

An action-oriented approach to didactic dubbing in foreign language education: Students as producers

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Abstract

This article discusses the action-oriented foundations of TRADILEX (Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education), a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, which involves researchers from twelve universities across Europe and the UK. This project focuses on the improvement in the linguistic skills perceived through audiovisual translation (AVT) practices such as the use of captioning (i.e., interlingual and intralingual subtitling) and revoicing (i.e., dubbing, voice-over, and audio description) through an action-oriented approach (AoA). The ultimate objective is the study of AVT as a means to enhance learners' communicative competence and reception, production, and mediation skills in an integrated manner. Following the design of a methodological proposal for a didactic sequence of AVT tasks, proposals are currently being piloted with B1 and B2 adult learners of English as a foreign language utilising – and adapting – the recent illustrative descriptors (Council of Europe, 2018) for AVT instruction. The potential benefits of action-oriented AVT tasks in foreign language education (FLE), in which foreign-language learners become active producers of AVT work, are put to the test employing empirical inquiry and thereafter advocating for more comprehensive integration of AVT in the FLE curriculum overall.

Key words: Audiovisual translation, dubbing, foreign language education, action-oriented approach, mediation skills, TRADILEX project

1. Introduction

As a society with access to the internet, we occupy spaces surrounded by screens. The 21st-century has brought about a rampaging surge in the amount of video material made available to us every day. New media consumption habits, such as binge-watching and streaming, have also appeared in recent decades and are particularly salient among younger generations (Matrix, 2014). In the fourth industrial revolution, some media distribution channels, such as streaming platforms, can even predict what users would like to consume (Schwab, 2016).

The broader availability of audiovisual programmes is a patent fact not only supported by statistical data on consumption trends but also by scholarly evidence. Mainly driven by a growth of academic interest in translation and localisation, and particularly audiovisual translation (AVT), some scholars have taken stock of the mushrooming of scholarly articles, projects, and theses that touch on translation in certain countries (Franco Aixelà, 2020). Indeed, it seems that AVT has experienced exponential growth in the last few years (Pérez-Escudero, 2018). The ever-increasing scholarly interest in topics related to media localisation and AVT exemplifies the need to better align academic research with industry demands and re-evaluate the contents, skills, and learning outcomes of higher education regarding languages and translation.

The latest industry needs, spearheaded by the rise of media consumption, have determined the re-shaping and updating of translator training environments, especially concerning the teaching of AVT (Bolaños-García-Escribano & Díaz-Cintas, 2019). The learning of dubbing, for instance, has a long tradition (Chaume, 2012;

Zabalbeascoa-Terrán, Santamaria i Guinot & Chaume, 2005) due to the currently high demand of trained professionals for script translation and dialogue writers (Spiteri-Miggiani, 2019) in the often (vaguely) called dubbing countries (Ranzato & Zanotti, 2019), especially from English into other languages. However, both the production and reception of dubbing have been subject to numerous changes in the last few decades, and a more recent trend of mainstream English dubbing is currently having a vast impact on the production of English-speaking dubbings (Hayes, 2021; Sánchez-Mompeán, 2021; Spiteri-Miggiani, 2021). In recent years, many industry stakeholders have argued that there has been a *critical* talent crunch in relation to training AVT professionals in some language combinations (Bolaños-García-Escribano, Díaz-Cintas & Massidda, 2021). Hence, it seems only reasonable that the need for trained dubbing professionals who can work in English-speaking dubbings is bound to continue increasing in light of current demand.

The application of dubbing to foreign language education (FLE) requires different approaches and skills (Lertola, 2019). The use of media in the FLE classroom is gaining wider currency nowadays (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019), but the intersections between AVT education and FLE are often restricted to the odd scholarly research study and, to the best of our knowledge, are still relatively marginal in conventional FLE classrooms. The application of active dubbing tasks, however, remains scarce (Sánchez-Requena, 2016) and calls for more scholarly attention.

In this paper, we set out to examine how didactic AVT, and more specifically dubbing, can be better exploited by educators to foster production, reception, and mediation skills in FLE environments. The relevant literature and interest, and experimental studies, in particular, have grown exponentially in recent decades. We hereby propose a taxonomy of descriptors, drawing on the Council of Europe's (2018) *Companion Volume with Descriptors*, which can be useful when it comes to further integrate AVT practices, such as dubbing, in the relevant descriptors concerning translation and mediation. A case study consisting of a detailed sample lesson plan will illustrate how hands-on intralingual and interlingual dubbing can be integrated into FLE settings to foster ever-more demanded skills.

