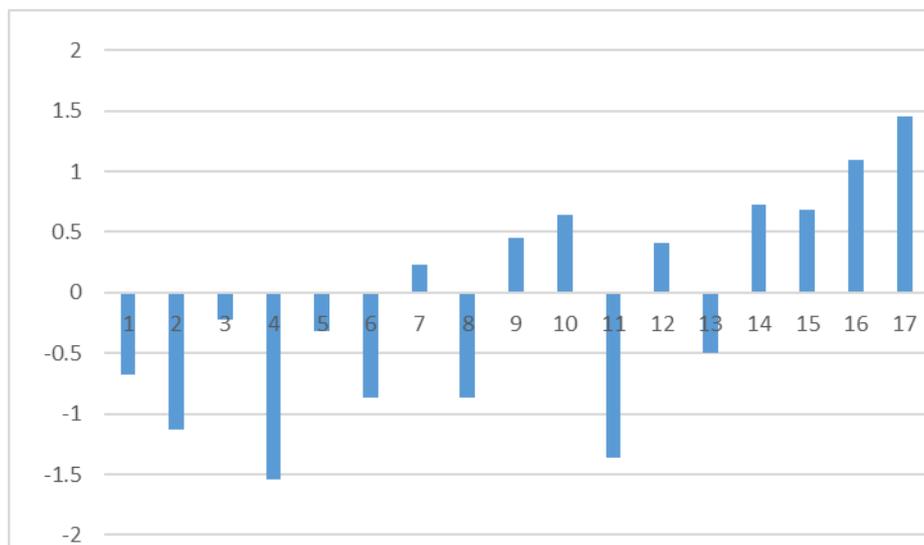


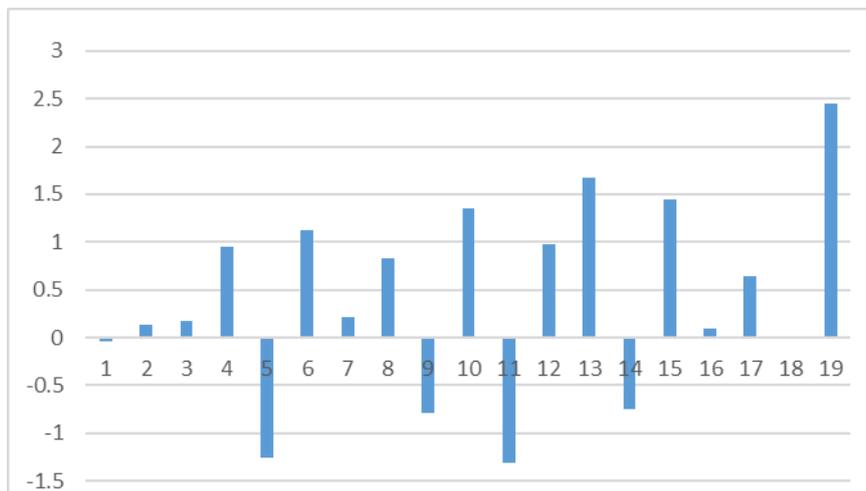
Figure 8. Difference between the pre-test and post-test in items related to the importance of Basque in different areas in the experimental group (source: authors)

As indicated in Figure 8, the items with the highest differences in average between pre-test and post-test examination of the experimental group were as follows: item 17, *Basque is important to be intelligent* (with 1.45 positive points of difference) and item 16, *Basque is important to talk to people I don't know* (with 1.09 positive points of difference). There were also 3 items with a negative difference, i.e., the score was lower in the post-test when compared to the pre-test: item 2, *Basque is important to read* (with 1.14 negative points of difference), item 4, *Basque is important to speak to my family* (with 1.54 negative points of difference) and

item 11, *Basque is important to speak on the phone* (with 1.36 negative points of difference). The remaining items in this part of the test did not record a significant change, as all were below 1 point of difference.

The positive result in item 17 seems to indicate that the children gave more importance to the academic field after conducting the project. This is in line with Lasagabaster's (2017) study, which mentions the importance given to the language in the academic aspect rather than in the social sphere. However, on average, item 16 achieved a higher result in the post-test than in the pre-test, which may indicate that after the project they gave more importance to Basque as a tool for talking to strangers and therefore to Basque in the social sphere. These results and discussion should be viewed with caution, as a more in-depth analysis from further studies would more clearly reveal the possible importance that may be given to the language in the social sphere.

Examining the items that rated lower in the post-test than in the pre-test, item 2 deals with the use of Basque in cultural and leisure activities. It might make sense that the children have a negative attitude towards reading in Basque after the project, as it is an activity that they were required to do at school, and not in their leisure time. Indeed, the project dealt with audiovisual products and revoicing which, despite being connected to written skills, may not be the most suitable task in improving language attitudes towards reading. The other two items, 4 and 11, reveal that after finishing the project children may not give as much importance to Basque when interacting with people they know i.e., within their family or with whom they talk on the phone, since, as can be seen in Figure 6, students do not normally use the language with their families. The project may not have succeeded in promoting the use of Basque in those social settings, due to the fact that the creation process they worked on promoted the use of Basque in the media setting but not in the interaction among people outside the school environment. Once again, as it has been perceived in previous studies (e.g., Becker, 2020; Lasagabaster, 2017), Basque seems to be more limited to the academic area rather than to the social and leisure environment.



**Figure 9.** Difference between the pre-test and post-test in agreement to items related to Basque in the experimental group (source: authors)

Figure 9 shows differences in the pre-test and post-test in the second set of questions, which covered items related to the agreement of the participants towards certain statements about Basque and the Basque culture (in a 5-point scale) with possible significant differences, as follows: item 6, *I prefer learning in Basque rather than in Spanish* (with a positive difference of 1.13 points), item 10, *Basque is important to talk to friends outside school* (with a positive

difference of 1.36 points), item 13, *we need to protect Basque, not to lose it* (with a positive difference of 1.68 points), item 15, *I like listening to music in Basque* (with a positive difference of 1.44 points) and item 19, *I like watching videos in Basque* (with a positive difference of 2.45 points).

There were also two items which scored a possible significant negative difference from the pre-test to the post-test: item 5, *Basque culture is very interesting* (with 1.26 points of negative difference) and item 11, *Basque is going to disappear because not too many people speak it* (with 1.31 points of negative difference).

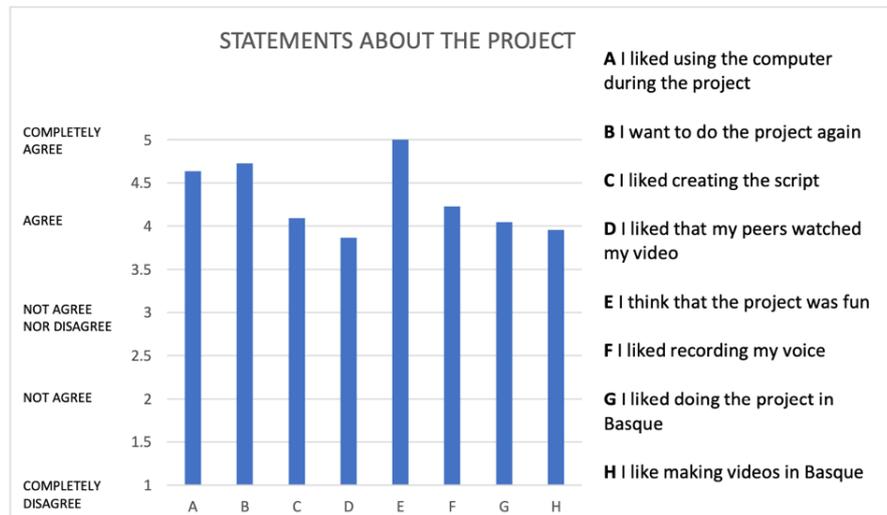
As can be perceived, the statements that discussed Basque audiovisual culture, items 15 and 19, specifically music and videos, received more positive opinions from the children after the project, which may indicate that it caused a positive effect on their perception of these products and, therefore, Basque in these genres. Consequently, by introducing fundubbing projects in the classroom, the general attitude towards the minority language within audiovisual products could improve in primary school children, as per previous studies (Fernández-Costales, 2021; Navarrete, 2013), which claim that revoicing projects can improve students' motivation towards learning.

Concerning items 10 and 13, about the social use of Basque, these also received a higher score in the post-test, implying that the participants' views improved in this regard. This contrasts with the results of the previous set of questions and could give a slightly more optimistic outlook towards the reinforcement of Basque in social settings, as the children expressed that it was important for talking to their friends outside school, and that the language had to be protected. Furthermore, the score for item 6 had improved, indicating, once again, the importance given to the use of Basque in the academic environment. Although lacking statistical analysis, results seem to indicate that the project tended to improve the children's attitudes towards Basque.

The negative variance of item 5 may indicate that, in general, Basque culture is of little interest to these children. Given differences in the usage of Basque among different regions in the Basque Country as reported by the Basque Government (2023), studies that compare these results with those of similar projects in different regions would be useful. In addition, selecting Basque audiovisual products in future fundubbing projects in the classroom would likely provide further data. When looking at the negative variance of item 11, this result may be considered positive, as the item itself has a negative meaning. The participants, after the fundubbing project, seem to agree less with the fact that Basque is going to disappear because of not many people using it. This fact will likely contribute to a more positive view of the preservation of the minority language.

### **4.3. Project evaluation**

After completing the fundubbing project, students in the experimental group (n=22) answered close-ended (5-point scale) and open-ended questions regarding their participation and enjoyment in the project. The close-ended questions were mixed with the statements in the second set of questions (see Annex 2), so that the participants would not realise they were specific questions about the project, they would not overthink them and they would answer them as honestly as possible. Overall, results indicate that the project was enjoyed by the participants (see Figure 10). Item E was marked with an average of 5, which means that all participants completely agreed with the statement. The other two items with highest scores are A and B, with average scores of 4.72 and 4.63, respectively.



**Figure 10.** Average scores for items related to the fundubbing project (source: authors)

In the open-ended responses, regarding the aspect of the project that they liked the most, the most popular response was “the voice recording process”, which was indicated by 13 participants (59%) as well as being reported as the easiest part of the process (as said by 7 participants, 31%). Other aspects labelled as positive were “having fun with friends”, remarked by 5 participants (22%) and “editing the video”, which was also indicated by 5 participants. Also, 7 students (31%) stated that their favourite aspect was that the fundubbing project was a new and fun thing to do. In the same fashion, when being asked if they would repeat the project again, all the participants said “yes”, thus suggesting that the children enjoyed the project and indicating that it was a motivating process, as mentioned in several previous studies (Alonso-Pérez & Requena, 2018; Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Burston, 2005; Chu & Chow, 2017; Lertola, 2019; Navarrete, 2013).

Regarding negative opinions towards the project, 6 participants (27%) reported that their least favourite part was that they had some technical difficulties with the editing program. In contrast, 8 of them (36%) reported that they liked everything and would not change anything in the future. Additionally, when asked what the most difficult part of the process had been, 7 participants (31%) said that the “editing process” was the most complex task, 6 of them (27%) said that it was “writing the script” and 2 participants also said that they would have liked to have had more time.

Overall, it can be said that the majority of comments were positive, and most negative ones concerned technical issues. These technical problems with ICT resources were also documented by previous studies (Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Fernández-Costales, 2021). Indeed, in the last part of the questionnaire, participants were asked if they wanted to add anything else, and the comments were as follows: “I would do it every month”, “I really liked this project”, “thank you for bringing this project” and “I would like to do it again”.

## 5. Conclusions

The results suggest that fundubbing projects may have a positive influence on attitudes towards Basque. These findings are in line with previous literature that report that the use of DAT led to improved results in various areas, such as written competence, motivation or learner independence (e.g., Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Burston, 2005; Danan, 2010; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Navarrete, 2013).

In addition, several other aspects were confirmed. For instance, the fundubbing activity was a very motivating, fun task for the children in the classroom, as expressed by several participants throughout the process. It was also significant that all of the participants reported that they would repeat the project again, confirming the results from Ávila-Cabrera (2022) and Danan (2010), where the students recommended a project of this kind for future classes, along with expressing the desire to do it on a voluntary basis.

In addition to overall enjoyment, the children were motivated and invested in the activity, with many of them displaying their creativity, changing the tone in their voices, creating fun scripts and adding extra sound effects. This creativity and motivation can also be seen in the literature analysed; for example, in the study by Navarrete (2013) dubbing was shown to boost students' motivation, or in the study by Fernández-Costales (2021), in which the dubbing project triggered both students' and teachers' motivation.

The teacher displayed an enthusiastic attitude towards the project from the beginning, contributing significantly to its success. After finishing the project, she expressed her satisfaction with the result and the students' attitudes, saying that she had the intention of repeating the project in the future.

In addition, as per studies of Lasagabaster (2017) and Becker (2020), it was affirmed that Basque is much more used inside the classroom than in social settings. In fact, as seen in the results' section, and despite all children in the study receiving their education in a D model school, they do not use the language as much in out-of-school contexts. Indeed, in both the control and the experimental group, the difference in the use of Basque with the teacher when compared with other social relationships is remarkable. Similarly, the use of Basque in leisure activities in both groups does not reach a high level, indicating that Basque is not as widely used out of the classroom as it is inside. Surprisingly, however, the children expressed that language did seem important to them for interacting with strangers, and they also said that it should be protected.

Through the revoicing project, it seems that there was an improvement in the attitude of the students towards entertainment content produced in the minority language, specifically music and videos. This could be a first step towards boosting the language in these non-academic contexts, which contrasts with the negative attitude that students reported in the questionnaires regarding their interest in Basque culture. Such disconnection could be due to the students' perception of culture as being more closely related to activities like reading, an aspect they also rated as unimportant in the post-test. Future projects that explore revoicing activities using Basque audiovisual products would be welcome to test if such affirmations could change.

Nonetheless, in general, the participants have expressed that it is important to preserve the language, and literature suggests that more action should be taken to encourage the use of Basque in leisure settings, transferring the language to real world scenarios. Projects such as the one presented herein may contribute to the transfer from academic to social contexts.

Regarding limitations, this study only measured the effect of DAT in the attitudes towards Basque, but it might also be relevant to explore if it could influence the acquisition of the language, which is the main objective of the lessons at school. As reported by the teacher, in the present study, the fundubbing project did not cause any negative impact on the students' marks. Nevertheless, a more detailed study of the impact of this type of project on the learning of Basque is advisable. In addition, the data set obtained was analysed qualitatively. A statistical analysis was not carried out, as the sample was small and it was considered that qualitative reflection was more appropriate due to the lack of previous research on DAT in Basque. Therefore, a future statistical analysis of the results is also advisable.

The difficulties observed during the implementation of the project have been previously reported in the literature (e.g., Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Burston, 2005; Danan, 2010; Fernández-Costales, 2021; Navarrete, 2013). All these studies stated that dubbing projects can be very time-consuming, taking longer than initially expected. This also happened in the present study, as unexpected difficulties arose, due to the fact that some groups took longer than others to finish revoicing and editing the video. However, as the study was carried out in the classroom, students that finished before their peers had the opportunity to carry on with different tasks that the teacher had already planned.

In conclusion, presented herein is an innovative case study (because of the educational stage and the language involved) analysing the effect on the attitudes towards a minority language when using a fundubbing project. To date, this is the first study conducted in DAT regarding Basque and primary education, and it was a limited experiment carried out in just one classroom. It is recommended that future research should focus on the use of different AVT modes, a variety of minority languages, a larger cohort of participants, as well as differing educational levels.

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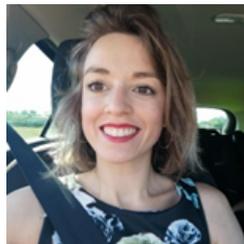
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**Annex 1**



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Name: ..... Age:..... Level:.....

What is your mother tongue? Which is your second language? And the third? Do you speak any other language?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. Others: .....

What language do you use with the following people?

	Always Basque	Always Spanish	Basque and Spanish equally	More Basque than Spanish	More Spanish than Basque	Another one:
With dad						
With mom						
With siblings						
With school friends						
With friends outside school						
With teachers						
With neighbours						

What language do you use for the following activities?

	Always in Basque	Always in Spanish	In Basque and in Spanish equally	More in Basque than in Spanish	More in Spanish than in Basque	Another one:
I watch TV...						
I listen to music...						
I use my mobile phone...						
I use my computer...						
I read books that are not for school...						

How important do you think Basque is for the following activities?

IS BASQUE IMPORTANT...	YES	QUITE	A LITTLE	NO
1. To make friends?				
2. To read?				
3. To write?				
4. To speak to your family?				
5. To have a good job?				
6. To be liked by others?				
7. To live in Vitoria-Gasteiz?				
8. To live in Spain?				
9. To go shopping?				
10. To watch TV?				
11. To speak on the phone?				
12. To talk to school friends?				
13. To talk to teachers?				
14. To talk to friends outside school?				
15. To pass exams?				
16. To talk to people you don't know? (in the street, in shops...)				
17. To be intelligent?				

Do you agree with these sentences?

	I COMPLETELY AGREE	I AGREE	I DON'T AGREE OR DIS-AGREE	I DON'T AGREE	I COMPLETELY DISAGREE
1. The sound of Basque when someone speaks it is beautiful.					
2. All kids in the Basque Country must learn Basque.					
3. I like speaking in Basque.					
4. Learning Basque is easy.					
5. Basque culture is very interesting.					
6. I prefer learning in Basque rather than in Spanish.					
7. Learning Basque is useful.					
8. Learning Basque is worth it.					
9. Basque is important to speak on the phone.					
10. Basque is important to talk to friends outside school.					
11. Basque is going to disappear because not many people speak it.					

<b>12.</b> Basque is important to talk to teachers.					
<b>13.</b> We need to protect Basque, not to lose it.					
<b>14.</b> Basque is important to talk to people I don't know (in shops, in the street...)					
<b>15.</b> I like listening to music in Basque.					
<b>16.</b> Basque is important to pass exams.					
<b>17.</b> Basque is important to talk to school friends.					
<b>18.</b> Basque is important to talk to my family.					
<b>19.</b> I like watching videos in Basque.					

Do you want to add anything else?

.....

.....

.....

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.....

**Annex 2**



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Name: .....

Age:.....

Level:.....

How important do you think Basque is for the following activities?

IS BASQUE IMPORTANT...	YES	QUITE	A LITTLE	NO
1. To make friends?				
2. To read?				
3. To write?				
4. To speak to your family?				
5. To have a good job?				
6. To be liked by others?				
7. To live in Vitoria-Gasteiz?				
8. To live in Spain?				
9. To go shopping?				
10. To watch TV?				
11. To speak on the phone?				
12. To talk to school friends?				
13. To talk to teachers?				
14. To talk to friends outside school?				
15. To pass exams?				
16. To talk to people you don't know? (in the street, in shops...)				
17. To be intelligent?				

Do you agree with these sentences?

	I COMPLETELY AGREE	I AGREE	I DON'T AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DON'T AGREE	I COMPLETELY DISAGREE
A. I liked using the computer during the project.					
8. Learning Basque is worth it.					
B. I want to do the project again.					

C. I liked creating the script.					
5. Basque culture is very interesting.					
D. I liked that my peers watched my video.					
E. I think that the project was fun.					
7. Learning Basque is useful.					
17. Basque is important to talk to school friends.					
F. I liked recording my voice.					
11. Basque is going to disappear because not many people speak it.					
3. I like speaking in Basque.					
1. The sound of Basque when someone speaks it is beautiful.					
G. I liked doing the project in Basque.					
13. We need to protect Basque, not to lose it.					
6. I prefer learning in Basque rather than in Spanish.					
2. All kids in the Basque Country must learn Basque.					
H. I like making videos in Basque.					
4. Learning Basque is easy.					
16. Basque is important to pass exams.					
12. Basque is important to talk to teachers.					
10. Basque is important to talk to friends outside school.					
14. Basque is important to talk to people I don't know (in shops, in the street...)					
15. I like listening to music in Basque.					
19. I like watching videos in Basque.					
9. Basque is important to speak on the phone.					
18. Basque is important to talk to my family.					

**What did you like most about the dubbing project?**

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**And what did you like the least?**

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**Would you want to do this project again? Why?**

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**What would you improve for next time?**

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**What was the most difficult part for you? And the easiest part?**

.....  
.....  
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.....

**Do you want to say anything else?**

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## Converting semiotic signs into a linguistic code: Implications for language learners' oral skills

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### Abstract

Research on the use of audio description (AD) in foreign language education has only been developed over the last decade. This paper introduces an experimental study on the potential of active audio description in learners' oral skills, focusing on the quantitative data which evidenced that oral productive skills are enhanced by this AVT mode. The study involved 81 undergraduate students of Spanish enrolled in a British University. During the ten-week intervention, participants were required to complete collaborative AD tasks. A range of instruments were used for data collection, which include pre- and post-questionnaires, rubrics, pre- and post-tests based on recordings of spontaneous conversation and observation notes by the teacher-researcher. There were two observers who revised all data collection tools, and three external evaluators assessed the potential enhancement of oral productive skills in learners' pre-tests and post-tests. Such a wide choice of tools was essential to allow the triangulation of data, and thus, to guarantee a greater reliability and consistency of the results obtained. Intonation, speed, and stress demonstrated the most significant improvement following the intervention, while the reduction of prolonged pauses was minimal, with the lowest rating among all examined features.

### Keywords

Didactic audio description (DAD), foreign language teaching, oral production skills, experiment, quantitative data

## 1. Introduction

This article discusses an experiment that aimed at confirming the following hypothesis: students enjoy active audio description (AD) tasks, they find them beneficial not only for their language learning in general, but also for productive oral skills (fluency, pronunciation and intonation), which is enhanced in spontaneous speech thanks to the use of didactic AD practice (DAD). The study took place in the third cycle of a larger study from which relevant qualitative and quantitative data was gathered and analysed. As such, it followed a cyclical structure in accord with action research principles, a methodology based on evaluation and reflection to implement required changes. Thus, lessons learnt from each cycle were applied to improve the quality of the data collected in each subsequent stage. Although its focus evolved with objectives and research questions, it culminated with this main experiment, which successfully responded to both questions formulated during the course of the study. The methodology used for the first and second cycles mainly provided information about learners' perceptions on AD practice. However, it was not until the final cycle (cycle 3) when there was enough relevant and consistent data to respond the second question which queried about the potential enhancement on oral productive skills in spontaneous speech.

1. What are the learners' perceptions when completing DAD tasks?
2. How does DAD practice impact oral production skills (fluency, pronunciation and intonation) in spontaneous speech?

The main objectives of this study were to analyse the impact of DAD practice on oral skills in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation, and also, the learner perceptions after completing their tasks. A secondary objective was to outline a series of guidelines for DAD which were extracted once data was analysed. The goal was to contribute to the community of language practitioners interested in an effective use of this audiovisual translation (AVT) mode. Due to space restrictions, this article focuses on the second research question. This is because the qualitative data obtained with regards to learners' perceptions clearly confirmed the conclusions reached in previous experiments (Navarrete, 2020). Participants' reflections towards AD practice were positive and encouraging. They valued how oral productive skills, as well as grammar and vocabulary, were enhanced. They also found their course tasks enjoyable and fun, and they appreciated the way the course was taught. However, on the negative side, some learners were not able to see the link between the course and certain areas of assessment.

Firstly, this article introduces the theoretical background of DAD, followed by the methodological rationale and the design of this study. This includes the mixed-methods strategies employed for data collection and analysis of results obtained. Secondly, it discusses the context and participants of the experiment as well as the resources and procedures used for structuring the lessons in a coherent way. Finally, it analyses the quantitative results obtained which evidenced the enhancement of oral production skills in language learning.

## 2. Audio description as a young sibling of didactic audiovisual translation

AD is a mode of AVT generally used for making video content accessible to blind and visually-impaired audiences. It aims at facilitating access to visual content by translating it into a verbal narration (Walczak & Fryer, 2017). AD is included in the AVT category of revoicing which comprises all modes that involve oral narration, dubbing, voice-over and AD (Lertola, 2019). In foreign language education (FLE), this exercise is often referred to didactic AD (DAD) as it is an active practice where the language learner inserts a narration into the original soundtrack of a clip to describe information transmitted visually, thus converting images into words. As

noted by Salway (2007), the scholarly examination of the connections between images and words has been ongoing for centuries, and the practice of AD combines them by incorporating spoken language discourse. Fryer (2016, p. 3) highlighted that “[u]nlike subtitling, dubbing, or voice-over, AD does not involve an existing text that requires translation from one language to another”. She cites Braun’s (2008, p. 2) characterisation of this process as an “intersemiotic, intermodal, or cross-modal translation or mediation” alluding to Jakobson (1959), who originally coined the term “intersemiotic” to describe forms of translation where the information does not originate solely from the translated channel but draws from other sources. Fryer also clarifies that in this context, “modal” suggests additional layers of meaning, encompassing spoken expressions, written communications, music, or sound effects. This is perhaps one more reason why this form of AVT is particularly beneficial for language learners. As students transform a visual concept into verbal expression without the need for intervention through their native language, they must construct their own scripts from scratch and record them using their own voices. This mode is often portrayed as an artistic practice due to the creative nature of translating visual elements into a linguistic code whilst the learner becomes a social agent that mediates between the clip and others, using aural discourse to interpret what can be seen (Navarrete, 2020, 2022; Navarrete & Bolaños García-Escribano, 2022).

The first attempt for a pedagogical practice of AVT in the language setting using the subtitling mode was by Díaz-Cintas (1995, 1997) which was followed by Talaván’s works (2006a, 2006b). That was the beginning of a long list of experimental studies that not only used subtitling, especially at the early stages, but also, revoicing in foreign language education (FLE). For further information, it is advisable to check both compendiums by Lertola (2019) and Talaván (2020) who examine in detail relevant studies carried out from then.

Most experimental studies on DAD have been released just over the last decade focusing on the impact of this mode of AVT on different language skills and competences, such as lexical competence (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013); integrated skills (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2014; Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017); oral production skills (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2015, 2016, 2021; Navarrete, 2018; Talaván & Lertola, 2016); writing skills (Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Talaván *et al.*, 2022); morphology (Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2020); media literacy (Herrero & Escobar, 2018); and learners’ perceptions (Bausells-Espín, 2022). In addition, some didactic proposals (Cenni & Izzo, 2016; Navarrete, 2018, 2020, 2023) and work on intercultural competence (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017) have been published. Finally, the aforementioned works (Navarrete, 2020; Navarrete & Bolaños García-Escribano, 2022) have focused on providing a methodological framework for DAD that is aligned to the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020).

Authors	Date	Features examined	Participants	Language	Level
Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen	2015	Speaking skills	16	English	B1
Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen	2016	Speaking skills	12	English	B1
Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen	2021	Speaking skills	28	English	B2
Talaván and Lertola	2016	Speaking skills	30	English	B1
Navarrete	2018	Speaking skills	6	Spanish	B1-B2

**Table 1.** Main studies on oral production skills (source: author)

As seen in Table 1, Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen's studies (2015, 2016) involved a restricted number of participants. They developed an application called "Videos for Speaking" (VISP) and deliberated on activities within it that employed DAD techniques to improve oral accuracy and fluency. While these studies did not primarily aim to measure quantitative improvement, their qualitative analysis of the outcomes provided insights into students' perceptions regarding the potential of DAD practice in enhancing oral skills. The same is true when they compared (2021) two different usages of the above application. The findings indicate that concerning language practice, VISP demonstrates equal effectiveness whether used as a classroom support tool or as a standalone application for independent use outside the classroom. However, in terms of attitudinal aspects, the students who integrated the app into their classroom activities displayed a more favourable attitude toward the app compared to those who employed it independently, with the latter group showing less enthusiasm and motivation regarding the app's utility and advantages.

Talaván & Lertola's quasi-experimental study (2016) was undertaken with 30 participants, divided into two groups, the experimental and the control group. The data analysed in the oral production test demonstrated the enhancement of this skill. A further data source comprising the feedback provided by the students confirmed these findings as the results were triangulated comparing both sets of data. However, the authors claimed that these findings are context-specific and should not be broadly applied. Despite a small participant pool, the combination of data sources and various data collection methods yielded a fairly robust design, increasing the likelihood of successful replication and broader applicability.

In a small-scale experimental research effort, Navarrete's study (2018) explored how DAD enhanced the oral skills of six undergraduate students who were studying Spanish as a foreign language at the B1 level. The investigation comprised an initial oral assessment, an evaluation of AD tasks, and the distribution of two questionnaires. Students recorded podcasts and completed AD assignments, followed by peer discussions in the classroom. Both tasks were assessed using the same criteria, which encompassed pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar. The research closely examined improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and intonation. While the study recognised its limitations, the author found the positive student reactions to DAD practice promising and indicative of potential for further investigation.

### 3. Sample and context

In the upcoming sections, we will examine the study that is the focus of this article. Its specifications will be drawn before delving into the discussion of the results. The experiment took place from January to April 2017. Initially, 81 students participated in the experiment, 64 completed the pre-questionnaire, 37 the post-questionnaire and 46 students were recorded for both the pre-task and post-task. All students were studying their first year at University College London (UCL), and they were 18–19 years old. They would have done an A-level in Spanish in the previous year or an equivalent course if they had studied secondary education in a foreign country. They all joined the course with ranging levels of proficiency around B1 (CEFR, 2020). The participants were students from different departments (School of European Studies Languages and Culture, Economics and Business, BA in Modern Languages, etc.). The Spanish language module as a whole is divided into four components (grammar and communicative skills, oral skills, translation from and into English-Spanish), and it runs for two terms (10 weeks each). The experiment was carried out within the Translation from English into Spanish component. There were nine groups with an average of 9 students per group taught by the teacher-researcher. This took place over a 10-week period, consisting of a session per week, where students had to complete eight AVT collaborative tasks spread out throughout the course.

#### 4. Data gathering tools

A number of instruments were used to collect relevant data. The methodology and the data collection instruments used in the previous cycles were essential for the design of the main experiment. These include pre- and post-questionnaires, rubrics, pre- and post-tests and observation notes by the teacher-researcher. There were additional participants in this cycle: two observers revised all data collection tools, and three external evaluators assessed the potential enhancement of oral productive skills in learners' pre- tests and post-tests. Such a wide choice of tools was essential to allow the triangulation of data, and thus, to guarantee a greater reliability and consistency of the results obtained. With 46 participants having completed the majority of AD tasks along with pre- and post-tests, it became feasible to measure the impact of AD practice on oral production skills (fluency, pronunciation, and intonation) in spontaneous speech.

In order to test and triangulate the results from the rubric applied to the assessment of oral skills, a similar procedure than the one used with the questionnaires was followed. Drawing from the researcher's teaching background, a detailed list of potential oral production features was meticulously compiled, focusing on common errors observed among Spanish speakers. In addition, rubrics from previous experiments (1 and 2), and examples of other rubrics used in AVT research, were revised, such as the ones Sánchez-Requena (2018) and Talaván and Lertola (2016) used for their studies. It had to be designed to be easily filled in by the evaluators. This time quantitative data, as well as qualitative data, was meant to be collected. Therefore, it needed to include variables that could be assessed numerically. Also, there was an open question to address any additional information that might not have appeared explicitly or might have been too specific to one particular participant. Again, only the strictly indispensable number of items were included. The rubric was also reviewed by the same observers that checked the questionnaires of this experiment. Table 2 represents a summary of the rubric employed to assess students' compulsory tasks, pre- and post-tests.

<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>Intonation Naturalness</b>	<b>Fluency Hesitations Prolonged pauses</b>	<b>Fluency Continued speech Intelligibility Lexical knowledge Grammatical Knowledge Self-correction Pronunciation</b>
Vowels (e/o/u)	5 Excellent	4 Too many	5 Excellent
Diphthongs ae/ao/au/eo/eu	4 Very good	3 Many	4 Very good
ia/ie/io/iu/etc.	3 Good	2 Some	3 Good
Consonants h/p/g/j/r/ñ b/v s/c t/d	2 Average	1 Almost none	2 Average
Orthographic confusion (que/qui, gue/gui)	1 Low		1 Low

**Table 2.** Summary of rubric used for tasks, pre- and post-tests (source: author)

This rubric was used for both the AD tasks and the pre- and post-tests<sup>1</sup>, since there was no reason to have different rubrics provided that the aim in both cases was to assess oral skills (fluency, pronunciation and intonation). Although in the case of the AD tasks, students had the chance to prepare their speeches, it should be noted that the objective of the study during this cycle was to find out if AD tasks had an impact on oral productive skills in spontaneous conversation. Hence, it was necessary to measure this impact on a number of oral features by comparing the tests before and after intervention.

The features analysed in this rubric were measured by a scale of 1 to 6 (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = adequate, 4 = good, 5 = very good, 6 = excellent). Scales of six instead of five values were selected following recommendations by Chyung *et al.* (2018). First, to avoid participants selecting middle options, which might cause the invalidation of certain questions. Second, to facilitate the statistical analysis of the variables. It is easier to separate the negative values from the positive ones by creating two isolated groups.

In the complete rubric, speed was assessed taking into account how fluent each participant was, and if speech was continuous or too slow with frequent pauses. Intonation was assessed in terms of how natural, that is near-native, the speech sounded. A general evaluation on pronunciation was also included, although appreciation of particular phonemes (consonants and vowels) were also incorporated in the following section of the rubric. The next feature, *easy to follow speech*, was related to the level of intelligibility of the participant's speech. These two last variables, *pronunciation* and *easy to follow speech*, attempted to assess overall pronunciation. For the second element, it is assumed that a listener will struggle to understand a speaker's speech for a number of reasons, such as lack of vocabulary and incorrect grammar (as mentioned earlier), but also due to unintelligible pronunciation. This design allowed the assessment of a number of features from a general point of view (pronunciation, intonation and stress), all of which affect the way speech is perceived by the evaluator. Finally, the last two variables of the rubric, *vocabulary* and *grammar*, were also selected to assess fluency, since deficiencies in vocabulary and grammar knowledge often cause dysfluency. This final feature was measured by assessing the level of wavering or prolonged pauses by the speaker: this was done by considering the number of pauses that the participant would make, since a broken speech is a clear sign of deficient fluency.

In terms of pronunciation, the teacher-researcher looked at vowels and groups of vowels where learners tend to struggle: the vowels /e/, /o/ and /u/ forming syllables, and articulation of diphthongs (/ai/, /ue/, /oi/, etc.). Regarding consonants, there was a group of consonants assessed individually (silent h, p, g, j, r, and ñ), which are the ones that tend to cause more problems to English speakers pronouncing Spanish words. In addition, the contrast between b/v, s/c and t/d was also assessed. In particular, special attention was devoted to the last pair (t/d), as there is a tendency by a large number of learners (in particular English speakers) to make these sounds alveolar instead of dental, because of their interference with English where these sounds tend to be the opposite. This general mispronunciation feature was explicitly explained, and samples taken from students ADs were assessed and worked on in class.

All these phonemes were selected based on the teacher-researcher extensive experience in FL teaching, in addition to the pronunciation studies by known scholars (Cala Carvajal, 1997; Ichaurrealde, 2001; Mompeán-González, 2001). Finally, examining stress at word level and the mispronunciation of 'que/qui gue/gui' due to orthographic confusion were additional variables included in the rubrics for experiments 2 and 3. After the second experiment, the teacher-researcher noticed how some students, who had previously written their AD scripts,

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<sup>1</sup> Both of them available online at: <https://bit.ly/2SmUA1f> and at: <https://bit.ly/2GGhBec> respectively.

did pronounce the 'u' in syllabic groups such as 'que/qui' and 'gue/gui'. This pronunciation error is common with level B1 students and it is due to orthographic confusion.

## 5. Resources and procedures

For the audio description tasks, seven video clips were carefully selected. As stated by Garza (1994) and King (2002), this should be a rigorous task on the part of the teacher-researcher, clips need to be motivating and culturally relevant for the students (especially because they will be playing the same clip continuously in order to complete their tasks). Also, they need to be adapted to the language objectives of the course where they are integrated. The clips for the experiment were selected with the aim of covering a variety of topic areas, grammar structures, and semantic fields that were well-aligned to the course syllabus. All of them (see Table 3) lasted between 1 to 4 minutes approximately, following the recommendations by many authors (such as Garza, 1994; Rost, 2002; Tomalin, 1986; Stempleski, 1990) who agree on using short clips, preferably from 30 seconds to 3-4 minutes and with a maximum duration of 6 minutes. In order to facilitate video editing, none of the videos included dialogue scripts, only music soundtracks. Also, aspects such as the pace of the action, the mood of the characters and the setting were cautiously considered to reach the desired level of difficulty for each task. According to Burt (1999), the clarity of the message, rhythm, duration of the clip, and level of interest for the learners are key aspects to consider, all of which were also examined when selecting each clip.

Clips	Source	Duration
1 <i>The Hunger Games</i>	<a href="https://youtu.be/B8BD9txkGL4">https://youtu.be/B8BD9txkGL4</a>	0:56
2 <i>The Full Monty</i>	<a href="https://youtu.be/OMTuZoNvahl">https://youtu.be/OMTuZoNvahl</a>	1:07
3 <i>One Day on Earth...Cooking Tortilla de Patatas</i>	<a href="https://vimeo.com/56434999">https://vimeo.com/56434999</a>	1:21
4 <i>Maldición</i>	<a href="https://youtu.be/k-Z8xxygd2Y">https://youtu.be/k-Z8xxygd2Y</a>	1:45
5 <i>The Minions</i>	<a href="https://youtu.be/Q04KG7gVQtw">https://youtu.be/Q04KG7gVQtw</a>	3:52
6 <i>Turismo Perú</i>	Clip no longer available online	2:23
7 <i>A short love story in stop motion.</i>	<a href="https://vimeo.com/877053">https://vimeo.com/877053</a>	3:47

**Table 3.** Clips and their duration (main experiment, cycle 3) (source: author)

In the course of the experiment, tasks were scaffolded following Vygotsky's principles on learning: '[s]caffolding not only produces immediate results, but also instils the skills necessary for independent problem solving in the future' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Thus, tasks were organised with increasing level of difficulty and creativity involved to instigate both autonomous learning and creative problem-solving skills.

For recording purposes, all videos were divided into the number of members of each working team (usually three members per group). Thus, if a clip lasted three minutes, each student would record about one minute. The scripts were sent via Moodle, our university VLE, annotating participants' interventions. The aim of this request was twofold: first, to enable the teacher-researcher to provide individual feedback on fluency, pronunciation and intonation (when the tasks were compulsory), as summative assessment was involved; second, to allow her to analyse the data collected by learners' individual task performance.

As there were only ten sessions for the experiment to be run, it was decided not to include the technology teaching in class explicitly. However, some measures were considered to ensure that students were able to carry out the minimum audio or video editing requirements. Each team was created in such a way that at least one member was confident enough to use the

appropriate programs (students were asked about their computer skills in the first session to make this possible).

There were three types of tasks, for all of which students had to record ADs with their own voices. The first type (type I) included tasks where the English AD of a video clip had to be adapted into Spanish. This set served primarily as examples of best practice regarding AD creation. Students would deduce basic guidelines on AD and reflect on time constraints when carrying out their own. The second set of tasks (type II) involved the creation of an AD from scratch of a given video clip. Students had to write their own scripts by looking at the images on screen and by selecting relevant information. The final task (type III) went a few stages further: this time not only the AD was needed but also a short clip had to be created, so that students would become designers, producers, audio describers and actors, taking and supervising each other's roles.

All sessions apart from one (aiming at preparing students for the written exam) were devoted to the experiment. In each session, a new clip would be introduced, students would discuss potential difficulties, work with the ADs at home, submit their transcription and recordings to our university VLE, and upload their videos to the YouTube platform. Feedback would be provided in the following session where each new video was viewed and discussed in class. Table 4 shows a basic structure of each session. At the end of each one, there was a wrap up stage where students, with the help of the teacher, outlined the learning outcomes of each session and highlighted particular difficulties encountered.

Stages	Task	Description
1	Reflecting on videos watched with tasks completed	Assessing videos and clarifying queries Students watch the video clip they have worked with, and reflect on problems posed for the corresponding AD script
2	Watching the clip for next task for problem anticipation and procedure discussion	Familiarising with the clip and discussing potential problems they might pose
3	Wrapping up	Learning outcomes are summarised Expectations for next task are discussed

**Table 4.** Stages involved in each session (source: author)

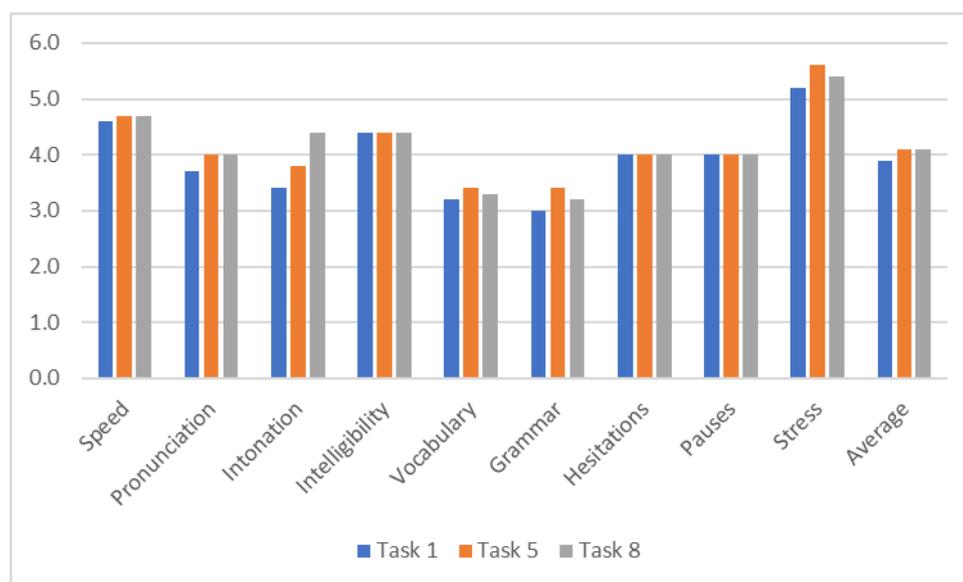
As it can be seen in the above table, a similar structure was used for each lesson. The discussion in class gave the teacher-researcher the chance to take relevant observation notes. As Dörnyei (2007, p. 185) points out, '[t]he main merit of observational data is that it allows researchers to see directly what people do without having to rely on what they say they do.' Therefore, the observer in this experiment had the chance to recall aspects such as particular difficulties posed by the tasks, students who submitted or did not submit their tasks and the reasons provided, the way they sat in class, the relationship among students, the interaction among them, and general rapport and class dynamics. All of these notes were key to carry out the necessary amendments to subsequent stages of the experiment, such as time dedicated to the tasks, reinforcement of certain areas of the course syllabus, attendance in class, encouraging students who did not submit a task, understanding technical problems they faced and how to solve them, etc.

## 6. Quantitative analysis of results: Course task results and evaluators' rubric

As mentioned earlier, two tests were designed to examine the participants' improvement on oral productive skills. Furthermore, the teacher-researcher evaluated individually three of the

tasks that students had carried out during the course of the experiment to contrast results with the pre- and post-test results, which were also assessed by three additional evaluators.

Figure 1 shows the average scores of the most representative tasks following the features assessed by the teacher-researcher. The conditions in which this evaluation took place were rather different to those of the pre- and post-test for two main reasons. First, the number of evaluators, a single one (the teacher-researcher) assessed the participants' speeches whereas in the case of the main tests there were four evaluators who assessed the participants' speeches before and after the intervention by using an ad-hoc rubric. Second, the AD tasks allowed students to write and prepare their speeches in advance whereas in the case of the main tests, participants were assessed in spontaneous speech.



