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An Action-oriented Approach to Didactic Audio Description in Foreign Language Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces 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. TRADILEX sets out to gather data on the improvement in the linguistic skills acquired through 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). A methodological proposal for a didactic sequence of audiovisual translation (AVT) tasks has been developed in order to enhance learners' communicative competence, as well as reception, production and mediation skills in an integrated manner. To this end, this methodological proposal is 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. This research effort sets out to better understand and evaluate the potential benefits of action-oriented AVT tasks in foreign language education (FLE). This project advocates for a wider integration of AVT in the FLE curriculum, thus fostering visual literacy and mediation skills, whilst promoting an active use of AVT practices and technologies in the classroom.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation, foreign language education, action-oriented approach, production, reception and mediation skills, TRADILEX project.

RESUMEN

Este artículo expone los principios fundamentales del enfoque orientado a la acción del proyecto TRADILEX (Traducción Audiovisual en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras) que financia el Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia e Innovación de España y que reúne a investigadores de doce universidades europeas y británicas. El objetivo de TRADILEX es el de reunir los datos necesarios para estudiar la mejora de las habilidades lingüísticas con el uso de subtitulado (tanto inter como intralingüístico) y doblaje (así como las voces superpuestas y la audiodescripción) con un enfoque orientado a la acción. La propuesta metodológica, compuesta de tareas de traducción audiovisual (TAV), que se presenta busca que el estudiante pueda progresar en el desarrollo de sus competencias comunicativas, así como en sus destrezas de recepción, producción y mediación lingüísticas, de una manera integrada. Dicha metodología se encuentra actualmente en fase de pilotaje con estudiantes adultos de niveles B1 y B2 de inglés como lengua extranjera y se ajusta a los descriptores publicados recientemente por el Consejo de Europa (2018) a la enseñanza de la TAV. Con este artículo, se examinan las posibles ventajas de la enseñanza de la TAV desde un enfoque orientado a la acción en el marco de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. El proyecto persigue, en última instancia, una mayor integración de la TAV en los programas de lenguas extranjeras para el desarrollo de destrezas de mediación y habilidades relacionadas con lo audiovisual a la vez que se promueven las tareas de TAV activas y el uso de tecnologías en el aula.

Palabras clave: traducción audiovisual, enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, enfoque orientado a la acción, competencias de producción, recepción y mediación, proyecto TRADILEX.

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1. Introduction

Developments in information and communication technologies have transformed the way in which international communication is conducted nowadays. New audiovisual consumption trends, such as streaming, have been instigated by the far-reaching effects of globalisation and are particularly entrenched by a heavily Internetised society (Jenner, 2018). Today, ever-increasing volumes of video material are being distributed through the internet in a myriad of languages across the globe; hence the need to localize audiovisual material to cater for the growing number of streamed content consumers (Lobato 2018, 2019), and to do so with the aid of new technologies in the hopes of improving efficiency. In the last few decades, audiovisual translation (AVT) has grown exponentially in the academic community, as have AVT-specific training programmes (Bolaños García-Escribano and Díaz-Cintas, 2019) as well as the uses and applications of AVT in foreign language education (FLE) settings (Incalcaterra-McLoughlin, Lertola and Talaván, 2020).

Navarrete (2020) reflects on how the general economic shutdown generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a revolution that goes beyond social, economic, political, environmental, technological, psychological and demographic areas of society, while it has also had an impact on media and new modes of interaction. Furthermore, courses at primary, secondary and higher education levels, as well as daily devotional practices, have transferred their face-to-face format into a variety of learning environments and conference applications for an unforeseen period of time. This new context is likely to have an effect on all modes of AVT and media accessibility (MA) settings, as they have been and continue to be highly stimulated due to our changing habits in the way we interrelate with people.