2. Didactic Audiovisual Translation in Foreign Language Education

Media have been employed in learning and teaching languages for a long time (e.g. British Council, 1979). Among the reasons why educators have traditionally used the media in their lessons is the introduction of examples of oral communication in realistic situations. This has often been achieved passively (i.e. through observation); however, research and practice involving audiovisual literacy (Sokoli & Zabalbeascoa-Terrán, 2019) and digital communication that focus on the *active* engagement of learners through action-oriented tasks (i.e. through creation), though more recent, can be equally promising.

Generally speaking, teachers and researchers who work on active AVT tasks with their students found that they encourage not only receptive and productive tasks but also critical thinking, pragmatic and intercultural awareness both in L1 and L2, as well as the ability to extract and infer information from multisemiotic texts.

The acquisition of language skills through AVT tasks involving active engagement has gained wider currency in recent years. They often rely on the captioning and reviewing of video clips by learners. The manifest integration of AVT in FLE scholarship has been particularly pivotal in the last few decades (Incalcaterra McLoughlin, Lertola and Talaván, 2018, 2020) and has been explored in some pioneer research projects, such as ClipFlair (clipflair.net). This was funded by the European Commission, from 2011 until 2014, and developed by several European higher-education institutions. The main focus of ClipFlair was the use of interactive

revoicing and captioning of clips in FLE (Baños & Sokoli, 2015). The ClipFlair online platform includes ready-made exercises as well as an AVT system that allows FLE instructors and students to create and complete revoicing and subtitling exercises in a web-based environment (Zabalbeascoa-Terrán, Torres & Sokoli, 2012).

PluriTAV (2016–2019), Babelium (2013–2015), SubLanLearn (2009–2012), and LeVis (2006–2008) are international projects that have scrutinised the application of AVT to FLE settings, too. The positive outcomes of scholarship in this field have contributed to various strands of inquiry and experimental research (Lertola 2019; Talaván 2020).

The present paper has been produced under the auspices of an international project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. TRADILEX (2019–) aims to continue and update the efforts of the aforementioned projects, adapting the principles of didactic AVT to the needs of 21st-century FLE courses. This project involves the creation of revoicing and subtitling lessons that, after being piloted and ultimately approved, are distributed among learners of English as a foreign language through an online learning platform.

2.1. Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility Practices: Revoicing

Revoicing is a hypernym covering different AVT practices, primarily based on the partial or total replacement of the dialogue in the original audio track. The two leading practices are (lip-sync) dubbing and voiceover (VO). Whereas the latter is usually inexpensive, the former is more financially demanding as it requires many more resources, including a dubbing studio, sound engineer, director, and voice talents.

There are several revoicing taxonomies, which vary greatly depending on their authorship. For instance, Luyken et al. (1991: 63) identify lip-sync dubbing, VO, narration, and free commentary, whereas Karamitroglou (2000: 4) differentiates between lip-sync dubbing, VO/narration, and free commentary. Following Chaume's (2012) classification, there are eight types of revoicing practices, but only one is concerned in this paper, namely dubbing.

Dubbing, aka “lip-sync dubbing” (Luyken et al., 1991: 71), is a practice in which the original soundtrack of a video containing the source language dialogue is replaced with another recorded track (Chaume, 2012). It can be any activity in which a new recording of dialogue and sound is integrated into an audiovisual production (Konigsberg, 2004), referring to both interlingual or intralingual approaches (Baker & Hochel, 1998). In professional AVT, on the one hand, dubbing is usually considered an interlingual practice and is frequently observed in so-called dubbing countries (Cerezo Merchán et al., 2016; Martí Ferriol, 2013). In didactic AVT, on the other hand, intralingual dubbing is usually the norm.

One of the critical characteristics of dubbing is the threefold synchrony (Whitman-Linsen, 1992), namely phonetic (matching the translation with the actor's lip movement), kinetic (matching the translation with the actor's body movement), and isochrony (matching the translation with the duration of the actor's utterance). Respecting these synchronies is essential in the translation and adaptation of the dubbing script. Translators and dialogue writers make use of language- and country-bound dubbing symbols, or notations, whose aim is to “help dubbing actors imitate the screen actors' paralinguistic signs: sounds, pitch, tone, volume, primary voice qualities, etc.” (Chaume, 2014: 58) in dubbing scripts. The implementation of these three synchronisations, along with the production of appropriate register, grammar, and diction, “is the result of a conscious agenda to domesticate the translated text, so that viewers do not realise that what they are witnessing on the screen is a translation” (Chaume, 2020: 113).

DVDs, digital television, Internet channels and the recent widespread of digital streaming platforms (e.g. Amazon Prime, HBO, Netflix) allow for a multimodal approach to FLE. Teachers can use a variety of audiovisual programmes, as well as exploit different types of videos to prompt students to produce their own subtitling (captions, interlingual, reversed) and revoicing (voiceover, dubbing). Tasks on media accessibility practices, such as audio description (AD) for the blind and the partially sighted audiences and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), are becoming more common nowadays too (Navarrete, 2018; Talaván, 2019). Nonetheless, all these educational methods must respond to previously established objectives. Besides, activities in the classroom must be carefully monitored by the FLE instructor and “used with an evident aim both for students and teachers” (Talaván, 2013: 73).