**Figure 1.** Average participants' scores across most representative tasks (experiment 3, cycle 3)  
(source: author)

As seen in Figure 1, the average improvement was not very significant, but one can appreciate a small increase from task 5. The features assessed for tasks 1, 5 and 8 respectively, in which an enhancement was most noticeable, were, in this order: intonation (3.4, 3.8 and 4.4), pronunciation (3.7, 4.0 and 4.0), stress (5.2, 5.6 and 5.4), grammar (3.0, 3.4 and 3.2), vocabulary (3.2, 3.4 and 3.3) and speed (4.6, 4.7 and 4.7). However, stress, grammar and vocabulary showed an increase in the rate of performance in task 5 rather than 8. These results could be explained by the fact that the final task was slightly different to all previous tasks, and learners had to create a video clip in addition to carrying out its corresponding AD. Thus, this task might have been more demanding from the participants' point of view, and their speech performances might have been slightly more careless.

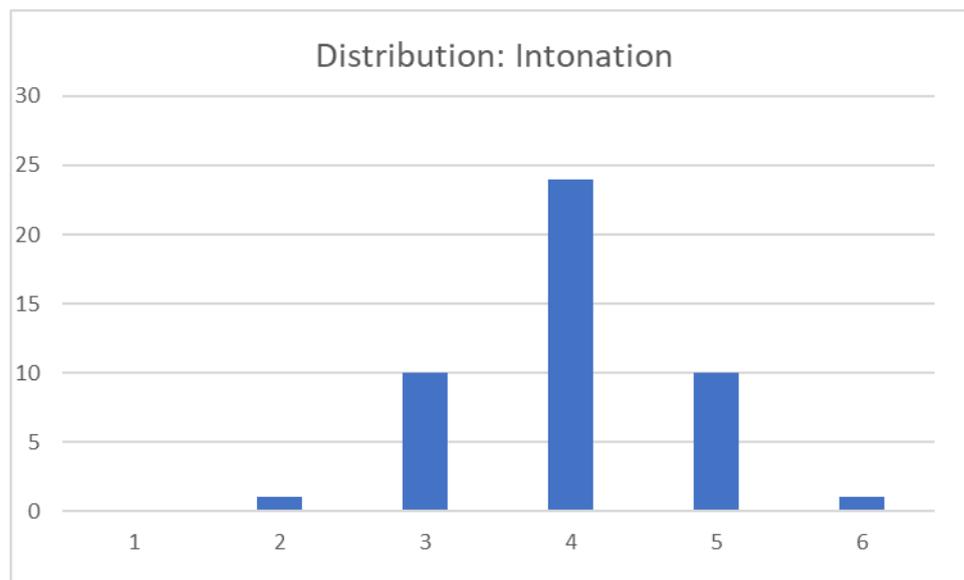
The pre-test took place in the second week of the course, whereas the post-test was performed in the last one. Participants were recorded while responding to a series of questions that they had to elaborate themselves. Most features analysed showed relevant impact by the intervention, however less impact was found regarding specific sounds. All features were statistically analysed following the procedure below, as seen in Table 5.

Steps	Action	Objective
1	Convert nominal attributes into figures	To obtain quantitative data which allows pertinent calculations
2	Organise data in a coherent manner	To apply relevant tests
3	Plot the frequency of the pre-test ratings	To check if data sets have a normal distribution, so that either parametric or non-parametric tests can be applied
4	Apply T-Test (for parametric data)	To calculate the rate of the statistical significance per set of data
5	Select the features that have more increase in rating	To focus on the most relevant data obtained
6	Contrast the increase in rating across evaluators	To triangulate data

**Table 5.** Statistical procedure for data analysis (source: author)

In the data analysis process, Steps 1 and 2 involved preparing the data by converting nominal values into numerical ones, allowing for easier analysis. The third step included plotting the frequency of pre-test ratings to determine if the data had a normal distribution, which was confirmed. This enabled subsequent parametric tests.

Figure 2 illustrates the resulting analysis of the intonation attribute. If the pre-test had a normal distribution, one could infer that this was equally the case for the corresponding post-tests.



**Figure 2.** Intonation attribute showing a normal distribution (source: author)

It is important to note that although many attributes across the four evaluators were analysed for a normal distribution, not all of them showed such a perfect one as in Figure 2. However, the data analysed after pertinent calculations were performed showed enough evidence for a parametric test to be applied.

Having ensured that the data sets had a normal distribution, a parametric test (step 4) was applied. According to Dörnyei (2007), when comparing research designs that have two sets of scores obtained by the same group, or when the same participants are measured more than once (46 participants were the ones that carried out both the pre and post- tests), it is best to compute a paired-sample t-test (also known as 'matched t-test', 'matched-pairs t-test' and

'pairs t-test'). This test calculates whether the difference between two sets of scores reaches statistical significance.

Feature	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Evaluator 4
Speed	0.00005%	0.05912%	0.00840%	0.00006%
Pronunciation	1.78928%	1.09207%	0.31826%	0.00000%
Intonation	0.00005%	1.91822%	0.00050%	0.00000%
Intelligibility	0.09559%	1.78928%	0.31826%	0.00009%
Vocabulary	0.02726%	20.94047%	0.05747%	0.00001%
Grammar	1.09207%	3.23111%	0.00021%	0.00002%
Hesitations	0.00002%	0.89548%	1.07893%	0.01641%
Pauses	0.00000%	42.02212%	42.02212%	0.00000%
Stress	0.00495%	0.18514%	0.00099%	0.00000%

**Table 6.** The two-tail (t-test) results across evaluators (source: author)

As seen in Table 6, the majority of findings show statistical significance, denoted by a threshold of  $p < .05$  or 5% with a few exceptions that fail to meet this criterion. This is the case of some of the results given by evaluator 2 who gave a very low score to the *vocabulary* attribute, and so the average rate of increase is almost unnoticeable. The same is true when it comes to the *pauses* attribute; both evaluators 2 and 3 did not see much change in this attribute, so they both gave it a low score. These actions have translated into a lack of statistical significance on these specific areas. Thus, one could conclude that these two attributes discussed in relation to evaluators 2 or 3 did not allow to reject the Null Hypothesis for the reasons explained above. Step 5 involved separating the data sets that exhibited a significant increase in ratings from those that did not. The aim was to analyse these data sets in a different way, focussing on the first set for a positive analysis of the results obtained that supported the successful impact of the intervention in learners' speech. The data sets that did not score a high increase in rating were examined from a remedial point of view in order to figure out possible causes that might justify this result. Thus, it would be necessary to decide whether the intervention had no impact or whether the design of the data collection tools and the tests themselves had not been appropriately carried out to assess certain features of oral production skills. This final step for data analysis aimed at contrasting the increase in rating among the four evaluators in order to triangulate the results obtained. Average rates of the different sets of data collected were calculated to improve the accuracy of the analysis of the results.

Table 7 depicts the average rate of change or increase given to each feature by each individual evaluator. These figures are the resulting calculations after comparing both sets of data, before and after the intervention. Average rates given to each feature across all evaluators are offered so that, by looking at this table, one can see the scores given to each feature individually and with all evaluators together as a group.

Feature	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Evaluator 4	Average
Speed	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.43
Pronunciation	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.32
Intonation	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.45
Intelligibility	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.30
Vocabulary	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.34
Grammar	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.33
Hesitations	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.34
Pauses	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.16
Stress	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.42

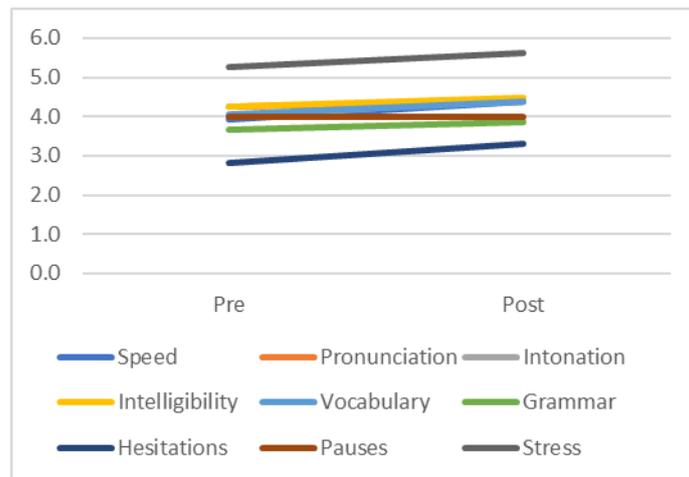
**Table 7.** Average rate of increase in the features assessed across evaluators (source: author)

Table 7 lists the attributes that increased most and least depending on the evaluator. One should note that average figures that showed a greater increase appear in dark to lighter green; medium increase in darker to lighter brown, and the lowest increase is in red. It shows how intonation (0.45), speed (0.43) and stress (0.42) scored the highest rates, which means that they are the features in which the intervention had a maximum impact. It further validates that the frequency of prolonged pauses among participants, a negative aspect of learners' speech, did not decrease despite intervention, as indicated by its minimal increase in rating (0.16), which is the lowest among all the features analysed.

As depicted in Table 7, there is a notable discrepancy in the assessments provided by the four evaluators. Evaluators 1 and 3 reported similar results, while evaluator 2 reported lower scores and evaluator 4 reported higher scores compared to the former two. This disparity can be attributed to two combined hypotheses that address these shortcomings within the evaluation process, and it is crucial to consider the inter-rater reliability factor here.

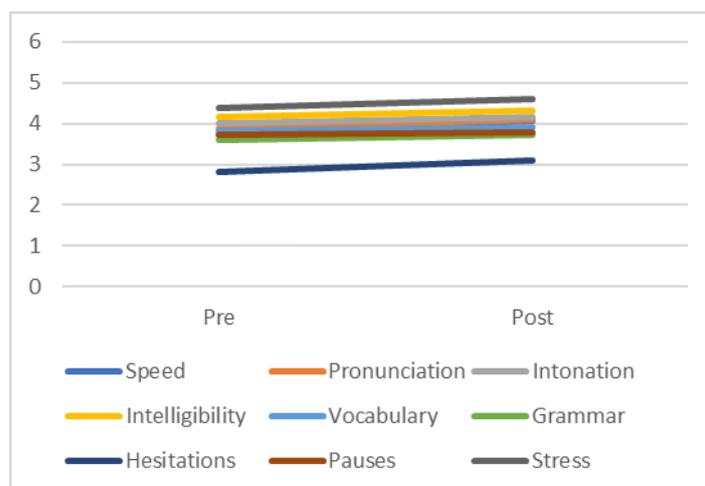
Firstly, it is possible that the rubric used for assessment lacked sufficient information in terms of performance criteria. Some authors such as Cox *et al.* (2015) and Dawson (2015) emphasise the importance of incorporating these additional items. Instead, the rubric included a graded list of values for assessment, leading to differing interpretations among evaluators. Secondly, this resulted in evaluators 2 and 4 establishing their baseline assessments from different starting points. For instance, evaluator 2's performance ratings oscillated between 3.8 and 4.0, while evaluator 4's oscillation ranged from 2.9 to 3.5. In contrast, evaluators 1 and 3 maintained a narrower oscillation level of 3.9 to 4.2. This divergence in the interpretation of the rubric's criteria and their respective starting points played a key role in the varying assessment outcomes, emphasising the importance of addressing the inter-rater reliability factor when evaluating performance. It could be argued that the evaluators' professional and research expertise were somewhat assumed, given their status as experienced teachers, who in addition, had previously assessed a similar experiment involving dubbing, which shared similar characteristics with the present one.

In the following Figures, 3 to 6, one can clearly appreciate what the increase rate per attribute, and by each evaluator's perception of potential improvement were. Each feature is represented with a different colour. These figures are useful because they add information on the evaluators' appreciation of change, taking into account the scale at which they started when assessing the pre-test and what was the scale at which they finished when evaluating participants' post-tests.



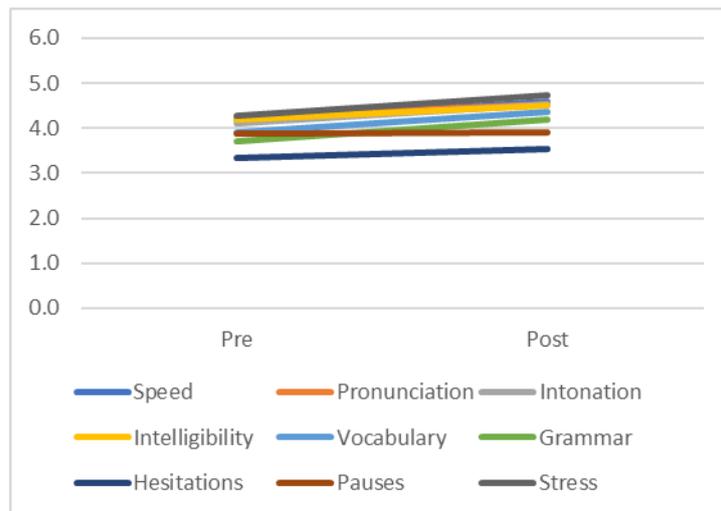
**Figure 3.** Pre- to post-scores for evaluator 1 (source: author)

Looking at Figure 3, one can see how evaluator 1 valued a positive increase in all features except for the pauses attribute. Most features (from a scale of 0.0 to 6.0) started just below the 4.00 rate and they improved above that same average scale. However, the *hesitations* feature was the one that started and finished at a lower scale, from just below 3.00 to just above 3.00, whereas the starting rate for stress was much higher, just above 5.00 and went to just below the 6.00 rate.



**Figure 4.** Pre- to post-scores for evaluator 2 (source: author)

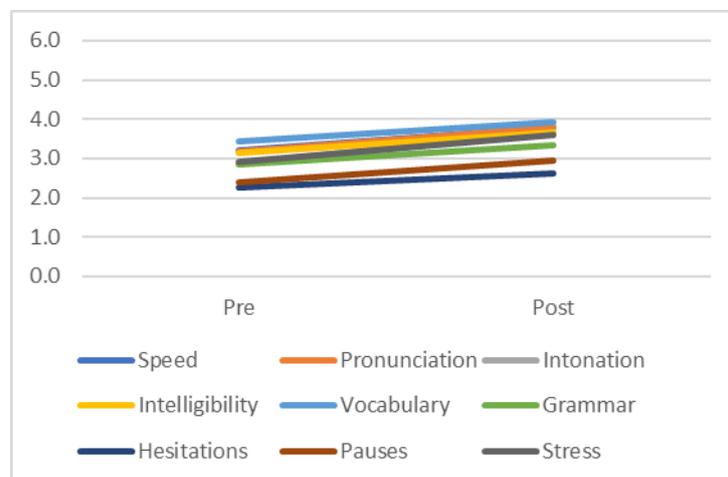
In terms of starting and finishing points for pre- and post-tests, evaluators 2 (Figure 4) and 3 (Figure 5) bear some resemblance, as most features are assessed from below and above the scale of 4.00. However, both evaluators started scoring from a noticeably lower point than in the case of the rest of the features examined when assessing the number of hesitations for the pre-tests (just below the scale of 3.00 for evaluator 2, and just above this same scale for evaluator 3).



**Figure 5.** Pre- to post-scores for evaluator 3 (source: author)

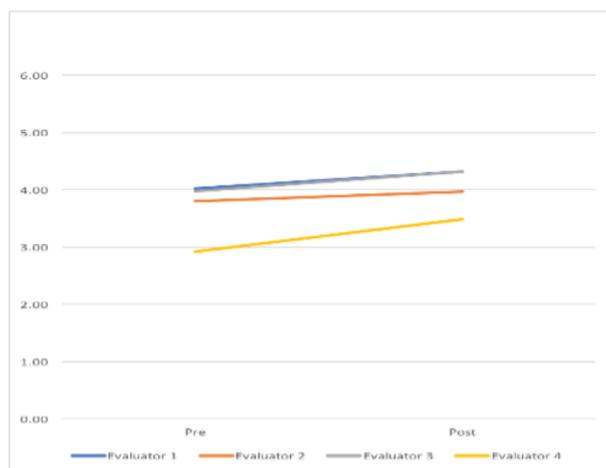
Looking at Figures 5 and 6, another similarity in the way in which evaluators 3 and 4 assessed the tests is that both scored a consistent change from the pre- to the post-tests across all features with the exception of speech pauses. As previously mentioned, none of them perceived much of an evolution from one test to the next when assessing this particular feature.

As illustrated in Figure 6, evaluator 4 is the one that scored the highest improvement across all features from one test to the next. However, she is also the only one that tended to give the lowest scores to most features in both the participants' pre- and post-tests. Her starting scores went from 2.20 to a 3.30 rate, but also, they finished in a generally lower rate (2.50-4.00) than all other three evaluators, whose score tendency was above 4.00.



**Figure 6.** Pre- to post-scores for evaluator 4 (source: author)

Figure 7 illustrates in a very simple and efficient manner the evaluators' scores for each of the tests, their starting and finishing rates and the differences among evaluators. It provides a summary of the pre- and post-tests across all attributes for each evaluator in different colour lines.



**Figure 7.** Summary pre- to post-tests across all attributes for each evaluator (source: author)

Figure 7 also shows how all evaluators' lines are ascending, which means that the intervention had a successful impact on learners' speech, but it is noticeably more horizontal in the case of evaluator 2's perceptions. Besides, the graph highlights how evaluators 1 and 3 assessed an average rate for improvement starting and finishing in a rather similar scale for both tests across all participants.

## 7. Conclusion

In most studies focusing on oral production skills based on DAD practice, attempts to quantify the actual improvement of these skills were rare, with the exception of Talavan & Lertola's study (2016). They emphasised that these findings should be interpreted within their particular context and cannot be generalised. Similarly, Navarrete's study (2018) faced limitations due to a small participant pool but highlighted learners' positive attitudes toward DAD practice and its potential for future investigation.

Statistical analysis of the data gathered from the evaluators' rubrics in this study confirms our hypothesis: DAD practice has a significant impact on oral production skills (fluency, pronunciation and intonation) in spontaneous speech. Most features showed a noticeable improvement, albeit with only minimal reduction in prolonged pauses. The experiment also highlights the need for a more comprehensive rubric to avoid differences in how evaluators interpret results and to establish a shared baseline, thereby enhancing evaluation consistency and reliability.

In light of the context presented above and the analysis of the obtained results, it is plausible to assert that oral proficiency in spontaneous speech can be effectively fostered through DAD's practice. The empirical evidence gathered suggests that the incorporation of DAD practice into language learning environments yields positive outcomes. Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that while the results demonstrate promise, further research is needed to ascertain the robustness and generalizability of these findings across diverse linguistic and educational contexts.

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## Audio description and pronominal verb production in students of Spanish: An analysis of unexpected linguistic outputs

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### Abstract

In audio description (AD), images are turned into words to facilitate access to audiovisual products for blind and partially sighted people. Over the last two decades, AD has been incorporated into foreign language education to promote active learning. This article presents an experiment on the potential of AD to promote pronominal verb (PNV) production in English-speaking students of Spanish (B2 level), focusing on participants' PNV uses beyond the expected ones. Experimental groups completed two translation tasks: an AD (images into words), and an interlingual translation (English into Spanish), in reverse order. Production differences were explored quantitatively and qualitatively by task type, task order, and PNV type. Results suggest that interlingual translation is more effective for PNV production. However, certain trends reveal that completing the AD first may enhance PNV frequency and correctness in a later task. More importantly, the presence of 'unexpected' PNVs—many of types considered difficult—challenges previous findings regarding students' tendency towards pronominal omission or overgeneralisation, raising questions about what generates students' awareness of pronominality requirements, and about whether establishing a visual-linguistic connection promotes such awareness.

### Keywords

Audio description, Spanish pronominal verbs, didactic audiovisual translation, Spanish as a foreign language, integrated form-focus approach

## 1. Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a steady transition from a passive (Vanderplank, 1988) to an active use of audiovisual material in foreign language education (FLE), mirroring the conception of the language learner as an active user introduced by the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001). This evolution has been facilitated by learner-centred methodologies like the task-based approach (Littlewood, 2004), increasingly more available and user-friendly technological tools, the revitalisation of translation within FLE (Cook, 2010) as the “fifth skill” (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017a) and as a form of mediation (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020, 2022), and a raising interest in the pedagogical potential of the active use of audiovisual translation (AVT) (Ávila Cabrera, 2022; González Vera, 2022; Lertola, 2018, 2019a; Talaván, 2013). These studies, alongside many others, belong to the field of didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) (Talaván, 2020). In DAT, learners are actively engaged (Talaván *et al.*, 2022) undertaking the AVT task—be it subtitling or revoicing<sup>1</sup>. Projects like ClipFlair (Baños & Sokoli, 2015) or TRADILEX<sup>2</sup> (Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023; Navarrete & Bolaños, 2022) have helped establish DAT as a recognised research field.

This paper contributes to this field with a descriptive, exploratory analysis of results from an experiment investigating the value of didactic audio description (AD), as opposed to interlingual translation<sup>3</sup>, to promote pronominal verb (PNV) production in learners of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). Specifically, it analyses PNVs used by students in unexpected places (see section 4). It first establishes the theoretical framework, covering didactic AD in FLE and key Spanish PNV features, including a tailor-made pedagogical taxonomy. It then presents the experiment (aims, methodology, context, participants, instruments, and procedures), followed by a description of the corpus and the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Lastly, the discussion examines results vis-à-vis research questions, while the conclusion addresses some limitations and provides considerations for further studies.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Didactic AD in FLE

Audio description is a mode of accessible AVT aimed at blind or partially sighted people which translates images into words (Walczak & Fryer, 2017). While translation in other AVT modes occurs across languages (interlingual) or within languages (intralingual), in AD it occurs from a visual to a verbal system (intersemiotic), activating different mental processes in the translator or audio describer (Holsanova, 2016). AD relies on visual perception and image-content processing, both heavily guided by attention to visual aspects, which varies across individuals, and by “mental schemas built from past experiences” (p. 52). Past experiences of sighted audio describers usually differ from those of blind or partially sighted audiences, largely because information processing is cognitively different for each. While sighted people can absorb large pieces of information through sight and hearing simultaneously, blind or partially sighted people rely mainly on the aural stream of information, which is “sequential” (p. 63). In AD creation, unlike in other translation modes, considering these perception and information-processing distances is essential.

AD’s intersemioticity and cognitive singularity nourish pedagogical innovation (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017a). Experiments on didactic AD have investigated its potential

<sup>1</sup> *Revoicing* includes dubbing, audio description, and free commentary.

<sup>2</sup> See the TRADILEX website for a comprehensive DAT publications list: <https://tradi.uned.es/en/new-publications/> [last accessed: 07/10/2023].

<sup>3</sup> Following Jakobson’s terminology (1959).

for the development of phraseological competence (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017b), lexical accuracy or stylistic richness (Calduch & Talaván, 2018), oral skills (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2016; Talaván & Lertola, 2016), intercultural and mediation skills (Navarrete, 2022; Plaza-Lara & Gonzalo Llera, 2022; Vermeulen & Ibáñez Moreno, 2017) or communicative and linguistic awareness from accessibility and inclusion perspectives (Ogea Pozo, 2022; Pintado Gutiérrez & Torralba, 2022). Results suggest that active AD tasks enhance learning in multiple ways (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017a; Lertola, 2019b; Talaván *et al.*, 2022).

Translating images into words requires matching image-coded information with linguistic forms, so that the resulting verbal representations semantically and pragmatically evoke in the receiver a mental image as similar as possible to that shown in the audiovisual product. Therefore, audio describing requires careful thinking about language along a syntactic-semantic continuum within a communicative situation. Because idiomaticity and accuracy are essential in AD to convey both content and experience, AD-based FLE could prove useful to present specific grammatical structures in an innovative, motivating manner, and to help uncover factors and patterns in learners' acquisition/production. Previous studies conducted with Dutch-speaking SFL learners compared AD's and interlingual translation's potential to promote grammatical competence, idiomaticity, and metalinguistic awareness regarding clitic pronouns (Escobar-Álvarez & Vermeulen, 2022) and pronominal verbs (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2023). Results suggest that interlingual translation is more advantageous. However, benefits of didactic AD are also identified, especially for creativity, learning awareness, communicative competence, idiomaticity, and accessibility awareness. To contribute to this research, the experiment described here provides data from English-speaking learners and proposes a different methodological approach.

## 2.2. Spanish pronominal verbs

Pronominal verbs (PNVs) are among “the most controversial topics in Spanish grammar, and in Romance languages” (Mendikoetxea, 1999, p. 1635). They are characterised by the presence in the infinitive of the clitic *se*—as in the reflexive *lavarse* (1a)—which in conjugation precedes the verb and agrees with the subject (1b, 1c):

- (1) (a) *lavarse* = to wash *oneself*
- (b) *Yo me lavo* = I wash *myself*
- (c) *Nosotros nos lavamos* = We wash *ourselves*

Reflexives are one PNV type. Many Spanish verbs can be pronominalised in varied configurations to express an array of semantic or pragmatic connotations, forming a complex syntactic-semantic network (see Delbecque *et al.*, 2014; Escobar-Álvarez, 2017; Escobar & Teomiro, 2016; Teomiro García, 2017; Teomiro García & Escobar-Álvarez, 2013). Butt and Benjamin, for example, consider the ability to discriminate between forms in certain pairs—e.g., *bajar/bajarse*, *salir/salirse*—“the mark of the true master of idiomatic Spanish” (2011, p. 369). For SFL students, acquisition can be hampered by the polyfunctionality of *se*, which contradicts basic principles of language processing such as that of one-to-one form-function correspondence or that of semantic transparency (Escutia López, 2010). Studies by Escobar and Teomiro (2016) and Gómez Soler (2015) identify two further hurdles: the lack of or partial equivalence in many languages (such as English), and the insufficient capacity of exposure to structure-rich input to promote nuance-noticing, exposure often limited in formal FLE contexts. This mainly results in *se* omission or overgeneralisation (Gómez Soler, 2015), affecting correctness or idiomaticity. Research also shows a relationship between PNV complexity and acquisition (Escobar &

Teomiro, 2016): easier configurations—such as reflexives—are acquired before more complex ones—such as accidentality markers (see Figure 1)—which are challenging even at advanced stages.

Furthermore, reflexives and verbs of change (e.g., *convertirse*, ‘to become’) are the only pronominals explicitly taught as such, with others generally presented on a verb-by-verb basis, requiring learners to rely on prototypicality or familiarity (Zyzik, 2006). For instance, the Instituto Cervantes’ curriculum<sup>4</sup> (the standard for SFL competence levels) lacks a dedicated PNV section. Instead, PNVs are scattered across *se* uses and levels: reflexives at A1<sup>5</sup>, reciprocals or passive structures at B1, and complex uses such as accidentality markers—*se me cayó*, ‘I accidentally dropped it’—from B2 upwards. Thus, having a fairly thorough, clear-cut mapping of PNVs became essential. Following pre-existing classifications, the researcher created an *ad-hoc* pedagogical taxonomy based on morphosyntactic and semantic features. It does not aim to provide a definitive PNV<sup>6</sup> grouping, but to intuitively “[encapsulate] important processes and relationships” (Whitley, 2002: xiii) and meet research-specific needs.

This taxonomy is informed by the *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* (RAE, 2009) and Teomiro’s mixed approach (2017). Whitley’s (2002) and Butt and Benjamin’s (2011) didactic approaches inspire a student-friendly terminology use. Only the most transparent, commonly used names (*reflexives* and *reciprocal*) are kept. Potentially obscure ones for learners (*ergative/ anticausative* or *sympathetic dative*) are replaced by others which facilitate cross-type comparison (*pseudo-reflexive*) or are more descriptive (*subject involvement*). Names used are adapted from established ones or based on typically described features. Following Teomiro’s (2017) intralingual classification, three major *categories* are established based on the (non-) obligatoriness of *se*, in order of increasing difficulty for learners: (1) obligatorily pronominal—*se* maintains the essential semantic-syntactic value; (2) occasionally pronominal—*se* adds nuances or connotations; (3) doubly pronominal—*se* plus another object pronoun are required (see Figure 1). *Sub-categories* are based on the main factor determining the use of the pronominal variant (formal, semantic, or both); *types* group more specific traits. The nomenclature used in this article follows this taxonomy.

<sup>4</sup> Cervantes Virtual Centre (CVC), *Gramática*: [https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/plan\\_curricular/niveles/02\\_gramatica\\_introduccion.htm](https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/plan_curricular/niveles/02_gramatica_introduccion.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> For in-depth PNV examinations, see works cited in section 2.2. Ample dialectal variation exists, but this taxonomy draws on Peninsular Spanish for simplification. A cross-dialectal analysis lies beyond the scope of the study.

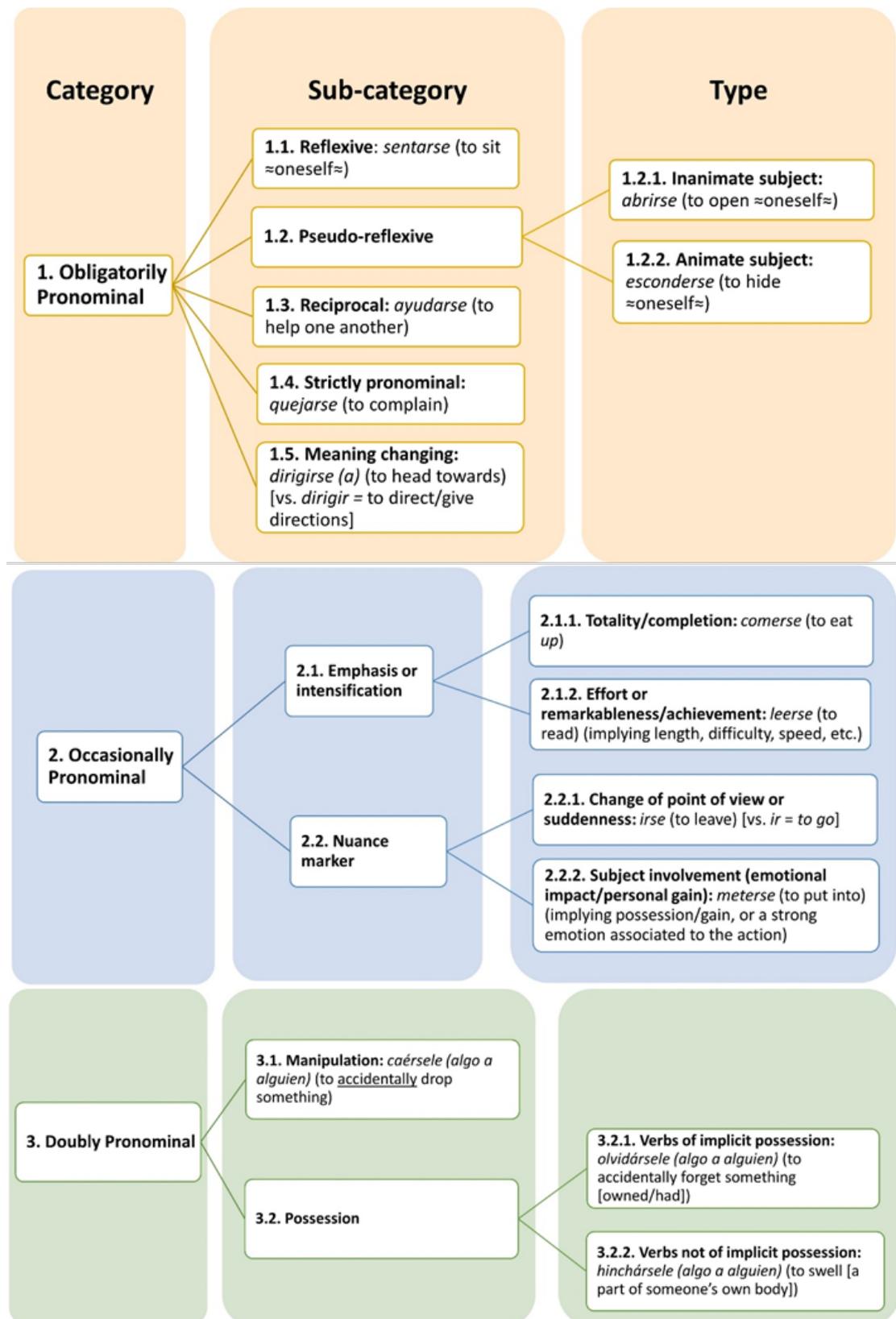


Figure 1. Pedagogical PNV taxonomy (source: author)

Given the complexity of Spanish PNVs and the benchmark status of idiomaticity in FL teaching, two challenges arise: understanding intersections between PNV features and learner acquisition, and finding effective strategies to present PNVs within meaningful communication. This article explores the potential of didactic AD to meet both.

### 3. The experiment

The experiment presented here replicated a study on AD and PNV production conducted with Dutch-speaking students by Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen (2023)<sup>7</sup>. They adopted Cohen and Brooks-Carson's (2001) premise that the absence of explicit first-language (L1) content in writing tasks would reduce negative transfer<sup>8</sup>, increasing idiomaticity in FL expression more than translation tasks, and extended this hypothesis to AD tasks (where the source is not verbally coded). They also hypothesised that AD's communicative nature could further promote idiomaticity awareness.

#### 3.1. Aims

In 2018–2019, a didactic AD Pilot Experiment was undertaken with English-speaking students of Spanish at the University of Manchester, with two-fold aims: (i) as a classroom project, to promote integrated-skills development; (ii) as a research experiment, to compare PNV production in intersemiotic translation (AD) and interlingual translation. This article focuses on (ii). The research questions (RQs) were:

1. RQ1: Is there a difference in PNV production between intersemiotic and interlingual translation tasks?
2. RQ2: Does prior exposure to forms in context and indirect instruction promote PNV production?
3. RQ3: Does production vary across PNV types?

For RQ1, an affirmative answer was hypothesised ( $H_1$ ) in favour of intersemiotic translation. For RQ2, an affirmative answer was also hypothesised ( $H_2$ ), anticipating a production increase in tasks completed second, regardless of type. For RQ3, another affirmative answer was hypothesised ( $H_3$ ), anticipating an inverse relationship between PNV complexity and production frequency, correctness, and idiomaticity.

#### 3.2. Methodology

To explore the value of indirect instruction as a methodological complement to structure-focused didactic AD tasks (RQ2), integrated form-focus instruction (IFFI) was adopted<sup>9</sup>. IFFI examines syntactic-semantic relations within communicative instruction (Spada *et al.*, 2014), focusing on relationships between intersections in the syntactic-semantic interface and mental representations, and their communicative implications. IFFI involves “different kinds of *instructional procedures [or] techniques* designed to attract learners’ *attention to form*” while communicating in the L2 (Ellis, 2016, p. 409, my emphasis). One technique is “unfocused” design, an “analytical approach” aimed at generating attention through “the efforts to comprehend and *produce meaningful texts* in the L2” (p. 409, my emphasis). Didactic AD tasks provide a suitable framework for implementing this approach, since creating an AD requires attention to constantly shift from image-coded *meanings* to linguistic *forms*, simultaneously focusing on structural accuracy and semantic-pragmatic idiomaticity to generate precise mental representations.

<sup>7</sup> Data collected during the ARDELE Project, launched in 2010 to explore the potential of didactic AD in multiple SFL areas (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2017b). Its researchers kindly shared the PNV-focused aspect of their study with the author at an earlier stage and consented to its replication.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Negative transfer’, though a problematic label, is used to describe L1 interference in FL acquisition-production (Zhao, 2019). A detailed analysis of language transfer lies beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>9</sup> See Ellis (2016) for an evolution of the focus-on-form methodology and differences with focus-on-forms.

### 3.3. Context and participants

The experiment was embedded in a compulsory second-year language module of the Degree in Spanish (B2 level, CEFR) with three weekly components: (i) *Grammar Skills*, (ii) *Translation and Writing Skills*—in a double slot—and (iii) *Oral Skills*—in its own slot. Project sessions took place during slots for components (ii) and (iii) and were delivered by the two module teachers<sup>10</sup>. Participants ( $n=95$ ) were 18–20 years old, they had studied Spanish for 5–10 years, and were proficient English speakers (the L1 for 93, i.e., 98%). Most had heard about AD, but none had attempted audio describing before<sup>11</sup>. Of the 95 enrolled students, 75 (79%) participated in project tasks. Thus, *participants* refers to students who completed either one or the two tasks. Attendance and project tasks were not part of the module's formal assessment<sup>12</sup>, hence the difference between number of enrolled students and project participants.

### 3.4. Instruments

For the tasks, clips of two consecutive scenes from Woody Allen's *Match Point* (2005) were used<sup>13</sup>. The professional Spanish AD script (PADS) presented a varied, high incidence of PNVs in similar configurations in both scenes. The scenes were suitable for first-time audio describers given the little dialogue and few characters involved (Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Talaván & Lertola, 2016). The first (MP1) was used for Task 1, and the second (MP2) for Task 2 (see Figure 3). For the interlingual translation, an English version of the PADS done by the researcher and proofread by L1 English-speaking colleagues<sup>14</sup> was provided.

### 3.5. Procedures

Following a pre-experimental design<sup>15</sup>, students were divided into two experimental groups (EGs) based on their *Oral Skills* component class group, chosen for the division because the two core project sessions (*Writing Session 1* and *Feedback and Reflection Session*, see Figure 3) took place in its slots. Four *Oral Skills* groups composed experimental group 1 (EG1), while the other three composed experimental group 2 (EG2), allowing a semi-random student allocation to EGs, since distribution across *Oral Skills* groups preceded the experiment<sup>16</sup>. The final 75 participants were distributed as follows: EG1 = 46, EG2 = 29.

To answer RQ1 (Is there a difference in PNV production between intersemiotic and interlingual translation tasks?) and RQ2 (Does prior exposure to forms in context and indirect instruction promote PNV production?), EG1 and EG2 completed both an intersemiotic translation task (AD) and an interlingual translation task (ITR, English into Spanish), one for each Match Point

<sup>10</sup> None of the teachers were the researcher. However, both teachers attended a researcher-led workshop and received lesson plans, detailed instructions, and full support.

<sup>11</sup> Information from pre-project questionnaires.

<sup>12</sup> This was because the project had not been tested by the time assessment changes were to be submitted for approval.

<sup>13</sup> Time codes: 1:25:44-1:29:49 (MP1), 1:29:51-1:33:45 (MP2). Source: Spanish *Match Point* DVD edition (Voilà DVD Art Studio, 2006) (also for the PADS).

<sup>14</sup> To the researcher's knowledge, no professional English AD exists on commercial DVDs/BDs or streaming services.

<sup>15</sup> A pre-experimental design may include one or more experimental groups and no control group. This is common in educational research (Salas-Blas, 2013) when experiments are embedded into classroom practice, making exclusion of some students from the intervention impossible (as was the case here). *Pre-experimental* is not a synonym of *pilot*, but a valid design both for preliminary and full studies (2013), if with limitations. Discussing them lies beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>16</sup> Students selected their *Oral Skills* group upon course enrolment depending on their individual schedule (i.e., this distribution occurred outside project procedures).

clip (MP1 and MP2) in reverse order (Figure 2). Reversing task order also sought to answer RQ3 (Does production vary across PNV types?), as it enabled production tracking by verb type across tasks.

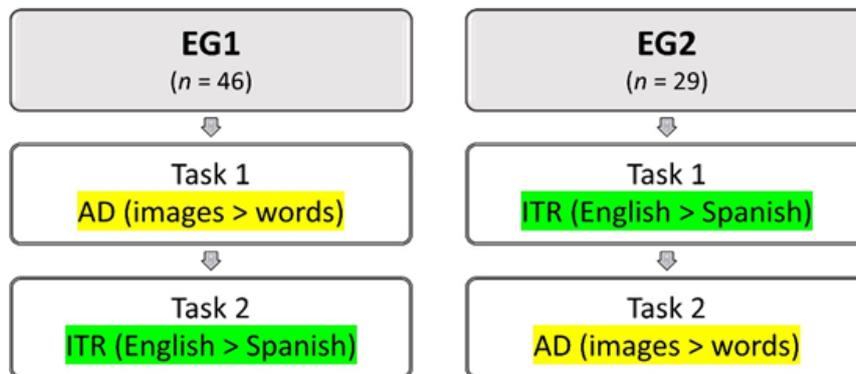


Figure 2. Task order by EGs (source: author)

The project ran over seven weeks and included four non-consecutive in-class sessions across *Translation & Writing Skills* and *Oral Skills* slots<sup>17</sup>, plus out-of-class work (Figure 3). In session 1 (stage 1 in Figure 3), basic AD guidelines were provided regarding what, how, and when to audio describe. In session 2 (stage 2), Task 1 was completed: EG1 created the AD for clip 1 (MP1) departing from the clip, while EG2 departed from the English version of the PADS. In the editing phase (stage 3), participants recorded their script and integrated their voiced AD into the video file. In session 3 (stage 4), they discussed challenges and learning outcomes, comparing their scripts to the PADS and reflecting on content and language-related choices.

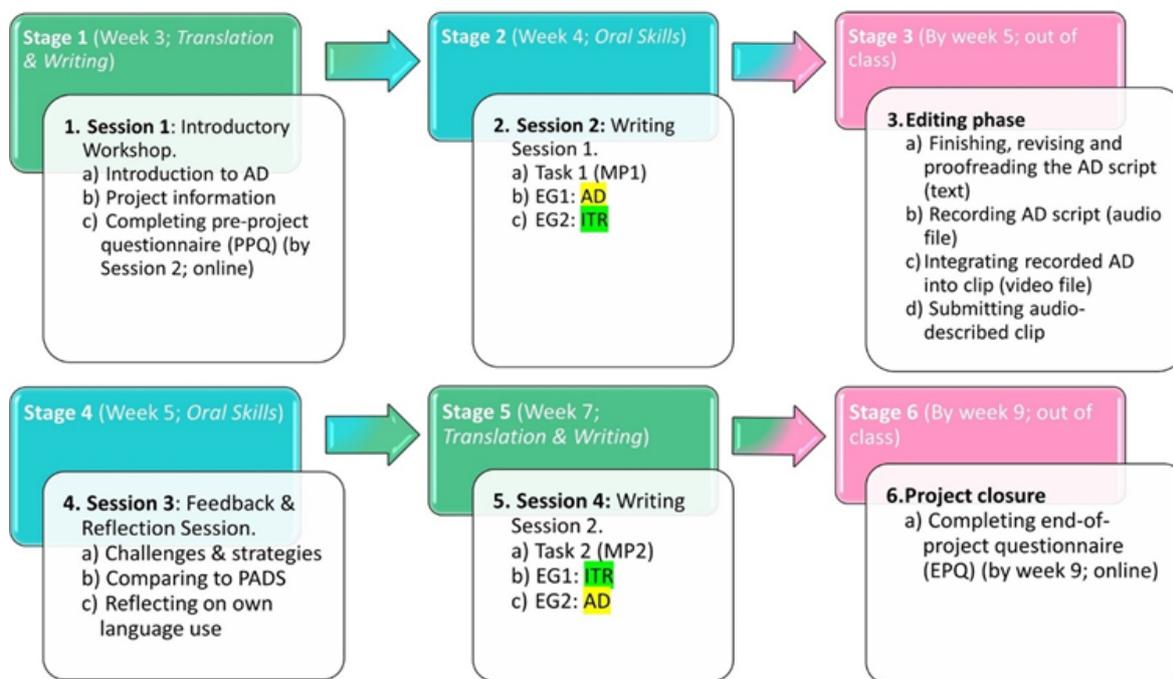


Figure 3. Experiment chronology (source: author)

Following IFFI (see section 3.2.), there was no explicit PNV teaching: participants were *exposed* to pronominals in context through the PADS and encouraged to reflect on relationships

<sup>17</sup> Session distribution was conditioned by module schedule/syllabus.

between linguistic choices and conveyed meanings, to foster awareness of links between linguistic form(s), semantic meaning(s), and mental representation(s). PNVs were only explicitly addressed upon request. In session 4 (stage 5), Task 2 was completed: this time, EG1 created the AD for clip 2 (MP2) translating from English into Spanish, while EG2 departed from the clip. Participants completed both tasks collaboratively (groups of 3–4), hence the lower number of samples collected (see section 4.1.). This proved problematic because members' engagement varied widely, and because it reduced sample numbers. Teachers acted as facilitators, encouraging metalinguistic and critical thinking without leading participants towards specific linguistic choices. Participants were allowed to use dictionaries, since assessing pre-acquired lexical knowledge was not the goal.