This article is an output from an international project called TRADILEX (*Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education*), which aims to create closer synergies between AVT and FLE by means of didactic AVT, which can be broadly understood as the application of AVT practices to the language classroom. The main emphasis of this project is placed on action-oriented tasks in which students foster their language skills by completing active tasks set in a specific context that prompt them to incorporate mediation. While one could argue that the number of AVT courses available in today's educational landscapes is growing significantly, the utilisation of *active* revoicing and subtitling tasks is still scarce in conventional FLE settings for the fostering of foreign-language competence. Didactic AVT is still far from becoming mainstream in the FLE classroom, so TRADILEX advocates for a wider integration of such practices to enhance language competency as well as transferrable skills (including mediation). To this end, the project has set out to establish closer connections with FLE educational centres, in tertiary and further education, and has proposed action-oriented didactic AVT courses in face-to-face and e-learning environments.

In this paper, we would like to examine the various benefits of AVT – with a special emphasis on audio description (AD) through action-oriented learning – in FLE contexts beyond higher education, such as secondary education or language centres. The teaching of revoicing practices, such as lip-sync dubbing, is far from new and may be implemented in the FLE classroom in many different ways (Díaz-Cintas, 2008). AD, which is used to make video content accessible to blind and visually-impaired viewers, is considerably newer and has received less scholarly attention in FLE (Navarrete, 2018).

We would also label our methodology as a communicative task-based approach that has developed towards the so-called action-oriented-approach (AoA). This is based on the premise that, as Navarrete (2020) explains, this methodology can be regarded as a sibling or a natural extension of previous communicative approaches insofar as the learners are expected to fulfil communication tasks determined by a specific context. However, in AoA, mediation becomes a pivotal mode of interaction since the language learner evolves into a social agent enabling

knowledge while mediating with others, which is clearly the case of AVT practice (Navarrete, 2020). Navarrete (2020:14) perceives the learner as “a social agent that mediates between the clip and others, using aural or written discourse to interpret what can be seen – or heard – including semiotic signs and images”. Our challenge also takes into consideration that although AoA started to be widely accepted from the beginning of the 21st century with the launching of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), scholars such as Piccardo and North (2019:1) have wondered if it is “simply old wine in a new bottle”. Likewise, Navarrete (2020) has demonstrated that it is too ambitious to define diverging elements between communicative approaches, such as the Procedural, Process and the Task Based Language Teaching, as arguing for all notions of communicative trends – where the AoA can be included – accomplish a high level of complexity because the boundaries between them are somewhat faint, if not imprecise.

Online learning and teaching environments, particularly widespread in most disciplines since the COVID-19 pandemic, offer an advantageous medium to further examine the didactic applications of *active AD*. This paper thus reports on the creation of practical, didactic, action-oriented revoicing tasks in online learning communities and thereafter discusses the relevant results from selected pilot studies. A brief analysis of the principles that govern didactic AVT lesson planning is also presented. In short, we set out to justify how the FLE classroom can benefit from less traditional teaching approaches, tasks, and materials, namely AD, thereby proposing a stronger presence of didactic AVT in curricula.

2. Didactic Audiovisual Translation in Foreign Language Education

Experimental research on the applications of AVT to the teaching of foreign languages has already showcased the multiple advantages of teaching students how to translate video clips in the foreign language (Talaván, 2013, 2020). The various benefits of, say, subtitling in FLE courses have already been confirmed by many scholars in the last decades such as Vanderplank (1988), Caimi (2006), and Talaván (2011), among others. Yet the many pedagogical benefits of lesser-known AVT modes, such as AD, have received less attention, and the same goes for e-learning environments in FLE, since research projects have tended to rely on in-person, face-to-face teaching to test the potential of AVT by means of experimentation.

Some pioneer research projects on online learning applications with a strong emphasis on AVT, such as the European funded project ClipFlair (clipflair.net), laid the foundations for further research on digital applications that can be maximized for FLE. Funded by the European Commission from 2011 until 2014, and developed by several European higher-education institutions, the main focus of ClipFlair was the teaching of (foreign) languages through interactive revoicing and captioning of clips (Baños and Sokoli 2015). The ClipFlair online platform includes ready-made exercises as well as an AVT system that allows educators and students to create and complete revoicing and subtitling exercises in a web-based environment. This platform was perceived as pedagogically useful for FLE purposes after being piloted by 1,213 learners with the help of 37 tutors in 12 different languages (*ibid.*: 211); however, given the rapid evolution of technologies, this tool is exclusively supported by outdated versions of a specific browser, as well as the discontinued software Adobe Flash Player, or the need to upload Silverlight in order to make the platform work, which can most definitely hamper its application to today’s FLE classrooms.