Despite the extensive literature on both *active* and *passive* subtitling in FLE contexts, whose benefits have long been established by other scholars (Sokoli 2006), revoicing is now “gradually gaining scholars’ attention” (Lertola, 2019: 31), and the scattered examples of didactic dubbing that have appeared in scholarly circles in the last three decades (Duff, 1989; Zohrevandi, 1994; Kumai, 1996; Burston, 2005; Wagener, 2006; Danan, 2010; Chiu, 2012; Navarrete, 2013; Wakefield, 2014; Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera, 2015; Lertola & Mariotti, 2017; Talaván & Costal, 2017) are now being complemented by newer attempts to further integrate didactic dubbing into the classroom. The most recent studies on didactic dubbing have been carried out by Sánchez-Requena (2016, 2018, 2020) whose work has been paramount to better establish the positive impact didactic dubbing has in the teaching of foreign languages using experimentation.

The use of audiovisual texts for *active* dubbing allows for plenty of approaches. According to Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera (2015: 153), however, “the main dimensions that can be exploited when using dubbing as a didactic resource are: monologues, dialogue exchanges and songs, as elements of the soundtrack”. In intralingual dubbing, which is particularly relevant in the TRADILEX project, there are five elements that have traditionally been perceived as positive and enriching for the student’s learning process, namely “(1) theatre techniques, (2) extra-verbal elements, (3) native-speed speech delivery, (4) ordinary life situations and (5) colloquial expressions” (Sánchez-Requena, 2020: 106).

The use of intralingual dubbing can be beneficial for the honing of speaking skills, and more specifically speed, intonation and pronunciation (Sánchez-Requena 2018), thus reinforcing its inclusion in the FLE curriculum insofar as it can be “motivating and encouraging enough for almost any type of language learner” (Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera, 2015: 170).

3. From the four traditional skills to the new linguistic modes

The Council of Europe aims at a more democratic society. It has taken into consideration the existing migration flows and social cohabitations among cultures and peoples as well as the need to redefine this context within the language learning setting. The existing debate between human and social sciences has resulted in the reconceptualization of language learning around the notion of social agency, so that the language learner has become a social agent enabling knowledge while mediating with others (Piccardo & North, 2019). The direction in which AoA has evolved from previous communicative approaches is towards giving mediation a pivotal role to language learning whilst preserving many of their typical features such as finding a communicative need for learning, using authentic materials or completing a useful task for real-life purposes. Comparing the AoA and previous communicative approaches, Piccardo & North (2019) draw attention to the close relationship that exists between the aspects they share, such as the need to complete language tasks, the way they are viewed, and the role of the resources used among other factors. These elements include

the contribution of the CEFR/CV (2018) to the transparency and coherence of the complex activity of language learning. However, these authors admit to being tempted to define the AoA “as a practice in search of a theory” (*ibid.*: 3). According to Navarrete (2020), their statement might refer to the ability of language researchers and practitioners to understand the potential of this practice, but it also reveals the need to conceptualise it, from two decades ago, when the term started to be used.

Mediation was marginally included in the CEFR (2001); however, in one recent update, the CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018) has converted this mode into its main strategic axis. A key innovation of its descriptive scheme is the replacement of the four traditional skills (i.e. speaking, listening, writing, and reading) with the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction, and mediation. It is crucial to emphasise how the latter lies at the very centre of the equation as it combines all three (as seen in Figure 1). Mediation serves “to reduce the gap between two poles that are distant from or in tension with each other” (Costa & Cavalli 2015: 12), and this distance can be of varied nature, such as intercultural or linguistic. It is the mediator who facilitates the understanding of a message among two or more groups of people that cannot communicate due to certain barriers. As a result, the social agency focus lies in the interaction among three parties at least, rather than two, where the mediator acquires a vital role in the communicative exchange.

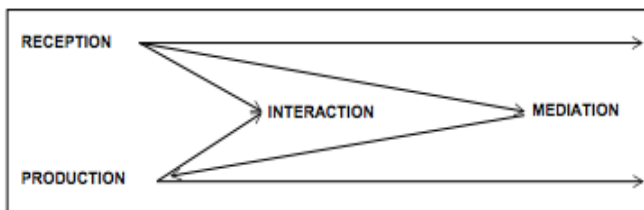


Figure 1: How the four modes are connected (Council of Europe, 2018: 32)

Navarrete (2020) highlights this social agency element of AVT practices as the learner mediates between the clip and others, using aural or written discourse to interpret what can be seen – or heard – including semiotic signs and images. In the case of dubbing practice, the learner interprets what is heard producing either an intralingual or interlingual oral discourse. With the recent addition of sign language to the new version of the Framework, it has been suggested that AD and SDH could be incorporated into the new version of the aforementioned volume, as these modes involve practices aiming at making clips accessible to people with either auditive or visual impairments (*Ibid.*). Although other AVT modes are worthy of examination, in this article, we will be presenting new descriptors for dubbing as they have not been developed until now.