#### 4. Linguistic analysis

To answer RQs (see section 3.1.), participants' productions matching actions expressed with a PNV in the PADS were tracked, recording whether they also used a PNV in their tasks (ADs and ITRs). These are the *expected* or *target* productions<sup>18</sup>. The tracking process revealed that participants also produced abundant pronominals to describe actions either *omitted* or *not* expressed with a PNV in the PADS. These are the *unexpected* or '*non-target*' items (NTIs) analysed in this paper. This exploratory analysis follows a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data (sections 4.2. and 4.3., respectively). For the descriptive quantitative analysis, NTI frequency and correctness rates are considered. To quantify NTIs by correctness, the set of labels created for the qualitative analysis was used. These labels result from a multi-stage process of inductive exploration<sup>19</sup> of participant-produced PNVs (see Figure 4). The qualitative analysis focuses on error typology and its impact upon idiomaticity.

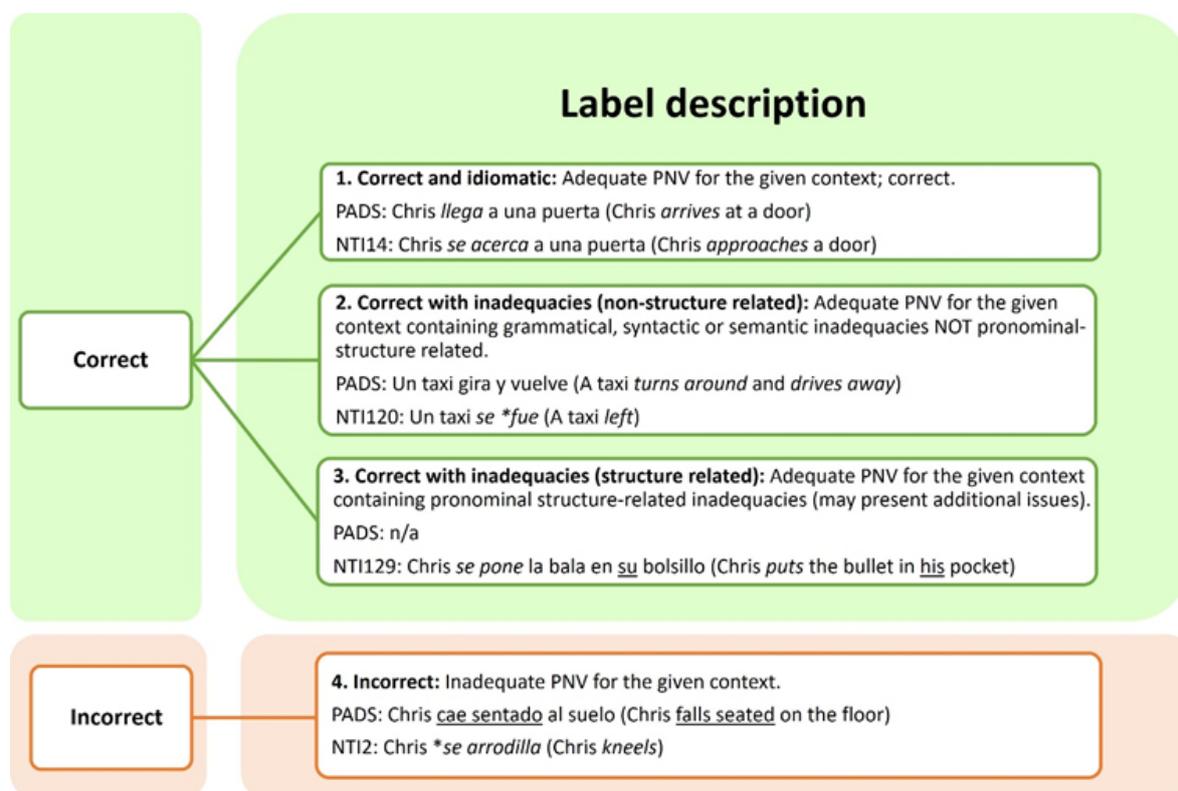


Figure 4. PNV correctness labels (source: author)

<sup>18</sup> See Bausells-Espín (2023) for a preliminary analysis.

<sup>19</sup> "Analytical induction": see Cohen *et al.* (2007, pp. 472-473). This process involved: data scanning and analysis, label creation, item coding, and inter-coder reliability assessment. A detailed discussion lies beyond the scope of this article.

Figure 4 summarises the labels, providing descriptions and examples. Labels 1–3 designate cases of context-adequate PNV choices; label 4 designates context-inadequate choices resulting from the impossibility to pronominalise a given verb, or from semantic inadequacy. *Correct* in labels 2 and 3 means that the pronominal is context-acceptable. However, the verb form or phrase contains errors. Label 2 tracks non-pronominality-related errors: in NTI120 (label 2, Figure 4), the verb *irse* ('to leave') is context-adequate but the tense (*se fue*, preterite) is not (the present tense is normally used in AD). Label 3 tracks pronominality-related inadequacies, such as pronoun-choice issues or the use of possessive determiners (*su*, in NTI129, label 3, Figure 4)—common among English-speaking SFL learners—where a definite article (*el*) is preferred.

#### 4.1. Samples and corpora

Participants ( $n$ ) submitted 68 scripts (i.e., samples), distributed by EG and task as shown on Figure 5: EG1 = 46, EG2 = 22; Task 1 (T1) = 25, Task 2 (T2) = 43. In total, 33 ADs and 35 interlingual translations (ITRs) were submitted.

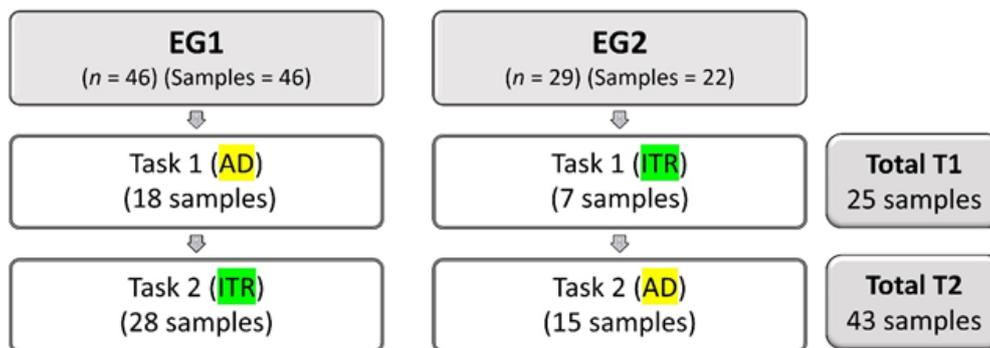
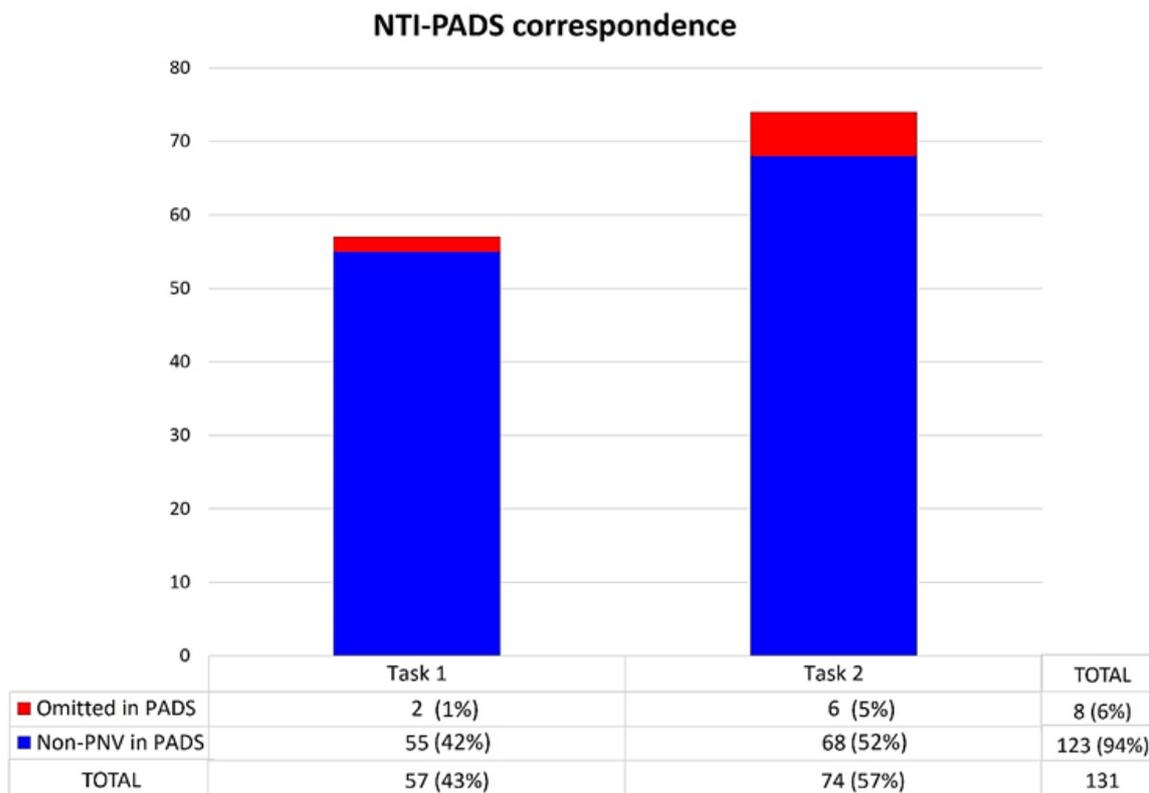


Figure 5. Sample distribution (source: author)

As explained, T1 and T2 were completed in different module slots (*Translation and Writing Skills* and *Oral Skills*, respectively). This means that participants working together for T1 may not have worked together for T2. Furthermore, since tasks were non-compulsory, some participants only collaborated in one. However, all T2 samples included the contribution of at least one T1 participant, so their experience completing one task type for T1 (AD or ITR) was transferred to the other type for T2. Therefore, no submissions were excluded from the sample.



**Figure 6.** NTI-PADS correspondence (source: author)

Samples contained 131 NTIs: 94% (123) described actions expressed with a *non*-pronominal in the PADS, while only 6% (8; all in ADs) described actions *omitted* in the PADS (see Figure 6). The corpus of NTIs compiles all participant-produced PNVs matching actions *omitted* (example (2) below) or expressed with a *non*-pronominal in the PADS (3). Both fully correct instances (2a) and error-containing instances (3a) were compiled. In examples, numbered NTIs (e.g., NTI61) show participants' productions. Corresponding PADS items are provided if applicable, with English translations taken from the researcher-created English script whenever possible. When NTIs refer to actions omitted in the PADS (and therefore absent from the English translation used in the experiment), translations are provided *ad-hoc* and marked (A). PNV nomenclature follows the researcher-created taxonomy (see Figure 1).

(2) (a) NTI61 (AD) (reflexive): Ian está poniéndose su chaqueta y *arreglándose* = Ian is putting on his jacket and *primping* (A)

(b) PADS: Un hombre... baja poniéndose la chaqueta = A man... walks down the stairs putting on his jacket

(3) (a) NTI13 (AD) (pseudo-reflexive): Chris *se asegura* \* que no le siguen = Chris *makes sure* he isn't being followed (A)

(b) PADS: Chris *mira* a uno y otro lado = Chris *looks* both ways

Finally, NTIs included 53 different verbs, some appearing once, some more than once within or across tasks. All verb appearances were analysed, as contexts, uses, or errors varied.

## 4.2. Quantitative analysis

The quantitative analysis of *non*-target items (NTIs) compares both total and group production rates in relation to RQs by task type, task order, and PNV type, focusing on frequency (4.2.1.) and correctness (4.2.2.) rates (%). For reference, figures show absolute numbers and relative percentages.

### 4.2.1. Frequency

Of the 131 NTIs, 45% (59) appear in ADs and 55% (72) in ITRs. Production by task order (T1 vs T2, Figure 7) shows that T1–T2 production decreases for ADs (-18%) while increasing for ITRs (+38%). That is, more *unexpected* PNVs appear in ADs when done first, but in ITRs when done second. This also means that the T1–T2 increase is higher when proceeding from AD to ITR, the task order for EG1. Therefore, EG1 both produced more NTIs (85, 65%) than EG2 (46, 35%) and showed a greater T1–T2 increase: +18% vs. +4% (Figure 8).

NTIs were also compiled by PNV type (see PNV taxonomy, Figure 1), classified based on grammatical and syntactic features, rather than on students' potential intentions. Two of the three main categories were represented: obligatorily and occasionally pronominals. Obligatorily pronominals were more numerous (75%), distributed across the following sub-categories: reflexives (18%), pseudo-reflexives (31%; 3% with inanimate subjects, 28% with animate), and meaning changing (26%). The remaining 25% were occasionally pronominal, specifically nuance markers of the two types: suddenness/change of point of view (PoV; 21%), and subject involvement (4%) (see Figure 9).

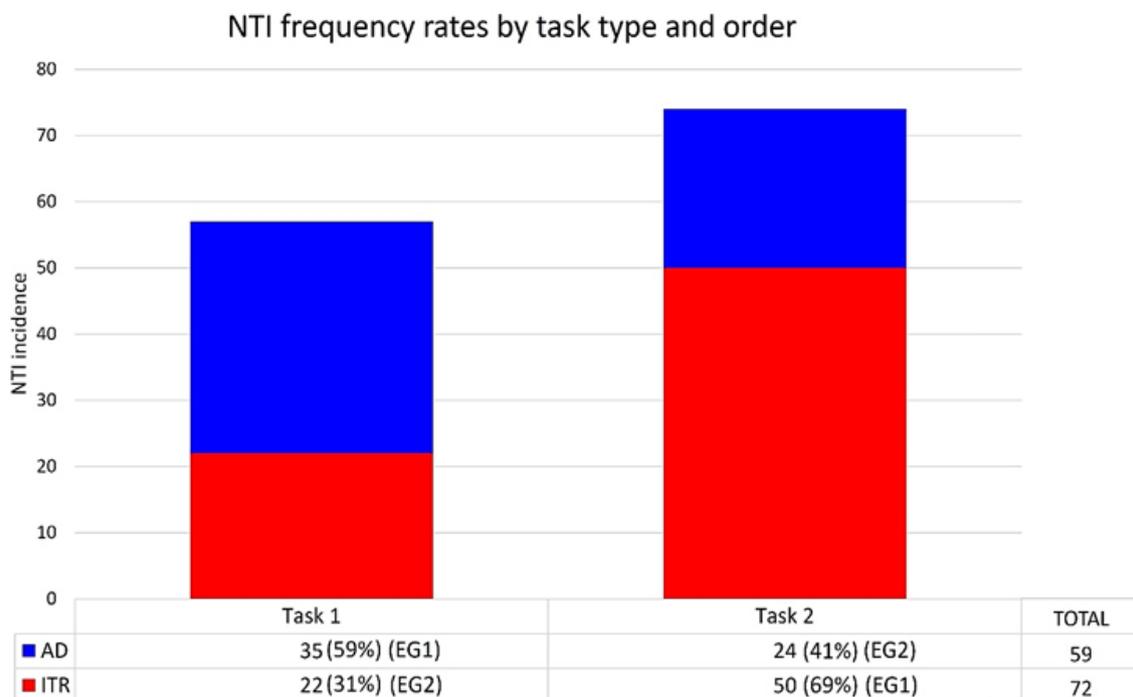


Figure 7. NTI frequency rates by task type and order (source: author)

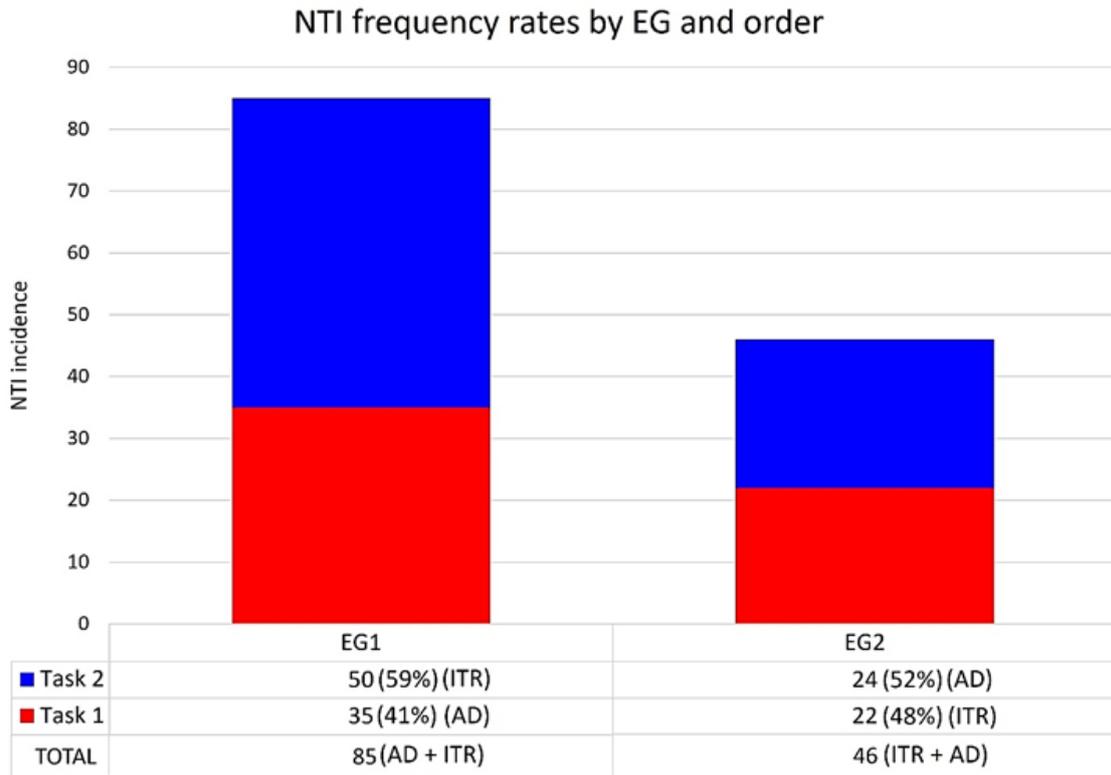


Figure 8. NTI frequency rates by EG and order (source: author)

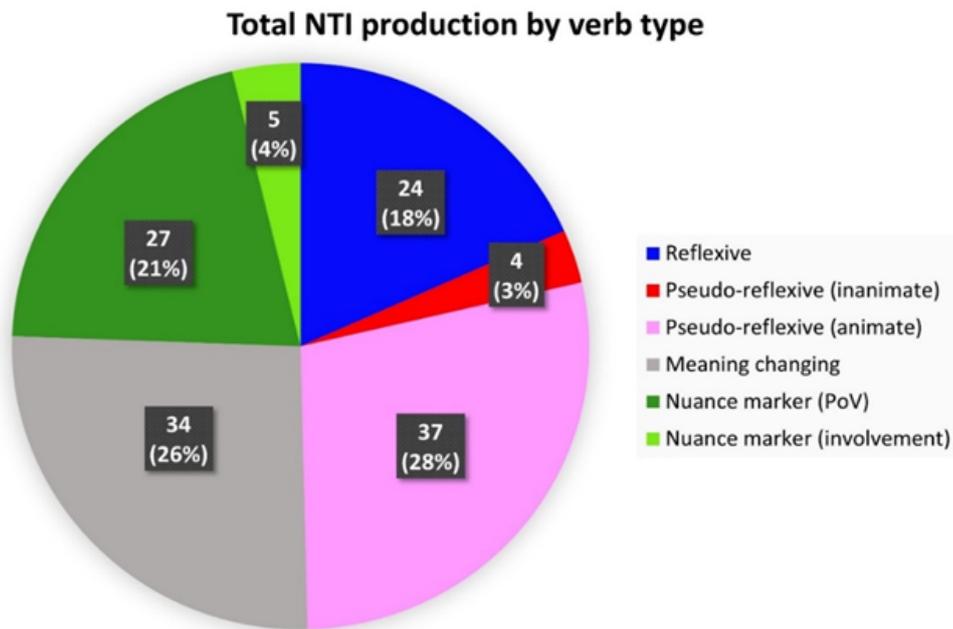


Figure 9. NTI production by PNV type (source: author)

Figure 10 shows distribution of PNV types by group (EG1 vs EG2) and task (T1 vs T2). This is generally consistent within overall production: more PNVs of all types are produced by EG1, if with minimal differences in inanimate-subject pseudo-reflexives and subject-involvement nuance markers. Similarly, most types show a T1–T2 increase across groups, except animate-subject pseudo-reflexives (decreasing for both) and meaning changing (decreasing for EG2).

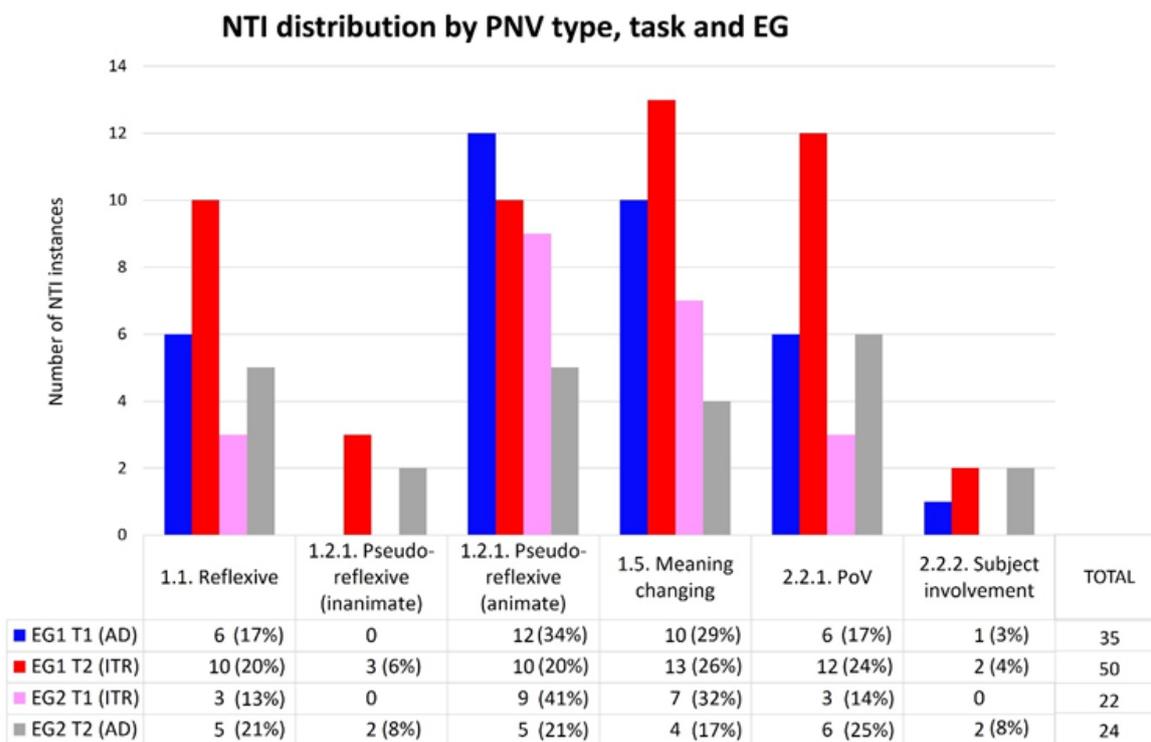


Figure 10. NTI production by PNV type, task and EG (source: author)

Production by verb type and task type is also consistent within overall production: more PNVs of most types appear in ITRs than in ADs, although with mostly minimal differences (see Figure 10). In EG1, this matches the T1-T2 increase except for animate-subject pseudo-reflexives (decreasing in T2). In EG2, however, production only increases in T2 for three types: reflexives, animate-subject pseudo-reflexives, and PoV nuance markers. This represents an increase when proceeding from ITR to AD.

**4.2.2. Correctness**

Tracing NTI correctness provides a fuller picture of PNV production patterns. Figure 11 shows total rates by correctness (see Figure 4 for correctness labels):

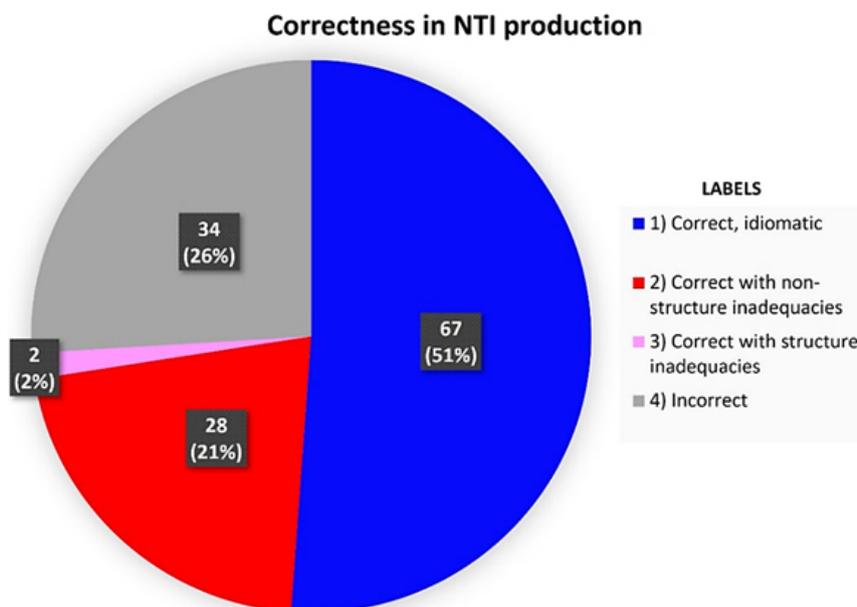
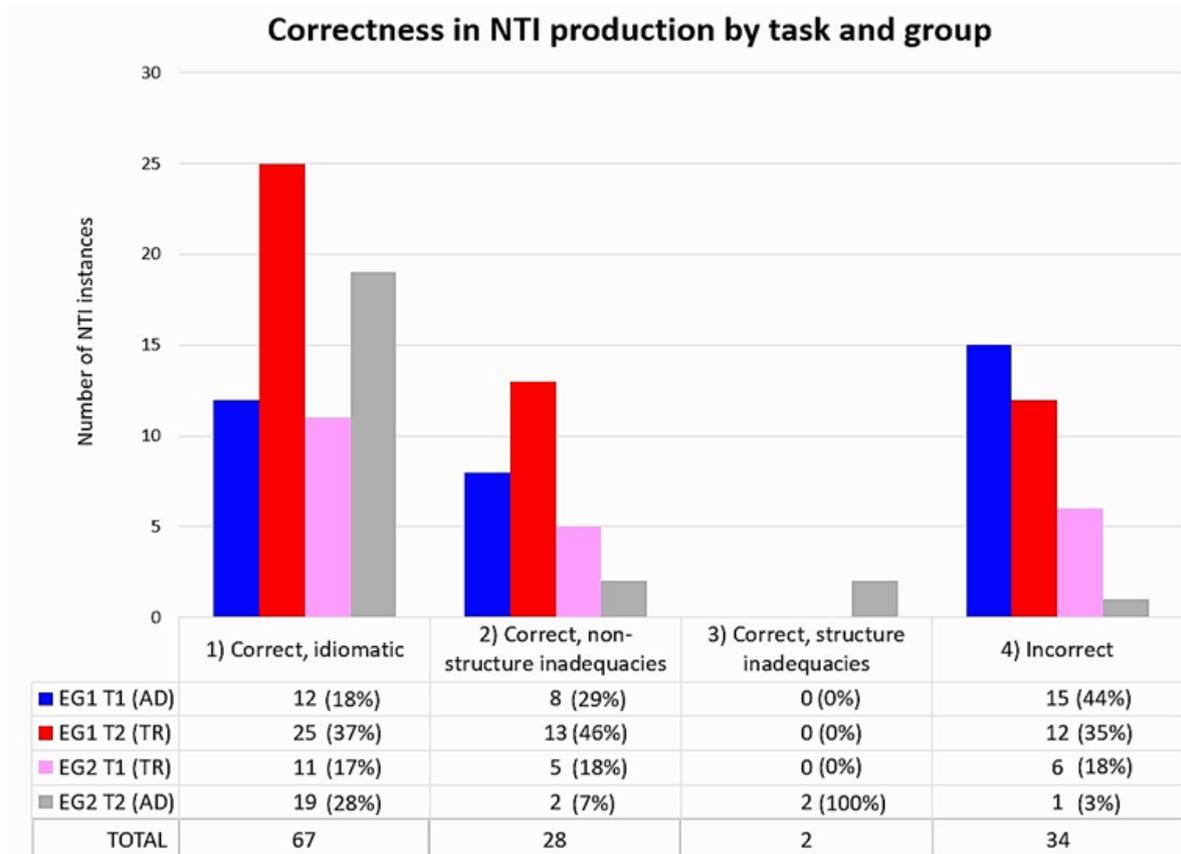


Figure 11. NTI correctness (source: author)

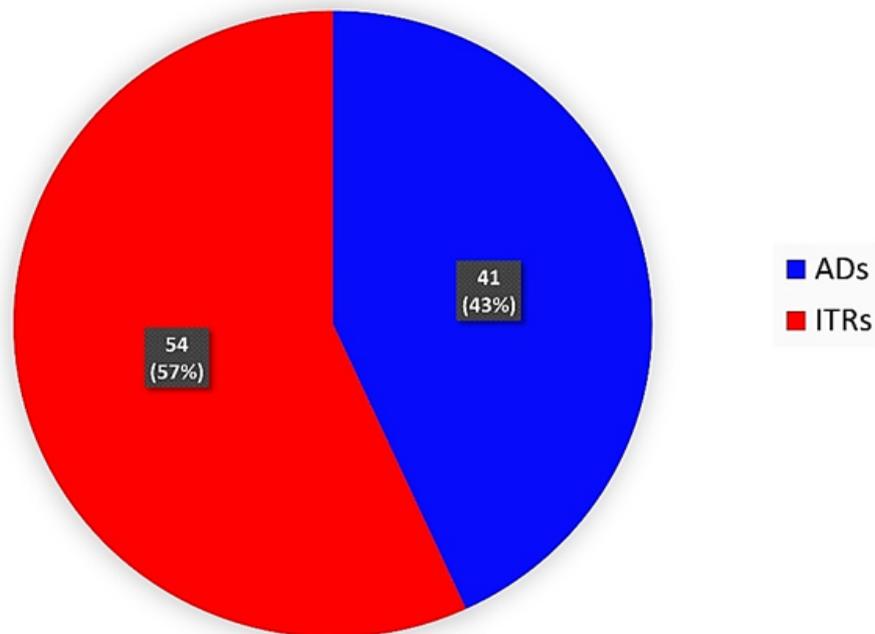
Over half of NTIs (51%) were both correct and idiomatic (label 1). Aggregating all NTIs with a correct pronominal choice despite the verb phrase containing inadequacies (labels 2 and 3) reveals that 74% were context-acceptable PNVs, while 26% were unacceptable.

Figure 12 shows correctness by task and EG. Overall, correctness rates were higher in ITRs (54%) than in ADs (46%). Aggregating fully correct and inadequacy-containing instances enlarges this difference to 57% in ITRs vs 43% in ADs (see Figure 13).



**Figure 12.** Correctness by task and EG (source: author)

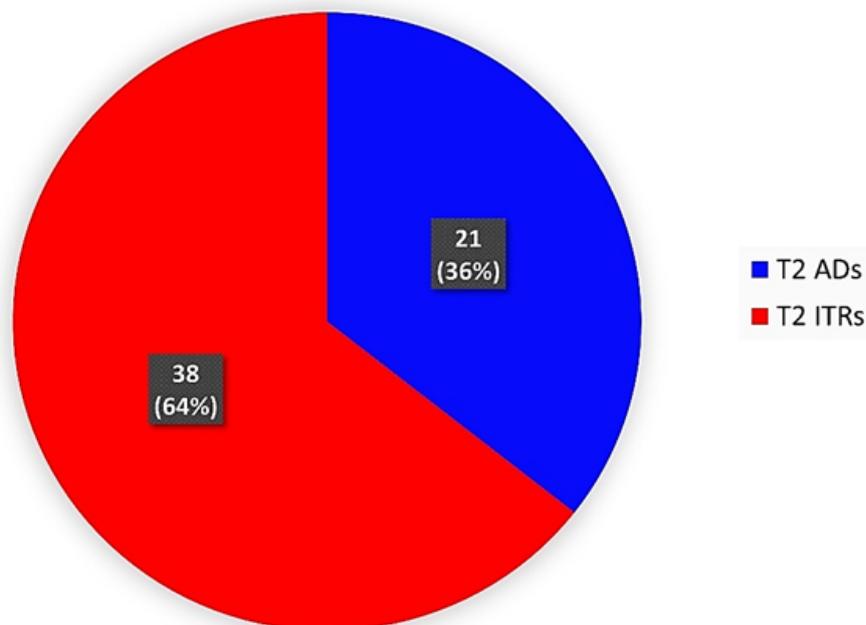
### Aggregated NTI correctness by task type



**Figure 13.** Aggregated correctness (labels 1 to 3 together) by task type (source: author)

Fully correct NTI rates are higher in T2: 18% vs 28% in ADs, 17% vs 37% in ITRs (see Figure 12). Aggregating all *correct* labels increases this difference in favour of T2 translations to 64%, vs 36% in ADs (see Figure 14). That is, adequate PNv production increases from T1 to T2, particularly for EG1—i.e., when proceeding from AD to ITR.

### Aggregated NTI correctness in T2



**Figure 14.** Aggregated correctness (labels 1 to 3) in T2 (source: author)

Correspondingly, overall *incorrect* NTI production decreases from T1 to T2 (62% vs 38%; see Figure 12). This drop is higher in T2 ADs—i.e., for EG2. Incorrectness rates are considerably

lower for EG2 (21%, vs 79% for EG1), although, as mentioned before, EG2 produced fewer NTIs in total.

By PNV type, only reflexives show more *incorrect* (54%) than correct (46%) cases (see Figure 15). Two types show no incorrect cases: inanimate-subject pseudo-reflexives, and subject-involvement nuance markers (*inv.*), although the latter only show one fully correct instance. Animate-subject pseudo-reflexives, meaning changing, and PoV nuance markers are mostly fully correct, with the difference over incorrect cases increasing if aggregating all *correct* labels.

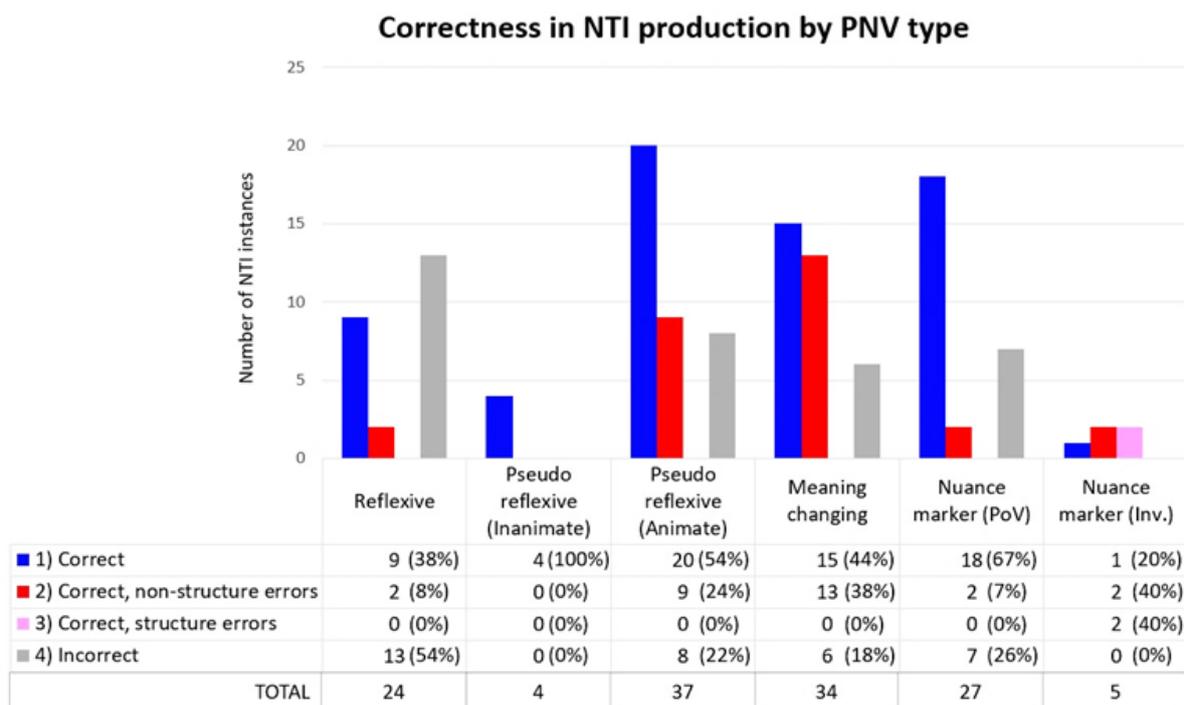


Figure 15. NTI correctness by PNV type (source: author)

The implications of (in)correctness and error types are discussed in section 4.3. below.

### 4.3. Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis of NTIs explores correctness considering verb choice adequacy and error type, and their impact upon idiomaticity, comparing with how those actions were described (if so) in the professional AD script (PADS). In the analysis, shared NTI features are grouped, and representative examples provided as needed.

All NTIs with no PADS correspondence provide supplementary details (see example (2) in section 4.1.) representing valid additions, except NTI60 (in example (4)), unnecessary because the character had been previously introduced:

- (4) NTI60 (AD) (reflexive): el vecino *se llama* Ian = the neighbour *is called* Ian (A)

NTIs with non-pronominal PADS correspondence represent either fully interchangeable alternatives, or different but acceptable interpretations. Both occur across ADs and ITRs. *Alternatives* designate NTIs that could replace the PADS wording with no nuance or idiomaticity loss (5, 6). Furthermore, many cases represent more succinct, even more idiomatic choices (7). This is so for all inanimate-subject pseudo-reflexives (8).

- (5) (a) NTI46 (ITR) (pseudo-reflexive): Chris *se pone* a recoger = Chris *starts* picking up  
(b) PADS: Chris *empieza* a recoger
- (6) (a) NTI89 (ITR) (nuance marker): Nola *se sube* a un taxi = Nola *gets into* a taxi  
(b) PADS: Nola *entra* en un taxi
- (7) (a) NTI62 (AD) (reflexive): Chris *se estremece* = Chris *shudders* (A)  
(b) PADS: Chris *estremece* la cara = Chris *makes* his face *shudder*
- (8) (a) NTI73 (AD) or NTI76 (TR) (pseudo-reflexive): el taxi *se aleja* = the taxi *drives away* (A)  
(b) PADS: el taxi *gira y vuelve* por donde ha venido = the taxi *turns around* and *drives away* in the direction it came from<sup>20</sup>

*Different interpretations* designate partially equivalent yet acceptable descriptions. The difference regarding the PADS may reside in: (i) a focus shift (9); (ii) a PoV shift—e.g., different spatial/movement references—without critical impact upon the intended mental representation (10); (iii) an unidiomatic lexical choice elsewhere with a still-acceptable PNV (11); or (iv) an overexplicitation (12). Instances belonging to (i) and (ii) often appear in ADs, where greater creativity is possible. Instances belonging to (iii) mostly appear in ITRs, where a source linguistic structure is given. Instances belonging to (iv) appear in both.

- (9) (a) NTI36 (AD) (meaning changing): Chris *se pone* nervioso = Chris *gets* nervous (A)  
(b) PADS: Chris *golpea* la puerta *con nerviosismo* = Chris *pounds* at the door impatiently
- (10) (a) NTI16 (AD) (pseudo-reflexive): Chris *se acerca* a la mujer = Chris *approaches* the woman (A)  
(b) PADS: Chris *anda* por el pasillo = Chris *strides* along de corridor [towards the woman]
- (11) (a) NTI92 (ITR) (pseudo-reflexive): Chris *se para* \*sin accionar = Chris stands without actioning (A)  
(b) PADS: Chris *permanece* inmóvil = Chris stands motionless
- (12) (a) NTI45 (ITR) (meaning changing): la señora *se da cuenta* = the woman notices (A)  
(b) PADS: la señora Eastby *levanta* la vista y *aguza* el oído = Mrs Eastby looks up and pricks up her ears

Inadequacies in context-acceptable PNVs affect conjugation or tense (see NTI120 in label 2, Figure 4, section 4), or elements in the accompanying structure (13), including: missing articles or prepositions (13a); wrong/unnecessary prepositions (13b); or inadequate lexical choices in complements which alter semantic nuance or idiomaticity, potentially hindering communication (13c; corrections in square brackets). Only NTI129 (see label 3, Figure 4) and another case show pronominal structure-related errors. Acceptable pseudo-reflexive and meaning changing PNVs contain more inadequacies, without clear error type prevalence.

<sup>20</sup> Directional specificity was not plot essential.

- (13) (a) NTI31 (AD) (meaning changing): Chris *se da* [la] *vuelta* para mirar = Chris *turns around* to look (A)
- (b) NTI24 (ITR) (pseudo-reflexive): Chris *se desliza* \*en [hacia] el piso = Chris *slides down* \*on [towards] the floor (A)
- (c) NTI97 (ITR) (meaning changing): Chris *se queda* \*sin *moción* [quieto] = Chris *stands motionless*

Finally, incorrect NTIs (14) show either an overgeneralisation of *se* where pronominality is unacceptable (14a) or another object pronoun should be used (14b); or an inadequate verb choice (14c)—i.e., the verb admits pronominality but, semantically, it is not context adequate (corrections in square brackets):

- (14) (a) NTI6 (AD): Chris \**se mira* a ambos lados = Chris *looks* \*at *himself* both ways (A)
- (b) NTI8 (ITR): Chris \**se* [le] *quita* su reloj = Chris *takes off* \*his own [her] watch (A)
- (c) NTI2 (AD): Chris \**se arrodilla* [cae de rodillas] = Chris \**kneels* [falls to his knees] (A)

No difference is observed in incorrect NTI features between ADs and ITRs.

## 5. Discussion: lessons from the ‘unexpected’

This section compares the results from the analysis of target items<sup>21</sup> (TIs, student-produced PNVs for actions expressed with a pronominal in the PADS) with those presented in this article from the analysis of *non*-target items (NTIs, student-produced PNVs for actions *omitted* or expressed with a *non*-pronominal in the PADS). Departing from the main trends observed in TIs regarding the research questions (RQs), Table 1 provides a side-by-side comparison against NTIs, alongside brief explanations (*Meaning*):

Trend	Compared production trends		
	TIs	Non-TIs	Meaning
(1) More PNVs in ITRs	✓	✓	RQ1 affirmative H1 <i>not</i> supported
(2) More PNVs in T1 AD than in T1 ITR	×	✓	H1 supported (?)
(3) Increase from T1 to T2	×	✓	RQ2 affirmative & H2 supported (quantity) (?)
(4) Errors decrease from T1 to T2	?	✓	RQ2 affirmative & H2 supported (quality) (?)
(5) As PNV difficulty increases, production decreases	✓	×	RQ3 affirmative
(6) As PNV difficulty increases, errors increase	✓	✓×	H3 unclear → reconsider difficulty?
(7) Tendency towards PNV omission	✓	×	PNV-worthy features?

**Table 1.** Target vs non-target production trends (source: author)

As Trend 1 shows, TI and NTI productions confirmed a difference between interlingual and intersemiotic translation tasks (RQ1) but contradicted the hypothesis that it would be in favour of AD (H<sub>1</sub>). This is consistent with Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen’s findings (2023). To test H<sub>1</sub>, EG1 and EG2 productions in T1—before exposure to or use of PNVs in similar contexts—were compared. As Trend 2 shows, T1 target PNV production was higher in ITRs, in line with Trend 1. However, *non*-target PNV production was higher in ADs. This leads to questioning whether AD may promote PNV production to some extent, preventing complete rejection of H<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>21</sup> See Bausells-Espín (2023).