Alongside the aforementioned ClipFlair project, there has also been a number of smaller-scale research projects that have endeavoured to further examine the pedagogical benefits of AVT, including PluriTAV (2016–2019), Babelium (2013–2015), SubLanLearn (2009–2012), and LeVis (2006–2008), among others.

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, once piloted and ultimately approved, will be distributed among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) through an online learning medium. The English-language teachers are not members of the project and may have had little or no contact with AVT in the past, so the project will provide the necessary guidance and support throughout the learning-teaching process, including hands-on workshops, a MOOC course on AVT, easy guides and other supporting materials and resources. The target learning-teaching groups comprise adult learners in language centres from universities and further-education institutions across Spain. For this reason, the lesson plans have to be adjusted to English-teaching standards in national language centres and have to reflect the requirements set for B1–B2 learners by the updated descriptors contained within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its Companion Volume with New Descriptors (CV) (Council of Europe, 2018), which put a greater emphasis on mediation (North and Piccardo, 2016), in addition to the AVT descriptors that are currently being devised as part of this project and which will be further discussed below. In the case of the so-called Official Language Centres of Spain (*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas*), B1–B2 levels correspond to upper-intermediate (years 3 and 4) and advanced levels of study (year 5), respectively; English courses provided by said institutions range from beginner's (A1) to specialist (C1) across a six-year curriculum. In sharp contrast, university-based language centres offer a myriad of FLE courses, which strongly depend on the practitioners, resources and services available at each institution. In Spain, the Bologna Process was conducive to the inclusion of innovative measures that would impact FLE; ever since its implementation over a decade ago, a mandatory B1–B2 foreign-language certificate requirement was enforced by the government (Spanish Royal Decree 1393/2007). Nowadays, there is a tendency for graduates from many Spanish universities to have to provide evidence of their foreign-language proficiency, in at least one language, before they finish their undergraduate studies or access postgraduate studies. This new measure has inevitably led to a substantial growth in the provision of FLE across Spanish higher education, in which B1–B2 courses, and EFL in particular, have mushroomed in recent years.

In spite of the aforementioned measures, Spain has not performed significantly better in foreign-language competency according to the surveys carried out by the EUROSTAT (<<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/44913.pdf>>). Until changes in Spanish students' performance in foreign languages become more clearly perceptible – EUROSTAT seemingly updates such statistics regularly and announces an update in 2024 – TRADILEX sets out to contribute to Spanish students' foreign-language literacy by providing a vast array of action-oriented, practical tasks that will further expose them to didactic AVT.

2.1. Didactic Revoicing as a Media Accessibility Practice: Audio Description

Revoicing is a hypernym that covers different AVT and MA practices aiming at converting spoken discourse or semiotic signs into an adapted discourse. Dubbing and voice-over (VO) are based on the partial or total replacement of the dialogue contained in the original audio track (Chaume, 2004). However, this is not the case for other revoicing modes. In free commentary, for instance, the narrator adapts the content of the clip for a new audience incorporating comments, clarifications and omissions, whereas in AD the narrator converts visual input (e.g., images, gestures, sceneries, etc.) into words through voiced narration. There is no replacement of the dialogue contained in the original audio track in AD; instead, a new track with the descriptions will be heard together with the dialogues from the original track. Therefore, it is key to point out that the main difference between AD and other interlingual revoicing practices, such as dubbing or VO, is that AD is a practice that aims to help viewers who have any sort of visual impairment (Fryer, 2016).