3.1. The new illustrative descriptors for dubbing practice

The below figure shows a range of categories for mediation activities, adapted from the most recent Framework. Existing descriptors from the original CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) appear in white, whereas new descriptors from the updated CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018) are in blue, and our newly added categories are shown in green. New categories for interaction activities have been created such as online conversation and discussion, and reactions to literature and creative texts. New descriptors have also been incorporated to encourage the development of mediation practices and potential strategies for language use, including sign language descriptors (as seen in Figure 2). This practice has been essential incorporation to the 2018 version of the Framework, as it clearly opens the path for the introduction of other AVT

exercises.

The additional type of mediation activity that has been created, which is known as “Mediating a clip”, comprises the adapted section of Figure 2. This is there to allow additional categories for each AVT mode. Also, the original CEFR/CV figure has been adapted with the new subcategories for dubbing, namely “Mediating a dialogue” and “Performing in L2 as an actor”. One should note that the category for AD practice called “Mediating a sequence of images from a clip” had previously been created by Navarrete (2020: 68).

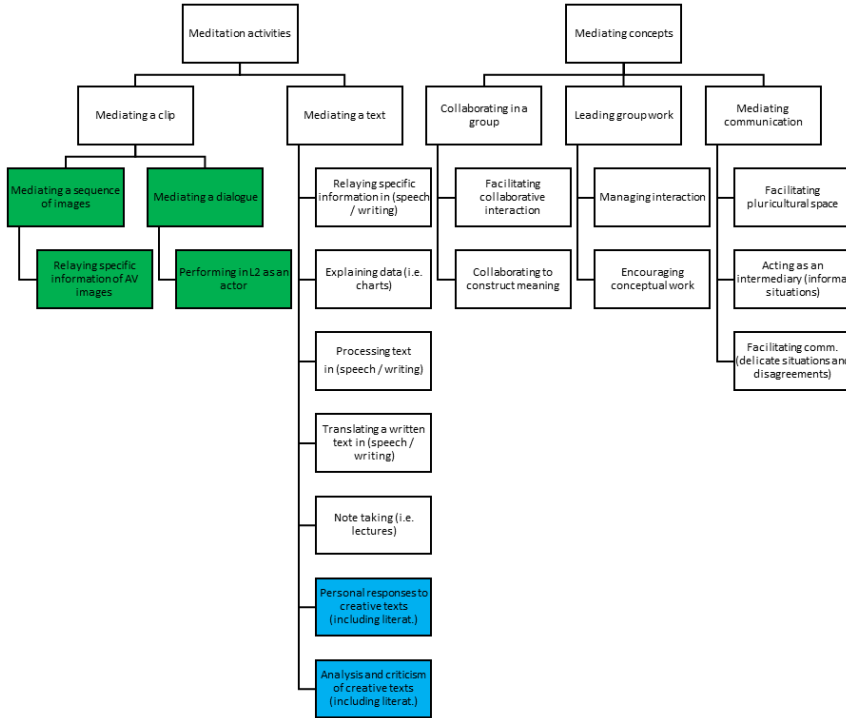


Figure 2: Adapted from the CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018: 104) categories and scales and updated accordingly

Table 1 shows the new intralingual dubbing descriptors designed to complement the CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018). In this AVT mode, learners replicate the existing dialogues without translating them in the L2. Therefore, the main learning objective lies in the complexity of the grammar structures and lexical sophistication of the original video as well as the level of intelligibility of spoken speech. As seen in the below table, the scale ranges from a basic to an excellent degree in the usage of lexis and syntax. The same applies to spoken speech, which considers the skills of fluency, pronunciation and intonation, as it ranges from a basic level of intelligibility for the lower levels (A1 and Pre-A1) to a remarkable degree of intelligibility for the upper levels (C1-C2). Again, as it occurs with the AD descriptors, the difference

between levels C1 and C2 is the successful application of near-professional standards. It is also necessary to highlight the idea that lip-syncing and synchrony with other body gestures are essential features that ought to be assessed at all levels. This is precisely where audiovisual content differs from more traditional types of texts that do not necessarily involve multimodality or multimediality. It is important to clarify that the below table appears in the exact format and with the content structure that would appear if it was going to be incorporated into the official Framework.