As Trend 3 shows, the T1-T2 PNV increase predicted by RQ2 and H<sub>2</sub> was only partially confirmed for TIs, as PNV incidence *decreased* for EG2 (who proceeded from ITR to AD). For NTIs, H<sub>2</sub> was fully confirmed, as PNV incidence *increased* for both groups, regardless of T2 type. The increase was high for EG1, who did AD first and ITR second, and very low for EG2, who did the opposite. This higher rise when proceeding from intersemiotic to interlingual translation further points at potential benefits of first departing from an image-based source text to promote structure recall and usage in a later task. Furthermore, NTIs showed a T1-T2 decrease in *unacceptable* productions (Trend 4). That is, prior exposure to and use of forms in context also improves correctness and idiomaticity. Because this was not measured for TIs, comparison is impossible and the answer to RQ2 regarding quality remains unclear.

Trends 5 and 6 provide an affirmative answer to RQ3, as incidence differs across PNV types. However, confirmation of H<sub>3</sub> remains unclear. Following previous studies (Escobar-Álvarez, 2017; Escobar & Teomiro, 2016), H<sub>3</sub> proposed that the more challenging the PNV was, the lower their incidence (Trend 5) and the more frequent the errors (Trend 6) would be. While TI production confirmed this, NTI did not: firstly, NTI production increased for almost all types including the most challenging ones; secondly, an easier type (reflexives) showed more unacceptable cases than more challenging ones, and the presence of unacceptable PNV choices was not always consistent with type-presumed difficulty. This raises questions about: (i) assessment of PNV difficulty, (ii) links between PNV-internal features and production, and (iii) learner perception of PNV difficulty.

Finally, Trend 7 provides the most interesting observation. TI production showed that participants mostly used *non*-pronominals where the PADS used pronominals. This behaviour is consistent with learners' tendency towards PNV omission (Gómez Soler, 2015). However, the existence of NTIs means that participants frequently used pronominals (both in ADs and ITRs) where the PADS *did not*, despite not having been explicitly instructed to do so. Additionally, many of these unpredicted pronominals offered a more concise, even more idiomatic alternative to the PADS. Two questions arise: (i) could action-related features be more determining in triggering pronominal uses than verb complexity or translation mode? and (ii) what makes certain actions more *PNV worthy* than others to learners' eyes?

## 6. Conclusions

Before presenting considerations for further research, certain limitations must be identified. First, statistical analysis may determine the significance of the observed trends. Second, results are yet to be contrasted with data from the following academic year (2019-2020), when the experiment was repeated, to see if trends continue across different student cohorts and if production patterns and the impact of the different variables could be extrapolated.

While results from *unexpected* productions also seem to initially reject the main hypothesis that AD would promote PNV usage, they provide sufficient deviations from trends within *expected* productions to confirm the potential of didactic AD for PNV acquisition. The use of integrated form-focus instruction (IFFI) seems to partially contribute when combined with tasks where learners must produce structure-rich, communicatively meaningful texts. A deeper examination may reveal whether IFFI nurtured the T1-T2 improvement or whether it resulted from learners having established prototypicality and developed familiarity. The evidence of improvement in correctness—especially when T1 was AD—further supports the hypothesis of the positive effect of intersemiotic translation. Although target-PNV omission rates were high in ADs, the numerous *non-target*, *unexpected* pronominals used contradicts the known tendency towards omission as well as previous observations regarding acquisition patterns, since many represented types considered difficult for B2-level learners.

Therefore, it seems worth investigating why participants deemed certain actions PNV-worthy, perhaps through an in-depth qualitative exploration of those deemed *non*-PNV-worthy, and vis-à-vis Spanish L1 speakers' productions—as Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen did (2023). Investigating whether relying on image-conveyed material helps the recognition of pronominality-related, action-internal characteristics, may uncover links between pronominality-triggering features, visual noticing, and patterns in structure acquisition and production. In other words, advancing towards *microlevel*<sup>22</sup> research studies, focusing on narrowed-down applications of DAT (Talaván *et al.*, 2023), could help students to increase their perception-production awareness, and teachers to discover links between noticing and production patterns. Incorporating AD research techniques could also be beneficial. Combining reception studies and eye-tracking technology or using think-aloud protocols may help unveil learners' perceptions regarding action pronominality, or connections between attention, looking, thought, and language use as well as whether those processes are simultaneous or sequential, or for how long students focus on certain visual elements or words and whether such engagement leads to learning (Szarkowska, 2023).

Finally, given the prominence of cognitive processes permeating AD creation, it might be worth exploring the potential of pairing didactic AD with cognitive load theory (CLT; Plass *et al.*, 2010) and with cognitive approaches to language learning. First, CLT could provide tools to analyse “intrinsic load” (difficulty of materials used) and “extraneous cognitive load” (task difficulty and possible learner-based adaptations; Szarkowska, 2023) to enhance the effectiveness of didactic AD tasks. Second, cognitive approaches such as construction grammar (Goldberg, 1995; González-García, 2012) offer a usage-based framework capturing grammatical patterning where language dimensions (syntax, semantics, pragmatics, etc.) equally contribute to shaping linguistic expression (Fried, n.d.). This approach explores grammatical structures through a hierarchical family-based system to identify underlying meanings and syntactic-semantic relationships across constructions (as the pedagogical taxonomy proposed here does), and it has been successfully applied to researching learners' acquisition of one PNV family, verbs of change (Cheikh-Khamis Cases, 2022). Incorporating these approaches to didactic AD may help understand the relationships between image(s), mental representation(s), and linguistic description(s). In sum, maximising both the cognitive and the communicative dimensions of didactic AD could help stimulate FL learners' metalinguistic and pragmalinguistic awareness, thus providing meaningful communication-based tasks that could facilitate the acquisition and production of grammatical structures as complex, challenging, and rich as Spanish pronominal verbs.

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<sup>22</sup> As opposed to *macrolevel* studies, which focus on methodological design or DAT implementation frameworks (Talaván *et al.*, 2023).

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## The implementation of museum audio description in foreign language education: A pilot study

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, audio description (AD) has been introduced in foreign language education (FLE) to develop language and intercultural skills. This article reports on a pilot study that focused on museum AD – that is, the verbal description of artworks for a visually impaired audience – and aimed to explore its pedagogical value in FLE. An English-language lesson on museum AD was designed and taught to two undergraduate classes (B2–C1 level). Students completed reception and production activities aimed at accomplishing a real-life media accessibility task, that is, describing an artwork to a visually impaired person. Data was collected through class recordings and observations, interviews with the instructors, and students' surveys and writing tasks. The findings show participants' appreciation of and engagement in the lesson, and highlight the value of museum AD for the development of empathy to enhance sense of citizenship, critical thinking, analytical and observational skills and, in turn, language skills. Furthermore, translating images into words seems to contribute to strengthening cultural awareness and creative thinking. By drawing on the affordances of museum AD, suggestions for classroom applications and research directions are also provided.

### **Keywords**

Museum audio description, foreign language education, English as a Foreign Language, audiovisual translation

## 1. Introduction

The value of adopting audiovisual materials in foreign language education (FLE) is now supported by a substantial body of literature (Lertola, 2019; Talaván, 2020). Yet, the most common audiovisual translation (AVT) practices for experimentation and classroom integration are often limited to subtitling and dubbing, and only recently followed by media accessibility practices such as audio description (AD). Although initially conceived for blind and partially sighted audiences, AD has been investigated from different perspectives, which have acknowledged its benefits for sighted individuals, including language learners (Talaván *et al.*, 2022). In line with this, AD has started to be explored as a didactic resource to develop lexical and phraseological competence and writing skills (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013), as well as oral skills (Navarrete, 2018; Talaván & Lertola, 2016).

The present contribution focuses on museum AD and its potential for implementation in FLE, which remains an under-researched area of inquiry. By offering an intersemiotic translation of artworks and artefacts for a visually impaired audience, museum AD inherently serves a social function, which may broaden learners' understanding of diversity issues, empower them to cultivate their sense of citizenship and enhance their social agency. In addition, museum AD may arguably contribute to developing language skills (e.g., the acquisition of specialised vocabulary) and visual literacy skills (Ruanglertrbutr, 2016, p. 18), as well as fostering cultural appreciation and critical and creative thinking through multimodal inputs. Against this backdrop, this pilot study aims to explore the pedagogical value of museum AD in the language classroom as a practice to enhance communicative language competences and, more broadly, to raise awareness of the relevance of cultural heritage and media accessibility practices within a democratic society.

Building on a contribution where museum AD is proposed as a pedagogical practice in the foreign language (FL) classroom (Bartolini, 2022), the present study illustrates a lesson designed with a focus on accomplishing a real-life task: describing an artwork to a visually impaired person. This lesson was taught to two different classes by two different language instructors. Both classes were part of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course for students enrolled in an undergraduate programme in Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Bologna, Italy. The course's target level corresponded to C1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2011, 2018).

Museum AD was employed as the primary authentic material to engage students in reception and production activities. Data was collected through class recordings and observations, interviews with the two instructors, and students' surveys and writing tasks. The analysis focused on the participants' perceptions of the value of museum AD for the development of language competences and transferable skills (e.g., cultural awareness, citizenship and social skills).

This paper discusses previous studies on didactic AD in FLE as well as museum AD. It continues by illustrating the study methodology and the data collection and analysis, and by discussing the results. Finally, suggestions for language practitioners are provided, along with the study's limitations and conclusions.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. AD as a pedagogical practice in foreign language education

AD involves "using speech to make audiovisual material accessible to people who might not perceive the visual element themselves" (Fryer, 2016, p. 9), either totally or partially. It is thus initially conceived for blind or visually impaired audiences to access visual information through a verbal rendering.

However, the broader benefits of AD for a range of sighted individuals – including students and educators – have emerged in empirical studies in which AD’s potential uses include guiding the learners’ attention in analysing audiovisual elements and complementing traditional teaching tools (Krejtz *et al.*, 2012). In the last few decades, the integration of AD into FLE environments has gained momentum (Lertola, 2019), also thanks to the ever-growing use of audiovisual media in the FL classroom (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). However, as posited by Bolaños-García-Escribano and Navarrete (2022), the intersection between AD and teaching still seems to be marginal.

Earlier studies explored AD’s potential to offer additional linguistic material to the dialogues of an audiovisual product for reception activities aiming at vocabulary acquisition (Martínez Martínez, 2012) or improved lexical and phraseological competence (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013), also encouraging cooperation between sighted and partially sighted learners (Walczak, 2016). Later studies focused on the design of task-based production and mediation activities, whereby students created their own AD scripts and even revoiced audiovisual products. Experimental studies have primarily been conducted on the enhancement of writing and speaking skills by asking students to perform/record the AD of a variety of videos in their FL, including movie scenes (Bausells-Espín, 2022; Cenni & Izzo, 2016; Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2014; Rodrigues Barbosa, 2013), tourist advertisements (Talaván & Lertola, 2016) and other types of video clips (Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Navarrete, 2018). New methodological proposals have also been put forward by combining different AVT modes for students’ integrated skills enhancement (Talaván & Lertola, 2022).

Besides the improvement of language skills and intercultural awareness, the existing literature has addressed the extended social value of AD, which is based on the opportunity for students to create a socially useful product by making audiovisual content accessible for visually impaired people (Talaván, 2020). As such, the social dimension of AD “makes it a very motivating activity for language learners” (Lertola, 2019, p. 54), which confirms the importance of incorporating issues of diversity and inclusion in the FL classroom through activities allowing students to develop their role as mediators (Pintado Gutiérrez & Torralba, 2022). Not only may AD foster mediation in FL teaching, but it can also be a useful task to combine “linguistic and social skills based on real-life situations” (Pintado Gutiérrez & Torralba, 2022, p. 4). Other scholars such as Herrero and Escobar (2018) have supported the integration of AD as a multiliteracy-oriented task in the FLE curriculum in order to develop creativity and critical thinking while improving film literacy and accessibility awareness.

In addition, recent research has stressed the importance of reassessing the role of students’ perceptions as valuable evidence of task difficulty and usefulness, and of their own learning progress (Bausells-Espín, 2022). Such insights have set the basis for further research into the pedagogical potential of this practice.

## **2.2. Introduction to museum audio description**

Although AD normally refers to the description of visual information embedded in an audiovisual product, AD also caters for the needs of blind and visually impaired audiences in accessing art and live performances. Museum AD is a specific AD sub-genre offering “a verbal description that seeks to make the visual elements of the diverse contents of museums and galleries accessible to blind and partially sighted people” (Hutchinson & Eardley, 2019, p. 42). Yet, such a description may arguably be enjoyed also by “the rest of us, who can see but may not observe” (Snyder, 2008, p. 192), which hints at the wider potential of this inclusive practice for people with sight.

Crucial differences may be noticed between museum AD and the AD of films (henceforth, screen AD). As highlighted by Neves (2015), screen AD is framed by a self-contained audiovisual product and is determined by a narrative, so the amount of visual information to be provided verbally is necessarily limited and needs to fit in the so-called *spaces* between the film dialogues. Museum AD, however, is used in contexts that have no pre-defined boundaries, so “there is less concern with ‘when’ to say, and a great emphasis on ‘how’ and ‘what’ to say about ‘what’” (Neves, 2015, p. 69). Furthermore, the audience of a museum AD may be sitting or standing, which can affect individual comfort and attention span. This inevitably affects AD length and depth.

Given the burgeoning literature on the successful integration of screen AD in the language classroom, museum AD may arguably be a further innovative pedagogical instrument for FL teaching. Besides allowing students to develop integrated language skills while becoming aware of media accessibility issues, museum AD can also promote the acquisition of art-specific vocabulary and increase students’ awareness of the societal value of cultural heritage. The impact of using museum AD in the classroom could thus transcend language education. Drawing on previous research on the inclusive value of AD in education (Fiorucci, 2017), the present study seeks to investigate the integration of museum AD in daily teaching routines for promoting learning in the FL classroom.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Setting and participants

The setting of this study is an EFL course offered during the third year of an undergraduate programme in Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bologna, Italy. The aim of the course is to enable learners to reach the equivalent to a C1 level of the CEFR in all language skills, and its focus is on practical applications (e.g., reading and listening to authentic material, writing texts, discussing and debating orally). This EFL course runs over the whole academic year (October to May) and consists of two consecutive 90-minute classes per week. Students enrolled in this course are divided into four groups according to the grades scored in the second-year EFL course exam. For the purposes of this study, the two most advanced groups were selected (henceforth, Group 1 and Group 2).

The study participants (N=42) included 28 students enrolled in Group 1; 12 students enrolled in Group 2, including one visually impaired student; and two EFL instructors (one for each group). Students’ demographic data was collected through an optional after-class survey, which was completed by 23 participants. Overall, respondents shared similar profiles – 22 students (i.e., 96% of the respondents) ranged in age between 20 and 25, spoke Italian as their primary language, and had been studying English for over 10 years. English proficiency levels were fairly homogenous, as 12 students (52%) self-rated their level between B2 and C1 and 11 (48%) rated their level as C1 or greater.

#### 3.2. Study design, materials and procedure

A lesson focusing on museum AD was designed and taught in two EFL classes. Drawing on the pedagogical principles of the action-oriented approach (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018; Piccardo & North, 2019) and task-based language teaching (Skehan, 2003), the lesson revolved around a real-life task. The instructions students received were as follows:

You are doing an internship at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, and you have been asked by your supervisor to create an AD of a painting for visually impaired visitors. Your supervisor asked you to write a draft of your description and test it by reading it out loud to a group of colleagues.

During the lesson, students engaged in scaffolding activities in preparation for the final task. The lesson was divided into two consecutive 90-minute parts. Part 1 focused on reception activities (listening to a museum AD) to enhance oral comprehension skills (see Table 1), and language-focused activities to facilitate the acquisition of specific vocabulary about art, physical features, clothing, and expressive language.

Stage	Objective	Activity Description
<b>Warm-up</b>	Introduce topic and generate engagement	Students discuss their favourite museums and paintings in pairs and with the whole class.
<b>Introduction to museum AD</b>	Provide topic background and elicit students' knowledge about topic	Students answer questions on their understanding and expectations about museum AD. The instructor defines museum AD and explains its main features.
<b>Listening activity 1</b>	Listen for gist	Students listen to an authentic museum AD, answer gist questions, and try to form a mental image of the artwork being described.
<b>Reflection &amp; discussion</b>	Raise awareness about visual disabilities and museum AD as an accessibility practice	Students reflect on their experience listening to an authentic museum AD.
<b>Listening activity 2</b>	Listen for specific information	While re-listening to the museum AD, students read a list of statements about details of the artwork described; they select the right statements and correct the wrong ones.
<b>Picture-matching + Reflection &amp; discussion</b>	Raise awareness about visual disabilities and museum AD as an accessibility practice	Presented with a number of paintings, students select the artwork described in the museum AD. Students reflect on their reactions to museum AD and provide feedback.
<b>Vocabulary activity</b>	Acquire specific vocabulary	Students read the museum AD transcript. They identify and learn new vocabulary about art, physical features, clothing, and expressive language.

**Table 1.** Part 1 with focus on reception (source: authors)

Part 2 focused on the production task, that is, writing a museum AD and performing it out loud (see Table 2). The learning objectives of this task included fostering the ability to analyse and describe visual content and to focus on the audience's needs, promoting creative thinking, and enhancing descriptive and expressive writing.

Stage	Objective	Activity Description
<b>Task preparation</b>	Prepare for the task	The instructor provides guidelines for museum AD production and assigns one artwork to each group of students.
<b>Writing task: Draft museum ADs (group work)</b>	Observe and interpret images to describe them to visually impaired people. Use lexical and grammatical structures related to artwork descriptions	Groups write a 300-word AD script of their artworks.

<b>Speaking task: Present museum ADs</b>	Verify the effectiveness of museum ADs and receive audience feedback	One representative from each group reads the museum AD out loud. Listeners identify the artworks being described from a selection of pictures.
<b>Post-task reflection</b>	Reflect on the task outcomes	Students reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their museum AD script and the delivery.
<b>Final discussion</b>	Reflect on the lesson and museum AD in general	Students reflect on their experience producing museum ADs and on lessons learned.

**Table 2.** Part 2 with a focus on production (source: authors)

Both parts of the lesson also included discussion activities to encourage students' reflections on their own visual literacy skills as well as on the social value of museum AD as an accessibility practice, and more broadly on inclusion and disability.

The materials employed were five authentic museum ADs of female portraits, which were deemed easier to interpret and describe than other subjects (e.g., abstract paintings). This choice ensured consistency in students' scripts in terms of difficulty and of focus on specific lexical areas (e.g., physical appearance, clothing, and posture).

The AD selected for the reception activities in Part 1 was produced by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and describes the painting *Woman I* (1950–52) by Willem de Kooning. The five ADs selected for the production task were produced by the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) and described the following paintings: *Ruth* (1933) by Nora Heysen, *Caroline Matilda Sotheron* (c.1808) by Thomas Lawrence, *The Black Watchful* (2018) by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, *Circe Invidiosa* (1892) by John William Waterhouse and *Priestess of Delphi* (1891) by John Collier<sup>1</sup>. The guidelines provided during the production task preparation were created by combining existing guidelines for the creation of museum ADs (e.g., Giansante, 2015; Neves, 2015; Royal National Institute of Blind People & VocalEyes, 2003; Snyder, 2010), which were simplified for the pedagogical purposes of this lesson.

The lesson plan and materials were designed by the two researchers. The lesson was then taught in Group 2's EFL class by one of the researchers, who is also the regular course instructor of this group, and in Group 1 by this group's course instructor, who had received a training session on museum AD and on the lesson objectives and activities.

#### 4. Data collection and analysis

Data was collected using the following tools:

- in-class observations performed by a researcher as a silent observer and note-taker;
- class recordings;
- the AD scripts created by the students;
- an interview between the silent observer and the two EFL instructors to enquire about their impressions of the lesson plan and activities; their experiences in delivering the lessons; any suggested changes to the lesson plan; and their interest in including museum or other types of ADs in future classes.
- an after-class student survey with Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions (see Table 3) that focused on their perceptions of their language skills and transferable skills improvement, and their feedback on museum AD as a didactic practice.

<sup>1</sup> Available for fair use for educational purposes on the MoMA website (<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/3?locale=en>, accessed on 25 July 2022) and the AGSA website (<https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/accessible-guides/>, accessed on 19 November 2022).

<b>Give a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)</b>
<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?</b>
I have appreciated...
Discussing the needs of people with visual disabilities
Discussing the importance of museum AD as an accessibility tool in our society
This lesson has helped me...
Reflect on the rights of people with visual disabilities
Understand the importance of making culturally relevant visual material accessible to people with visual disabilities
Improve my ability to observe and interpret an image in order to describe it later to people with visual disabilities
Write the AD of an artwork in English for someone to listen to (and not read)
Understand the importance of using language in a way that takes into account the listener's specific needs
Improve my ability to create mental images by listening to the ADs of artworks in English
Acquire specialised art-related vocabulary to describe an artwork in English
Acquire vocabulary to describe a person (physical appearance, expression, clothing)
Overall, are you satisfied with this lesson?
Have you found this lesson motivating?
Have you found this lesson challenging?
During your language courses, would you like to audio describe artworks again?
Would you like to experiment with the AD of audiovisual texts, such as videos or TV series?

**Table 3.** Survey questions (source: authors)

The survey was completed by 23 students. Of the students who completed the survey 79% attended both Parts 1 and 2 of the lesson in Group 1 and 71% in Group 2<sup>2</sup>. The students' survey data from the Likert-scale questions was analysed quantitatively in the form of mean scores out of 5 (5 being the highest value), while all the other data (i.e., survey open questions, class observations, class transcripts, interview transcripts, and AD scripts) was analysed qualitatively. Each set of data was coded separately according to a set of codes identified in advance on the basis of the research aims (Table 4).

<b>Macro-codes</b>	<b>Micro-codes</b>
<b>Language skills</b>	Vocabulary
	Listening skills
	Writing and speaking skills
<b>Transferable skills</b>	Cultural awareness and expression competence
	Social and citizenship competence

**Table 4.** Codes for data analysis (source: authors)

Among the transferable skills, cultural awareness and expression competence encompasses abilities such as visual literacy, understood as the “ability to express and interpret figurative and abstract ideas, experiences and emotions [and an understanding of] how arts and other cultural forms can be a way to both view and shape the world” (European Commission, 2019, p. 14). Social and citizenship competence refers to diversity awareness, that is, “respect for human rights” and for the “diversity of others and their needs”, as well as “critical thinking” and the ability to “feel empathy” (European Commission, 2019, pp. 11-12).

<sup>2</sup> Class attendance was not mandatory, so the number of student participants fluctuated. In Group 1, there were 25 students in Part 1 and 27 in Part 2; in Group 2, there were 11 students in Part 1 and 10 in Part 2.

From the qualitative analysis, four themes emerged about the potential contribution of museum AD to the development of the aforementioned skills. These themes are illustrated in Section 5.

## 5. Results and discussion

In this section, we illustrate the main benefits that museum AD as a pedagogical practice can bring to the language classroom. Results are organised into four main themes: empathy as a catalyst for language learning; translation as a catalyst for the development of advanced cognitive abilities, creative thinking, and cultural awareness; vocabulary exposure and acquisition; and overall appreciation and engagement. The following sub-sections focus on these themes by organically combining and discussing results that were collected through the multiple data collection tools, as detailed in Section 4. Direct citations from the participants are provided – most of them from in-class observations. When citations are not taken from in-class observations, the source is specified.

### 5.1. Empathy as a catalyst for language learning

One of the greatest values of museum AD lies in its potential to promote learners' empathy. Developing a sense of empathy towards the intended audience of museum AD – visually impaired people – seems to be the catalyst for the development of key transferable skills (e.g., sense of citizenship, critical thinking, and analytical and observational skills) as well as production skills.

Students genuinely tried to put themselves in the shoes of visually impaired people and, consequently, developed awareness about accessibility issues and the needs of people with visual impairments. Survey results showed that students generally appreciated opportunities for discussing the rights of people with disabilities, as well as for reflecting on the needs of people with visual disabilities (see Table 5).

Give a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?	Mean score
<b>I have appreciated...</b>	
Discussing the needs of people with visual disabilities	4.1/5
Discussing the importance of museum AD as an accessibility practice in our society	4.1/5
<b>This lesson has helped me...</b>	
Reflect on the rights of people with visual disabilities	3.9/5
Understand the importance of making culturally relevant visual material accessible to people with visual disabilities	4.1/5
Improve my ability to observe and interpret an image in order to describe it later to people with visual disabilities	4.2/5
Write the AD of an artwork in English for someone to listen to (and not read)	4.0/5
Understand the importance of using language in a way that takes into account the listener's specific needs	4.6/5

**Table 5.** Survey results regarding empathy (source: authors)

For instance, a student claimed, "It's a bit hard because you have to forget that you can actually look at [the painting]" and that "you cannot take for granted all the things that we take for granted". Another student added that she "tried really hard to put myself into it, and as a blind person and what she would be saying, and I would like to have a lot of detail because I cannot

see ... in order to have a clear image.” A third student recognized that AD “reminds us we are really lucky to be able to see.” Instructor 2 claimed that “the added value of AD compared to other listening products lies in putting yourself in someone else’s shoes and learning how to communicate in a way that you’re not used to because of some constraints” (interview). It was thus important for the instructor “to make sure that they [students] see the value” (interview). Interestingly, the visually impaired student shared the following reflection:

I never understood how much, as a visually impaired person, I was using my sight. I think it’s interesting to see how small details you don’t even think about. If you’re with a blind person, you need to tell them. I found it interesting to put myself in somebody else’s skin and see, even if I’m visually impaired, how blind people can deal with art.

This emerging sense of empathy arguably stimulated students’ expression of authentic emotional responses, critical thinking, and sense of citizenship. Students learned to appreciate the importance of museum AD in today’s society and of making culturally relevant visual material accessible to people with visual disabilities (see Table 5). During the reception activities, students critically reflected on AD features that would offer the best possible experience for this audience by genuinely reacting to and expressing constructive criticism of the AD products. Students in both groups commented on “the voice of the narrator” and on “the way of narrating”, which seemed to be “lacking something on a more emotional or emotive level”, as suggested by Instructor 1. They were “expecting something more involving, more artistic, more poetic”. Some students thought “it wasn’t complete”, as they were “also expecting background music or sounds”. Students also observed that the AD listened to in Part 1 lacked “extra elements that were not just merely the way it was painted”, such as an introduction at the beginning providing more context, a description of the setting surrounding the subject, or more technical details (e.g., specific shades), and that “for a blind person it’s not fair to get only this”. Generally, students expected the AD “to be more specific and detailed” than a standard audio guide, providing information “not only about the light or colours or the scene in general, but also about the atmosphere and the feeling of the painting”, as well as symbolical meanings about the position of the figures depicted. For instance, a student “had the image that [the artwork is] creepy, but I don’t feel it [from the AD]. I think you should feel the same as abled people”. Further evidence is provided by Instructor 2, who recognized the students’ frustration with the AD they listened to, but argued that it “led to an interesting discussion, as this is not the kind of class that needs to provoke just positive feelings” (interview). What Instructor 2 “mostly liked about these lessons is that they gave students the opportunity to really think in an authentic way, which made this educational at a deeper level”. This evidence suggests that these critical observations activated oral discussion skills. Museum AD became the object of students’ discussions, as opposed to a mere tool to improve their English skills. This, in turn, enabled learners to activate and use speaking skills and strategies to authentically express criticism, opinions, (dis)agreement, suggestions and, more generally, feelings.

Writing skills were also positively affected. More specifically, the process of developing empathy stimulated a sense of citizenship, critical thinking and discussions which raised learners’ awareness about the importance of writing for an audience. The writing task on museum AD allowed students to make the target audience (i.e., visually impaired people) and their needs central to the writing process. During the production task, students carefully observed and analysed their paintings and attempted to include what they perceived as desirable AD features in their own museum ADs with the aim of improving the experience of a visually impaired audience. This, in turn, led them to exploit the specific language strategies and resources for drafting a product that could be appreciated by these recipients, such as content

organisation (e.g., the order in which a subject is described, what information to include or exclude), vocabulary use (e.g., descriptive and expressive language, art-related terminology), and creative writing strategies (e.g., interpreting the subject of the painting; using analogies, comparisons, and imagery; employing different language structures to avoid repetitions).

Examples of features used by students include background and contextual information such as the following:

- information about the artists and their styles, and elements of the story of Circe to explain the portrait *Circe Invidiosa* (e.g., “the main subject of the painting is the demigoddess Circe... According to Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, the demigoddess was jealous of the love between Glauco, Poseidon’s son, and the beautiful nymph Silla”);
- personal pronouns (e.g., “we are in deep, dense, dark woods”);
- descriptive and expressive language (e.g., “her facial expression evokes seriousness and austerity”; “dark eyebrows crowning her big eyes”);
- art-specific vocabulary (e.g., “the artist used natural light and smooth side strokes”; “splash of blue”);
- interpretations of the artwork (e.g., “the contrast between her pale skin and her t-shirt also reflects the contrast between the landscape and the sky in the background”);
- analogies (e.g., “the painting comes in a door-like size”).

In addition, during the lesson, Instructor 2 stressed that “writing is *for the reader*”, and that AD ultimately “helps us become more aware of the writer’s role and the recipient’s role – whether it’s a reader or a listener.” In the interview, Instructor 2 further supported the usefulness of museum AD to develop the ability to write for an audience by stating that museum AD was “probably the ultimate type of writing” to teach and practice this concept, and by expressing the intention to incorporate elements of AD in future writing classes. Similarly, Instructor 1 noticed that if a text is “also been made pleasurable to read, and it’s easier if it’s readable, then it opens up the audience and it sort of makes that information more widely accessible” (interview). Also, according to Instructor 1, “learning how to describe something clearly from a different perspective than what you’re used to [means] shifting your ability to describe”, which may ultimately contribute to “improving your analytical skills [and] observation skills” (interview).

Interestingly, students’ perceptions aligned with the instructors’. Most respondents felt they improved their visual literacy skills (e.g., abstraction and concentration, critical and analytical skills, as well as descriptive and creative skills), by observing and interpreting an image in order to describe it later to people with visual disabilities (see Table 5). Writing skills and social skills were also perceived as improved – more specifically writing the AD of an artwork in English for someone to listen to and not read, and using language in a way that takes into account the listener’s specific needs (see Table 5). A student even claimed that AD is “more useful for people who can see than people who cannot see”, as “it helps us keep in mind the listener.”

After the AD presentation task, students generally appreciated the ADs created by their classmates more than the AD listened to in Part 1 of the lesson. They mainly appreciated the style being “more realistic for all the paintings”, the higher level of detail, as well as the expressive and “involving” style, such as the use of the first-person pronoun in the description. Instructor 1 thought that students were “beginning to understand and appreciate what was involved in both sides”, that is, in AD production and reception. Students were developing “empathy towards... people who were in a different position from them while trying to create that sort of sense of equality” by seeking to provide the best possible description (interview). In the instructor’s opinion, not only may this help students “understand and interact with

people who come from those communities” but it could even inspire students “to get into that kind of work” in the future (interview).

Finally, it can also be argued that museum AD is particularly useful to reflect on the relationship between author and audience in written texts. Written English tends to be more audience-oriented than Italian, and this difference is reflected in elements such as organisation of ideas, text structure, and tone (Bortoluzzi, 1998). Instructor 2 observed that the constraints of museum AD inherently forced students to become acutely and authentically aware of their audience, significantly more so than when they write texts for a “standard” readership.

## 5.2. Translation as a catalyst for the development of cognitive skills, creative thinking and cultural awareness

Similarly to other types of didactic AD (Bausells-Espín, 2022), museum AD seems to contribute to developing cognitive as well as creative skills in sighted individuals by requiring listeners to translate verbal input into mental images. This process also contributes to raising cultural awareness and to challenging our worldviews by uncovering biases and assumptions.

Results showed that museum AD may benefit the development of oral reception skills. The added value of listening to a museum AD for sighted students lies in the opportunity to form a mental image that resembles as closely as possible to an existing image by receiving oral input exclusively. This requires – and, arguably, develops – more advanced cognitive efforts than other listening products normally do, such as piecing together different types of discrete details (e.g., descriptive, interpretative, expressive elements) to build a bigger picture (both literally and metaphorically). Students felt they improved their ability to create mental images by listening to ADs of artworks in English (see Table 6).

Give a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) To what extent do you agree or disagree?	Mean score
This lesson has helped me...	
Improve my ability to create mental images by listening to the ADs of artworks in English	3.7/5

**Table 6.** Survey results regarding translation (source: authors)

During the lesson, students said they were “able to form a mental picture” but were “a bit confused”, for instance, about the colours or about specific parts of the painting, such as the woman’s face and torso. In addition, they could “imagine some elements but it’s difficult to imagine the whole painting”. On the same vein, Instructor 1 noticed that “it was a different kind of listening, especially in a creative way, which is also something that doesn’t necessarily get explored in lessons fully” (interview). This could be considered as “a different level of listening because it was forcing them [students] to listen even more carefully than they ordinarily would” (interview). Consequently, AD involved “a much higher listening skill and a much higher burden on listening” (interview).

Listening to or reading a museum AD seems to also foster imagination and creative thinking. Instructors and students commented that listening to an AD (or reading its script) may be compared to reading a book or listening to an audiobook, whereby the recipient activates their imagination and creative thinking to “see” what is described more than they would do when observing a painting or watching a film. During the lesson, Instructor 2 stressed that “the physical objective description is done through a very rich detailed language... pretty much like when you read a novel or a literary work: through the use of language, it evokes a certain feeling.” Following a student’s comment about AD being “like reading a book rather than watching a film”, Instructor 1 noticed that “we praise books over films, but we don’t praise

audio descriptions over works of visual art” and wondered about “Why should it be that art needs to be only visual as in ‘see’... when you can see it with your mind?” During the interview, a reflection also emerged about the fact that looking at a painting “makes us not necessarily lazy but... not involved in the creation of that image, whereas AD could be a way of engaging more [in] a three- or four-dimensional kind of experience”.

Finally, as far as cultural awareness and expression are concerned, museum AD provided the opportunity to bring preconceptions and cultural biases to the surface, challenging them from different perspectives. Following the listening activities, students discussed the differences between the portrait of a woman described in the AD and their mental images of such portrait. Students did not seem to recognise a woman in the painting, as it seemed “more a sketch” or “a soldier”. This allowed Instructor 2 to raise their awareness not just about “what can be done in the AD to guide the listener” but also on “preconceptions that we have based on who we are, what we know about the world, how we see the world”, for example about the image of a woman. Instructor 2 found it “funny that some of them were so adamant about that woman not being a woman” (interview). Similarly, a student said that apart from the woman’s face, they imagined a completely different body, also adding that “if you don’t specify that [the body is very square] you automatically think of a *normal* body, especially if you describe the breasts being round.” Another student “expected a more elegant pose.” These comments suggest preconceptions about the representation of the female body and provide fertile ground for discussions about biases.

### 5.3. Vocabulary exposure and acquisition

Overall, museum AD material provided exposure to and opportunities for the acquisition of vocabulary that can be useful to high-intermediate and advanced language learners (B2–C1 CEFR levels). Students felt they improved their vocabulary, including specialised art-related vocabulary and, to a lesser extent, specific vocabulary to describe a person, including physical appearance, expression, and clothing (see Table 7).

Give a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?	Mean score
This lesson has helped me...	
Acquire specialised art-related vocabulary to describe an artwork in English	3.9/5
Acquire vocabulary to describe a person (physical appearance, expression, clothing)	3.5/5

**Table 7.** Survey results regarding vocabulary (source: authors)

These domains apply to the paintings selected for this lesson plan (portraits), but paintings on different subjects (e.g., landscapes or still lives) would provide opportunities for the development of different vocabulary. Students reflected on art-related terminology (e.g., “portrait”; “painting” instead of “picture”), collocations (“oil on canvas”), descriptive and expressive language (e.g., “teeth are bared in a rigid grin”), and identified unknown terminology (e.g., “bulging breasts”, “perched”). Instructor 1 thought the task required students to use “more sophisticated vocabulary in order to convey something that ordinarily they wouldn’t convey” (interview). Along the same lines, Instructor 2 told students that AD offers “an opportunity to expand our vocabulary and see how something can be described – in a more basic way or richer, more expressive way.”

## 6. Appreciation and engagement

Overall, students seemed satisfied with the lesson, as they found it motivating albeit challenging (see Table 8). This lesson seems to have raised the students' interest in AD: some of them would like to audio describe again, also by experimenting with the AD of audiovisual texts, such as videos or TV series (see Table 8).

Give a score from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely yes)	Mean score
Overall, are you satisfied with this lesson?	4.6/5
Have you found this lesson motivating?	4.3/5
Have you found this lesson challenging?	3.8/5
During your language courses, would you like to audio describe artworks again?	3.4/5
Would you like to experiment with the AD of audiovisual texts, such as videos or TV series?	4.3/5

**Table 8.** Survey results regarding appreciation and engagement (source: authors)

Throughout the lesson students engaged in lively discussions, expressing their preferences (e.g., style of art and favourite artworks, artists or museums), talking about past experiences in museums, as well as reacting to and commenting on the features, values and drawbacks of museum AD. Students from both groups also showed high levels of participation during the production tasks, with teams actively engaging in analysing the paintings, doing research and delving in animated discussions over their interpretations, terminology and information to include. In Group 2, the instructor even extended the task duration as students were eager to properly complete their work. During the interviews, both instructors commented that the lesson “was a very positive experience”, “motivating” and “stimulating”. Although they recognised the lesson plan was too long for the time allocated, they were satisfied with it and appreciated that students were “active” and “quite engaged” (interviews). Instructor 2 was “pretty prepared for them not to like the way the AD was structured”, while Instructor 1 seemed more surprised to hear a student’s comment “against the notion” of AD but argued that students “still took a lot from the lesson”, as they reflected on AD deeply (interviews).

From a FLE perspective, this study findings align with action-oriented-approach principles (Council of Europe, 2001; Piccardo & North, 2019). Museum AD provides authentic material to create real-life scenarios and tasks that, by presenting specific constraints (e.g., visually impaired audience; translating visual content into oral products and vice versa), require learners to activate competences that end up being further developed in the process. In addition, the social value of museum AD makes it an ideal tool to create the conditions in which learners react and act meaningfully and authentically as social agents to reach a real-life goal. In this study, learners’ emotions triggered social agency, confirming the importance of the emotional dimension in language education (Piccardo & Aden, 2014). Empathy – fostered by the exposure to museum AD and the acknowledgement of its social value – emerged as a driving force that positively affected cognition, intercultural skills and, ultimately, language learning. As Instructor 2 pointed out, “we learn by being uncomfortable”, and “the useful thing about a task... is that there are constraints. And those constraints are real” (interview). In this case, it was not just about describing a picture, but about trying to describe it to someone who cannot see. As such, students “were able to point out what made the task challenging. And then, inevitably, they had to think about strategies to compensate” (interview), which ultimately helped them make their descriptions more accurate and develop the skills discussed in the sub-sections above.

## 7. Conclusions

This exploratory study aimed to shed light on the pedagogical potential of museum AD in FLE. A task-based lesson was designed and delivered within an EFL course, and data about students' and instructors' perceptions, as well as classroom activities, was collected and analysed to identify the benefits that museum AD might offer for the development of language and transferable skills.

Overall, participants appreciated the lessons and perceived their usefulness for improving FL skills. The most significant findings concern the roles of empathy and translation as catalysts for the development of sense of citizenship, cultural awareness, critical and creative thinking, and analytical and observational skills that, in turn, enhance language skills.

These results are not generalisable due to the small number (N=40) and homogenous profiles of the student participants. Timing was also a limitation, as more than two classes are needed to fully exploit the potential of museum AD activities. These limitations call for further longer-term experimental studies involving a larger number of participants. A wider sample could include students with different language backgrounds, ages, and proficiency levels. A study design with pre- and post-tests as well as treatment and control groups would also contribute to validating the didactic value of museum AD by measuring students' learning as a result of AD activities.

Based on our pilot study, suggestions for practitioners include devoting an entire course to didactic museum AD and using multiple examples of authentic ADs to increase students' exposure to different features and allow for critical comparisons. Proposed classroom applications include terminology-focused activities through controlled practice to foster vocabulary learning; students' revisions and improvement of authentic museum ADs; production of original ADs with a focus on writing for an audience and creative writing; oral performance of museum ADs focusing on pace, intonation, and expressive spoken skills; and debates on inclusion and diversity issues, or on themes emerging from the artworks described.

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## The role of accessibility in language teaching: Respeaking in the foreign language classroom

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### **Abstract**

Research into using audiovisual translation (AVT) and media accessibility (MA) in the foreign language (FL) classroom has proven that it raises awareness and garners the attention of teachers and scholars alike (Talaván, 2020). Respeaking is a live-captioning technique where someone listens to the original audio of a (live) programme or event and respeaks it using speech-recognition (SR) software, incorporating punctuation and elements for the hard-of-hearing. Professionals are well versed in shadowing, i.e., oral repetition of information found in the materials presented, which is more related to interpreting. Shadowing, together with subtitling revision techniques, could offer much potential for language learners in improving pronunciation and punctuation, among other skills (Soler Pardo, 2022). This paper provides an overview of using respeaking in FL learning, focusing on the benefits for students. We first introduce the concept of accessibility, focusing on shadowing and intralingual subtitling practice in the classroom using respeaking as a pedagogical tool. We then explore different options of how to introduce learners to shadowing as well as subtitling norms and proper techniques. Finally, we discuss correct material selection and the different tasks that could be adapted to different FL competences and workflows to enhance cooperation among learners and language learning.

### **Keywords**

Audiovisual translation, foreign language teaching and learning, shadowing, respeaking

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, research on access to audiovisual content has been carried out by audiovisual translation (AVT) scholars with a special emphasis on media accessibility (MA), which is generally focused on access services such as audio description (AD), subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) or sign language (SL) interpreting (Agulló & Matamala, 2019). Likewise, Vanderplank (1988) and Holobow *et al.* (1984) analysed the use of subtitles in foreign language (FL) learning, among many other scholars (Ávila-Cabrera, 2018; Borghetti & Lertola, 2014; Bravo, 2009; Díaz-Cintas, 2018; Fernández-Costales, 2017; Sokoli, 2018; Talaván, 2020; Vanderplank, 2016; Williams & Thorne, 2000), and some studies assess the role of dubbing as a didactic resource in L2 education (Burston, 2005; Chiu, 2012; Danan, 2010; Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Talaván & Costal, 2017; Wakefield, 2014).

Having said this, when it comes to MA, even if we do find studies related to SDH (Agulló & Matamala, 2019; Talaván, 2019) and AD (Calduch & Talaván, 2017; Vermeulen & Ibáñez Moreno, 2017; Navarrete, 2021), no study has yet focused on the use of respeaking – used for live-subtitling – in FL learning. Only Moores (2022) offers a brief mention on how non-native speakers might utilise respeaking to help or enhance their English, although from the standpoint of leisure rather than didactic application. In fact, materials related to this cannot be found, and there is no literature focusing on a specific teaching procedure that could combine respeaking and language learning simultaneously. Hence, this paper aims to offer a proposal on the use of respeaking as a pedagogical tool in the FL classroom. The focus of the methodology lies in introducing students to producing “as-live subtitles” (Moores, 2022, p. 286) through shadowing and proofreading. To do this, students need to be exposed to MA services to learn how these live subtitles are produced and formed in a real-life context, hence becoming more aware of the reality of MA and the specific needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences.

Respeaking combines oral repetition and proofreading of the working language. In this context, respeakers listen and repeat the original language into speech recognition (SR) software, which transforms the oral text into real-time subtitles. Consequently, when we say “proofreading”, we refer to the revision of the created text, particularly spelling and coherence. Considering this, this paper aims to offer different options on how to introduce learners to shadowing, as well as subtitling norms and proper techniques. This article presents a preliminary project that focuses on the needs and requirements of respeaking and attempts to describe the benefits that FL activities related to respeaking might have. To do so, we will first introduce the concept of respeaking and its didactic use, followed by an introduction to shadowing and subtitling norms in the FL classroom. Then, activities using respeaking will be introduced, as well as videos that could be used in an FL context to help familiarise students with this MA modality. The paper will after that describe a proposal for the assessment of both the shadowing and subtitling parts in respeaking for C1 L2 students. Finally, preliminary conclusions will call for urgent further long-term research in terms of the pedagogical use of respeaking in FL education with plans devised to carry out an experiment with FL learners.