Table 1: Proposal for new illustrative descriptors for dubbing to be included in the CEFR/CV

Level	Descriptor
C2	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using an outstanding degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing an excellent level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation (following near- professional standards).
C1	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using an excellent degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing an excellent level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.
B2	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using a very good degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing a very good level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.
B1	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using a good level of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing a good level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.
A2	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using a satisfactory degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing an acceptable level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.
A1 and Pre-A1	Can perform as an actor the original dialogues of a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration lip-sync and other synchrony with body language gestures, using a (very) basic degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing a (very) basic level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and intonation.

To conclude this section, we would like to highlight the importance of having incorporated a new category for mediating a clip, which would allow for other AVT modes to be further integrated into FLE environments. More importantly, the intralingual dubbing subcategories are hereby presented for use by FLE instructors and can be easily adapted for use with other AVT modes such as subtitling and SDH (subtitling) as well as interlingual dubbing, voice-over, and free commentary (revoicing). The existing AVT descriptors have not been tested yet, but in the near future, we are hoping to develop the ones that are still missing, and also, to test them.

However, in TRADILEX, only the scales for B1 and B2 will be tested as these are the competence levels for all AVT modes developed through the lesson plans that have been created for our language project.

4. Case Study: Revoicing Lesson Plans

The AoA approach followed in this project requires the creation of ad hoc lesson plans, which would be developed online in this particular learning context. The first piloting sessions were carried out in the Google Classroom ecosystem. The primary rationale was twofold: first, all students had to qualify for a free account (provided by Google in this case), and, secondly, free technical assistance was provided by Google for learners and teachers using Google Classroom. This platform also enables the teacher to upload files that will be stored on the cloud to be accessed and downloaded by all students, who will be sharing a common learning space.

Outlining the main components of the lesson (i.e. content) and its learning outcomes (i.e. descriptors) constitutes the core of lesson planning in FLE. A lesson plan template was produced for all project members to agree on common terminology and a set of teaching methods; the latter contained relevant information for both the student and the language teacher and a step-by-step explanation of the lesson. At the time of writing, lesson plans are being adapted into online tasks in the form of tests (with sample answers) on Google Forms.

The advantages of using Google Forms to create those tests were manifold:

- They can be easily embedded into the existing Google Classroom;
- they can display YouTube videos, which are quintessential for didactic AVT tasks;
- they allow the teacher to embed an answer key containing the solutions and writing samples;
- they record the data automatically and allow the student to upload their submissions, which are then transferred to the project's cloud storage for assessment purposes;
- they allow to have both anonymous and non-anonymous submissions depending on each session's requirements; and
- they are part of Google Cloud, which allows the user to customise and leverage the working space (including controls, policies and processes) to be GDPR compliant. (This online environment, however, ought to be further reviewed throughout the project's duration as per the developments on the Court of Justice of the European Union Judgment's action in Case C-311/18.)

Moreover, some of the cloud-based technologies used to revoice clips (e.g. Screencastify, <<https://www.screencastify.com>>) were only supported by Google's browser, i.e. Chrome. Therefore, it only followed that all aspects related to student-teacher interaction and work remain within the same online ecosystem.

The TRADILEX project, however, is currently migrating online lesson plans to a Moodle environment, but other tests on an array of platforms have been carried out to establish what the most convenient online ecosystem for this type of approach would be. In a similar vein to what was done in the aforementioned ClipFlair project, the project is also developing its own online platform in order to host their online lessons plans and the materials and resources necessary for the completion of AoA activities. Nevertheless, the current state of the project only allows for the piloting of the lessons on existing environments, such as Google Classroom and Moodle.

A total of 12 lesson plans have been created for each of the five AVT modes that have been developed in TRADILEX (i.e. subtitling, SDH, dubbing, voice-over and AD) six for the level B1 of English competence and the same number of lessons for B2. The lesson plans have been designed in such a way that learners should spend approximately one hour in each. Learners ought to complete all 30 lessons for the level they are enrolled in. This would be done in two blocks of 15 lessons each, including three lessons for each AVT mode

Table 3 shows the general structure of the TRADILEX lesson plans and the objectives. The tasks included in the lessons are coherently scaffolded in order to prepare learners for subsequent tasks, whilst providing the cultural context of clips and lexical or grammatical items that might be needed for the completion of both the AVT and the final task. Thus, these activities will reuse some of the linguistic and intercultural elements that students have been working with during the previous stages of the lesson.