## 2. Theoretical background

Before attempting to define what “didactic respeaking” would stand for, respeaking must be first explored. It is a technique whereby a respeaker listens to the original sound of a (live) programme or event and respeaks it – including punctuation and some specific features for the deaf and hard-of-hearing – into SR software (Romero-Fresco, 2011). The software then converts the recognised speech into on-screen subtitles with the least amount of delay.

All forms of communication are based on the production, transmission, and reception of a message among various participants (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). Nevertheless, in respeaking

a so-called “middle text” is produced from an oral text and transformed into a written text created by professionals for viewers of the audiovisual product (Eugeni, 2008, p. 38):

Respeaking differs from other techniques employed to produce such subtitles in its process. While stenotyping, velotyping and the so called dual-keyboard system produce directly the target text using a different channel from the one used to ‘receive’ the source text, namely the operator’s hands, respeaking is a form of isosemiotic translation (the oral-acoustic channel is used both for the reception of the source text and for the production of the target text) where the operator does not produce directly the source text, but a sort of ‘middle text’ which will be then “translated” into the source text by the speech recognition technology employed.

To do this, in some countries like France teams of respeakers often work together and a different person takes on the editing work (Romero-Fresco, 2011); an approach that will be taken into account throughout this proposal when it comes to respeaking activities in the FL classroom.

Greater accuracy can be asked from learners with advanced proficiency levels whereas a general understanding and similarities to the original text may suffice for intermediate students. The shadowing element of respeaking involves listening and speaking at the same time, a procedure that implies a series of abilities that need to be learnt, as well as proofreading, that “requires closely analytic reading with focus on both form and meaning” [sic] (James & Klein, 1994, p. 36).

In order to understand the concept of shadowing, it is key to look into simultaneous interpreting: here, “the interpreter sits in a booth with a clear view of the meeting room and the speaker and listens to and simultaneously interprets the speech into a target language” (AIIIC webpage, found in Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco, 2008, p. 110). Thus, it would appear that the basic similarity between the two practices is the simultaneous quality of the actions involved: listening and speaking at the same time.

Considering this, in the FL context, learners can be asked to repeat what they hear, i.e., asked to create this “middle text” if the abilities required are taught, and this process could allow them to enhance their pronunciation and listening skills. While working on their aural/oral skills, they will also need to be conscious of the written product, which is where ‘shadowing’ and ‘shadowing for respeaking’ differ. As mentioned earlier, learners’ levels will determine the materials employed, but also the expected accuracy and the correct assessment. At higher levels – having introduced this methodology in previous practice – we could even let students choose the materials so they can “make all of the choices regarding genre, vocabulary, proficiency level, because they can select among the virtually limitless number of easily accessible videos” (Wakefield, 2014, p. 160). Therefore, students could benefit from participating in this process of choosing the materials (Vanderplank, 2016).

### **2.1. Didactic respeaking**

When respeaking, it is key that the software recognises the message, which requires good pronunciation, punctuated speech and a thorough lexical and thematic knowledge. In addition, students must be told that the respeaker is interacting with the software in order to interact with a person. That implies that the pronunciation they use or any pause they make will not reflect “good spoken interaction” – i.e., communication with a person. Hence, to use respeaking as a didactical tool, SR software should be installed on computers for students to use when training themselves. In the words of Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco (2008, p. 117):

[...] respeakers must feel at ease when dictating to the SR software, which requires familiarisation with the software demands and limitations. Once these limitations are

identified, respeakers must try to either overcome them or at least minimise them through training, which is possibly the most important part of the preparation stage in respeaking.

This type of software – such as Isis (developed by Starfish), CMU Sphinx, HTK, Julius, Kaldi, IBM ViaVoice, or even actual software used by respeakers, like Dragon by Nuance and Fingertext (Belenguier Cortés, 2022) – includes the ability to transcribe what is being said. When using SR software, students need to do the so-called “quick training and enrolment”, which involves them reading many specific words and sentences so the software can adapt to their intonation and voice into the specific language being taught in the FL classroom. This implies learners would already have to pay attention to their pronunciation before starting to use the SR software.

Even though SR software includes a corpus of thousands of words, respeakers need to introduce specialised terms when working with specific materials. Therefore, it could also be appropriate to teach students how to use macros, i.e., to include the specific spoken form that is assigned to a word into the software so whenever they pronounce the specific word, the SR software will be able to identify it. When working with homophones, it would be highly recommended to work in pairs, since students will be able to either focus on the pronunciation (the respeaker) or the quality of the created subtitles (the proofreader). When working alone, students can reflect on and review the text created after respeaking to see whether the message is clear or, on the contrary, if there are any misunderstandings caused by omission or mispronunciation. Assessment is also a useful tool for students, who can play an active role in their own learning, assess themselves (self- and peer-assessment) and be more aware of their learning process and their strengths and weaknesses (De Higes Andino & Cerezo Merchán, 2018).

Considering the use of didactic respeaking in the FL classroom, even if respeaking could be interlingual (Szarkowska *et al.*, 2016; Dawson & Romero-Fresco, 2021), respeaking is hereby understood as an intralingual activity, which implies a challenge for the FL classroom; in terms of the information received, Lambert (1992) states that comprehension and recall “are significantly higher when there is a decoding and recoding process than they are in shadowing, which is merely a literal repetition of the source message” (Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco, 2008, p. 111). Considering this, activities and goals in the FL classroom can be adapted to different approaches: whether to expect the ability to analyse and reformulate from students or to just stick to repeating the text heard to assess pronunciation, diction, and fluency.

Through didactic respeaking, students will be training the following skills found in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR):

- Listening to the ST in the FL.
- Speaking (intralingual TT) in the FL.
- Reading the TT when proofreading.
- Writing if corrections need to be made while reviewing the work.

In the present proposal, students are trained to create this “middle text” considering their language level and the goals in the FL classroom. Nevertheless, didactic respeaking could be useful not only for FL learners in general but specifically for FL learners on Translation and Interpreting degrees or AVT Master’s degrees who are willing to work in Accessibility departments and who might be interested in enrolling on a proper respeaking course. Furthermore, students could also be asked to review the resulting subtitles, which could be of interest for students in the AVT field.

## 2.2. Shadowing and intralingual subtitling practice

When considering shadowing and intralingual subtitling practice, a reflection on the chosen material must be considered, and the video selection should not only adapt to respeaking needs

(i.e., shadowing and intralingual subtitling), but also to the FL learners' level. Furthermore, the videos could also be a great source of reflection and analysis, since they allow connections to be made between the material itself and the actual teaching experience (Sanz-Moreno, 2021). As Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco (2008, p. 113) stated, in respeaking there are difficulties to be found in the ST:

The ST often poses the same type of difficulties for respeakers and subtitlers, namely multiple turn-taking, overlapping dialogue, use of realia (famous names, geographical references, names and institutions), etc. Regarding the audience, both respeakers and subtitlers need to be aware of their viewers' needs and requirements, so as to, for instance, produce appropriate extralinguistic information.

Hence, these aspects should also be considered when choosing FL materials. Given that respeaking and simultaneous interpreting were previously compared due to their similarities when it comes to practice (particularly with shadowing), it comes as no surprise to infer that training could be similar, as seen in the ILSA Project (2017–2020). In fact, respeaking is also labelled as “the simultaneous interpreting 2.0” by the SMART Project (2020–2023).

Kopczynsky (1982) introduced a series of elements that can have a remarkable effect on interpreting: speech presentation (spontaneous text or read text), speed elocution, accents, syntax coherence, pauses, intonation, non-verbal language, the use of the microphone, the use of graphic or audiovisual materials, the reaction of the audience, the type of audience as well as the sound quality can have a major impact on the user, meant to be a gradual training process (Pražák *et al.*, 2020).

Pedagogical approaches towards respeaking training coincide in that professionals should be able to master the following (Fresno & Romero-Fresco, 2022):

- Linguistic skills, which allow respeakers to comprehend the original message and to deliver it in the respoken subtitles.
- Software-related skills, which allow respeakers to properly dictate into the speech recognition software, and to change the subtitle format and position on screen.
- Cognitive skills, which allow respeakers to perform three main tasks:
  1. Editing the original message in such a way that meaning does not get lost.
  2. Splitting their attention when conducting several simultaneous activities.
  3. Verbalising punctuation commands.

Since this type of AVT practice needs to be adapted to the FL context, a simple speech that can be used for FL learners will be sought out. When considering selecting a video to practice shadowing, the following aspects should be borne in mind:

- Language: Depending on the language to be taught, a list of variants, dialects and accents should be considered.
- Speaker: This aspect can be key where selecting an older or younger speaker, with or without an idiolect, with a specific speed of speech, as well as specific vocabulary given by the specific age.
- Domain: According to what is to be taught or by the goals of the class, a general or a more specific domain could determine the level of difficulty of the materials. For example, if students need to work on climate change vocabulary, a speech talking about climate would be sought.
- Level: FL learners' level will determine the difficulties and the challenges found in the FL audiovisual text they will work with. Therefore, the materials used should be

suitable for the learners' levels and needs. Nevertheless, when respeaking, a low level of difficulty is recommended. Despite their good command and their good listening skills, this is not a listening exam, but rather a respeaking activity, so students have to listen and speak at the same time. Thus, with users new to respeaking, slow speech would be advised so as to not to cause frustration on students.

- Use: When interpreting, consecutive and simultaneous modalities have to be distinguished. Having seen respeaking and its similarities to simultaneous interpreting, the use of discourses meant for simultaneous interpreting training might be considered to be most suitable for FL learners. Nevertheless, consecutive speeches could also be selected, for their pace tends to be slower and easier for students to work with. In any case, before engaging in any intralingual respeaking practice, a module on dictation and software management may be helpful to reduce recognition mistakes (Dawson & Romero-Fresco, 2021).

Spaces and platforms like *Speech Repository* from the Directorate-General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation, 2023) could be a useful e-learning tool, since it classifies its materials according to different criteria, such as language, speaker, domain, level and use, as reflected in Figure 1.

The screenshot shows the 'Speech Repository' website. At the top, there's a dark blue header with the site name. Below it is a navigation menu with links for 'Search Speeches', 'About', 'Tutorial', 'SCICRec', 'My notifications', and 'FAQ'. A notification bar below the header suggests visiting the 'Knowledge Centre on Interpretation'. Below that is a 'Welcome to Speech Repository' banner with a yellow 'EU Log in' button. The main section is titled 'Find a speech' and features a search form with several filters: Search (Keyword or speech number), Collection (- Any -), Speaker (- Any -), Language (- Any -), Domain (- Any -), Level (- Any -), Use (- Any -), and Type (- Any -). A 'Refine results' button is located at the bottom right of the search form.

**Figure 1.** *Speech Repository* platform (DG Interpretation, 2023)

This paper focuses on intralingual respeaking, i.e., subtitles written in the same language as the AV product (Lertola, 2015), which are those targeted to the deaf and hard-of-hearing, language learners and those who cannot access the audio of a programme for whatever reason. Considering respeaking as a pedagogical tool, the use of intralingual subtitles is required since FL learners do not have the interpreting skills to be able to translate from the spoken speech in a second language (L2) into a written first language (L1) text. Working on the intralingual combination, students get familiar with the phonetics in L2 to try to repeat them and acquire them when respeaking.

### 3. Methodological proposal: examples of respeaking tasks

In the present proposal, each task presents a two-minute video extracted from a video from Speech Repository, selected according to the FL learners' level. In this case, the following exercises (devised for C1) are expected to last 60 minutes and be undertaken weekly. The structure proposed by Talaván & Lertola (2022) is used for this sequence as follows:

- Warm-up phase: students will anticipate video content, the vocabulary present, the structures, and the possible cultural information. This might include a reception or a production task. In respeaking, a reception task is recommended so students will find it easier to identify vocabulary through the speech. This phase should take 10 minutes.
- Viewing the video: the video is watched and accompanied by related tasks so that students can get to know the linguistic content. This phase should take from 5 to 10 minutes.
- Didactic respeaking: learners get to work on the video itself on their own or in pairs. When in pairs, one student has the role of the respeaker, i.e., they will hear the material through headphones and repeat the discourse or segments of it and afterwards the second student plays the role of the proofreader, i.e., they read the text created to be broadcast. Depending on the FL level, a supporting written text can be given to the respeakers, so that they can just fill in the gaps while listening to the text and ask the proofreader to see if the sentence is grammatically correct or if the words suit the context; alternatively, the respeaker could be expected to deliver the full speech and ask the proofreader to check for coherence, spelling mistakes and readability of the text. When working on their own, the student can act as the respeaker and the proofreader at the same time: they start with the role of respeaker, repeating parts or the full speech for the software to transcribe and, once finished, reread the full text to check for possible mistakes. They can also repeat the entire procedure if certain words or parts of the texts are missing. This activity should take around 30 minutes.
- Post-respeaking task: students do related-production tasks to practice some elements found in the video. This final phase should take the last 10–15 minutes of an hour-long lesson.

The outcomes of the lesson plan would be:

- To practice reception (listening and reading) and production skills (speaking and writing).
- To enhance motivation.
- To introduce respeaking as a pedagogical tool.
- To promote teamwork in the L2 context.
- To develop accessibility awareness, and audiovisual communication, which are both key in a digital society where technologies are the norm.

These goals are achieved since students play an active role (either as respeakers or proofreaders or both) which could be changed according to the needs and to the lesson, i.e., students can change roles in different lessons or reinforce their weakness by having specific practice in the abilities involved in each role. In this activity (when performed in pairs), one of the students (the respeaker) hears the original speech through headphones and repeats the word, the whole text or the words that might be missing in the given text (if needed due to the level of the FL learners) out loud, whereas the other (the proofreader) checks for possible mistakes and coherence in the entire document. A possibility of individual work could be also appropriate when wanting to reinforce more CEFR skills in less time, since students respeak what they hear (listening and speaking) and proofread the aforementioned result (reading and writing).

In addition, a warm-up phase, video-viewing phase and post-respeaking phase encourage the abilities sought in the main respeaking activity.

As an example of a respeaking task, a sample of a C1-level video that aims to introduce learners to the practice of respeaking is provided below. In this preparatory task, students are required to fill the gaps in a document while watching a video from the Speech Repository. In this case, the video is titled *A dog is good for you!* and lasts for 2 minutes 45 seconds. In the video, a speaker makes a speech about the effects dogs have on our health, as seen in Figure 2.

### A dog is good for you!

public

European Commission

**Place:** Brussels

**Date:** 18/01/2012 - 00:00

**Description:** Effect of pets on your health



**Speech Details**

Language: (en) English

Speech number: 24154

Duration: 02:46

Level: Basic

**Figure 2.** Video used for the respeaking lesson plan (source: *Speech Repository*)

The main characteristics of the chosen video are:

- Language: English with no dialecticisms or a strong accent.
- Speaker: Interpreter for the European Commission, without an idiolect and with a slow pace in her speech.
- Domain: Animals and health, a well-known topic for C1 level students.
- Level: As previously mentioned, a low level of difficulty would be suitable for new users in respeaking. In this case, an easy topic together with simpler language would be advisable.
- Use: This speech is meant for consecutive interpreting.

Two different exercises will be carried out in the warm-up phase. To help FL students with the role of respeakers to get familiar with the speech they will respeak shortly after, their warm-up activity will be a gap-fill activity of the same speech so that they familiarise themselves with the words and their correct pronunciation. Meanwhile, an activity for the proofreaders will be to receive the transcription of the speech from the teacher and identify any spelling mistakes. The main goal will be to help them spot the vocabulary present in the text to train them for their proofreader role afterwards. After that, the activity will be commonly reviewed with all the students, so every student benefits from the pronunciation and spelling of the words that

will be worked on in the respeaking task. In addition, the video is watched all together to learn about the difficulties found in the speech.

After the warm-up activity and watching the video together, the two halves of the class get together and the students work in pairs as respeakers and proofreaders with the exact same speech. To do so, one of the students listens to the original speech again with headphones (through a tablet or a computer with SR software installed, for instance) and respeaks the speech with the software transcribing it; in the meantime, the proofreader checks the transcription is correct, repeating the warm-up activity.

To make this task easier for students to get them started with respeaking and the software, they will be asked to respeak the missing parts of the aforementioned speech. Before that, in the warm-up phase, educators can emphasise specific vocabulary, grammar and difficult hearing parts of the speech with them (in Figure 3 in yellow) and ask them to complete the missing words of parts of the original text (written in bold). The emphasised words found in the original speech are underlined in blue:

**Ladies and gentlemen**, my name is Helen Campbell, formerly of DG interpretation of the European Commission, and I'm going to talk to you today about pets and **the effect of pets on your health**. Now, I'm British, and **as you probably know**, most British people love animals, and most have pets as well. **Usually it'll be a dog or a cat**, but there's also now a fashion for pythons. Many people are buying pythons as pets. Well, **whatever the pet might be**, we all know that it's comforting when you come home, for example, **your dog is waiting for you**, and it's good for you to take the dog for a walk. **People generally are happy to have these pets**, but in fact, **it goes a little further than that**, because there have been some studies carried out recently that show that owning a pet actually has a very **positive effect** on your health. People who own pets **tend to suffer less than others from headaches, migraines, back pain, or depression**. They feel generally healthier, and they feel fitter for owning that pet, of course, especially if it's a dog, because as I remember when I was younger, **we had a wonderful dog whom I loved very much**, but he had to be taken for two very long walks every day. Now, you take a dog for a long walk twice a day, **maybe for half an hour**, and you are probably going to be fairly fit. **So by and large, owning a pet is going to be good for you**. Some people will say yes, but it's quite expensive, in fact. **Yes, it is**. It costs quite a lot to feed our very large dog, and that's true. That is perhaps the downside. The other thing is, and this is certainly in my own case **I travel an awful lot** and I live in a flat. And so it would be terribly unfair of me to buy a dog because **I would never be around enough** and I would have to **rely on** lots of friends to take the poor dog for a walk and to feed it. **I can assure you**, however, that one of these days when I do calm down and stop traveling so much, **that will be one of my first thoughts**. I think that I can see myself with a very pleasant cocker spaniel as a companion, and I shall take the cocker spaniel for long walks. **Pets certainly are a good therapy and a great pleasure to have**. Thank you.

**Figure 3.** Exercise of the speech *A dog is good for you!* used for the respeaking lesson plan (source: author)

To wrap up the session, a writing assessment related to the speech topic will be asked for to put the vocabulary found in the speech into practice. In this case, the writing assignment could be an essay answering the question: *Do animals improve our mental health?* For students to have sufficient sessions to adapt to the SR software and the practice of didactic respeaking, the following structure and timing has been devised to introduce students to respeaking; they are offered different practice sessions, and after six sessions they are assessed taking into account the evolution of the previous lesson plans (see Table 1):

Structure	Didactic respeaking	Timing
Introduction	Getting to know the software.	Three sessions (60 minutes per session)
	Lesson plan structure: Filling the gaps in the provided text by listening to speeches through the software.	
Practice	Lesson plan structure: proofreading the given texts by listening to the speeches.	Three sessions (60 minutes per session)
	Lesson plan structure and working alone: respeaking and proofreading a speech for the first time.	
	Lesson plan structure and working in pairs: active roles and taking turns between a respeaker and a proofreader.	
Assessment	Lesson plan structure and practice time: switching roles and introducing subtitling norms.	Two sessions (60 minutes per session)
	Individual respeaking task and per pairs respeaking task submission of two different videos.	

**Table 1.** Didactic sequence structure (based on the proposal of Talaván & Lertola, 2022, p. 30)

Undoubtedly, introductory sessions to the software are essential to accomplish the aforementioned lesson plan; an introduction to the respeaking software should be key in the first session, as well as complementary sessions to provide technical support (if needed) and previous practice with different videos. Training courses also incorporate dictation practice – i.e., dictating into the software, without listening to anything, to see what recognition is like and the limitations of the software. Another step could also be to respeak without the software – i.e., doing everything (listening, speaking, punctuation, intonation, etc.) without the software being active, simply to focus on fluency. The next step would be to repeat the same task with the software to see what gets actually recognised.

If students have a respeaking lesson per week as the main lesson plan or even as a complement to the regular lesson plan, it can be inferred that this proposal will take two months to complete the whole respeaking in the FL classroom plan, in which the role of the student is expected to be constantly active. Furthermore, to practice respeaking long-term in the FL classroom, more respeaking lesson plans could be used following the above didactic sequence structure and making a final assignment with respeaking as the task to be submitted. Undoubtedly, it is important to note that the search criteria should be adapted to the preferred FL, the learners' needs and the lesson plan applied in the classroom.

#### 4. Subtitling norms in the FL classroom

Subtitling is a popular AVT mode and has been investigated, both at theoretical and practical levels, by scholars and experts in the field (Gottlieb, 1992; Díaz-Cintas, 2004; Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). In this context, since in respeaking students must already focus on the delivery of the speech as well as on the proofreading, the quality of the resulting subtitles can be studied in another activity with subtitling as an AVT pedagogical tool in the FL classroom. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to introduce basic good subtitling practices into lessons to let students know the importance of high-quality subtitles for users, especially in terms of accessibility.

Having said this, a handout of the Code of good subtitling practice as a checklist containing this information for the proofreader can be useful to give students some reference when it comes to the quality of subtitles. Lertola (2015) proposed an adaptation of the Ivarsson and Carroll

“Code of Good Subtitling Practice” (1998), which could be a good complement to introducing learners to good practices to ensure subtitling quality, as seen in Figure 4.

**Code of Good Subtitling Practice**

- **Translation quality** must be high with due consideration of all idiomatic and cultural nuances;
- The **language register** must be **appropriate** and correspond with the spoken text;
- **Subtitle text** must be distributed on a max of 2 lines in **sense blocks and/or grammatical units**.  
Ex. Never split the subject from the verb or the article from the name, etc.;
- **Each subtitle** must be **meaningful and self-contained**;
- There must be a close correlation between **film dialogue and subtitle**: source oral language and target written language should be **synchronised** as far as possible;

- When it is necessary **condense the dialogue**;
- **Obvious repetition** of names and common comprehensible phrases can be **omitted**.  
Ex. You can omit references to people or objects clearly visible on the screen (people's names, personal pronouns, exclamation, etc.);
- Subtitles should stay on the screen for a minimum of **one second** to a maximum of **seven seconds**;
- The language should be **grammatically correct** and make use of **punctuation**;

Punctuation	When to use it
?!/	Question/Surprise
.	When subtitles are finished
...	Pause in speech; an unfinished thought; at the end of a sentence
" "	Quotation; ironic use of words and sentences; name of magazines, movies titles, etc.
Numbers	In words: 0-9 In numbers: from 10 on
UPPER CASE	Names; titles (Mr, Ms, etc.)

- Two-person dialogue in one subtitle should be indicated by a **dash** at the beginning of each line (no space after the dash).  
-How are you?  
-Fine, thanks.
- Using *Italics* when we hear the speaker but we don't see him/her on the screen or when subtitling a songs.
- Songs might be subtitled where relevant.

**Figure 4.** Subtitling norms for language learners adapted from the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, retrieved from Lertola, 2015, pp. 255–256).

Considering the different scholars who have dived into subtitling in the FL classroom (Lertola, 2015; Agulló & Matamala, 2019; Talaván, 2019), a complementary activity could be to analyse the content created and adapt it to subtitles following the aforementioned norms in Figure 4. This would lead to having two different AVT plans that complement each other and help train different FL abilities: the first more focused on listening and speaking skills, and the second focused on reading and writing skills; one relating more to live delivery and the other to pre-recorded content, which could be an interesting exploration for learners in itself. Coherence and meaningfulness are key, especially in terms of delivering a message from an oral source into a written text.

## 5. Respeaking assessment

In terms of assessing respeaking, a series of competences need to be assessed when it comes to professional respeakers. According to Arumí Ribas and Romero Fresco (2008, pp. 114–116), respeaking skills before and during the process focus on software-related skills (how SR software works and its preparation), production skills (accurate grammar and spelling) and multitasking skills (ability to speak while listening).

As previously mentioned, considering respeaking is being introduced in the FL classroom and not in the AVT classroom, adaptations to this taxonomy should be made to give an assessment rubric. The following sections examine how to properly assess the two roles of the proposed lesson plan: that of the respeaker (i.e., the shadowing assessment) and the proofreader (the subtitling assessment).

### 5.1. Shadowing and intralingual subtitling practice

To test the level of proficiency in oral production, with which learners start and check their improvement after working on the respeaking tasks, two speaking tests should be designed. Based on the design of the study by Talaván & Costal (2017), one would be focused on pronunciation and the other on fluency. The former looks to students trying to sound as natural as possible for the software, emulating the original video so the respeaking software can recognise what they are saying. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the SR software should be trained with every student so the foreign accent will be recognised even though they are not speaking as a native speaker but rather interacting with a software with a plain voice. When assessing fluency, the marking involves paying attention to the ability of listening and speaking at the same time, as well as to the ability to build proper sentences that work and make sense in the FL.

Professional respeakers' skills should be considered in terms of competences related to shadowing (Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco, 2008, p. 114). These include preparation skills, fostering of research capacity, ability to develop subject matter glossaries and databases, familiarity with terminology in specialised fields, compliance with the Code of Ethics, strategic skills, ability to work as part of a team.

Therefore, the following goals will be the focus on these competencies (Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco, 2008, found in Belenguier Cortés, in press):

- Knowing how to train the software for optimum performance.
- Acquiring the ability to speak while listening.
- Overcoming the stress caused by a live situation.
- Expressing thoughts lively and concisely.
- Dictating short tranches of text at a higher-than-average speed.
- Dictating with a flat and clear pronunciation.

Hence, if students can use the SR and speak while listening, they enhance phonetics, pronunciation and fluency, which translates into being understood and improving the flow of the speech and the oral "middle text" itself. Therefore, Table 2 focuses on assessing accuracy, synchrony, pronunciation and intonation.

Assessment	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	Target (2)	Above Target (3)
<b>Accuracy:</b> The voice recordings are grammatically correct.				
<b>Synchrony:</b> There is synchrony between the delivered speech and the respeaking.				
<b>Pronunciation:</b> Words are pronounced correctly.				
<b>Intonation:</b> Intonation is clear.				

**Table 2.** Assessment rubric for the FL respeaker (retrieved and adapted from Castañeda & Rodríguez González, 2011; Talaván & Costal, 2017)

To distinguish the competencies of the respeaker and the proofreader when assessing them, a recording of the respeaker’s speech should be made to compare the speech delivered and the final text which can be (or not) corrected by the proofreader. In terms of assessing the complete task, educators could ask students to use the resulting text to turn it into subtitles, which could be done either with a template (which means students would only have to pay attention to the subtitling rules in terms of segmentation, condensation, and other subtitling norms) or, if they have previously worked with subtitling software, produce subtitles from scratch using the created “middle text”. As previously mentioned, this paper focuses on the first part of the activity, which is respeaking, but this proposal could be easily turned into a long-term lesson plan that could boost and unify skills previously worked in the FL classroom.

## 5.2. Proofreading and subtitling assessment

When it comes to assessing the part of the proofreader (i.e., a different student who did not respeak the text), two approaches could be used:

- Assessing the resulting text and the corrections made by the proofreader.
- Assessing the resulting intralingual subtitles coming from the resulting respoken text.

For the former, i.e., assessing the resulting proofread “middle text”, attention should be paid to the possible changes the proofreader might (or not) have made. In that scenario, educators can pay attention to the final linguistic result since the message delivery will be the priority when respeaking and proofreading. In that case, an overview of linguistic aspects should be taken into account: in this proposal, an assessment of spelling, units of meaning, syntax, cohesion, punctuation and grammar should be made, as exemplified in Table 3.

Task assessment (0-5 per item, from no evidence to excellent)	
Item	Description
Spelling	There are no misspellings or homophones in the text.
Units of meaning	The text contains units of meaning that reflect the original oral message.
Syntax	There are no syntactic mistakes in the text.
Cohesion	The text is coherent.
Punctuation	The text is well written and with proper punctuation marks. Additions made by the proofreader are coherent.
Grammar	The text is grammatically correct.
<b>Total points (out of 30)</b>	

**Table 3.** Assessment rubric for the final text (retrieved and adapted from Castañeda & Rodríguez González, 2011, p. 499)

When assessing a final subtitling task, a different rubric should be followed and applied. Here, aspects like condensation and segmentation would be key. A rubric that includes these aspects could be applied, like the one proposed by Castañeda & Rodríguez González (2011). Nevertheless, the potential use of a template – example shown as Table 4 – should be considered since using a template would leave synchrony out of the assessment.

Task assessment (0-5 per item, from no evidence to excellent)	
Item	Description
General linguistic accuracy	The subtitles are grammatically correct (spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax).
Description of sounds – accuracy	Acoustic nonverbal information is conveyed in the subtitles in a grammatically correct way.
Description of sounds – coverage	Correct choice of acoustic nonverbal information is included in the subtitles.
Condensation	Subtitles allow the audience to have enough time to read them without missing visual information (i.e., avoiding too much text in the subtitle).
Segmentation	The text in the subtitle is correctly segmented (e.g., there is no break between a determiner and the noun it accompanies in two subtitles nor in two lines).
<b>Total points (out of 30)</b>	

**Table 4.** Assessment rubric for subtitles (retrieved and adapted from Castañeda & Rodríguez González, 2011, p. 499)

Both rubrics could be combined and used in didactic respeaking. Nevertheless, both will require further validation through piloting to offer the possibility of being replicated.

## 6. Conclusions

The above tasks, together with the methodological proposal, will be piloted with B1–B2 levels in the FL classroom with students of French as a FL in higher education. Therefore, materials will be created, and the previous assessment will be used in an experimental study to seek the necessary evidence to test the benefits of respeaking as a pedagogical tool.

Accessibility can provide the inclusion we seek as students get to know a different way of learning, since learners are not only introduced to this modality, but also understand the importance and the challenges found when making content accessible. The current proposal seeks to follow previous methodologies of national and international projects such as LeViS (Romero et al., 2011), Babelium (Pereira Varela, 2014), ClipFlair (Sokoli, 2018), PluriTAV (Martínez-Sierra, 2018) or the TRADILEX project (Talaván & Lertola, 2022) and introduce didactic respeaking, a pedagogical tool for FL learners that, to the author's knowledge, will be used for the first time.

In the future, respeaking could be applied to other contexts to test its benefits and within other methodologies, whether in intralingual or interlingual contexts, concentrating on specific CEFR skills (Runnels, 2021) or using different SR software. The goal is to make accessibility present in the reality of FL students, which is imperative to enhance equality of opportunities as well as audiovisual communication, a key aspect in a digital society. The tasks presented in this FL learning proposal seek to ensure the practice of production (i.e., speaking and writing) and reception (reading and listening). These tasks should therefore pursue the CEFR skills among the knowledge of FL learners and the importance of the respeaking role in accessibility while helping students enhance their digital competences.

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## Literary translator training through audiovisual adaptation of children's albums

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### **Abstract**

The present paper delves into a didactic experiment conducted within the context of a literary translation course focused on French-to-Spanish translation. The primary objectives of this project were twofold. Firstly, it aimed to translate a specific literary genre, namely children's albums, with a keen focus on linguistic and cultural nuances. Subsequently, the translated content was adapted into a videobook format, enriching the learning experience. Moreover, the experiment extended to the realm of audiovisual translation as a French short film, derived from the same literary source, was subtitled into Spanish. The paper meticulously elucidates the characteristics of these diverse products, delves into the intricacies of the translation briefs, and expounds upon the methods and materials employed throughout the experiment. The paper culminates with a comparative analysis of the source texts and their Spanish translation solutions, highlighting the pedagogical benefits derived from translating multimodal literary products. This multifaceted approach not only hones bilingual language skills, both passive and active but also fosters cultural and digital literacy among students.

### **Keywords**

Audiovisual translation, captioning, children's album, literary translation, videobook

## 1. Introduction

Electronic media have significantly transformed literature. The traditional conception of the published written text has given way to a digital literature that has implicated itself in the global media landscape. New technologies offer the consumer multiple avenues for approaching literature. The world of fiction can now be accessed with daily-use devices such as mobile phones, tablets and e-readers, among others. These tools are used frequently by children who begin at an early age to acquire what Ulmer (2002) calls *electracy*, or the ability to navigate digital media. This ability develops when actively participating in story creation, as a result of interactive formats, where sound effects, images, music, and text converge. The publishing sector, conscious that children are future literary consumers, is making great efforts to create illustrated textual products, interactive albums, audio stories, videobooks, etc., targeting ages 0 to 12. These products are on the rise nationally and internationally<sup>1</sup>. In light of this increase in public interest and demand, for this project, these formats have been established as appropriate for training future literary translators. Transversal pedagogical methodologies (acquisition of translation skills, analysis of literary text, learning foreign language and culture, use of video creation and editing tools, as well as software for subtitling short films) have been applied as they prepare students to successfully manage the transformation that narrative discourse undergoes during adaptation to these new media and forms of expression. This project then combines the various results of a didactic experiment which has allowed us to extract an essential resource from the literary translation class: the illustrated children's album. This text type is particularly versatile because of its multimodal format, thematic pervasiveness, and adaptability to all ages.

The illustrated album is a literary genre whose narrative mode relies on the interdependency of text and image. While a traditional story is limited to the description of characters and settings, the illustrated album uses images to communicate a constructed sequential narrative storyline to the reader (Durán Armengol, 2005, p. 242). The storyline must achieve an integral rendering of the spaces, atmospheres, character personalities, and outline the sequence of events. As such, undertaking the translation of an illustrated album requires consideration of not only the interaction between words and images in the unfolding of events but also the pervasive rhetorical mechanisms and the linguistic richness of the genre. Such elements are achieved by combining stereotypical constructions from traditional storytelling and symbolic vocabulary with an amalgam of expressions such as babbling, onomatopoeia, rhyme, invented words, etc., many of which engender a significant cultural load.

The children's album chosen for this interlingual translation commission was *La petite casserole d'Anatole* (2009) by Isabelle Carrier. Students were tasked with adapting it for audiovisual media and presenting the result as a videobook. Given that this album was adapted for a short film by Eric Montchaud (2014), a linguistic analysis of this film and its subsequent subtitling into Spanish with Aegisub (an open-source, cross-platform tool for creating and editing subtitles) were carried out too. Finally, the results of the pragmatic linguistic adaptations of the same source text for different digital platforms were compared alongside the translations produced by the students.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Informe sobre el sector editorial español. Año 2020* [Report on the Spanish publishing sector, 2020] (Federación de Gremios de Editores de España (2022)), from the Federation of Spanish Publishers' Guilds, 52.6% of readers read in paper format (paperback), and 18.1% in digital format. In addition, the number of audiobook users has doubled in the past four years (2.4% in 2018 → 5.2% in 2021). At the international level, the results published by the Audiobook Publishers Association (APA) are worth noting: in 2021 they published 74,000 audiobooks, which represents a 25% increase in revenue (1.6bn USD) (e-Audio Productions, June 20, 2022).

The study begins by outlining its objectives and methodology. The second part delves into the comparative analysis of the children's book and its short film adaptation, covering paratextual, discursive, and linguistic elements. Additionally, it compares student translations and adaptations to the interlingual subtitled version of the short film. The study concludes by objectively assessing the data from each phase. The results show that the translation and adaptation of illustrated children's books into new audiovisual formats enhances students' competencies and readies them for the job market.

## 2. Objectives and methodology

This translation project had two main goals: to perform an interlingual translation of the album's content and then create a videobook with voiced translations enhanced by sound effects. This approach integrates linguistic and visual elements, making the translation more engaging. The result is a multimedia product for children aged 3 to 6, designed to captivate and stimulate their emotional and cognitive growth. By using audiovisual platforms, I aimed to introduce modern digital strategies from the publishing industry into the classroom for added adaptability and versatility.

To this end, the application of a transverse methodological design that would combine skills, strategies, concepts, and contexts, and also join together two learning models, the procedural and the conceptual models (Zabala, 2000), was prioritised. With the procedural model, students would acquire organisational and design skills, and develop problem-solving strategies by adapting the new format to the target recipient. With the conceptual model, students would acquire conceptual knowledge by document analysis and study of the literary genre. This allows them to examine their experience with children's narratives and discover a potential career path for future research.

Furthermore, this experience, beyond its innovative aspect, combines the task of published text translation with working on the short film version, based on the same album, directed by Eric Montchaud in 2014. This new product led us to pose questions around the relationship between the children's printed literary text, or hypotext (Genette, 1989), and its adaptation to a short film, or hypertext. These questions addressed the differences and similarities between both products (i.e., what is retained, what is altered, what is omitted and what is added in the hypertext), and finally how the hypertext affects the text's transformation in translation. To respond to these questions, a linguistic analysis of the video and its Spanish subtitles was carried out using Aegisub. This analysis was then compared with the results of linguistic-pragmatic adaptations of the same text to two different digital platforms, as well as their respective translations into Spanish.

In the design of this project, I posit that an integrated and transversal methodology positively impacts student learning, as a result of the combination of relevant disciplines such as translation, linguistics, new technologies, and language learning. The didactic success that this synergy affords is easily verifiable in multiple studies published around the symbiosis of audiovisual translation (AVT) and didactics in the L2, which produced a versatile, innovative discipline known as didactic audiovisual translation (DAT). Researchers of DAT have shown that audiovisual translation, and specifically subtitling, enable the development of linguistic skills, both written and spoken (Alabsi, 2020; Metruk, 2018; Talaván, 2013), comprehension abilities, foreign language training (Ávila-Cabrera, 2018, 2021; Talaván et al., 2017; Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2014), and vocabulary acquisition (Elsherbiny, 2021; Fievez et al., 2020; Sinyashina, 2020). Beyond its efficiency for L2 learning, it is also optimal for audiovisual translator training (Bolaños García-Escribano et al., 2021; Ogea Pozo, 2020) and, as this project demonstrates, for literary translators. In fact, this pedagogical offering states as its manifesto that multimodal

translation has great potential to promote the acquisition of translator competence. This is because it incorporates bilingual competence (comprehension and written/verbal expression in two languages), cultural competence (contextualisation of translation in the target culture), instrumental competence (documentation, video editing tools) and professional skills (adapting the product according to the company's brief).

Ultimately, the confluence of sound, images, and text prompts students to think and create a high-quality target text in their native language. This process involves moving away from literal translation, avoiding calque errors, and adjusting to the communicative world of the translation's recipient.

### 3. Analysis and results

The two different formats of the same children's literary product are a paper copy of an illustrated children's album and its film adaptation. The former is the illustrated album *La petite casserole d'Anatole* by Isabelle Carrier, published in 2009 by Biboquet-Valbert, in the *Les Trésors Biboquet* collection. This 40-page album is only 334 words long and was selected for this project with students of literary translation (French-Spanish) from the degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Córdoba, Spain. Students carried out a commission that consisted of the translation of said text into Spanish and its subsequent adaptation to a videobook. This adaptation should reproduce the translation, both spoken and acted, in the style of a fairy tale, of the narrated storyline and with sound effects of the linguistic elements captured by the album's paratext. Framing this translation writing as a professional contract, students had to pretend that the publisher Penguin Random House<sup>2</sup> had requested this project, for *Alfaguara Clásicos*, under the section of children's audiobooks, which includes audiobooks aimed at a wide audience of children. The time allowed for completion was two weeks starting from the setting of the text and the translation brief in class. Delivery of the videobook was to be accompanied with the associated invoice.

The second format is audiovisual. The short film in question was produced in French by Eric Montchaud in 2014, based on this album, and produced by the Belgian cinematographer JPL Film. The short, 00:05:29 minutes long, contains one *off-voice*: an omniscient narrator who describes the actions of the protagonist and the reactions and feelings of the characters. The task relating to this product was an interlingual subtitling (French into Spanish) of the *off-voice*. The resulting subtitles were contrasted with the published paper translation adapted from the children's album that the students produced.

These texts were chosen for linguistic, semantic, and functional reasons. They address sociocultural aspects like inclusion, diversity, and plurality as the central theme. The album explores Anatole's emotions, symbolizing his disability with a saucepan he carries, which complicates his life and leads to rejection, making him feel judged and isolated. The readers follow Anatole on his journey toward emancipation. Moreover, the lexical-linguistic simplicity of this text makes this the logical first choice for a student literary translation task, as its syntactic structure and general lexicon make it easier to understand and to translate into a second language. This allows for a full translation of the entire work, rather than just an excerpt, as is often the case with the translation of other literary works that are much more extensive.

In class, students read the album and discussed its plot, potential comprehension challenges, and the symbolism of the saucepan. Subsequently, students analysed the narrative construction

<sup>2</sup> According to their website, Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial is the Spanish language division of the international publishing company Penguin Random House. They publish roughly 1,800 titles per year and offer titles from over 8,500 authors across 51 publishing groups (Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, n.d.).

of the story's progression, spaces, decoration, or characters and their relationships with others. Finally, they produced a semantic-cultural interpretation.

On a second reading, students attended to the album's linguistic and paratextual peculiarities, paying particular attention to cultural elements and reproduction of sounds that accompanied the images. These elements, collected in the *pre-translation phase* of this project, had to be adapted to a children's target audience. To that effect, it must not be taxing on the reading level of the recipient, given that the videobook format facilitates access to the album's contents to any age group or linguistic competence. Regarding adaptation for the multimodal format, students were free to use computer-assisted tools, enabling them to leverage their digital skills and impart additional creative value to the project. As a suggestion, and assuming that students know the presentation creation software PowerPoint, the project was exported to an .mp4 video file. Nonetheless, it was suggested that students should use free, easy-to-download video editing software such as Clideo or Canva, or free trial versions of certain paid tools like Camtasia or Filmora, ignoring the fact that the resulting videos would carry watermarks from the respective companies.

To compare student videobook translations with French-to-Spanish interlingual subtitles for the short film, the multimedia elements (dynamic spaces, non-verbal cues, sound effects, rhythm, etc.) were analysed and translated. The Spanish subtitles were then added using Aegisub. In this case, subtitling was carried out for the hearing people since our aim was to enable comprehension of the story and develop reading proficiency of the assumed target audience, i.e., children. Interlingual subtitling, as defined by Díaz-Cintas (2012, p. 99) and as found in this film where the audio is reproduced in the L2 and the written message appears on-screen in L1, brings multiple didactic benefits, and enables establishing connections between L1 and L2, acquiring comprehension and expression skills in both languages, reflecting about connections and respective cultures, and developing conscious and independent learning styles.

To create the subtitles, linguistic and pragmatic parameters were followed, that is, the language and expression (morphology, syntax, and lexis) of the original text were carefully analysed to ensure that the translation is suitable for the target audience. I aimed to adapt the translation to align with the purpose and function of the text within Spanish culture. The subtitles are displayed simultaneously at the moment of projection with the locution of the *off-voice*. In subtitling, the significance of functional aspects was recognised, and thus, I specifically focused on parameters that involve time and space restrictions. Additionally, the interdependencies with the image, audio, and textual content when working on the subordinated translation (Mayoral Asensio, 1997) were closely considered. These aspects had to be borne in mind in the early phase of subtitling, and then throughout the process of subtitle creation, as we will see in the following sections of this study.

In the early phase, the sound effects, the suprasegmental elements (expression of emotions recreated by verbal and non-verbal communication), the contextual information (sounds, noises, music) and the speed of oral discourse were considered. Subsequently, I characterise the creation of the subtitles following these considerations (Díaz-Cintas, 2012): spatial (location in the lower part of the screen, subtitle fewer than 42 characters, coherent segmentation of the content, timed or synchronically adjusted to the in and out times of subtitles), temporal (duration of three seconds for one line of subtitles and six for two lines), orthotypographical (Spanish orthographical conventions for capitalisation of the titles and indicators), and linguistic (natural adaptation and equivalent reformulation of the original message using the fewest number of characters). From a didactic point of view, the need to condense the message activates cognitive and metalinguistic mechanisms. These mechanisms encourage reflection around complex linguistic aspects, which in turn stimulate foreign language learning, and thus translation learning.