Table 2: General structure of lesson plans

Stage	Time (min)	Description	Objective
Warm-up	10	Discussion of topic areas and/or content covered in the clip	Acquiring a general knowledge of the context in which the clip is situated
		Introduction of lexical and grammatical items, and intercultural knowledge	Using new lexical and grammatical items needed to understand the clip that would be viewed in the next stage of the lesson as preparation for the AVT task
		Anticipation of video content (e.g. plot, characters, and action points)	
Clip viewing	10	Viewing of the clip (needs to be done at least twice)	Focusing on the messages conveyed by the spoken discourse and its visual elements
			Anticipating problems for completing the AVT task
			Discussing potential temporal constraints
AVT task	30	Completion of the AVT task (individually or in small groups) using the software selected	Developing linguistic skills (written and/or spoken discourse) in an integrated manner
Written production	10	Discussion of relevant topics related to the	Complementing the linguistic and intercultural content of the clip by working on

tasks	content of the clip	additional production tasks to support the learning of new items
	Performance of role-plays or writing tasks to further practice the linguistic and intercultural elements contained in the clip	

To illustrate the above table with a sample lesson, we will be discussing an example of dubbing practice for level B2 (CEFR/CV). It contains a two-minute short film called *Chicken*, directed by Barry Dignam in 2001, which presents two Irish youngsters playing a game that takes them into a pact of love and brotherhood connection. The warm-up stage of the lesson contains an activity that introduces some slang words where students must select the appropriate one for each of the sentences given. There is also a short comprehension text that presents the concept of English linguistic varieties.

This stage prepares learners for the following stage of the lesson, which is the video viewing. The clip comprises a conversation between two youngsters, full of slang words and based on the Irish variety of English language. This stage introduces the linguistic context of the clip (slang words, colloquialisms and language varieties). As the characters have a markedly strong accent, the script is given for students to familiarise with the linguistic content of the clip. This is followed by a cloze test (with missing words that need to be added) to ensure the acquisition of new lexical items by the learners.

Guidelines on pronunciation and dubbing are provided before embarking on the dubbing task. These guidelines contain information on the pronunciation of certain sounds of the Irish, UK and US English varieties, but students are not forced to use them. Instead, they are encouraged to adopt an English variety that they feel comfortable with. The dubbing recommendations are based on the principles of lip-sync, fluency and speed of speech, as well as the naturalness of oral discourse and dramatisation, all of which are features that should be assessed when using this methodology. As with all the TRADILEX tasks, learners are asked to work exclusively on a one-minute extract of the clip.

The final task, or post-AVT-task, entails the writing of a fictional dialogue between the two main characters of the clip. It aims at creating their own ending for the story for which learners need to revise and use the lexical and grammatical items learnt throughout the previous stages of the lesson. Thus, learners have been provided with the cultural context of the clip and have been encouraged to use linguistic tools (including dictionaries) in order to complete their tasks.

4.1. Piloting Lesson Plans

Lesson plans ought to be piloted to guarantee they will serve their purpose at a later stage. Though often neglected, pilot studies hold enormous potential and help fine-tune and better tailor larger-scale research projects (Malmqvist et al. 2019). This is the opportunity for the researcher to identify weaknesses, and strengths, and determine to what extent the materials, methods, or data-collection require any changes to better suit the needs of the study. In this case, it constitutes an excellent time to, for example, ascertain whether the chosen videos are suitable (i.e. alignment of task, materials and descriptors) and whether the captioning and revoicing tasks have been timed appropriately (i.e. alignment of task duration and students' expectations).

Prior to the piloting sessions, lesson plans are carefully devised, and revised, following the below steps:

- First, a team of two experienced FLE teachers would select a suitable video clip from the video database collated by project members and subsequently agree on the essential details that will characterise the lesson plan, including the level of proficiency, didactic AVT mode, learning outcomes and objectives, overall aims of the session, and key communicative functions.
- Secondly, the team would produce all relevant documentation and the actual online lesson in Google Drive and Google Forms, including exercises and answer keys.
- Thirdly, a third experienced researcher would revise the documents and the online form and report back to the team. The team would thereafter implement any changes necessary following continuous communication with project colleagues.
- Fourthly, once the lesson plan has been carefully revised and finalised, a team of junior researchers test the lesson by completing the exercises online. The junior researchers would time themselves while completing it and thereafter produce a report. This report should comment on the strengths and weaknesses of said lesson plan, signposting the research team to any areas of improvement and any exercises that take more or less time than expected and thus require further fine-tuning.
- Fifthly, the research team would reconvene and finetune the lesson plan so as to produce a final version that is ready for piloting with EFL students from other educational settings (i.e. Spanish-speaking students of English at both B1 and B2 levels).

Once the above steps have been completed, as well as any additional rounds that might have been needed, a pilot study is devised. Pilots can take multiple forms, and, at the time of writing, TRADILEX scholars are currently designing further pilot experiments to put the project's methodological framework to a test.