The following section presents the study design and its results regarding the pretranslation phase. Then, the translation phase describes the potential pitfalls of both texts, the translation techniques and procedures applied to resolve them, and the adaptation of the formats.

### 3.1. Pretranslation and translation phases: Comparative analysis results

As expected, some differences have been found in the linguistic content between the album and the video text. Certain descriptions of actions or points of view that appear explicitly in the written text are suggested via moving images and sound effects (noises or music) in the short film. The paratextual elements, constructed with characteristics of prefabricated orality (Brumme, 2008, p. 7) specific to children's discourse are considered first.

The first paratextual utterance analysed was the album's title. This relies on the homophony *casserole-Anatole*, a wordplay that facilitates memorisation, and the diminutive *petite*, which softens the relevance of the disability. A review of the students' suggestions and the translation chosen for its brevity is included in Table 1:

French segment	Student album solutions	Short film solutions
<i>La petite casserole d'Anatole</i> [Anatole's Little Saucepan]	El cacito de Pablito El cacito de Agapito, etc.	00:00:14,020 --> 00:00:16,420 El cacito de Carlitos

**Table 1.** Translation solutions of the album title (source: author)

Most students opted for diminutives and cultural adaptations of the proper noun. For the short film, cultural reformulation was used, but the name *Carlitos* was chosen. This anthroponym allowed us to create an alliteration with the /k/ sound and maintain the three-syllable construction of the original in both nouns. The proposed name *Agapito* is interesting since it recreates the beginning of the French name. However, it is not currently a common name in Spanish, and it is four syllables long.

Regarding the format adaptation, the modification of the album established a chromatic parallelism between the initials and the endings of the drawn words *casserole* and *Anatole*. This parallelism can be seen both in the script type and the colour. Both details have been retained in the translated adaptations, which also incorporate the author's name and the commissioned Spanish publisher. Consider the example in Figure 1:



**Figure 1.** Original album cover, student translation example and screenshot of the title of the short and subtitle (source: Carrier, 2009, and Montchaud, 2014)

In the short film, there is a chromatic analogy created in the start of the noun *casseroles* and the graphical representation of the object. In the subtitle, capitals were used as required in subtitling norms. Table 2 captures some elements of prefabricated orality in both formats. The album tended to contain more variety than the short since the semiotic elements have replaced the linguistic ones. Nonetheless, the video also recreates, through images, the written expressions pronounced by characters and the phonetic reproduction of onomatopoeias:

Parameter	French album segment <sup>3</sup>	Student translation solutions	French short segment	Short film translation solutions
<b>Onomatopoeias</b>	<i>Crrr</i> (metallic sound of dragging the saucepan)	Crrr	<i>Crrr</i>	CRRR
	<i>Poc !</i> (bang)	¡Pum!	<i>Poc !</i>	PUM
	<i>Hi, hi !</i> (lady's laugh)	¡Ji, ji!		
	<i>Ouah ! Ouah !</i> (barks)	¡Guau! ¡Guau!	<i>Ouaf ! Ouaf !</i>	GUAU GUAU
	<i>Hop !</i> (jump)	¡Alehop!	<i>Toc ! Toc !</i>	TOC TOC
	<i>Poc ! Pic !</i> (ball game)	¡Poc! ¡Pic!	<i>Pic ! Poc !</i>	PIM PAM
<b>Proper and improper interjections</b>	<i>Aïe !</i> (pain)	¡Ay!	<i>Câlin !</i>	ABRAZO
	<i>Waouh !</i> (enthusiasm)	¡Yupi! ¡Yuju!	<i>Caca !</i>	CACA
	<i>Câlin !</i> [Hug!]	¡Abrazito!	<i>Aïe !</i>	¡AY!
	<i>Caca !</i> [Poopoo]	¡Abrazo fuerte!	<i>Merci !</i>	GRACIAS
	<i>Viens !</i> [Come on!]	¡Caca! ¡Tonto!		
	<i>J'arrive !</i> [I'm coming!]	¡Jolín!		
	<i>Comme il est chou !</i> [How cute!]	¡Ven!		
	<i>Que c'est beau !</i> [How pretty!]	¡Ya voy!		
	<i>Vas-y Anatole !</i> [Come on, Anatole!]	¡Qué mono!		
	<i>C'est vraiment intéressant !</i> [How interesting!]	¡Qué bonito!		
	<i>Pirouette, cacahouète !</i> (Well-known French children's song)	¡Venga Pablito!		
	<i>...joli coquelicot mesdames, joli coquelicot nouveau...</i> (Well-known French children's song)	¡Qué interesante!		
<b>Songs</b>		¡Soy una taaaza...!	Omission	∅
		¡Una teteera...!		
		¡La gallina turuleca...!		
		Susanita tiene un ratóóóón...		
		Cucú cantaba la rana...		

<sup>3</sup> The pages where the examples are located have not been included since the album is not paginated.

<b>Visual metaphors<sup>4</sup></b>	? (doubt, incomprehension) Musical notes	¿?	???	???
		Musical notes	Musical notes	Musical notes

**Table 2.** Translation solutions for prefabricated orality from the album and the short film (source: author)

The onomatopoeias in Table 2 appear in various formations. Some onomatopoeias are created not by human speech, but are produced by interaction between the human being and an object, such as *crrr* (metallic sound), *hop !* (jump), *poc !* (hit). A second type is made up of articulated forms of onomatopoeias with a distinct basis in the verbal action that they recreate: *Hi, hi !* (*rire, reír* [laugh]), *Ouah ! Ouah !* (*aboyer, ladrar* [bark/Woof!]) or *Poc ! Pic !* (*taper, golpear* [hit/Bang!]), whose phonic reproductions are based on a repetition of a conventional association to the action. The most used translation technique was a cultural equivalent, although transcription of the original onomatopoeia was also chosen (*Poc ! Pic!*). This last decision is assessed as incorrect given that it is representing the sound produced by a ball striking a bat in a game of ping-pong in a back-and-forth exchange, for which there is the Spanish equivalent *¡Ping! Pong!*.

Interjections are other exclamative or exhortative expressions reproduced as speech acts. The album contains proper interjections as human vocalisations such as *Aïe !* (pain), *Waouh !* (enthusiasm), and improper interjections constructed with nouns (*Caca !*), verbs (*Regarde !*, *Viens !*) or sentences (*J'arrive !*, *Comme il est chou !*). The translation techniques used were literal translation (for the verbal constructions *Regarde !*, *Viens !*, *Tiens !*) and adaptation using expressions with the same function (*Comment il est chou !*, *Waou !*, etc.). In the *Caca !* example both techniques are applied: the literal translation *¡Caca!* and the adaptation *¡Tonto! ¡Jolín!* [Dummy! Shoot!] is a solution that seems pertinent. For the translation of children's songs, cultural equivalents were chosen to achieve a text which will be familiar to the recipient / reader. Most students opted for classics from popular tradition, and the well-known songs such as *Los payasos de la tele*<sup>5</sup> or more current options such as the song *Soy una taza* from the EnCanto group (2008). Finally, for the graphical conventions of question marks and musical notes, categorised as *visual metaphors*, the techniques of symbol reproduction (musical notes) and orthotypographical adaptation of opened and closed question marks in Spanish were applied.

In the video, although the sound effects of the audiovisual format reproduce the sounds of people, animals, and objects, there are nonetheless some linguistic interjections and onomatopoeias. As with the album, the translation technique for both was cultural adaptation. That being said, in the subtitle, the principal text is differentiated from the paratextual element using capital letters. This strategy is used, for example, to include indicators of suprasegmental elements in subtitles for deaf and hard of hearing (SDH). However, even though the video recreates the visual metaphors, they have not been included in the subtitles given the universality of their meaning. Finally, the songs have been omitted in the short film. Figures 2, 3 and 4 include a presentation of examples of the adaptation of the paratextual elements to each of the formats.

<sup>4</sup> According to Aparici (1992, p. 44 (our translation)) "The visual metaphor is a graphical convention that expresses an idea via an image", but also via writing (signs of admiration or questioning), or of musical notation (music notes).

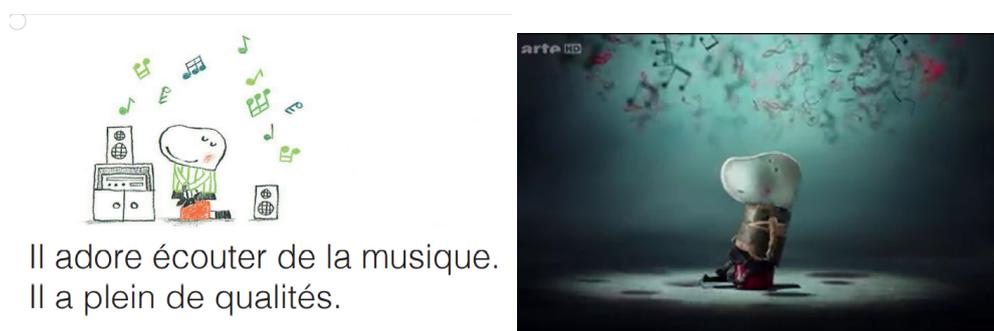
<sup>5</sup> A company of Spanish clowns trained for Gaby, Fofó, Miliki, and Fofito, who had great success in Spain with their television program *El gran circo de TVE*, airing between 1972 and 1981.



**Figure 2.** Onomatopoeia and interjection examples from the original album (source: Carrier, 2009 and Montchaud, 2014)



**Figure 3.** Example of children's song presentations in the original album and student translation solutions (source: Carrier, 2009)



**Figure 4.** Examples of visual metaphors in the original album and the video (source: Carrier, 2009, and Montchaud, 2014)

In examples from Figure 4, the musical notes symbolise the sound effects of a song. In the video, the graphical representation is reinforced with a melody and movement of the notes. Once the analysis of the paratext was concluded, the study of linguistic particularities that the story exhibits was considered. The narrative structure of this story is symmetrically divided into two

parts. In the first part, consisting of negative content, the physical and relational limitations of Anatole are portrayed. Their description progresses until the arrival at the dramatic climax (*il decide de se cacher [...] Les gens l'oublie* [He decides to hide [...] people forget about him] our translation). The second part, in a more positive tone, starts at the point of inflection that is marked by the adverb *Heureusement (par suite [luckily])*. Anatole meets a lady who shows him how to disentangle himself from his ladle and to overcome his physical obstacles, culminating with his independence and emancipation.

This expository symmetry articulates the syntactical structure. In this way, antithetical parallels (*les choses seront plus simples [Things will be simpler] / les choses ne sont pas aussi simples [Things are not so simple]; elle se coince un peu partout / elle ne se coince plus partout [It snags everywhere / It doesn't snag any more]*) were found, as well as alternation of negative expressions (*en colère, gênant, bizarre, inquiétant, peurs, impossible [Angry, annoyed, strange, unsettling, fears, impossible]*) and positive ones (*joyeux, affection, sensible, sens artistique, qualité, doué, etc. [Happy, affection, sensitive, artistic talent, quality, gifted]*).

The subjects are generic (*une personne extraordinaire, les autres, etc. [an extraordinary person, others, etc.]*), except for those that pertain to the protagonist. This resource imprints an atemporal, universal value upon the story. This value is reinforced with the use of the present tense, which lends it a lasting quality.

Actions in the form of verbs revert to Anatole, both as the subject (with reflexive verbs such as *se met en colère, se cache, etc. [gets angry, hides]*) or as a recipient (in passive, direct, and indirect structures such as *Il se fait gronder, elle lui est tombée dessus, et l'empêche d'avancer [he is scolded, it fell on him, and prevents him from moving forward]*). The order and progression of subsequent events are depicted by an abundance of temporal adverbs (*un jour, parfois, en plus, souvent, peu à peu [one day, sometimes, in addition, often, little by little]*); and the intensity of the action, with quantity-related adverbs (*beaucoup, très, plein de, terriblement [very, very, full of, terribly]*).

Although the album's story is about the difference between human beings, linguistically it is not represented explicitly, only stated that Anatole "He's not quite like the others" (*il n'est pas tout à fait comme les autres*). On the other hand, he has many qualities (*il a plein de qualités [he has many qualities]*), imperceptible by others, who only notice his disability. This argument is evidenced by the restrictive construction *ne...que (les gens ne voient que cette petite casserole [People only see this little flaw])* and comparative formulations (*comme les autres; plus d'efforts que les autres [like the others, more efforts than the others]*).

To overcome these linguistic peculiarities students, in most cases, used literal translation, official equivalent, and transposition. They favoured simple, cohesive sentences and generic vocabulary, without nuance or presupposition. The examples included in Table 3 present the students' translations.

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
<i>Un jour, il en a plus qu'assez et décide de se cacher.</i> [One day, he has had more than enough and decides to hide]	Un día decide esconderse porque ya no puede más. (I)	00:02:48,500 --> 00:02:52,100 <i>Un jour, il en a plus qu'assez et décide de se cacher.</i>	00:02:48,500 --> 00:02:52,100 Un día, ya no puede más y decide esconderse.
	Un día, cansado de la situación, decide esconderse. (II)	<i>Un jour, il en a plus qu'assez et décide de se cacher.</i> [One day, he has had more than enough and decides to hide]	

**Table 3.** Translation solutions of the same segment in the original album and short film (source: author)

Some solutions show slight variations, such as transposition by changing the syntax order of the subordinate clause (solution I), or use of a synonymous expression (solution II). However, the majority have substituted the main sentences with an equivalent; a technique that was also used with the subtitles, both with the sequential ordering and the actions. The subtitle has been segmented by dividing the original in two lines. This can be seen in the text layout. The syntactical layout and cohesive sentences facilitate fragmentation with a primary semantic unit in the first line. The second, lower line of the subtitle, is preceded by the conjunction. In both lines the character length is below 35 (23/20), and they only display for 3.6 seconds. On screen, it looks like the screenshot portrayed in Figure 5:



Figure 5. Example of segmented subtitle (source: Montchaud, 2014)

As Table 4 shows, the temporality of each segment in the original text and the subtitle have been incorporated by recreating the synchronisation and semiotic cohesion (Díaz-Cintas, 2001) of the sounded word at the start and finish of the subtitles.

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
<i>Peu de gens réalisent qu'Anatole doit faire deux fois plus d'efforts que les autres pour y arriver.</i> [Few people realise that Anatole has to make twice as much effort as the others to do it.]	Casi nadie se da cuenta de que tiene que esforzarse el doble para alcanzar a los demás. (I)	00:02:12,380 --> 00:02:13,530 <i>Peu de gens réalisent</i>	00:02:12,380 --> 00:02:13,530 Muy pocos se dan cuenta
	Pocas personas se dan cuenta de que tiene que hacer el doble de esfuerzo que los demás para conseguirlo. (II)	00:02:13,550 --> 00:02:16,800 <i>qu'Anatole doit faire deux fois plus d'efforts que les autres pour y arriver.</i>	00:02:13,550 --> 00:02:16,800 de que Carlitos se esfuerza el doble para hacer las cosas.

Table 4. Translation solutions of the same segment in the original album and short film (source: author)

In this example, solution (I) presents a modulation from an affirmation to a negation of the subject, but the verb *arriver* [achieve] seems to have been mistranslated. *Alcanzar* in Spanish (*conseguir* [succeed] (Real Academia Española, n.d. a, our translation) is not in line with the meaning of arrival (in Spanish *llegar a juntarse con una persona* [to reach another person] (RAE, our translation), which is what appears in the example. Solution (II) was included as it is more literal than the original segment, and in fact it recreates a verbal paraphrase *hacer el esfuerzo de* [make an effort to] instead of a simple form *esforzarse* [exert oneself]. The other

element of comparison was also included: *los demás* [others]. The translation decisions from solution (II) are not viable in the subtitle because of their length. As a result, they have been condensed, omitting the 2nd term of comparison and generalisation of the verb *arriver*.

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
<i>Elle trouve qu'il est très doué.</i> [She thinks he is very gifted.]	Cree que tiene un don. (I) Se da cuenta de que es muy talentoso. (II)	Omission	∅

**Table 5.** Translation suggestions of a segment in the album omitted in short film (source: author)

The example in Table 5 shows the translation solutions with the past participle in the adjective form *doué*, meaning *Pourvu d'une qualité survalorisée ou du moins appréciée* [Possessing a highly valued or at least appreciated quality] (Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales, 2012). Solution (I) opted for a transposition of the adjective to a noun, in this case *don* [gift] which alludes to a special ability. Although the noun has been transferred with its property, I believe that this ability, painting in this case (as reflected in the album's images), should be made explicit. To this end (II), the official equivalent *talentoso* [talented], that the RAE defines as *tener talento, ingenio, capacidad y entendimiento* [to have talent, ingenuity, ability, and understanding] was chosen (Real Academia Española, n.d. b). This segment was omitted in the short film's script, but our solution would have been *Cree que tiene mucho talento* [He believes he has lots of talent].

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
<i>...et il a un grand sens artistique.</i> [... and he has a great artistic ability]	y tiene mucho talento para el arte.	00:00:59,540 --> 00:01:01,500 <i>et il a un grand sens artistique.</i>	00:00:59,540 --> 00:01:01,500 y es un gran artista.

**Table 6.** Translation solutions of the same segment in the original album and short film (source: author)

The segment from the ST from Table 6 is identical in both formats. The most used student solution was transposition by change of group, that is, the grammatical structure of the adjective was replaced with a prepositional complement. In the subtitle, linguistic compression was applied, condensing the expression to the shortest possible word count.

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
<i>Mais souvent les gens ne voient que cette petite casserole qu'il traîne partout.</i> [But often people only see the little saucepan he drags everywhere.]	Pero muchas veces la gente solo se fija en el cacito que arrastra a todos lados. (I) Pero a menudo los demás solo se fijan en el cacito que arrastra a todas partes. (II)	00:01:19,300 --> 00:01:22,940 <i>Mais souvent les gens ne voient que cette petite casserole qu'il traîne partout.</i>	00:01:19,300 --> 00:01:22,940 Pero la gente solo ve el cacito que lleva a rastras.

**Table 7.** Translation solutions of the same segment in the original album and short film (source: author)

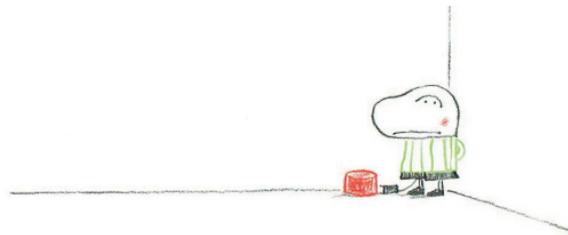
This example in Table 7 is similar to the previous one and is chosen to illustrate a specific subtitle editing technique known as *reduction*. When translating the same segment from the

source text, students provided solutions that closely resembled the original, essentially a form of literal translation (the only difference being the use of singular or plural in option I). To match the original timing and ensure appropriate reading speed, the time adverbs (*souvent*) and place adverbs (*partout*) were omitted in the subtitle. This choice did not result in any loss of meaning because the ongoing present tense conveyed the temporal aspect, and the adverbial phrase *llever a rastras* [dragging around] indicated an ongoing action. This could be seen as either partial reduction or condensation.

French album segment	Student translation solutions	French short film segment	Translation solutions
...et bien sûr il se fait gronder.	y claro le regañan. (I)	Omission	∅
[... and of course, he gets told off.]	y claro le castigan. (II)		

**Table 8.** Translation solutions of an album segment omitted in the short film (source: author)

The segment included in Table 8, not present in the short film, has been included here for analysis of the proposed solution (II). In this album section, the narrator describes Anatole receiving a scolding for misbehaviour. Solution (I) is accurate as it employs the official equivalent. Solution (II) seems appropriate because it integrates the verb's meaning with the semiotic element from the album, depicting Anatole's punishment in the corner (Figure 6). Both solutions involve changing from a passive to an active construction. The relevant image is displayed in Figure 6:



...et, bien sûr, il se fait gronder.

**Figure 6.** Original album image (source: Carrier, 2009)

The translation techniques, shortening methods, and the application of subtitling norms in interlingual subtitling for the short film (Zabalbeascoa, 2021) have been summarised. Key translation techniques include linguistic reformulation (morphosyntactic changes, cultural element adaptation), partial reduction (omission and condensation), and techniques for subtitle production (spotting, synchronisation, length, reading speed). These techniques aim to adapt content for the target culture while maintaining fidelity to the original.

Students resorted to techniques commonly applied in the translation of video albums, including cultural adaptation, official equivalent usage, linguistic compression, modulation, literal translation, and transposition (see Molina & Hurtado-Albir, 2002). This reflects students' thoughtful approach to tailoring translations to the target audience and culture, ensuring relevance and creativity. Notably, students put effort into adapting speech for children's albums, focusing on vocalisation, tone, tenses, and actions to convey the protagonist's mental state and character actions in paratexts. They incorporated sound effects to enhance the child-friendly nature of the content, resulting in an engaging *edutainment* product that aligned with professional translation standards.

### 3.2. Post-translation phase to analyse participants' perceptions

To assess participants' views on using audiovisual adaptations of children's books in translator training, a custom questionnaire based on Fernández-Costales *et al.*'s (2023) validated tools, tailored to our translator training context, was employed. This instrument aimed to gauge perceptions of language acquisition and translation skill development, aligning with PACTE's competence framework (Hurtado-Albir, 1999, 2015).

After the intervention, the online questionnaire was administered to a sample of 49 students, comprising 41 (83.7%) Spanish-speaking Translation and Interpreting students from the University of Córdoba and 8 (16.3%) Erasmus students from European universities with French as their mother tongue. To examine language gains, perceptions at various task stages were analysed. Specifically, for the audiovisual adaptation task, participants translated the children's book *La Petite Casserole d'Anatole* from French to Spanish (Stage 1) and produced a video with their own Spanish voiceovers (Stage 2). A t-test assessed significant differences in French and Spanish language learning based on participant perceptions. This analysis was conducted using the JASP 0.17.2.1 statistical software, and the results are displayed in Table 9:

Measure 1	Measure 2	T	df	p
Oral production (French)	Oral production (Spanish)	-4.106	48	< .001
Written production (French)	Written production (Spanish)	-3.150	48	0.001
Oral reception (French)	Oral reception (Spanish)	-1.323	48	0.096
Written reception (French)	Written reception (Spanish)	-1.458	48	0.076
Grammar (French)	Grammar (Spanish)	-2.401	48	0.010
Vocabulary (French)	Vocabulary (Spanish)	0.896	48	0.813
Culture (French)	Culture (Spanish)	0.000	48	0.500

**Table 9.** T-test analysis of the first stage (source: author)

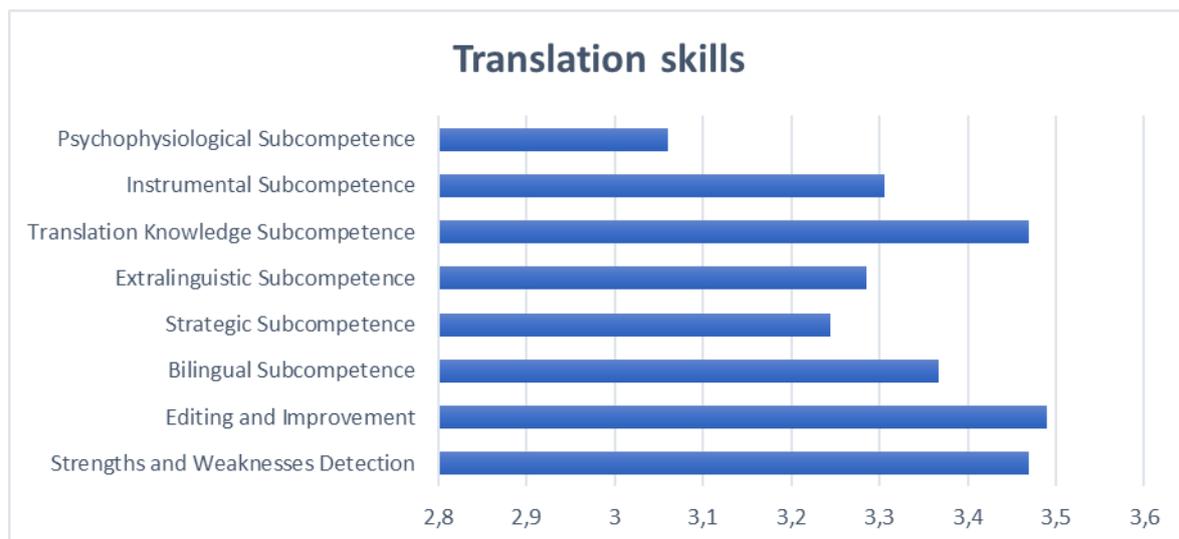
The results should be interpreted bearing in mind that they are based on the hypothesis that, at this task stage, French learning would be inferior to Spanish. Note that the task involved translating directly from French to Spanish while adapting the Spanish text for the target culture and audiovisual format. Statistically significant differences were found for oral production ( $p < .001$ ), written production ( $p = .001$ ), and grammar ( $p = .01$ ). Other skills and competencies showed no statistically significant differences for both languages, indicating enhancement of Spanish production skills and grammar knowledge, as most participants' native language is Spanish.

The second stage involved students recording their adapted translations while considering audiovisual format specifics. Creativity was crucial here, as students were expected to showcase their creativity in their performances.

Measure 1	Measure 2	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Oral production (French)	Oral production (Spanish)	-4.869	48	< .001
Written production (French)	Written production (Spanish)	-3.508	48	< .001
Oral reception (French)	Oral reception (Spanish)	-2.138	48	0.019
Written reception (French)	Written reception (Spanish)	-1.543	48	0.065
Grammar (French)	Grammar (Spanish)	-1.754	48	0.043
Vocabulary (French)	Vocabulary (Spanish)	-1.124	48	0.133
Culture (French)	Culture (Spanish)	0.000	48	0.500

**Table 10.** T-test analysis of the second stage (source: author)

Regarding the second task, as summarised in Table 10, statistically significant differences emerged in oral production ( $p < .001$ ), written production ( $p < .001$ ), oral reception ( $p = .019$ ), and grammar ( $p = .043$ ). This suggests stronger language skill development in Spanish compared to French, aligning with results from the first task.



**Figure 7.** Translation skills (source: author)

Figure 7 data indicates participants had a positive perception of acquiring translation competence ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ), a primary research objective. They also displayed high awareness of their strengths and weaknesses ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ), crucial for fostering autonomous learning. They reported improvement in editing audiovisual texts and enhancing translations ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), aligning with the goal of autonomous learning and gaining ICT skills. Moreover, participants noted the development of other sub-competences, namely extralinguistic competence ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ), instrumental competence ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), bilingual competence ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ), strategic competence ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ), and psychophysiological competence ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ).

		Would you like to pursue a career in audiovisual translation in the future?		
Would you like to pursue a career in literary translation in the future?	No	Yes	Total	
No	10	12	22	
Yes	6	21	27	
Total	16	33	49	

**Table 11.** Contingency table of willingness to become a literary or audiovisual translator (source: author)

	Value	Df	p
$\chi^2$	2,975	1	0,085
N	49		

**Table 12.** Chi-square test for the contingency analysis of Table X-1 (source: author)

Table 11 data reveals that out of 49 participants, 6 (12.24%) aspire to be literary translators, 12 (24.48%) aim for AVT, and 21 (42.85%) are interested in both. On the other hand, tests in Table 12 show no significant association between the preferences for literary or AVT. However, a notable portion (21, 42.85%) have a preference for both.

#### 4. Conclusions

The experience highlighted the advantages of integrating audiovisual content into literary translation classes. This enhanced students' communicative skills in both languages, improved oral and written expression and comprehension, and fostered adaptation to different formats and target cultures. Recording voice versions of their translations helped identify language interference errors and harness positive transfer.

In today's multimedia era, expanding technological skills is crucial. The students who participated in this study recognised the professional potential of their training, boosting motivation and knowledge. Innovative DAT methods also garnered student satisfaction by equipping them to tackle new challenges, individually and as a team. Therefore, future projects will include subtitling, further enhancing student competencies for the job market.

In conclusion, merging literary and audiovisual translation enriches language and culture learning, aligning with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020). This interdisciplinary approach proves efficient in bridging languages and cultures, making it an integral resource for training translators and linguists.

#### 5. Acknowledgements

With thanks to Dr Sam Strong for translating this article (from French and Spanish into English) as well as Dr Antonio Jesús Tinedo Rodríguez for his invaluable help.

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## Didactic transmedia storytelling: The case of *Josep* and the teaching of Catalan

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### Abstract

This article explores the exploitation of the film *Josep* (Aurel, 2020), a biopic inspired by the life of the communist artist Josep Bartolí based on his own illustrations. The particularity of this material is twofold: it is a multilingual animated film (French, Catalan, Spanish and English), which will help us to highlight and work on the skills required in a multilingual environment; and there is also a comic inspired by the film (Aurel *et al.*, 2020) that was published at the same time as the film's release. A clear case of "transmedial storytelling and diversification" (Rippl & Etter, 2013, p. 191) is faced, in which a film is brought to a book format. These two formats (audiovisual and visual-textual) provide us with two different types of material with which to work comprehensively, not only on linguistic competences but also on cultural and historical ones, with scenarios that are highly attractive and motivating for learners. This proposal aims to contribute to the discipline by presenting the didactic opportunities that audiovisual translation (interlingual subtitling and dubbing) has as a mediation tool in language teaching and the learning of Catalan, through activities taken from the film and its comic *Josep* in several teaching-learning scenarios.

### Keywords

Didactic audiovisual translation, multilingualism, transmedia storytelling, Catalan, *Josep*

## 1. Introduction

In the last two decades, audiovisual translation (AVT) has been consolidated as a useful tool for the improvement of communicative, intercultural, mediation and technological competences in foreign language learning and teaching. In addition, research has shown that didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) is highly motivating for students (Talaván, 2020). In parallel, there is a current across Europe that aims to promote linguistic diversity and revitalise minoritised and endangered languages (Prys Jones, 2013). One of the most innovative contributions of this article lies in the fact that, on this occasion, the application of DAT deals with the improvement, learning and even perfection of a language which can be both a foreign language and a first language that is considered a minoritised and endangered language. This article aims to use DAT as a mechanism for inclusion and diversity, making minoritised languages visible and enhancing their learning and teaching.

The use of comics or graphic novels in combination with DAT can make the learning process more engaging and memorable for learners, as well as help them acquire language skills more effectively. It also allows learners to explore different genres, cultures and ways of expressing themselves.

This article begins with a review of the most recent and important literature on DAT and minoritised languages, especially in Catalan, and then discusses the particularities of multilingual films and the use of comics as a support tool in language learning and teaching. The main section then presents a didactic proposal for the exploitation of the multilingual film *Josep* that could be used in different classrooms such as Bachibac<sup>1</sup>, Official Language Schools and BA in Translation and Applied Languages, followed by the conclusions.

## 2. DAT and Catalan

In this article, it is assumed that, as Castelló-Mayo *et al.* (2021a) note, cinema and media culture are fundamental tools for keeping a language alive; that “culture is implicit in audiovisual products [...] and the impact of the visual channel is clearly beneficial when working with intercultural and social matters in the classroom” (Fernández-Costales, 2017, p. 188). Today, there is a large surge in audiovisual content produced in languages other than English (Tudela-Isanta & Arias-Badia, 2022), alongside a growing interest and demand for creating content that embraces and reflects the cultural diversity and multilingualism of our society (Santamaria, 2019).

The application of DAT in foreign language learning and teaching is a phenomenon that has been around since the 1980s (Talaván, 2020). This article aims to apply all these tools and practices to the learning and teaching of Catalan. Catalan may be either a foreign language (L2 from now on) or one’s own language (L1 from now on), but one that is endangered and is the Achilles heel of many students for whom, although they have received formal training in this language, it is not their mother tongue and can be an element of social and cultural discrimination.

### 2.1. DAT: state of the art

It is beyond the scope of this article to review everything that has already been researched and applied to the benefits of the use of AVT for learning and improving languages, whether foreign or native. However, I would like to highlight the overview that Incalcaterra McLoughlin

<sup>1</sup> Bachibac is a dual degree programme that offers students the possibility of simultaneously obtaining the Spanish Baccalaureate and the French Diplôme du Baccalauréat at the end of their post-compulsory secondary education. This programme of excellence can be taken in schools in both countries where the mixed curriculum is offered (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, Gobierno de España, n.d.).

made in 2018 of all the possible modes of AVT and their accessibility and to mention some of the most recent works on the use of AVT that the TRADILEX project (2020-2023) compiles on its website. These include those dedicated to more general aspects of AVT (Incalcaterra McLoughlin *et al.*, 2020; Lertola & Talaván, 2022), studies on didactic dubbing (Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Bolaños García-Escribano & Navarrete, 2022; Fernández-Costales, 2021), didactic subtitling (Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2021; Correa-Larios, 2022; Díaz-Cintas & Wang, 2022; Faya-Ornia *et al.*, 2022; Hunt-Gómez, 2023), didactic voice-over (Talaván, 2021), didactic audio description (AD) and subtitles for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) (Navarrete, 2022; Ogea Pozo, 2022; Talaván *et al.*, 2022) and studies on the use and application of DAT in new and hitherto unexplored areas (Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023; González-Vera, 2022).

In direct relation to this didactic proposal, this article draws on the work of Bobadilla-Pérez & Carballo de Santiago (2022), where they mention that DAT helps learners not only to improve their communicative competence and linguistic skills in the foreign language but also to develop digital competences by working with online resources and AVT editing software.

The project best suited to applying our material is PluriTAV (Marzà *et al.*, 2018) as it is committed to a multilingual approach focused on didactics and language improvement. It uses AVT to learn a foreign language, improve mother tongue skills and develop multilingual competences. In line with the PluriTAV project, our proposal also recognises the advocacy by previous authors (Cummins, 2014; Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991) of the use of translation in the classroom, not only to promote foreign language acquisition but also to develop or strengthen the mother tongue.

## 2.2. DAT and Catalan

This article focuses on Catalan as a language to be learned and improved in contrast to other languages that have already been worked on more extensively in the field of DAT. Catalan is considered a minoritised language, that is a vernacular language that, regardless of how many people speak it, is marginalised from normalised social use by the impetus of certain hegemonic languages in areas such as education, administration or in the legal field (Castelló-Mayo *et al.*, 2021b). As Bardini (2022) points out, since languages were declared vehicles of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2003, member states should protect and promote minoritised and endangered languages and speaker communities need to take action. Bardini proposes AVT as an efficient tool in this process. Like Bardini, Belmar (2019) considers translation to be an activity that helps the revitalisation of languages in need, and that it “should be introduced in language revitalisation programmes and language policies” (2019, p. 39).

AVT has always been seen as “a frequently underestimated, but potentially significant language planning tool, particularly in smaller and minority language areas” (De Ridder & O’Connell, 2018, p. 401), and “it has become clear that AVT and accessibility incorporate political perspectives. [...] If promoted politically, AVT can be used to strengthen minority languages and cultures” (Matamala & Pedersen, 2020, p. 4). For this and many other reasons that will be discussed in the course of this article, a didactic proposal that deals fully with Catalan is necessary.

Incalcaterra McLoughlin (2018, pp. 483–484) already mentioned studies that “have shown the effectiveness of subtitled videos and programmes in teaching and learning national languages [...], where subtitles have been linked with and advocated for the promotion of not just bilingualism but also multilingualism”, such as Kothari *et al.* (2004), Kruger *et al.* (2007) and Ayonghe (2009). In the case of Catalonia, a “de-ethnification” of language use has been detected among younger speakers; that is, the use of Catalan or Spanish is not explained by factors such as family language (Tudela-Isanta & Arias-Badia, 2022). Flexible multilingual practices are observed, and language varieties are used consciously in different contexts and

for different purposes (Trenchs-Parera, 2016). There is thus a situation in which young people are open to a multilingual reality and mostly accept multilingualism, which is reflected in language convergence, interference and code-switching (Tudela-Isanta & Arias-Badia, 2022). Taking all of the above into account, it is also worth noting here that the materials and activities proposed in this article focus on Catalan taught in secondary schools, in the first years of university or to newcomers to Catalan-speaking regions, as these scenarios are a particularly critical time for Catalan speakers. One of the reasons for this is that young people consume a large amount of audiovisual products and these contents, whether original or translated, are most of the time offered in hegemonic languages (Bardini, 2022). Another reason is that the use of Catalan is decreasing, although it is an asset in fostering inclusion and alphabetisation through multilingualism.

### 3. Multilingual films, comics and transmedia storytelling

This article considers not only the multilingualism of film and comics but also students' linguistic background in the classroom (Catalan and Spanish, among others). According to González-Davies & Wilson (2021, p. 244), the current situation suggests embracing

an integrated plurilingual approach (IPA) that really acknowledges reality, while connecting and working on students' linguistic repertoire in classrooms that become translanguaging spaces where the speakers' plurilingual competence is in action.

#### 3.1. Multilingual films and plurilingual competence

Multilingualism is increasingly present in audiovisual production (UNESCO, 2012), and it is a contemporary reality that, if it appears recurrently in cinema, is not the result of chance but quite the contrary: its use demonstrates an intentionality that aims to achieve verisimilitude as a mechanism that serves to give liveliness to the characters' dialogues (Arias-Badia, 2020; Brumme, 2012). This situation leads to current audiovisual products reflecting sociolinguistic phenomena such as multilingualism, code-switching, diglossia or informal interpretation, among others (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011).

All the above goes hand in hand with the new multilingual literacy trends which, instead of focusing, from a pedagogical perspective, on a single language or a few languages, "emphasize that the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in our societies calls for a multiliterate approach in secondary education" (Van de Wiele *et al.*, 2022, p. 155). Thus, the intention is not only to educate in languages but also "to expose pupils to different cultures and media and to enhance their media awareness" (p. 155). The study of multilingual films and their translation into several languages shows the complexity involved in this process, as well as the importance of the translator's awareness of linguistic varieties and their cultural, social and even political connotations.

The use or existence of a third language in an audiovisual text can play different roles: character portrayal, reinforcing stereotypes, supporting the development of the plot, giving greater drama to some scenes or giving a comic tone to scenes (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011), theme, suspense, metaphor, signalling the bad guy, signifying otherness, showing tolerance and metalinguistic function (Santamaria & Pujol, 2018). Tamayo & Manterola (2019) identify four main functions of a third language: identifying otherness, highlighting an identity, emphasising realisms and creating humour in some scenes. According to the work of de Higes Andino (2017), as a complement to the images and the story, the dialogues written to be read as if they were oral are an attempt to reflect the multilingualism present in a multicultural society. For all these reasons, the material this didactic proposal works with is ideal for its multilingual

nature and for the possibilities it offers us to work from a multilingual approach, allowing us “to build bridges and encourage mediation between both languages (L1 and L2), identities, and cultures, as well as to foster interaction among them” (Molines Galarza & Mejías-Climent, 2021, p. 273).

### 3.2. Comics as a teaching-learning tool

According to Trippó (2017), modern graphic novels and comics offer teachers and students versatility when studying languages, cultures and visual arts. There is great potential for the integration of comics into the teaching of these disciplines in education (del Rey Cabero, 2013), which is what this article intends to show. Along the same lines, Ramos Caro (2015) mentions that comics have managed to conquer all kinds of audiences and are an attractive and enormously effective learning tool, as was previously mentioned with the use of audiovisual texts in the classroom.

In general terms, the advantages of the presence of comics in education should be highlighted, as Ortiz (2009) states when he relates the use of comics to the development of the following dimensions:

- It enhances learning through improved reading comprehension and vocabulary enrichment.
- It develops learners’ oral and written expression as well as their ability to memorise.
- It facilitates concentration.
- It adapts easily to the learners’ own reading pace.
- It is ideal for working on spelling and synthesis skills.
- It greatly facilitates (foreign) language learning.
- It helps to contemplate and interpret the information contained in audiovisual media.
- It helps to awaken in learners a critical attitude towards ideological aspects in the contents of the audiovisual media.
- It facilitates understanding of the social and cultural reality of their immediate environment.
- It is an effective medium for the transmission and teaching of values.

Referring to the literature that demonstrates the suitability of comics as a teaching resource in the foreign language classroom, Marsh (1978, p. 778) notes the following: “It describes four major purposes for which different comics were found useful: (1) vocabulary and expressions; (2) grammar; (3) conversation and composition; (4) culture; also, pronunciation, intonation and listening comprehension”.

For Rodríguez Rodríguez (2020), there is a clear symbiotic relationship between the language of cinema and comics from a semiotic perspective, which leads us to establish translation strategies that are often similar. While audiovisual texts contain two simultaneous channels, visual and aural, comics can only be captured in a graphic medium, although due to their constituent elements, they can emulate sound. In addition, Cuñarro (2013) states that comics are made up of linguistic, iconic, chromatic and graphic codes. Therefore, a form of multimodal creation that combines images and words to generate meaning is faced (Evans, 2017).

Comics and films are both multimodal expressions where verbal and non-verbal signs complement each other. The translation of these particular media has certain particularities that could be exploited for the purposes of language teaching. As was mentioned in the introduction, the use of comics in addition to AVT can make the learning process more engaging and memorable for learners, helping them to potentially acquire language skills in a more effective manner. It also allows teachers and learners to explore different ways of expressing the same product through different genres.

The studies (Kruger, 2013; Mayer, 2005) examined in this article reveal the cognitive effort required by viewers when audiovisual content is presented at a fast pace and the negative impact this has on information delivery. Incalcaterra McLoughlin (2018) highlights that instructor-mediated learning settings are no longer as cognitively taxing since the main activities are preceded by a whole series of preparatory activities that contextualise and assist learners. One of the purposes of this article is to emphasise the benefits of including comics in these preparatory and supporting activities and of making the reading pace of comics (as opposed to films) an essential part of the process.

### 3.3. Transmedia storytelling

Transmedia storytelling “unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 95). This article could not agree more with the work developed by Molines Galarza & Mejías-Climent (2021, p. 270) when they say that “the fact that a story is transmitted and adapted to different modes gives us the first positive aspect when choosing it to promote the development of a wide range” of skills in the language classroom. It is very much inspired by the work of these authors as they present a “methodological approach involving both literary and audiovisual possibilities (transmedia)” and combine and extend it with the use of AVT, “thus encouraging language learning through transmedia storytelling” (p. 271) and the plurilingual and translational approach.

Our didactic proposal is a clear case of “transmedial storytelling and diversification” (Rippl & Etter, 2013, p. 191), in which a film is brought to a comic format. These two formats (audiovisual and visual-textual) provide teachers and learners with two different types of material with which to work comprehensively, not only on linguistic competences but also on cultural and historical knowledge, using scenarios that are highly attractive and motivating for learners (Mayer, 2005). A transmedia approach takes the comic and film as media for remembering and reliving historical events as both embody an important vehicle for the transmission of memory and feedback on each other; the power of the image, a powerful tool for fixing certain events in the collective memory, should be emphasised (Cruz *et al.*, 2015). Lastly, the intermediate nature of the didactic proposal enables learners and teachers to approach the same story from various perspectives.

Using a film and its adaptation in comic format seeks “to trigger students’ media awareness, multiliteracy and intercultural understanding” (Van de Wiele *et al.*, 2022, p. 167). When teachers and learners work with a real text (film and comic), they know that they are working with a cultural product that has been produced in a given society and at a given time, even if it is very recent. Therefore, these two formats carry a documentary value and a specific message that can contribute to the development of intercultural skills (del Rey Cabero, 2013). In our material, there are elements referring to history, socio-political structures and cognition.

### 4. The case of *Josep*: A didactic proposal

*Josep* (Aurel, 2020) is a multilingual production, filmed mainly in French, in which Catalan plays an important role, sharing space with other hegemonic languages such as Spanish and English. The film presents clear examples of social multilingualism, code-switching and linguistic convergence. *Josep* is an animated biographical drama, not suitable for children under 12, which has received numerous awards since its release in 2020 (among them the César Award for Best Animated Film in 2021 and the European Film Award for Best Animated Feature Film in 2020). The plot of the film and the comic can be summarised as follows (I.C.A.A., 2020):

February 1939. Spanish republicans are fleeing Franco’s dictatorship to France. The French government has built concentration camps, confining the refugees, where they barely

have access to hygiene, water and food. In one of these camps, separated by barbed wire, two men will become friends. One is a guard, the other is Josep Bartolí (Barcelona 1910- NYC 1995), an illustrator who fought against Franco's regime.