We ran a didactic dubbing teaching session at one of the partner institutions to better understand how the project's piloting should take place. This small-scale, preliminary study was carried out with six affiliate students of English as a foreign language, and translation, who attended their remote year abroad at UCL, UK, during the 2020–2021 academic year. Being such a small group, the in-class observations and discussions served to identify any conceptual and methodological challenges present in the lesson plan used so as to inform the upcoming piloting stages of the project.

The students (N=6) attended a two-hour session, in which the teacher introduced the project and the reasons why the pilot experiment was being carried out. This was followed by a brief discussion on AVT and its applications to FLE, as well as their own perceptions of AVT in both educational and professional settings. Once they had roughly an hour of teaching left, they were prompted to complete the lesson plan previously discussed on intralingual dubbing of Irish short film *Chicken* (2001). In this lesson plan, learners were expected to practise slang and become familiar with accents other than standard and frequently used varieties, including those from American English and British English, as well as to be able to identify and utilise rhetorical elements and lexis appropriately to express emotions.

To the above-mentioned end, the online dubbing lesson plan (B2 level) encompassed the following exercises (as discussed in more detail in previous paragraphs):

- Preliminary tasks: multiple-choice questions on American, British and Irish slangs, and a reading exercise on Irish English with true/false questions to test reading comprehension, were used to expose the students to some of the

most salient characteristics of Irish English, which is less frequently present in FLE curricula, as opposed to American and British varieties of English;

- Viewing task: a 2-minute excerpt from the short film was displayed and a transcript was provided for students to underline words that were pronounced with a marked Irish English accent; some multiple-choice questions prompted students to choose the proper pronunciation they could identify in the video;
- Didactic dubbing task: before revoicing a 1-minute excerpt from the video using a Google Chrome plugin, or a separate open-source video-editing tool, students were asked to practise their pronunciation with Google using their microphone and the phonetic samples available on the search engine. Students then had half the duration of the lesson to produce their own recording and upload it to the online form (students were asked to replace the original dialogues, i.e. 194 words, with their own voice and pronunciation);
- Concluding task: writing assignment in which students composed a short fictional dialogue between the protagonists to imagine how their love story could potentially end if the short film was turned into a feature film. Students were asked to utilise the vocabulary that they had previously learnt (i.e. slang and idiomatic expressions) to reinforce their production skills.

Since the session was conceived as a preliminary step towards more formal piloting sessions, students were asked to share their opinion on the lesson plan, as well as to communicate any difficulties they were experiencing. Informal notes were taken to inform the design of future pilot studies. At the end of the session, students were asked to fill in an online questionnaire on the lesson plan and their overall experience; however, only four students filled it in.

Students who completed the online questionnaire were all third-year or final-year students of modern languages (English) at a Spanish university; two were aged 18–20, and the other two were over 25. Two were Catalan native speakers, whereas the other two were Castilian Spanish native speakers. Three of them had a B2-level certification in English as a foreign language.

Only one of the students had taken translation modules as part of their undergraduate studies in the past, and this student was also the only respondent who had previously undertaken training in AVT as part of their studies. Given the lack of AVT practices in the FLE curriculum, it comes as no surprise that none had done any active revoicing in the past. Indeed, only one respondent claimed to have done active subtitling and passive subtitling and dubbing, but only rarely. Similarly, no respondents had seemingly participated in any initiatives to practise their foreign-language skills through self-taught AVT exercises in the past.

Regarding the lesson plan itself, all four respondents considered the instructions, the dubbing software tutorial and the answer keys to be very clear. The software was perceived as user-friendly by all of them. This information matches the comments shared orally during the lesson; however, one of the students struggled to install the Chrome plugin and reported an incompatibility issue with his Linux device. Another student claimed it was somewhat complicated finding the plugin within the browser's interface in the first place. Having said that, none of them reported any significant issues, glitches or flaws while using the software after installation. The only student who claimed to have experienced such difficulties openly acknowledged that his operating system was the only reason why he could not engage in the didactic dubbing exercise adequately during the class. All four students shared their lack of preparation, or previous knowledge, in both Irish English and colloquial language, thus reinforcing the aims of this session.

The session was carefully timed, and it soon became apparent that there were significant duration issues. In fact, past one hour and twenty minutes, only one out of the six students present in the classroom had managed to complete the whole lesson plan. In the subsequent questionnaire, a final-year student claimed he spent 65 minutes; however, the remaining respondents claimed to have spent 90, 120 and 140 minutes, respectively.

All respondents gave very positive feedback on the lesson plan as a learning experience and claimed the lesson plan was beneficial, insightful and appropriate for FLE uses. They also claimed it was either very or somewhat enjoyable, thought-provoking, informative and intuitive, and only one out of four claimed it had been a slightly tiring lesson plan, whereas the remaining respondents concluded it had not been tiring at all.

All respondents showed a positive attitude towards using didactic dubbing in FLE. The honing of listening and speaking skills, as well as grammar and vocabulary (use of English), were deemed the most valuable benefits obtained by partaking in this didactic dubbing session. All respondents selected 'very useful,' except a couple of them choosing 'somewhat useful', when asked about this. Technological literacy and dubbing-specific skills were deemed 'somewhat useful' or 'very useful' by most respondents too. Opinions were shared differently with regards to other skills. Interestingly, reading and writing skills, alongside intercultural skills, were not perceived as equally relevant in this lesson plan, despite the preliminary and final tasks prompting students to read and write. This may indicate that, when evaluating the quality of lesson plans during the pilot sessions, students may be focusing on the core of the lesson plans, i.e. the didactic AVT task, and obliterating or devoting less time to the rest.

Respondents made different claims in terms of the potential uses of such didactic dubbing methodology:

I really believe it can be useful.

I found this exercise very useful as a first contact with dubbing. It's complicated to manage the timing of the original video with my own voice but it has helped me to get used to it.

Listening and speaking

You are in contact with oral English.

All in all, this preliminary experience of AoA-based didactic AVT was warmly received by the participants, whose feedback subsequently informed the fine-tuning of the piloting sessions for TRADILEX. Despite the impossibility of extrapolating conclusions in light of the scarce data available, it allowed the project to establish specific areas of improvement (e.g. duration and sequencing), as well as some aspects that required further development (e.g. software compatibility and tutorials).

The above results immediately led to the identification of some action points that have now been introduced in the project to improve the lesson plans, and we continue to work towards more representative and generalisable piloting sessions in future. Some of the changes that were implemented include the following:

- Offering alternative software programs for students who cannot run Screencastify on Google Chrome on their own devices and those who only have access to a Linux computer; as a result, open-source video-editing

Lightworks (supported by Linus, Mac OS X and Windows) was incorporated;

- Shortening the lesson plan so that students can devote more time to the actual intralingual dubbing task at hand; as a consequence of this, the phonetic practice exercise has been axed, and the preliminary questions reduced substantially;
- Adjusting the video tutorials to include more detailed step-by-step guidance on how to install and use the relevant revoicing software;
- Producing easy guides and other documents outlining computer requirements as well as general steps that students need to follow before completing the tasks (e.g. installing and configuring software, adding plugins and making them visible in their browser); and
- Configuring the online questionnaires so that students give feedback on the didactic task at hand and the preliminary and final tasks separately.

As previously mentioned, this preliminary study was conceived as a mere introduction to the piloting of the sessions, and the above results cannot be deemed final or representative and generalisable on their own. Yet this initial exploration into the uses of didactic dubbing in the FLE classroom is clearly conducive to our testing methodology and constitutes a crucial steppingstone towards future pilot sessions. Furthermore, this initial approach was fundamental to determine the duration and configuration of the subsequent pilot sessions, as well as the need to guarantee the technology, can be used by all stakeholders.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the AoA foundations of TRADILEX, a project that aims at creating coherent language courses based on learners' performance of AVT tasks as well as collecting data for its analysis and dissemination of lessons learnt. This is done using a methodology where learners become producers and social agents since they mediate between the clip and their audience. The resulting information gap caused by linguistic, cultural, visual or aural accessibility barriers prevents the receptor of the message to apprehend the entire content of a clip. Thus, the role of the mediator consists of interpreting what can be seen – or heard – including semiotic signs and images whilst facilitating it to their audience using aural or written discourse.

This paper has focused on intralingual dubbing, this mode has been explored from a didactic point of view by analysing the particular challenges it might pose to language learners including the threefold synchrony (phonetic, kinetic and isochrony). As AVT modes were not included in the CFER/VC (2018), a new category for “Mediating a clip” has been incorporated to allow the inclusion of all modes of didactic AVT to the Framework, including intralingual dubbing and its illustrative descriptors which have been developed in this article. The general structure of the TRADILEX project and the structure of its lesson plans have been outlined, focusing on one example based on dubbing practice for B2 learners. The authors of this article were unable to fully pilot their lesson plan in-depth, due to the limited number of participants that attended the session, but some light has been shed on how to improve the didactic sequences, especially in terms of the technology used, supporting materials and timing. We have provided guidelines on how to complete this essential stage of the project as well as analysed and discussed the preliminary results obtained from a dubbing lesson in a small-scale preliminary study, whose results have informed the upcoming pilot studies that will be carried out as part of the TRADILEX project.

This article has been written in a context where audiovisual materials are ever-more present and purposefully used in FLE settings (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). Thus, we believe all modes of AVT have been stimulated due to our new habits, and the TRADILEX project offers an adequate platform that supports language users in

improving their linguistic, cultural and mediation competences in an attempt to better align the teaching of languages with 21st-century demands.

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