The possibilities of the film and comic are endless, but this didactic proposal focuses on two modes of AVT – subtitling and dubbing – together with the two comics: the original version and the Catalan translation, both as support material (Aurel *et al.*, 2020). Since the didactic proposal works with authentic material and is not something designed for exclusively pedagogical use, using this material can increase learners' motivation and interest, and this reduces their anxiety when learning and participating in the classroom (del Rey Cabero, 2013). As the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) points out, involvement, motivation and a relaxed state of the learner are conducive to task and learning success (Council of Europe, 2002).

This didactic proposal aims to offer a way of foreign and mother language acquisition, consolidation and improvement for learners. The material was chosen by the author based on its interest for the students, the possibilities for exploitation in the classroom, level of difficulty and diversity. It is aimed at young adult students with different CEFR levels of French and Catalan (from B1 to C1), and it can be used in different scenarios such as Bachibac, Official Language Schools and BA in Translation and Applied Languages. The teachers in each of these spaces will be responsible for adapting the design of the activities to the characteristics and needs of their learners as it could be given in face-to-face, blended or online contexts.

#### **4.1. Features of the material**

Taking Molines Galarza and Mejías-Climent's (2021) methodological approach mentioned above, which involves both literary and audiovisual possibilities, and extending it with the use of AVT, our didactic proposal was designed based on the transmedia (comic, film and related resources) and plurilingual approach developed in class. Unlike other studies in which the audiovisual products recommended to work with in class are two- to three-minute, self-contained "short extracts from films and TV series" (Lertola, 2015, p. 261), this proposal involves a production of 74 minutes. As a result, sessions must be divided appropriately to avoid fatigue for both teachers and learners and to understand the sum of all the activities as a large project. Due to the characteristics of the audiovisual text, this design is dealing with a slow drama that contains no more than 4,000 words in its original version. The comic material is 174 pages long. The feature film has been divided into four blocks that will allow us to design and distribute the activities effectively. The criterion for this division is that each of the blocks should be narratively sound and contain a similar number of words to achieve a balance. The fact that there is a difference in minutes or pages between the chapters is due more to the artistic distribution across the two products. To date, the film has been subtitled in several languages (including Catalan, Spanish, English, French and Japanese), but it has not been dubbed.

#### **4.2. Design and presentation of the didactic proposal**

The didactic proposal is divided into four main blocks spanning over one semester and occupying 13 sessions (one session per week) of approximately 90 minutes each. The project can be implemented by carrying out the activities presented below involving the use of both modes of AVT or, due to the complexity and frequent problems of time constraints in subject curricula, by opting for only one of the two modes of AVT, depending on the skills and competences to be reinforced.

The first and second blocks are common to all itineraries, and the remaining two will vary depending on the itinerary chosen. The fundamental structure of the didactic proposal is

based on previous studies, mainly by Calduch and Talaván (2018), Molines Galarza and Mejías-Climent (2021), Bobadilla-Pérez and Carballo de Santiago (2022) and Talaván and Lertola (2022).

#### 4.2.1. First block: introduction to the project and the disciplines involved

The first block is an introduction to the project in general: an introduction to translation as a pedagogical tool, an introduction to DAT as a tool for language learning and improvement, and an introduction to transmedia storytelling and the characteristics of the language of comics.

The proposal aims to involve both teachers and learners in the whole process before performing the tasks. This block is crucial for teachers as they will act throughout the project as mediators and will feel self-confident and encouraged to adopt a more innovative approach to Catalan teaching. Teachers will be the ones to develop a pre-test (linguistic and plurilingual) in which the deficiencies or needs of the learners can be detected (these integrated skills tests are designed to measure the initial level of the learners). Regarding language learning and improvement, this test should be distributed in two stages to collect quantitative data: first as a pre-test, and then, at the end of the project, as a post-test. According to the TRADILEX project (2020–2023), these tests consist of four parts: oral comprehension, reading comprehension, oral production and written production. At the end of the training, the teacher will be able to compare whether there has been an evolution in language learning and improvement.

After the theoretical immersion in all the fields covered by the project, a series of training sessions will be devoted to more technical, technological and linguistic aspects of the AVT modes to be worked on. Thus, at least one hour per AVT modality will be devoted to covering the fundamental aspects of didactic subtitling and dubbing, as well as one hour for the more technological aspects in programmes such as subtitle editors (Aegisub and/or Subtitle Edit, free downloadable user-friendly programmes perfectly suitable for class use) and audiovisual editing tools (such as Audacity, Magic, AV Movie Morpher or InShot if mobile phones are used rather than PCs). This article is aware of the cost and time-consuming nature of the training (already mentioned in much earlier works such as those by Williams and Thorne, 2000) and the fact that there might be technology-related issues. Moreover, “because of the younger generation’s assumed computer literacy, we may overestimate many learners’ ability to undertake this specialised dubbing task in an efficient manner” (Danan, 2010, p. 453). Therefore, this proposal aims to place a strong emphasis on support and training in the technological aspects so that technical issues do not hinder the successful implementation of the proposal for teachers and students. Table 1 shows in detail the activities and skills that are worked on in each session.

SKILLS	ACTIVITY
<b>SESSION 1</b>	
Oral comprehension Oral production Mediation	Introduction to the project in general: translation and DAT as tools for language learning and improvement; introduction to transmedia storytelling; and the characteristics of the language of comics
<b>SESSION 2</b>	
Oral and reading comprehension Oral and written production	Pre-test
<b>SESSION 3</b>	
Oral comprehension Oral production	Fundamental aspects of didactic subtitling and dubbing

**SESSION 4**

Oral comprehension

Training in subtitle editors and audiovisual editing tools

Oral production

ITC competence

**Table 1.** Distribution of sessions by activity in the first block (source: author)**4.2.2. Second block: introduction to the material**

In accordance with the good practices mentioned throughout this article, this second block starts with a series of preparatory activities that precede the viewing of the film and the reading of the comic. This phase will be dedicated to the so-called “warm-up activities” (Talaván, 2020), in which, anticipating cinematic and comic content, vocabulary related to the themes to be worked on later is presented. Brainstorming activities can be launched to help provide knowledge of the socio-political and historical moment in which the material is set, everything that is necessary and beneficial for the subsequent execution of the DAT activities. By way of suggestion:

- Readings (in French and Catalan) on historical films and biopics.
- Readings (videos, photos, drawings) on the French concentration camps after the Spanish Civil War.
- Searching for information on the main character, Josep Bartolí.

All these activities of reflection and production help in a preparatory phase for the development of reading, writing, listening, speaking and/or mediation skills. The abovementioned activities also enhance possible activities to use in class, such as guided close reading, peer-to-peer tasks and classroom discussion.

Once the warm-up has been completed, the class proceeds to the visualisation of the material. The ideal scenario would be that there would be no textual support other than the comic itself for the proper subsequent development of the proposed activities. Due to the length of the film, it can be watched together in class or individually. In any case, there should be a sharing afterwards for the learners to show the teacher that the material to be translated has been understood and that they are familiar with the key concepts of the text. The use of listening, reading and mediation tasks should be encouraged at this stage.

SKILLS	ACTIVITY
<b>SESSION 5</b> Oral and reading comprehension Oral and written production Mediation competences	Warm-up activities
<b>SESSION 6</b> Oral comprehension	Visualisation of the material
<b>SESSION 7</b> Reading comprehension	Reading of the material

**Table 2.** Distribution of sessions by activity in the second block (source: author)

### 4.2.3. Third block: description of activities by AVT modes

Once it has been decided whether to work on one or both modes, the AVT activities are designed. The first step is to divide the class into four large groups to cover the four blocks detected in the material to compensate for the fact that there is a lot of footage. Each group will be responsible for either subtitling or dubbing their chapter.

#### Didactic interlingual subtitling

Two statements that reinforce the validity of didactic subtitling for language teaching and learning are adopted. One is from Castelló-Mayo *et al.* (2021b, p. 93), who say that “the practice of AV subtitling in non-hegemonic languages is proposed as a catalyst for cultural diversity and an antidote to the ‘flattening of cultural diversity’”. The other is from De Ridder & O’Connell (2018, p. 406): “subtitling can also be used as a useful language planning tool in L1 maintenance, as well as language revitalization and language development within the minority languages cultures”. Thus, subtitling in the audiovisual field, particularly in non-hegemonic languages, contributes to making dialogical communication and intercultural acceptance more fluid and consolidated (Baker, 2018).

Based on the activity diagram on the use of subtitles in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) developed by Fernández-Costales (2017), the possibilities of using subtitling as a didactic resource in L2 developed by Talaván (2020) and the later methodological proposal designed by the TRADILEX project (Talaván & Lertola, 2022), the didactic proposal focuses on interlingual standard subtitling, where the audio is mainly in English and French (L2a and L2b) and learners have to translate it into Catalan (L1). This activity will develop better oral comprehension in L2 and better written production in L1. In addition, aspects such as vocabulary acquisition, integrated language skills, intercultural education and pragmatic awareness will be reinforced. In evaluating the learners, as proposed by Talaván (2020) in her assessment rubric, accuracy and appropriateness of the translated texts, length and duration of the subtitles, condensation strategies, appropriate segmentation and synchrony will all be assessed.

SKILLS	ACTIVITY
<b>SESSION 8a</b>	
Visual and oral comprehension	Re-watching the chapter to work with: Chapter 1: 00:00:00-00:24:00
Vocabulary	Chapter 2: 00:24:01-00:35:44 Chapter 3: 00:35:45-00:55:32 Chapter 4: 00:55:33-01:08:03
Reading comprehension	Re-reading the related comic chapter: Chapter 1: pp. 1–48 Chapter 2: pp. 49–78 Chapter 3: pp. 79–121 Chapter 4: pp. 122–147
Oral production	Sharing ideas that emerge after getting to know the product (both film and comic) in depth and discussing it before translating it

<b>SESSION 9a</b>	
Written production	Producing subtitles for the chapter/excerpt of the film individually
Oral comprehension	
Intercultural competence	
ICT competence	Using subtitling editors

**Table 3.** Distribution of sessions in the third block (didactic interlingual subtitling) (source: author)

### Interlingual dubbing activities

As with subtitling, dubbing can be performed by learners in an interlingual direction (from L2a and L2b into L1). This task will be a powerful resource to improve oral and written production in L1 and oral comprehension in L2. In fact, Fernández-Costales (2021) reviews all the previous studies that have shown that dubbing is a good practice for improving oral production, the promotion of fluency, intonation and the improvement of pronunciation and grammar knowledge.

In addition, Navarrete (2013) had previously shown that having learners work on video dubbing contributes to the improvement of oral production and enhances their motivation and desire to communicate in the classroom. Learners produce a soundtrack replacing the original version of the film: they focus on language production and this encourages learners “to cooperate with peers and engage in a relaxed and satisfying group activity” (Danan, 2010, p. 445).

The aim of this activity is to reinforce phonetic and phonological training, to improve speaking skills such as intonation, fluency and speech delivery rate and rhythm, to reduce mispronunciation, and to reproduce the dramatic and emotional (if any) content of the scene (paralinguistic elements). Danan (2010) already showed that it was helpful in terms of vocabulary expansion and improved sentence structure (due to multiple rehearsals).

As described above and based on the proposal of Talaván (2020), in the case of dubbing the following will be assessed: linguistic accuracy (pronunciation and intonation), lip synchrony, the degree and appropriateness of dramatization, fluency and speed of speech (naturalness), and technical quality.

SKILLS	ACTIVITY
<b>SESSION 8b<sup>2</sup></b>	
Visual and oral comprehension	Re-watching the chapter to work with (as in Table 3)
Vocabulary	
Reading comprehension	Re-reading the related comic chapter (as in Table 3)
Oral production	Sharing ideas that emerge after getting to know the product in depth and discussing it before translating it
<b>SESSION 9b</b>	
Written production	Writing the dubbing script for the chapter/excerpt of the film individually
Oral comprehension	
Intercultural competence	
ICT competence	Using video editing tools
Oral production	Performing the script (rehearsing and recording the script)

**Table 4.** Distribution of sessions in the third block (didactic dubbing) (source: author)

<sup>2</sup> These re-watching and re-reading activities are not necessary if only one AVT task was chosen.

#### 4.2.4. Fourth block: discussion and evaluation

The closing phase of the project should include a series of post-translation activities in addition to the evaluation activities. These include discussion and peer assessment of the completed activities together with a self-evaluation of the whole process. Teachers will assess the individual and group development of the whole project. At the same time, they will have the learners do a post-test in which the same linguistic and oral expression aspects that were assessed in the first sessions of the didactic proposal (pre-tests) will be evaluated, which will enable them to elaborate a comparison task and evaluate the progress of the learners.

Following the proposal of the lesson plans described by Talaván & Lertola (2022), the learning outcomes of the didactic proposal are as follows:

- To develop audiovisual reception, production and mediation skills.
- To enhance grammar, lexical and intercultural competence.
- To enhance transferable ICT skills and motivation towards not only the foreign language (mainly French) but also the first language (Catalan).
- To acquire a foundation of cultural, socio-political and historical concepts about the events studied.

SKILLS	ACTIVITY
<b>SESSION 10</b>	
Oral production	Peer-assessment (in groups)
Mediation	
Oral comprehension	Sharing the result with the rest of the group
<b>SESSION 11</b>	
Oral comprehension	Teacher assessment and feedback
	Reflection
<b>SESSION 12</b>	
Oral and reading comprehension	Post-test
Oral and written production	

**Table 5.** Distribution of sessions in the fourth block (source: author)

## 5. Conclusions: to be continued

This article aims to demonstrate that DAT can be an effective way to improve Catalan linguistic skills by providing a more immersive and authentic language experience. It does this by using audiovisual (film) and visual-textual (comic) materials, developing activities that deal with the creation of subtitles and dubbing scripts in Catalan to support comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and to practice speaking, grammar, pronunciation, mediation and other transversal competences such as digital skills. It also involves analysis of the AVT process and encourages both learners and teachers to use different technologies. Bringing all these aspects together fulfils one of the objectives set out at the beginning of the article: to use DAT as a mechanism for inclusion and diversity, making Catalan visible and enhancing its learning and teaching. Hence the recommendations of the EU Digital Education Action Plan, which include integrating the linguistic dimension into educational programmes and ensuring that learners reach adequate levels of language proficiency, mainstreaming new technologies in language learning and creating Catalan-sensitive spaces.

Today, there is more publishing and more access to audiovisual products than ever before. The didactic proposal described in this article could be adequately piloted in the three scenarios

mentioned (Bachibac, Official Language Schools and BA in Translation and/or Applied Languages) with students with a B2–C1 French and Catalan level. It is at no time intended to be prescriptive but rather to provide an example of possible ways of implementing AVT in the classroom and of working with language combinations that have so far received scant attention.

To the best of my knowledge, this article contributes to the fields of translation studies, DAT and Catalan teaching and learning. It is an example of activism that deals with intersemiotic, transmedia and plurilingual translation. Moreover, DAT used in combination with comics is here added as an innovative element to the practices carried out until now to improve Catalan linguistic skills. The comic is used as a reading and supporting material, and its illustrations are used as visual cues to help learners understand the story and the dialogues (also present in the film). This helps students understand and appreciate linguistic diversity, improves spelling, enhances the interpretation of messages from audiovisual media, enriches vocabulary and develops learners' oral and written expression and reading comprehension as well as their communicative and intercultural skills.

In addition to all the objectives described throughout the article, it would be desirable if this didactic proposal could be transferred and applied to other minoritised languages and to other levels of training. All minoritised and endangered language regions are an indirect target group since language revitalisation benefits all citizens as it is a sign of cultural literacy. There are a few examples of animated multilingual audiovisual products that have been faithfully adapted from/to a comic format and that, like *Josep*, narrate socio-political and historical moments relevant to the place in which they are set. As a result, the didactic proposal presented here could also be applied to them. These include *Persepolis* (Paronnaud & Satrapi, 2007), *Vals Im Bashir* (Folman, 2008) and *Black is Beltza* (Muguruza, 2018).

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## Training pre-service primary education teachers in didactic audiovisual translation: A case study

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### **Abstract**

Didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) explores the potential benefits of active revoicing and subtitling tasks for the development of language, mediation, and translation skills. Despite the vast literature on DAT and language learning (Lertola, 2019a), research on DAT training for pre- and in-service teachers is still somewhat limited (Lertola, 2021; Lertola & Talaván, 2022). The present case study investigates DAT-focused pre-service teacher training with a sample of six final-year primary education students. As language learners, participants voluntarily enrolled in a B2-level English course with 15 lesson plans offered within the TRADILEX project. Furthermore, they took a pre-test (ITIS) and a post-test (FITIS) to assess their oral and written receptive as well as productive skills (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2021). As pre-service teachers, participants undertook a teacher training course on lesson plan design, focusing on didactic audio description. First, the course provided them with a strong theoretical framework for DAT (Talaván & Lertola, 2022). Then, it trained them to design lesson plans. Participants' feedback was collected through a final questionnaire. The quantitative and qualitative results show that pre-service teachers improved their English language skills, especially their productive skills. These findings call for more systematic experimental research in the area.

### **Keywords**

Didactic audiovisual translation, audio description, teacher training, primary education, English as a foreign language

## 1. Introduction

An unparalleled development of technology and unprecedented events has characterised the beginning of the 21st century. One of the most illustrative examples was the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its effects on society and (higher) education. Emergency remote teaching became a widespread solution, but many educators reported a lack of experience in virtual environments (Ferri *et al.*, 2020; Iglesias-Pradas *et al.*, 2021). Studies such as the one by Palacios-Hidalgo and Huertas-Abril (2021) on language teaching and emergency remote teaching report on the challenges linked to online communication and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to teach languages in virtual environments. Furthermore, Palacios-Hidalgo and Huertas-Abril (2021) explored how to provide pre-service teachers with appropriate training to develop their own materials for remote language teaching, specifically English for Social Purposes, an approach first developed by Huertas-Abril and Gómez-Parra (2018).

Remote language teaching has received great attention in the last few years (Bond *et al.*, 2021). However, engaging students in motivating ICT-based learning experiences is also auspicated in face-to-face contexts. In order to plan and prepare such learning experiences in both educational contexts, pre-service as well as in-service teachers should be offered appropriate training. Nonetheless, there is scarce literature for the very case of training pre-service teachers, and in particular primary in-training teachers, for online or face-to-face teaching by providing them with specific training on how to make the most of media products through the active use of the different audiovisual translation modes (i.e., revoicing and subtitling). According to Talaván and Lertola (2022), didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) is a somewhat young discipline, stemming from audiovisual translation, in the field of applied linguistics. DAT aims to explore the pedagogic potential of language tasks in which learners are provided with video materials; the role of language learners as *prosumers* – that is, producers and consumers of online content (Herrero, 2019) – means they are expected to produce a new video by making use of a set of protocols and techniques linked to different media localisation modes (Talaván & Lertola, 2022).

DAT-based sessions are planned according to a specific and thoroughly designed structure as an evolution of task-based language methodology (Jia & Harji, 2022; Nunan, 2004) and consist of four main phases:

- Warm up: the lesson plan's first stage aims to provide learners with the language knowledge they will need to face the DAT task. Therefore, students are provided with activities and exercises which should focus on the grammar, lexis and overall knowledge required to carry out the DAT tasks. Written reception tasks of parallel texts, together with specific use of English activities, are prone to appear in this section to meet students' needs.
- Video viewing: this stage has the objective of ensuring that language learners have a complete understanding of the audiovisual text they are expected to focus on in the DAT task. In particular, learners are required to carry out language tasks that promote active viewing (as opposed to passive viewing) of two-minute video excerpts to involve them as active participants in all the stages of the lesson plan.
- DAT task: this is the core stage of the lesson plan and requires learners to carry out a verbal transfer (either interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic depending on the DAT mode selected) of only one minute of the video excerpt they have analysed in the previous stage of the lesson plan. In order to do so, language learners are provided with specific protocols and software for each of the DAT modes, namely subtitling, voice-over, dubbing, audio description (AD), and subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing (SDH).

- Post-DAT task: this is the final stage of the lesson plan and aims at consolidating the knowledge learners are expected to acquire, and it is linked to the very concept of integrated skills. Therefore, a DAT-based captioning lesson plan would require an oral production task, whilst a DAT-based revoicing lesson plan is expected to include a written production activity.

The DAT literature has dramatically increased in recent years thanks to the exponential development of technologies together with national and international research projects such as LeViS (Sokoli, 2006), Babelium (Pereira Varela, 2014), ClipFlair (Baños & Sokoli, 2015; Gajek, 2016; Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola, 2015; Navarrete, 2013; Soler-Pardo, 2020; Zabalbeascoa *et al.*, 2012), PluriTAV (González Pastor *et al.*, 2021; Marzà *et al.*, 2018; Reverter-Oliver *et al.*, 2021), and TRADILEX (Talaván & Lertola, 2022), among others.

Focusing on the positive effects of DAT on the development of language skills, studies on didactic subtitling, which has been one of the most studied DAT modes, show its effect on the improvement of the four skills in an integrated way (Ávila-Cabrera, 2018; Plaza-Lara & Fernández-Costales, 2022; Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera, 2021), the enhancement of intercultural awareness (Borghetti & Lertola, 2014; Rodríguez-Arancón, 2023), the development of pragmatic competence (Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2018; Lertola & Mariotti, 2017), an increase of the lexical repertoire (Lertola, 2019b), and it has also shown to be helpful for the learning of English for Specific Purposes such as business (Ávila-Cabrera, 2021; Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban, 2021), science (Bianchi, 2015; Ogea-Pozo, 2020; Tinedo-Rodríguez & Ogea-Pozo, 2023), tourism (Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2021), and technology (González-Vera, 2021, 2022a, 2022b).

The use of certain DAT practices has shown to be highly effective as a resource for foreign language learning purposes. Dubbing-focused studies on oral production skills (Bolaños-García-Escribano & Navarrete, 2022; Sánchez-Requena, 2017, 2020) and assessment (Talaván & Costal, 2017) have followed studies combining subtitling and dubbing, which have shown remarkable benefits in terms of language learning and acquisition (Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera, 2015), as well as voice over (Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2018). Media accessibility practices, notably AD and SDH, tackle the barriers that hinder users from having access to audiovisual products (Talaván *et al.*, 2016). They focus on the development of language skills as well as on increasing accessibility awareness. In terms of didactic AD, which is the main focus of the present study, research has proved to foster the development of language skills in an integrated way (Ibáñez-Moreno & Vermeulen, 2015; Navarrete, 2020; Navarrete & Bolaños García-Escribano, 2022; Palion-Musiol, 2019; Plaza-Lara & Gonzalo-Llera, 2022; Vermeulen & Escobar-Álvarez, 2021; Vermeulen & Ibáñez-Moreno, 2017). Other scholars have placed greater emphasis on interculturality (Maszerowska & Mangiron, 2014), mediation (Navarrete, 2022), and orality (Navarrete, 2021). Besides, Ogea-Pozo (2022a, 2022b) showed how AD can help enhance accessibility awareness among language learners; what is more, she argued that pre-service translators tend to have their consciousness on media accessibility progressively increased after didactic AD experimental treatments. When it comes to didactic SDH, it has proven to be a promising research area. There is a recent study by Bolaños García-Escribano and Ogea-Pozo (2023) that focused on interlingual SDH and consisted of a pilot study that explored the potential benefits of SDH in terms of language gains and accessibility awareness. In this regard, there is another study by Tinedo-Rodríguez and Frumuselu (2023) that reinforced the results of the formerly mentioned research, proving how effective this accessibility mode is for the promotion of L2 integrated skills together with the development of interculturality and its potential as a tool to foster social justice-based values to enrich language teaching. Talaván *et al.* (2022) showed the positive effects of combining DAT's accessibility modes. In terms of

EDI topics, it is worth mentioning the positive effect of DAT on gender awareness (Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2022b), and its complementarity with English for Social Purposes (Talaván & Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2023; Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2022a) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (Gómez-Parra, 2018). Furthermore, specific language tests have been designed within the framework of DAT-based experimental treatments (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2021), and these assessment tools have also been validated (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2022).

The literature on DAT teacher training is still scarce; nevertheless, Lertola and Talaván (2022) reported on the training of 12 in-training teachers on DAT methodology and didactic dubbing and AD. The results were positive in terms of perception of the didactic resource. Participants were expected to do a lesson plan on each of the aforementioned modes in the shoes of a language learner. Within an exploratory study on the implementation of didactic free commentary, Lertola (2021) reports on the teacher training experience of 18 pre-service infant educators. Participants had the chance to act both as language learners and as in-training teachers since they were required to develop a didactic free commentary task by writing and recording the audio of a short animation that they could use in their future career. Feedback questionnaires and structured as well as non-structured observation reported very encouraging results on the one-DAT mode training.

This study focuses specifically on primary education pre-service teachers enrolled in the fourth year of the undergraduate degree in Primary Education. Previous experimental studies have shown that teachers have a positive perception on the use of didactic subtitling (Fernández-Costales, 2014, 2021b), as well as students (Fernández-Costales, 2021a). This is indeed a crucial departing point for this study as it sets the basis for its implementation by pre-service teachers in primary education.

## 2. Method

This study has followed a mixed-method approach. According to Bisquerra's (2004) typology of educational research, this type of design would respond to a pre-experimental pre-test and post-test one. The quasi-experimental nature of the design has also to do with educational ethics. For the sake of equality of opportunities, all students enrolled in the undergraduate module entitled *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* offered by the Faculty of Education at the University of Córdoba, Spain, were given the opportunity to participate from November 2021 to March 2022. Therefore, it can be inferred that the sample is incidental as the training was offered to all the students in the formerly mentioned course, and it is pre-experimental since there was not a control group. In total, 11 participants initially signed up for the course. However, 54,5% (N=6) completed all the tasks in the DAT training module.

The main objectives of this study are the following:

1. To assess the potential of a DAT-based course on pre-service Primary teachers in terms of oral production.
2. To evaluate the potential of a DAT-based course on pre-service Primary teachers in terms of oral reception.
3. To explore the potential of a DAT-based course on pre-service Primary teachers in terms of written production.
4. To assess the potential of a DAT-based course on pre-service Primary teachers in terms of written reception.
5. To deepen on the perceptions of pre-service Primary teachers on the applicability of the DAT-based methodology on primary education.

The research instruments consisted of an initial questionnaire, an initial test of integrated skills (ITIS), an experimental treatment (i.e., 15 lesson plans for B2-level, equivalent to three per DAT mode, and the creation of six AD-based lesson plans as in-training teachers), a final test of integrated skills (FITIS), and a final questionnaire.

### 3. Results and discussion

This study aims to widen the scope of the one carried out by Lertola and Talaván (2022) and Lertola (2021) by offering pre-service teachers a course in which participants would put themselves in the shoes of a language learner who is taking a DAT-based course. Besides, this study aims at complementing Fernández-Costales' (2021a, 2021b) studies on the perception of DAT in primary education settings.

The results are discussed in two distinct sections for the sake of clarity. First, the impact of the experimental treatment on the four skills will be explored in order to meet objectives 1 to 4, whilst there is a second section which focuses on the perceptions of pre-service teachers with regard to the implementation of DAT-based tasks in primary education (objective 5). The results discussed here are not generalisable due to the small sample size.

#### 3.1. Language skills

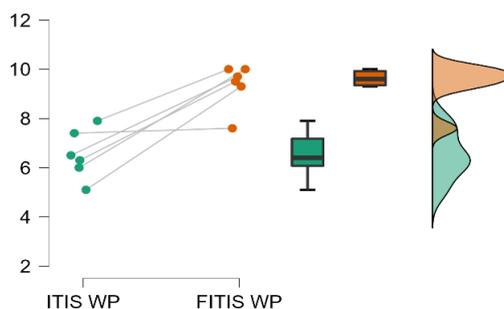
This section delves into the impact of the experimental treatment in terms of language skills development. For the sake of exhaustiveness, the data gathered from production language tests have been assessed through *ad hoc* rubrics. Oral production has been assessed in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and coherence whilst written production has been assessed in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, word usage and text composition. Regarding oral reception and written reception, the assessment method was different as it consisted of a multiple-choice questionnaire which was automatically corrected by the virtual platform. It is worth mentioning that in order to improve reliability there was a time constriction for each test as they were administered asynchronously online.

Due to the small size of the sample (N=6) and due to the fact that it does not meet normality conditions, a non-parametric test has been applied, specifically, the Wilcoxon paired test has been used to explore the different hypothesis. Table 1 shows the results of applying the aforementioned test to each of the variables that have been assessed through the instruments which have been mentioned (i.e., rubrics for evaluating production skills and a marking for reception tests). Each variable has been examined while considering the alternative hypothesis that the post-test score surpasses the pre-test score. There are no subcomponents within the receptive skills because they are automatically marked according to the design of the ITIS and FITIS tests (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2022).

	ITIS (pre-test)	FITIS (post-test)	<i>t</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>df</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>p</i>
<b>Written production</b>	Spelling	Spelling	-7.510	5	< .001
	Grammar	Grammar	-2.767	5	0.02
	Punctuation	Punctuation	-3.730	5	0.007
	Word usage	Word usage	-4.663	5	0.003
	Text composition	Text composition	-3.162	5	0.013
	Total	Total	-4.658	5	0.003
<b>Oral production</b>	Pronunciation	Pronunciation	-3.212	5	0.012
	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	-6.325	5	< .001
	Grammar	Grammar	-4.394	5	0.004
	Fluency	Fluency	-4.625	5	0.003
	Coherence	Coherence	-4.134	5	0.005
	Total	Total	-5.886	5	0.001
<b>Written reception</b>	Total	Total	0	5	0.5
<b>Oral reception</b>	Total	Total	-2.530	5	0.026

**Table 1.** Wilcoxon paired test assessing participants performance (source: authors)

When it comes to analysing written production, it is worth mentioning that there is an improvement because the alternative hypothesis which was stated was that spelling ( $p < .001$ ), grammar ( $p = .02$ ), punctuation ( $p = .007$ ), word usage ( $p = .003$ ), and text composition marks ( $p = .013$ ) were higher in the post-test. Furthermore, the general written production post-test mark is higher than the pre-test's ( $p = .003$ ). In addition, raincloud diagrams are valuable as they offer a comprehensive representation of raw data, encompassing essential statistical measures such as the mean, median, and mode. Their inclusion in quantitative research serves as a transparency endeavour, as advocated by Allen *et al.* (2021), which is the rationale behind their utilisation in this analysis. Figure 1 aims at providing a general outlook of the evolution of the written production skills. The data in green are linked to the pre-test and the data in orange are linked to the post-test. Each point represents the participants and their position at each measurement. The highest mark that participant could obtain in each test for each skill was 10.



**Figure 1.** Raincloud diagram of written production skills (source: authors)

<sup>1</sup> The parameter *t* represents the test statistic calculated from the differences between paired samples.

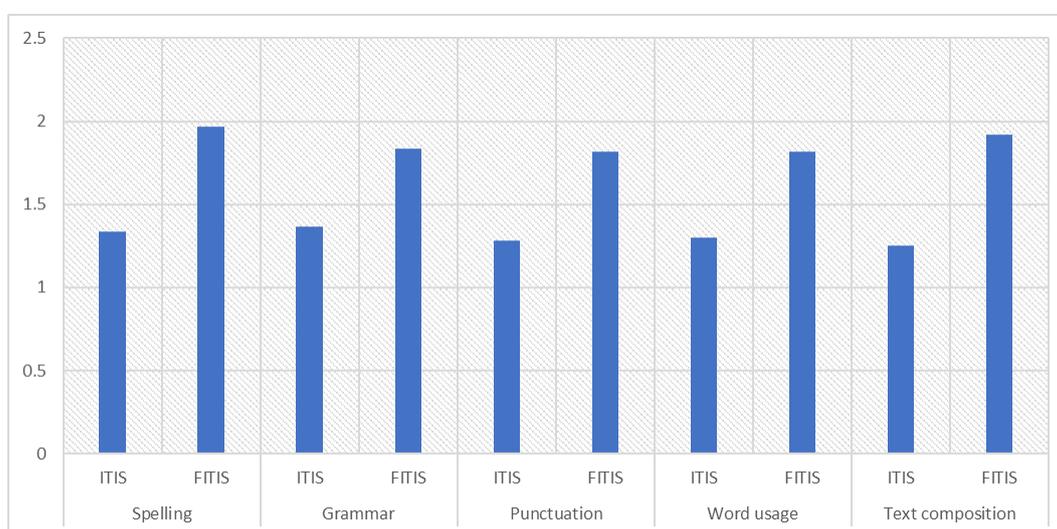
<sup>2</sup> The degree of freedom (*df*) is a calculation that indicates the number of marks that are different to the rest.

For the sake of concreteness, Table 2 compiles the descriptive statistics associated with each variable pertinent to written production, encompassing the mean, subject count (N), and standard deviation (SD). One of the most relevant aspects is the analysis of SD as it experiments a percentual reduction of 75.92% in the case of spelling, 30.46% in the case of punctuation, 19.19% in the case of word usage, 48.22% in the case of text composition, and 9.99% in the case of the general mark.

	Spelling		Grammar		Punctuation		Word usage		Text composition		General mark	
	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS
<i>M</i>	1,333	1,967	1,367	1,833	1,283	1,817	1,3	1,817	1,25	1,917	6,533	9,35
<i>N</i>	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
<i>SD</i>	,216	,052	,197	,314	,279	,194	,297	,24	,394	,204	1,001	,901

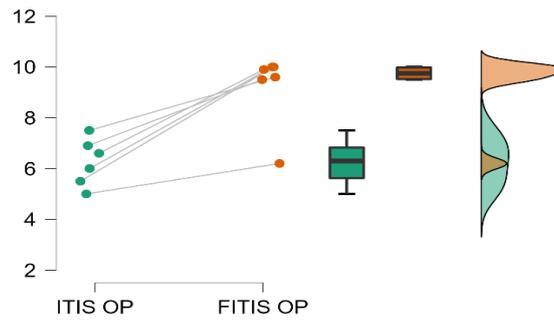
**Table 2.** Analysis of descriptive statistics of written production (source: authors)

Figure 2 shows the evolution of each subcomponent of the written production. Therefore, it can be inferred that written production improved after the experimental treatment.



**Figure 2.** Bar diagram for each subcomponent of written production (source: authors)

When it comes to analysing oral production in Figure 3, it is worth mentioning that the results are coherent with written production for the alternative hypothesis which consist of the following subcomponents marking higher in the post-test: pronunciation ( $p=0.012$ ), vocabulary ( $p<.001$ ), grammar ( $p=.004$ ), fluency ( $p=.003$ ), and coherence ( $p=.005$ ). The raincloud diagram shows the changes in the distribution of the sample before and after the intervention with regard to oral production (ITIS and FITIS, respectively). It should be pointed out that the dots in green represent the average mark of each participant in ITIS oral production while the dots in orange depict the performance of the participants in FITIS oral production. Regarding the distribution curve, the green curve is not as sharp as the orange one due to the fact that after the intervention the average mark tends to be higher with lower levels of standard deviation.



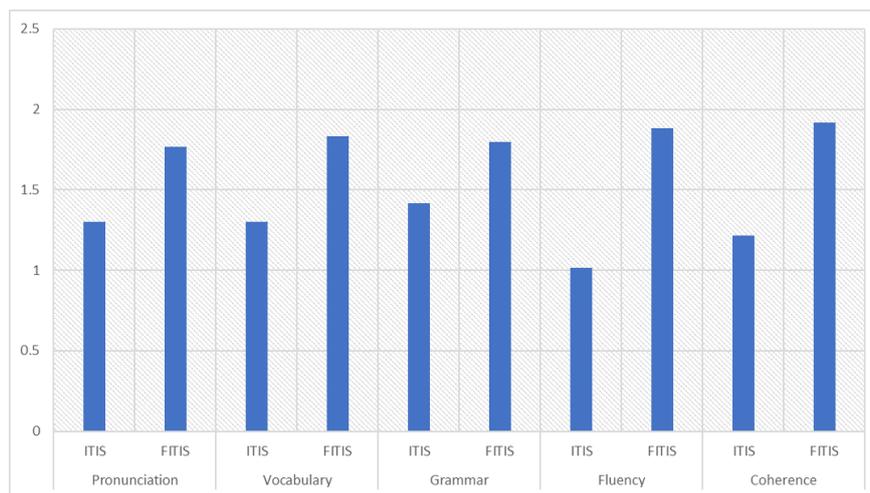
**Figure 3.** Raincloud diagram of oral production (source: authors)

Table 3 shows the data for each specific subcomponent together with the general mark obtained in the oral production tasks. In this case, there is a percentual reduction of SD for fluency (48.61%) and for textual coherence (51.07%). It implies a harmonization of the marks obtained by participants regarding the formerly mentioned components.

	Pronunciation		Vocabulary		Grammar		Fluency		Coherence		General mark	
	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS
<b>M</b>	1.3	1.767	1.3	1.833	1.417	1.8	1.017	1.883	1.217	1.917	6.25	9.2
<b>N</b>	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
<b>SD</b>	0.268	0.383	0.179	0.314	0.214	0.395	0.397	0.204	0.417	0.204	0.927	1.485

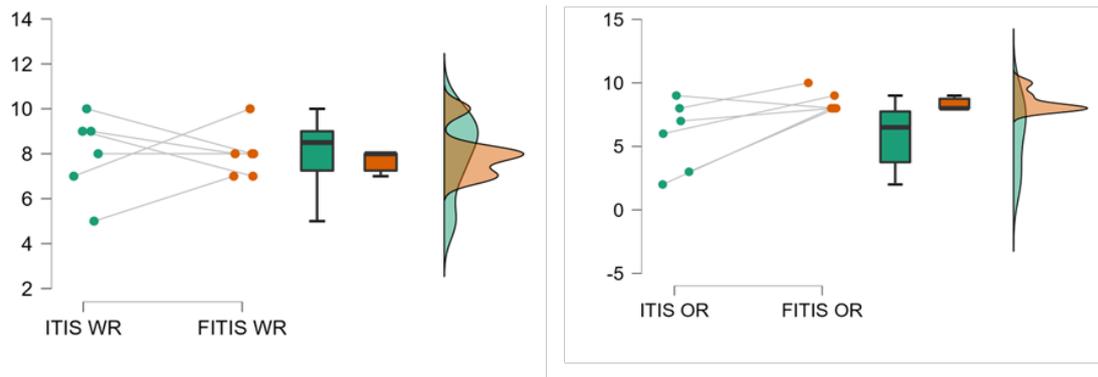
**Table 3.** Analysis of descriptive statistics of oral production (source: authors)

It is also of interest to have a general outlook on the evolution of each subcomponent of oral production. Figure 4 shows the score of the subcomponents of oral production in the pre-test (ITIS) and in the post-test (FITIS), and it clearly reflects the tendency towards improvement after the experimental treatment.



**Figure 4.** Bar diagram for each subcomponent of oral production (source: authors)

To obtain a holistic vision of the development of the skills, it is of uttermost importance to deepen on both oral and written receptions skills. Figure 5 shows the evolution of both skills within the framework of the DAT-based experimental treatment.



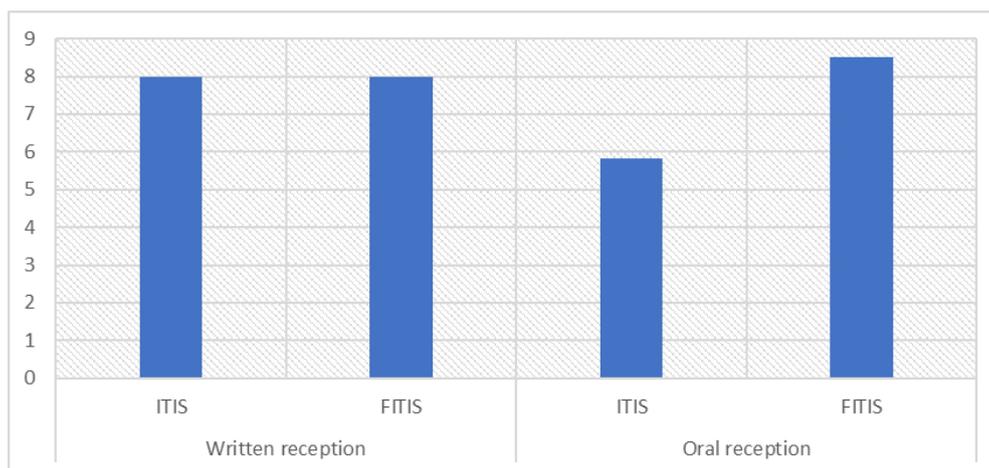
**Figure 5.** Raincloud diagram for written and oral reception, respectively (source: authors)

The case of written reception is a particular one since there is no improvement in terms of average mark ( $p=0.5$ ), but as Table 4 shows the experimental treatment seems to have a harmonizing effect as the SD experiences a percentual reduction of 38.79%. By observing Figure 5, the tendency is towards improvement, but the average mark of the participants remains the same. This is the reason why in Figure 6, the score is the same for both the pre-test and the post-test.

	Written reception		Oral reception	
	ITIS	FITIS	ITIS	FITIS
<b>M</b>	8	8	5.833	8.5
<b>N</b>	6	6	6	6
<b>SD</b>	1.789	1.095	2.787	.001

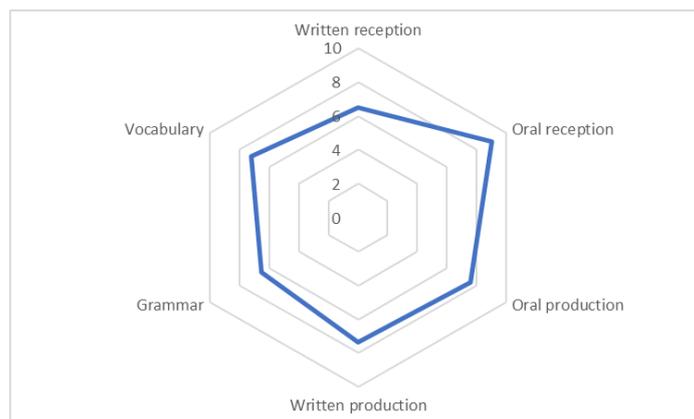
**Table 4.** Analysis of descriptive statistics of reception skills (source: authors)

For the very case of oral reception, there is a clear improvement since the difference between the pre-test and the post-test are statistically significant ( $p=0.026$ ). Students had been exposed to a sizable amount of audiovisual input, which may explain this result.



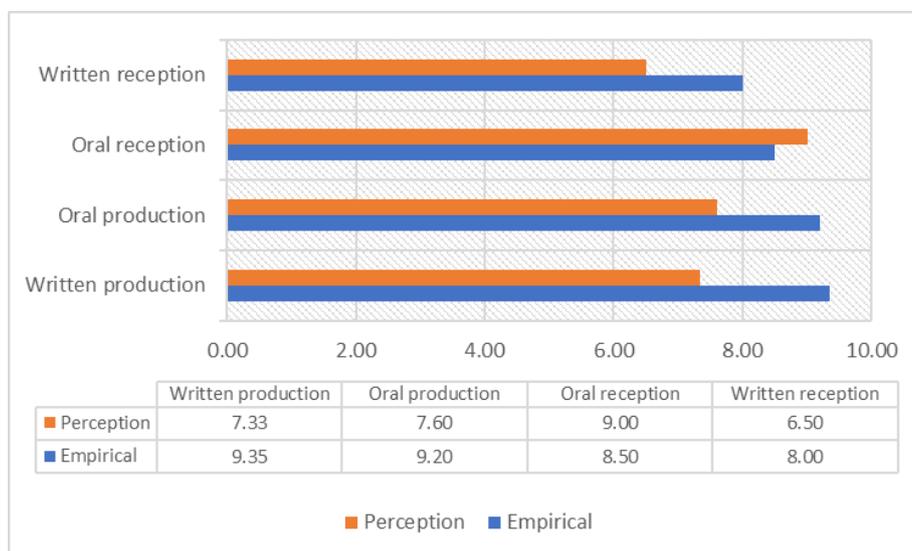
**Figure 6.** Bar diagram for each reception skill (source: authors)

In general, the impact of the course seems to have had a positive effect on the participants, specifically in terms of oral reception, and oral and written production. In order to triangulate the results, it is crucial to compare the empirical data to the perception data. Figure 7 conveys the skills and components (grammar and vocabulary) that pre-service teachers allege to have improved.



**Figure 7.** Radial diagram of participants’ perceptions of improvement for each skill (source: authors)

This diagram should be observed in clockwise direction starting by oral reception since it is the skill which participants feel to have developed the most ( $M_{OR\ PERCEPTION} = 9.00$ ) whilst according to the empirical study it would be the third variable ( $M_{OR\ FITIS} = 8.50$ ). According to participants, oral production is the second skill they have developed the most ( $M_{OP\ PERCEPTION} = 7.60$ ) and it is also the second according to the empirical data obtained ( $M_{OP\ FITIS} = 9.20$ ). The third variable participants affirm to have improved is written production ( $M_{WP\ PERCEPTION} = 7.33$ ), but it is the one they have improved the most according to empirical data ( $M_{WP\ FITIS} = 9.35$ ). Eventually, there seems to be a match in terms of written reception which occupies the fourth position for the very case of perception ( $M_{WR\ PERCEPTION} = 6.50$ ) as well as for empirical data ( $M_{WR\ FITIS} = 8.00$ ). Figure 8 summarises this information. The orange colour is linked to the data based on perceptions and the blue bars are the ones linked to empirical data obtained from the pre-test and post-test.



**Figure 8.** Skills improvement according to perception and empirical data (source: authors)

It is noteworthy to highlight that for the case of oral reception, participants perceived to have developed this skill in a higher degree compared to empirical data. Notwithstanding, it is not the case for oral production, written reception and written production because for these skills the empirical data indicate that their performance was actually higher compared to their own perception.

### 3.2. Perceptions on the didactic potential for pre-service Primary Education teachers

This section is qualitative in nature, and it aims at analysing the perceived pedagogic potential of DAT-training in primary education settings. In the final questionnaire, there was an open-ended question which asked participants about the usefulness of DAT as a language teaching resource for primary education.

From the data gathered in Table 5 (English translations of the original comments in Spanish), pre-service teachers emphasise the usefulness of DAT for teaching languages since it integrates skills in a natural and interactive way, enhancing motivation as well as fostering awareness of cultural diversity and media accessibility.

Participant	Answer
B	I consider it a very useful and entertaining methodology to learn English in a more enjoyable and simple way. This is why it should be used. Because it makes students aware of cultural diversity and existing audiovisual issues.
C	Of course, because it means learning languages through a totally different experience from the norm, where learners will be much more motivated, and in the end, the key to learning is motivation.
D	Yes, it is another way to learn the language in a more interactive way.
E	Yes, as it takes into account all skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing.

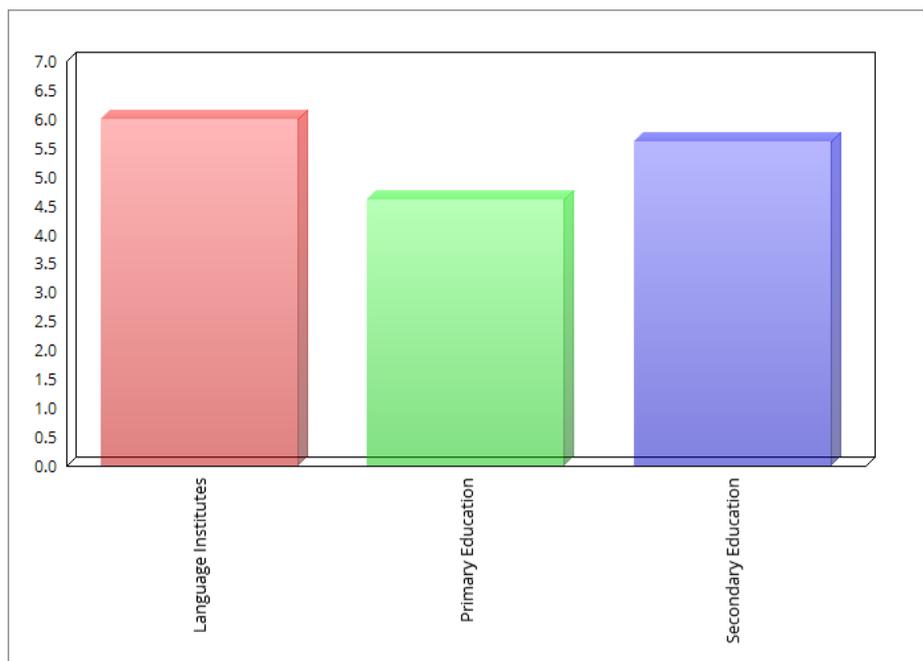
**Table 5.** Perceptions on the usefulness of DAT in primary education (source: authors)

A subsequent question focused on the main difficulties pre-service teachers might find while applying DAT-based lesson plans in primary education. A sample of participants' answers are presented in Table 6. The drawbacks pointed out by the pre-service teachers in their answers might be linked to language and digital gaps, whose relationship is analysed by Huertas-Abril and Gómez-Parra's (2019) who showed how the digital gap may have a negative impact on the language gap.

Participant	Answer
A	The problem of the use of ICTs and the lack of access to them for everyone.
C	I think that its use can be difficult for specific age groups. Not all aspects of DAT could be addressed, for example, in primary school I think that subtitling would be very complicated, not because of its complexity, but because of the time and dedication it requires.
D	Lack of knowledge in the field of technology.
E	The speed of speech, the use of certain expressions.

**Table 6.** Perceptions of the drawbacks of DAT in primary education (source: authors)

Figure 9 validates the positive perceptions participants expressed in their comments with data collected through a Likert scale question within the final questionnaire. Participants indicated that they perceive the use of DAT positively in primary education ( $M=4.6$ ,  $SD=1.3$ ) whilst, in secondary education, they found a higher potential of the use of DAT ( $M=5.6$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ). Furthermore, for the case of Spain's language institutes (*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas*), it is important to mention that participants fully agreed with the usefulness of including these tasks since  $SD=0$  and the  $M=6$  (six being the maximum score).



**Figure 9.** Perceptions of DAT in different educational contexts (source: authors)

Besides, there was another item in the questionnaire that asked participants on the pertinence of making use of DAT as a resource in language learning, and they were expected to justify their answers. The reader may find the answers in Table 7.

Participant	Answer
<b>A</b>	Because I consider it a very useful and entertaining methodology to learn English in a more enjoyable and simple way. That's why it should be used because it makes students aware of the cultural diversity and existing audiovisual problems.
<b>B</b>	Of course, because it involves learning languages through a completely different experience than the one offered by the norm, where students will be much more motivated, and ultimately, the key to learning is motivation.
<b>C</b>	Yes, it is a more interactive way of learning the language.
<b>E</b>	Also, because it takes into account all the skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

**Table 7.** Perceptions on the use of DAT in language learning (source: authors)

Furthermore, participants were asked about the main advantages of DAT in language education. Their answers contrast with the questions on the limitations, not least because they highlighted the positive aspects of DAT, including autonomy, motivation, creativity, and the simultaneous development of language skills. The reader may find a detailed breakdown of these advantages in Table 8.

Participant	Answer
<b>B</b>	The autonomy and the possibility to create one's own subtitles are a great advantage.
<b>C</b>	As I mentioned earlier, I believe that motivation is key. It also fosters students' creativity, addresses the needs of everyone and shows them the vast range that TAV encompasses. Undoubtedly, within it, they may discover a hidden passion for learning a foreign language.

<b>E</b>	It is a more motivating way of learning and does not prove as tiresome as other methods.
<b>F</b>	Additionally, one can develop all language skills simultaneously.

**Table 8.** Perceptions of the main advantages of the use of DAT in language education (source: authors)

Besides, there were two comments (Table 9) on the general perception of the intervention which are of uttermost interest for the study.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>A</b>	Personally, I found this course to be exceedingly engaging and would heartily recommend it to anyone.
<b>F</b>	The course has been a remarkable journey of self-discovery, allowing me to develop skills that I never thought possible. I felt thoroughly motivated by the challenges I faced, especially those that allowed me to channel my creativity. Moreover, it has been an excellent platform for practicing and improving my English language proficiency. Many thanks!

**Table 9.** General perceptions of the use of DAT (source: authors)

In conclusion, the comments provided by participants in Table 9 reflect their overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the DAT intervention. Their expressions of enthusiasm, skill development, and language gains highlight the significant impact of this approach on their learning experiences, emphasising its value both personally and professionally.

#### 4. Conclusions

The case study has tried to put forward the need for pre- and in-service teacher training in DAT methodology. In particular, it reports on the results obtained from six final-year students of the degree in Primary Education at the University of Córdoba, Spain, who undertook a four-month teacher training course that included a B2-level English language course comprising 15 lesson plans that had previously been created and validated by the TRADILEX project. The six participants subsequently produced AD-based lesson plans. In this case study, participants acted as language learners and in-training teachers of English as a Foreign Language, respectively.

The quantitative and qualitative results obtained from the experimental treatment bring attention to the fact that pre-service teachers have improved their English language skills after the experimental treatment. The findings from pre- and post-tests are especially interesting since they show that participants have improved their productive skills followed by receptive skills in the following order: written production, oral production, oral reception and written reception.

Participants also reported a very positive perception on the possible applications of DAT-based tasks in primary education contexts. Interestingly, this study echoed Fernández-Costales's (2014, 2021a, 2021b) findings on the perception of DAT by both teachers and students. However, this study is unique inasmuch as the participants acted as both pre-service primary teachers and English language learners, and their perceptions in both positions were widely positive. This double condition was also presented in Lertola's (2021) study, in which participants acted as language learners and in-training infant educators. Furthermore, the current case study also complements Lertola and Talaván's (2022) study on teacher training and widens it by showing the usefulness of the five main DAT modes for language education. Furthermore, considering the historical context in which it was implemented, pre-service teachers also reckon that this training was particularly appropriate as it provided them with useful resources for remote teaching.

One of the main drawbacks pre-service teachers found was linked to the use of technology. As Huertas and Gómez-Parra (2019) pointed out, the digital gap is narrowly linked to the language gap, and it is important to note that DAT-based tasks often take place in virtual environments. Therefore, also due to the fact that schools are getting more resources to reduce the digital gap, further research on face-to-face contexts should be carried out to explore its effectiveness.

One of the main limitations of this study is the sample size. Therefore, further studies on teacher training are required. More specifically, additional research is needed for pre- and in-service teachers to emulate language learners' experiences in order to improve lesson plan design and piloting. Piloting was not feasible due to time constraints.

To conclude, and despite the limitations of the study, this paper sheds light on the importance of DAT for pre-service teachers by expanding on previous studies. Future research endeavours may delve into new avenues for exploring the impact of DAT on language skill improvement, motivation enhancement, and its effectiveness, especially in primary education settings.

### Acknowledgements

This study received funding from the Spanish Government, Science, and Innovation Ministry /Gobierno de España, Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (Project reference PID2019-107362GA-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033, Agencia Estatal de Investigación). As a predoctoral researcher, Antonio Jesús Tinedo Rodríguez received funding support from the UNED-Santander Research Scholarship (academic year 2022) and from EIDUNED (Escuela Internacional de Doctorado) as a FPI researcher (academic years 2023–2026).

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## Finding spaces for improvement in the didactic use of audiovisual translation in the EFL classroom: The case of the TRADILEX project

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### **Abstract**

TRADILEX was a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (2020-2023), which aimed to perform quasi-experimental research that determines the degree of improvement in English as a foreign language (EFL) after the implementation of a methodological proposal that integrates different AVT modes. The current paper reports on empirical evidence obtained from the implementation of the TRADILEX project in five different centres (Universitat Jaume I, Universidad de Almería, Universidade da Coruña, Universidad de Castilla la Mancha, and Speaking Languages Online). A common denominator among all these centres was the low level of student engagement and, as a consequence, a higher dropout rate. Our aim is to analyse the factors, both positive and negative, that could have had an impact on the completion of the tasks proposed. To this end, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) qualitative analysis has been carried out using the data obtained thanks to different collection instruments created for the project. As a result, the causes that may have had a negative impact in all five language centres and may have caused a higher dropout rate have been identified. These conclusions will support the implementation of TRADILEX methodology in the future.

### **Keywords**

Didactic audiovisual translation, language teaching, dropout rate, TRADILEX, SWOT analysis

## 1. Introduction

The use of audiovisual material in foreign language learning (FLL) settings is not a recent practice. Vanderplank's seminal article, published in 1988 and entitled "The value of teletext sub-titles in language learning", paved the way to a novel approach of understanding FLL, which considered the use of captioned videos as a useful tool for exposing students to the richness and variety of language available in television (Vanderplank, 2019). Since then, the didactic potential of audiovisual material in the foreign language classroom has received scholarly attention, to such an extent that an active engagement of learners in audiovisual translation tasks is encouraged. As a result, a burgeoning research avenue, known as didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) (Lertola, 2019; Talaván, 2020), has been established, drawing the attention of an increasing number of researchers in the fields of FLL and translation studies.

The development of research in DAT has gone hand in hand with the technological advances over the last decades. While Vanderplank's proposal (1988) relied on the passive use of subtitles for enhancing students' learning process, the most recent research in the field of DAT promotes an active role of the learner through audiovisual translation (AVT) tasks. This action-oriented approach (Bolaños García-Escribano & Navarrete, 2022; Navarrete & Bolaños García-Escribano, 2022) would not have been possible without information and communication technologies or Internet access. Likewise, the consolidation of AVT as a research area in translation studies, as well as the new educational paradigms that place the learners at the centre of their learning process, have laid the foundations on which the principles of DAT have been developed.

Experimental research on the applications of AVT to FLL has been supported by several research-led international projects: LeViS (2006–2008); SubLanLearn (2009–2012); ClipFlair (2011–2014); Babelium (2013–2015); and PluriTAV (2016–2019), among others. The present paper has been written within the framework of another international project on DAT, the TRADILEX project (2020–2023), which will be briefly introduced in section 2.

By conducting a SWOT analysis, the main objective of this study is to explore the positive and negative or improvable aspects of the TRADILEX project, with regards to both internal and external factors, in order to determine which of them had a major impact on the language centres with a higher dropout rate among students. With that in mind, the following research questions (R.Q.) were established:

- R.Q. 1: What are the positive qualities (strengths and opportunities) of the TRADILEX project?
- R.Q. 2: What are the improvable qualities (weaknesses and threats) of the TRADILEX project?
- R.Q. 3: What do all five language centres, which exhibited a higher dropout rate, have in common as compared with other institutions where the implementation of the project was successful?

The paper is organised as follows: firstly, a brief description of the public-funded project TRADILEX and the literature published within the project framework contextualises and justifies this study. Then, the research is defined with the description of the method, the instruments, the analysis and the discussion. The study ends with the concluding remarks while also acknowledging the study's limitations.

## 2. The TRADILEX project

TRADILEX is a R&D&i project undertaken by the TRADIT research group. It stands for Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education and has received funding from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation for the period 2020-2023.

The main goal of this project was to carry out quasi-experimental research to determine the degree of improvement in English<sup>1</sup> as a foreign language after including AVT as a pedagogic tool. With the aim of enhancing communicative competence in an integrated manner, the researchers taking part in this project – who belong to eleven Spanish and four international higher education institutions and work in the fields of translation studies and FLL – developed a methodological proposal comprising a didactic sequence that combines five AVT modes: subtitling, voiceover, dubbing, audio description (AD), and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH).

The sequence, aimed at B1 and B2-level learners, comprised a total of 30 lesson plans (LPs) for each level (six LPs per AVT mode). All of them had been piloted with adult students belonging to different language centres or higher education institutions. During the implementation of the project, however, the didactic sequence was reduced to 15 LPs (three per AVT mode). As Talaván and Lertola (2022) explained, each LP contains reception, mediation and production activities and is structured in a scaffolded manner in four sections: warm-up, video viewing, AVT task and post-AVT task. The LPs, of one hour each of them, were to be completed online using Google Forms in an autonomous way. At the end of each LP, the learner could download the key for self-assessment and the teachers could access the captioning or revoicing file to provide feedback.

During the academic year 2021–2022, the didactic sequence was implemented in a total of 15 higher education institutions and language centres. As explained in section 2.1., the project brought to the fore the benefits of this methodology in the development of integrated language skills and communicative competence (Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023). However, it also encountered some difficulties that require further reflection. In this paper, special attention will be paid to the high dropout rate at five centres taking part in the study in order to minimise this problem in the future.

Our SWOT analysis (explained in section 3) focuses on the positive and negative or improvable aspects of the TRADILEX project to determine what factors may have had the greatest influence on the low engagement of students at certain centres. The centres included in the analysis and the participants taking part in the study are the following:

- Universitat Jaume I: 52 students registered, but only 12 finished the didactic sequence. The sample consisted of ten women and two men, all aged between 18 and 30, except for one who was between 41 and 50 years old. All participants had a B2 proficiency level, except for two participants with a C1 proficiency level.
- Universidade da Coruña: 14 students registered, but only one man finished the didactic sequence. He was aged between 18–30 and had a B1 level.
- Universidad de Almería: 37 students registered, but only 9 finished the didactic sequence. The sample included six men and three women aged between 18 and 30 with a B1 proficiency level.
- Universidad de Castilla la Mancha: 50 students registered, but only 12 finished the didactic sequence. They were six women and six men aged between 18 and 30. Six of them had a B1 level and the other six a B2 proficiency level.
- Speaking Languages Online<sup>2</sup>: 30 students registered, but only 10 finished the didactic sequence. The sample consisted of seven women and three men. Regarding their ages, three participants were between 18 and 30 years old, two between 31 and 40 years

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<sup>1</sup> In the last stages of the project, other European languages have also been included and tested.

<sup>2</sup> A private language centre that showed great interest in taking part in the project.

old, three between 31 and 50 years old, and two over 51 years old. In terms of English proficiency, six participants had a B2 level, while four had a C1 level.

As can be seen, only 44 (approx. 24%) of the 183 students enrolled in these courses completed the didactic sequence.

### **2.1. Research published within the TRADILEX project**

The TRADILEX project has been extensively studied by its members, and as a result, numerous research designs based on empirical evidence from TRADILEX have been published during the last 3 years. Talaván and Lertola (2022) introduced a methodological proposal designed for the project that emphasises the novelty of the approach compared to previous research. Such novelty lies in the combination of five different AVT modes. According to the authors, the pedagogical translanguaging instructional strategy based on DAT involves a number of AVT modes, including both captioning and revoicing, and may combine two or more languages. The development of mediation skills is also emphasised, as any AVT mode can help students “make the original audiovisual text more accessible and understandable, facilitating and clarifying the linguistic and communicative transfer, thus mediating texts, concepts, and communication” (Talaván & Lertola, 2022, p. 27).

Bolaños García-Escribano and Navarrete (2022) and Navarrete and Bolaños García-Escribano (2022) focused their studies on the action-oriented approach (AoA) in the TRADILEX sequence, which involves learners carrying out communication tasks in specific contexts. The authors argued that mediation plays a central role in AoA, since learners become social agents who facilitate knowledge while mediating with others. Meanwhile, Sánchez-Requena *et al.* (2022) analysed the results of a questionnaire completed by 30 teachers who supervised the implementation of the TRADILEX learning sequence in different proficiency level courses. Their results showed the benefits of using different audiovisual translation modes to enhance communicative competence in FLL, as well as some areas for improvement in their application. Teachers viewed DAT as a motivational tool for language learning due to its innovative, authentic, and independent learning and creativity-promoting qualities. However, the study also revealed concerns about the reliance on technology, such as the need for familiarisation with the software used and access to adequate technological equipment and a stable internet connection.

Aware of the concern teachers coordinating and implementing the TRADILEX sequence showed, the study of Lertola and Talaván (2022) focused on the specific training for the teachers, as they play a key role in TRADILEX as specifically trained facilitators of the learning process. The authors discussed the results of a pilot study of TRADILEX that involved 12 foreign language teachers who had taken an online teacher training course in DAT. The article analysed the data gathered through a feedback questionnaire completed by the participants, the assessment of their AVT tasks, and structured as well as non-structured observations. Among all the conclusions, it is worth mentioning that teachers found some AVT modes more challenging than others. The authors focused mainly on revoicing, i.e., AD and dubbing, and found that for participants, the former was slightly more challenging but still found it to be effective in the language classroom. The authors argued that the reason for that perception is the more demanding nature of AD, as it conveys intersemiotic transfer (Lertola & Talaván, 2022, p. 148). The studies published by Couto-Cantero *et al.* (2021), Talaván and Tinedo-Rodríguez (2022) and Couto-Cantero *et al.* (2022) analysed the online assessment designed for the project. The assessment for the project was carried out through the educational platform Moodle using rubrics as evaluation tools. In the design of these rubrics and in the context of an asynchronous environment, two key elements were taken into account: feedback and the importance of scaffolding.

Talaván and Tinedo-Rodríguez (2022) addressed the issue of dropout rates in their study, which is the main focus of the current study. According to the authors, e-assessment facilitates communication between teachers and students, allowing students to receive immediate feedback on their marks. However, in the institutions discussed in the present study, this strategy was not effective enough, as students ended up dropping out of the course. Couto-Cantero *et al.* (2022) explored the results of initial and final tests with an initial sample of 40 applicants, eight of whom finally completed the course. Results showed that oral and written production skills had clearly improved. Nevertheless, the authors also addressed some of the obstacles they faced, such as resistance to breaking with traditional tests that some find effective, and the challenging nature of the marking and evaluation process. The studies by Lertola (2021), Plaza-Lara and Fernández-Costales (2022) and Plaza-Lara and Gonzalo Llera (2022) focused on the didactic application of specific AVT modes and showed the particular benefits of each mode for language learning. Finally, members of the TRADILEX project also explored the advantages of using DAT in other educational contexts, such as in primary education (Fernández-Costales, 2021a, 2021b) and secondary education (Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena, 2018; Bobadilla-Pérez & Carballo de Santiago, 2022; Navarrete, 2018). Therefore, the following question arises: If DAT has proven to be effective for language learning, why did some students, enrolled in all five language centres, drop out of the course implementing the TRADILEX sequence? What factors may have influenced their decision to drop out?

### 3. Methodology

The SWOT analysis, developed by Learned *et al.* (1965) in the 1960s, is a descriptive tool originally used in the context of strategic business planning (Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007) for qualitative analysis purposes. However, its simple framework, which allows for easy identification of internal and external factors conditioning a project or organization, has made it suitable for the application of this approach in evaluation research (Romero Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2015) in the academic arena.

The acronym SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and it has also been called TOWS analysis. The primary aim of this analytical method is to provide an overview of the internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats (Veiga Díaz, 2020) that affect a project in a positive (strengths and opportunities) or negative (weaknesses and threats) way. This confrontational analysis of internal and external factors makes it possible to explore the positive and negative aspects of a project through a systematic approach (Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007) with the aim of planning future strategies and maximizing results. As shown in Figure 1, strengths and weaknesses can be defined as internal, controllable factors, whereas opportunities and threats are external, uncontrollable factors, which form the external environment in which the project takes place.



**Figure 1.** 2x2 Matrix for SWOT Analysis (adapted from Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007, p. 387)

### 3.1. Data collection instruments

For the implementation of the TRADILEX project, different research tools were developed, tested and validated (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2021, 2022; Lertola & Talaván, 2022; Sánchez-Requena *et al.*, 2022) in order to gather information not only on the possible benefits of the methodology in students' integrated skills, but also to compile feedback on the project itself, be it positive or negative. These positive and negative or improvable aspects are examined in the present study drawing on the SWOT analysis methodology previously explained. Since this type of analysis requires qualitative data, the data collection instruments that support our research were the following:

- The final questionnaire answered by the students that finished the didactic sequence in the five centres examined in this paper (a total of 44 questionnaires). This tool provided qualitative feedback through several open-ended items in which the students could express their point of view regarding the methodological proposal: instructions, time invested and duration, improvement of integrated skills and cultural knowledge, AVT modes used, satisfaction, and motivation.
- The final questionnaire answered by the teachers and staff that monitored the implementation of the didactic sequence in the different centres (a total of 30 questionnaires). In this questionnaire, a group of items focused on the teachers' perception of the development of the methodology. Furthermore, in the final open questions, the participants could express their point of view on the use of DAT.
- Semi-structured interviews with students carried out once the course had finished (a total of 6 interviews). Due to the high number of participants, only a small sample was interviewed. The objective of the final oral interviews was to obtain a more complete picture of the project, discuss its advantages and disadvantages, and compare the data with those retrieved from the questionnaires.

The feedback provided in all these sources of information was analysed and categorised using the four pillars on which SWOT analyses are based. The software for qualitative research ATLAS.ti was employed. Codes were created to tag strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

## 4. SWOT analysis

Taking into account the 2x2 matrix for SWOT analysis presented in Figure 1, in this section, the main conclusions drawn from the data collection instruments mentioned above were organised depending on whether they are considered internal (strengths and weaknesses) or external factors (opportunities and threats) conditioning the project and its methodology. Specific excerpts obtained from the data collection instruments mentioned in 3.1 were included and translated into English. It must also be pointed out that, as mentioned by Lertola and Talaván (2022), ideas retrieved from the instruments mentioned above were repeated once and again, which shows a certain agreement among the participants.

### 4.1. Strengths (internal analysis)

#### 4.1.1. Enhancement of integrated language skills using a motivating, creative and innovative methodology

Although the enhancement of students' integrated language skills was measured using an instrument not assessed in the present study, namely, the Final Test of Integrated Skills (see Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2021), most of the students' and teachers' perceptions retrieved mainly from the questionnaires showed an overall impression that students had improved their language skills. But even if, in certain cases, these perceptions may differ from one participant to another (depending on the previous level of students, the implication of the group and dropout rates), almost all the participants agreed on the use of several adjectives to describe the methodology proposed by TRADILEX, when compared with other traditional methods in FLL: motivating, creative and innovative. These positive qualifiers were repeated by almost 100% of the students and teachers taking part in the project, and the quality of the materials created for the project received a special mention by all parties involved in the data collection instruments. Furthermore, 36,36% of the students (16 participants) remark that thanks to the methodology proposed by TRADILEX, competences are contextualised and acquired in real-life situations, which cannot always be simulated using a textbook: "continuous contact with English based on real use. It has nothing to do with the methodology of the typical book that has been used for many years now" (student no. 5 from Universidad de Castilla la Mancha).

#### 4.1.2. Students' awareness of cultural, social and accessibility issues

The active use of AVT in the foreign language classroom brings students closer to the translator profession (Díaz-Cintas, 2008; Talaván, 2020). In this sense, some participants pointed out that the inclusion of accessibility modes, such as AD and SDH, in the didactic sequence, helped them to empathise with the problems that people with visual or aural impairments face to enjoy audiovisual materials in their daily lives: "SDH helps us to empathise with people with this problem and understand them, as we come into direct contact with the work that facilitates their translation" (student no. 4 from Universidad de Almería).

At the same time, the selection of the topics for each LP was carefully planned to include not only cultural contents that allowed students to plunge into the English culture and its diverse manifestations all around the world, but also to address issues with social impact, such as gender discrimination, violence against women, environment and racism (Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2022). This approach was positively valued by 45,45% of the participants (20 students), who recognised the potential of DAT to discover new cultures and raise awareness of social issues: "the methodology helps to teach positive values" (student no. 3 from Universitat Jaume I); "cultural contents draw attention on different elements and motivate to learn more about each one of them" (student no. 5 from Universidad de Almería).

### **4.1.3. Integration of information and communication technologies (ICT)**

This particular strength may be controversial, since the use of information and communication technologies was also mentioned as a negative aspect of the project, as will be explained below. Although only 11,36% of the participants (5 students) agreed on the fact that the integration of ICT brings benefits for students and appreciate the possibility of learning how to use new software, this rate was not so high as for other analysed aspects, such as the motivating and innovative nature of the methodology. It must be remarked that the software used was specifically developed for translation or video editing tasks, and students were only provided with brief video tutorials, created by the TRADILEX members, in which the basic features needed to complete the AVT tasks were explained. This required students to be autonomous enough, to take an active role during their learning process, and to have the basic technological skills that allow them to solve problems when these are not explained in the video tutorial. From the researchers' perspective, these attributes may be what makes the difference between those that mentioned the use of ICT as a positive or negative aspect. In this sense, further research is required.

## **4.2. Weaknesses (internal analysis)**

### **4.2.1. High dependence on ICT**

This weakness is closely related to the strength mentioned in 4.1.3. Although 11,36% of the participants (5 students) considered that the use of ICT was positive for the methodology, most of them reported that this high dependence on ICT could have a negative impact on the learning process and students' motivation. Even if video tutorials were provided, 27,27% of the students (12 participants) stated that they faced problems when working on Moodle, the educational platform used to articulate the didactic sequence, and 36,36% of the students (16 participants) experienced some difficulties when installing the software required for each AVT task. More than 50% of the participants (22 students) included in this study showed greater concern about the technical elements of AVT: volume in the video, spotting in subtitling tasks or synchronisation in dubbing. In this sense, student no. 7 from Universidad de Almería mentioned that "although video tutorials are quite complete, they did not explain all the specific features or technical problems that one can face." Therefore, the challenges confronted by the students differed from one person to another depending on their previous technological competence.

### **4.2.2. Excessive workload**

LPs were planned to be completed in one hour. As explained by Talaván and Lertola (2022), they consisted of four phases that included a warm-up, a video viewing, a didactic AVT and a post-AVT task. Virtually all participants informed that the time spent to complete the LPs always exceeded the time allocated. Furthermore, due to the setup in Google Forms, once the students started a new LP, it had to be completed in one go, because there was no possibility to stop and continue in a different moment.

In this sense, both students and teachers recommended to shorten certain activities because of the excessive workload. For example, the post-AVT task used to include a writing task, which was perceived as a quite repetitive task by some students. In the same way, even if the different sections in the LPs were found interesting and necessary, some of the participants suggested to focus especially on the AVT task: "it would be advisable to focus more on AVT and delete some of the pre- and post-AVT tasks" (student no. 1 from Speaking Languages Online).

### **4.2.3. Lack of immediate feedback for open questions or AVT tasks**

Once the students submitted the LP through Google Forms, the tool showed them a correction

key with answers for the different activities they had just completed. This key was created by the TRADILEX members and, in the case of open questions (such as writing a text or speaking) or the AVT task itself, an example was provided so that participants could get an idea of what was expected for each task and compare with their own productions. However, although some of them found the key very useful, they preferred to receive feedback on their own deliverables. This individual feedback was only provided when a group of teachers was monitoring the completion of the didactic sequence and it was not always immediate. In this sense, one teacher from Universidade da Coruña mentioned the following: “I think students didn’t feel accompanied and couldn’t notice they were progressing in their language skills.”

### **4.3. Opportunities (external analysis)**

#### **4.3.1. Teacher training in didactic AVT**

The innovative nature of the methodology proposed by TRADILEX enables teachers to adapt their training materials to create AVT tasks (Talaván & Lertola, 2022). Although teacher training could also be understood as a threat instead of as an opportunity, the teachers monitoring the implementation of the didactic sequence in the different centres were offered the possibility of taking a course on DAT. The feedback provided in the teachers’ questionnaire highlights the interest that this methodology arouses. Although, after the completion of the didactic sequence, they also mentioned some drawbacks that could have a negative effect on the learning process, they remain optimistic and enthusiastic about the use of this methodology.

#### **4.3.2. Possibility of introducing cross-curricular skills**

This opportunity is closely related to the strength mentioned in section 4.1.2., i.e., students’ awareness of cultural, social and accessibility issues. It could be stated that, apart from the benefits the methodology has proved to yield in language learning, its approach is aligned with the aims of the *Education 2030 Agenda* defined by the United Nations, whose targets include “education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2017, n. pag.).

In addition to this education in values, the data collected from the instruments used in this study also showed that cross-curricular competences such as autonomous learning and creativity were promoted. In this sense, some teachers added that it would be interesting to implement the methodology in face-to-face contexts in order to promote teamwork: “the course would work better if the students were enrolled in a specific course with face-to-face conversation activities and not as complementary activities” (teacher no. 2 from Universidade da Coruña).

#### **4.3.3. Implementation of DAT in primary and secondary education**

All the data collection instruments used for this study included a question regarding the convenience of introducing DAT at other educational levels. Albeit with some nuances, a great part of the participants was open to this idea, mainly because of the innovative, motivating and contextualised learning it offers, which differs from the classical methods used in FLL. Many of them, however, referred to the need to adapt the methodology to the different levels, not only on the linguistic aspect, but also with respect to the use of ICT or the autonomous work required from students. One aspect that was particularly positively perceived was the aforementioned education in values that the methodology could promote at non-university levels.

#### **4.4. Threats (external analysis)**

##### **4.4.1. Low level of student engagement when the didactic sequence is not compulsory**

Due to the relatively high dropout rate at certain centres, participants were asked about the reasons that could explain this low level of student engagement. In this regard, the data provided in the final questionnaire answered by the teachers and staff that monitored the implementation of the project allowed us to conclude that when the completion of the didactic sequence was not a compulsory task in the final assessment of the course where the project was embedded, the completion rate of the course dropped. Furthermore, when the duration of the didactic sequence exceeded that of the course, students' engagement was usually lower. These conclusions were confirmed by the data provided by the students in their questionnaires. Many of them stated that, due to the excessive workload, they finally decided to put their efforts into the tasks that were compulsory to complete the course in which they were enrolled. The above notwithstanding, a few students mentioned that a positive aspect of the methodology was the possibility it offered to learn without the pressure of having to take an exam and some of them even asked the teachers for some extra time to complete the didactic sequence once the course had finished.

##### **4.4.2. Focus on intermediate levels and reliance on students' previous knowledge**

The TRADILEX project was targeted for B1 and B2 English learners, so students were supposed to have basic knowledge in grammar and vocabulary. Although each LP included, apart from the AVT task, other activities that aimed to provide the participants with the vocabulary and grammar rules to be applied in the AVT, no explanation of grammatical issues was provided as traditionally done in FLL settings. Maybe this was one of the reasons why some participants stated that previous knowledge was required to complete the LP satisfactorily. They remarked that the LPs allowed them to review their grammar knowledge, but without that previous basis it would have been difficult to complete the didactic sequence.

##### **4.4.3. Incompatibility with personal or professional duties**

Although this threat would apply to other methodologies different from the one proposed by TRADILEX, it is worth mentioning it since a great part of the participants in the questionnaire and the interviews referred to the problems they faced when trying to complete the didactic sequence along with their personal and professional duties. This is closely related to the excessive workload of the methodology and dependence on ICT mentioned as weaknesses above. It must be pointed out that the didactic sequence was only offered to adult learners, whose daily duties may differ from those of younger students, and in most of the cases it was a complementary module within the course students were enrolled in. Although these conditions were specific to the TRADILEX project that aimed to determine the potential of DAT in FLL, in the future, the implementation of the didactic sequence proposed should be adapted considering student's profile and needs.

#### **5. Discussion**

Any SWOT analysis should aim at identifying the positive and negative aspects of a project in order to plan future strategies and maximise results. To answer the research questions presented in the introduction, the results of our analysis have been summarised in Table 1.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancement of integrated language skills using a motivating, creative and innovative methodology</li> <li>- Students' awareness of cultural, social and accessibility issues</li> <li>- Integration of information and communication technologies (ICT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High dependence on ICT</li> <li>- Excessive workload</li> <li>- Lack of immediate feedback for open questions or AVT tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher training in DAT</li> <li>- Possibility of introducing cross-curricular skills</li> <li>- Implementation of DAT in primary and secondary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low level of student engagement when the didactic sequence is not compulsory</li> <li>- Focus on intermediate levels and reliance on students' previous knowledge</li> <li>- Incompatibility with personal or professional duties</li> </ul>

**Table 1.** Results of the SWOT Analysis

The first research question of this study aimed to determine the positive qualities of the TRADILEX project. With regard to internal factors, it is noteworthy that the strengths observed in the project at these five language centres did not significantly differ from the results of the project as a whole. Therefore, all participants demonstrated awareness of the value of DAT for improving language skills, promoting intercultural learning, and developing digital skills. These findings are consistent with prior research discussed in the literature review of this study (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2022; Fernández-Costales *et al.*, 2023; Lertola & Talaván, 2022; Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2022; Talaván, 2020; Lertola, 2019). Therefore, the reason for the drop-out of these students was not the unawareness of the above-mentioned benefits of DAT.

Although the authors acknowledged that the final questionnaires completed by students were only obtained from those who did not drop out of the language centres under study, the fact that they reported similar strengths in DAT implementation implies that the project was successfully carried out. Thus, improper implementation of the project cannot be considered as a dropout factor in this case.

Regarding the opportunities, considered as external factors, all participant teachers in the project positively valued the specific course on DAT. It is noteworthy that several initiatives within the TRADILEX project focused on teacher training, yielding highly favourable outcomes (Fernández-Costales, 2021a; Lertola & Talaván, 2022). A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was created to provide teacher training in DAT, and the first edition attracted 420 registered teachers. Among the eight teachers who responded to the questionnaire monitoring the implementation of the didactic sequence, only half had completed this initial training, as it was not mandatory for participation. Although monitoring and assessment without specific knowledge of DAT can be conducted, participants with a deeper understanding of the specific methodology are likely to be more engaged in the project. Consequently, inadequate teachers training may represent one of the dropout factors in these language centres. Mandatory training for all teachers could enhance their motivation and involvement, as they would comprehend the benefits of DAT outlined in the literature and appreciated by participants who completed the MOOC.

The data collected from the instruments employed in this study indicate two additional opportunities stemming from the innovative methodology proposed by the TRADILEX project. Firstly, it provides the possibility of introducing cross-curricular skills, as previously observed

by Rodríguez-Arancón (2023), Talaván and Lertola (2022) and Tinedo-Rodríguez (2022). Secondly, the data revealed that participants recognised the transferability of the integrated DAT approach proposed by TRADILEX to different educational stages. These findings align with the conclusions of prior studies mentioned in this chapter.

In general, all teachers and students who participated in the five language centres with higher dropout rates acknowledged the two opportunities described above, but they did not seem to have a notable impact on student motivation to complete the TRADILEX sequence. Regarding transferability, it may be understandable that students were not concerned about whether the methodology can be implemented in other educational stages. However, developing cross-curricular skills should be a significant factor influencing motivation. Unfortunately, in these language centres, obtaining the final language certificate for professional or academic development was one of the primary motivators for students, rather than developing interdisciplinary skills.

Upon analysis of the data collected, three common tendencies were identified regarding the areas for improvement of the TRADILEX project and DAT methodology. Firstly, the enhancement of ICT skills was viewed as an advantage of DAT, but the high dependency on technology of the approach was also considered an obstacle. Previous studies have also acknowledged this ambiguous relationship between ICTs and DAT in the context of language learning (see Lertola, 2019). Secondly, students in language centres with higher dropout rates consistently regarded dependency on specific technologies not as an obstacle for language learning, but as a skill that requires time to develop. Lastly, the excessive workload as perceived by teachers and students, especially in those language centres where the TRADILEX sequence was introduced as an extra activity, was identified as a conditional factor. As the completion of the tasks was not considered an assessment tool for the final mark or the course where it was being implemented, the focus of the students and some teachers was not primarily on the general improvement of their language skills, but on the amount of work it entailed.

The focus of the present analysis was on the weaknesses and threats of the TRADILEX project as identified through the second research question. Three common tendencies were identified regarding internal factors of the TRADILEX sequence and DAT methodology. The high dependency on technology was considered an obstacle, while the lack of immediate feedback was identified as a limitation of the project. Furthermore, the excessive workload imposed by the project and its incompatibility with students' personal, professional, or academic duties were recognised as external threats to its success.

The lack of immediate feedback was identified as a major weakness of the TRADILEX project, which had not been discussed in previous literature. Feedback is essential for effective learning, as it provides students with a model or sample answer for open questions, as well as specific instructions on the errors they make. However, providing useful feedback requires significant engagement from teachers, which may exceed their monitoring responsibilities (in the particular case of TRADILEX) and increase their workload. This internal weakness of the project also becomes an external factor that influences the dropout rate in the five institutions where the project was introduced as a complementary activity.

The incompatibility with personal, professional, or academic duties was identified as an external threat to the project's success. In these five language centres, the TRADILEX sequence was introduced as a complementary activity, and most students' main motivation was to obtain the certificate as they had other professional or academic responsibilities. In some cases, the completion of the tasks would outlast the duration of the course itself, leading to a lack of motivation among students.

Another external threat to the project's success was linked to the way it was introduced in the course. As a complementary activity, the TRADILEX sequence was not well-connected to the course contents of the language centre. Students perceived that they were not provided with the vocabulary and grammar rules to be applied in AVT, nor were grammatical issues explained as traditionally done in FLL settings. This lack of connection between the course contents and the TRADILEX sequence could also be one of the factors that affected the completion of the different tasks.

In summary, the second research question aimed to evaluate the weaknesses and threats of the TRADILEX project. The identified tendencies and factors highlight the importance of providing effective feedback to students, reducing the excessive workload imposed by the project, and ensuring its compatibility with the personal, professional, and academic duties of the students. Additionally, DAT sequences would need to be integrated with the course contents of language centres to enhance its effectiveness.

The results of the third research question revealed that external factors were the main contributors to the higher dropout rate observed in the language centres examined, rather than internal factors of the TRADILEX sequence. As anticipated, three external factors were identified, which were discussed in the response to the second research question. First, the completion of the TRADILEX sequence was not mandatory, and therefore, some students may not have felt motivated to complete it. Second, there was a lack of rigid temporal planning of the sequence. Finally, the profile of the students who participated in the course was such that their primary motivation for completing the course was to achieve a specific language proficiency level for professional or academic development, and therefore, the TRADILEX sequence was viewed as a supplementary activity rather than as an integral part of the course. These external factors may have contributed to the high dropout rates observed in the language centres under examination.

## 6. Concluding remarks

The present study aimed to investigate the positive and negative or improvable qualities of the TRADILEX project, focusing on both internal and external factors, and to determine which factors had a major impact on the language centres with a higher dropout rate. The findings revealed that the strengths and opportunities of the TRADILEX sequence, which integrated DAT tasks, were generally observed in all the language centres, consistent with the conclusions of previous research. DAT not only promoted language skills but also facilitated the development of digital skills, intercultural awareness, mediation skills, and autonomous learning. However, the weaknesses of the project were also identified, and the research team is taking steps to address them. For example, in response to the issue of dependence on technology, two strategies are being considered: providing more training for both teachers and students on the specific apps and finding alternative methods of implementing DAT that do not require the use of specific software.

As previously mentioned, despite the challenges faced by some language centres in successfully implementing the TRADILEX sequence, students generally recognised the potential of DAT as an integrative approach to language learning. However, it is evident that threats (external factors) play a significant role in hindering the successful implementation of the sequence, as discussed in the preceding section. These external factors were mainly related to the way in which the sequence was introduced in the course, whether it was compulsory or not, and the motivation of the students themselves.

Moreover, other contributing factors to the high dropout rate in these centres included the level of involvement of monitoring teachers, as only half of them completed the training course,

and some did not provide feedback on open questions. To address these issues, one potential solution would be to provide a clearer description of the responsibilities of the monitoring teachers and give them a more participative role while using DAT to enhance autonomous learning. Additionally, enhancing extrinsic motivation for both teachers and students, better acknowledging the role of students, and considering the completion of the sequence as part of the assessment for teachers, are possible ways to improve the implementation of the sequence in the future.

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## Acknowledgements

The study described in this article forms part of the TRADILEX project (“La traducción audiovisual como recurso didáctico en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras”, PID2019-107362GA-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

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