Although different countries tend to have their own AD idiosyncrasies, they often coincide in many of their recommendations and guidelines when it comes down to their starting points, synchronisation, target users and so on. Sonali, Greening and Petré (2010) identified a series of prerequisites or steps in order to ensure that an AD is successful, which we can summarise as follows:

- Message spaces have to be available in order to insert information bubbles of audio described material.
- Chunks of the recorded narration have to be inserted at the right time and in the correct place whilst keeping synchrony with the images appearing on screen.
- Content has to be carefully balanced so that the visually impaired listener is not overloaded with too much information.
- Scripts needs to take into consideration both the plot and the relevant visual information of the setting.
- The language of the original work needs to be matched with the narration, taking into account its particular audience.
- Discourse has to be fluent and a simple style and adjectives that are precise and lexically appropriate must be used, whilst avoiding incorrect language or cacophonies.
- Information needs to be self-contained comprising a document that makes sense on its own, whilst responding to the ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘who’ and ‘what’ of each situation described when relevant to the story told.
- Objectivity from the part of the describer needs to be considered whilst keeping the rhythm, tone, suspense and tension of the original work.
- The visuals must be respected without being censored or without removing excess material due to the audio describer’s personal beliefs.
- The audience should not be patronised with a description of what can be easily inferred.
- Events in the plot must not be revealed beforehand, nor must situations of dramatic tension, suspense or mystery be disturbed.

In short, audio describers are required to find a precise balance about what, when, who and how to interact with the audience, in order to respond to contextual questions about key visuals from the film settings.

2.2. Uses and Applications of Audio Description in Foreign Language Education

The examination of AD in FLE is considerably more recent; it was the least explored didactic AVT mode for about a decade. However, in the past few years, it has increasingly gained the attention of scholars attracted by its potential for language learning. Most studies have focussed on active AD, with the exception of Martínez Martínez (2012), who looked at the potential of passive AD where learners used pre-existing AD scripts to focus on movement verbs and other activities for lexical practice created by the author. There are other general studies which tested AD tasks based on the benefits for learners because of their motivating nature (Gajek and Szarkowska, 2013); raising awareness about the need to make AV products accessible, in particular for visually impaired users, and improvement in oral and written production skills, (Rodrigues Barbosa, 2013). In addition to these studies, Burger (2016) provided useful guidelines on how to select videos. For instance, clips should be short, containing brief dialogues, and a clear sequence of events, as well as a musical soundtrack. All these studies were mainly based on teacher’s observations and little data was collected to reinforce these findings. By contrast, experimental studies have focussed on gathering relevant quantitative and/or qualitative data to support their analysis of the enhancement of different skills; namely, lexical competence (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen, 2013); integration of skills (Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen, 2014); oral production (Ibáñez Moreno

and Vermeulen, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Ibáñez Moreno, et al., 2016; Talaván and Lertola, 2016; Navarrete, 2018, 2021); assessing the potential of AD in learning Italian as a FL (Cenni and Izzo, 2016); written production (Calduch and Talaván, 2018); critical thinking (Herrero and Escobar, 2018); and the enhancement of morphological understanding via corpus linguistics tools (Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2020).

3. New Production, Reception, Interaction and Mediation Descriptors

According to Piccardo and North (2019), as the Council of Europe aims to create a more democratic society, it has taken into consideration the existing migration flows and social cohabitation among cultures and peoples as well as the need to redefine this new context within language learning settings. As a result, the existing debate between human and social sciences has given rise to a reconceptualization of language learning around the notion of social agency, so that language learners become mediators, having evolved into social agents enabling knowledge while mediating with others. This is the context in which the AoA has been developed. In our opinion, this approach can be considered a sibling of previous communicative trends, since it comprises many of its characteristics such as the need to complete real-life tasks or the idea of a learner-centred teaching setting. However, unlike preceding approaches, mediation is an area that acquires a pivotal role for language users. In addition to this key feature, Piccardo and North (2019) discuss the close relationship between a number of factors such as language tasks, the way tasks are viewed, and the role of the resources used. Other factors mentioned include the contribution of the CEFR/CV (2018) to the transparency and coherence of the very complex activity of language learning. However, they admit to being tempted to define the AoA “as a practice in search of a theory” (*ibid.*: 3). Navarrete (2020) explains how their statement might refer to language researchers and practitioners’ understanding of the potential of this practice, but it also reveals the need to conceptualise it, since the term has now been in use for two decades.

It is important to point out that mediation was marginally included in the CEFR (2001), but it is in its recent update, the CV (Council of Europe 2018), that this area has become its main strategical axis. New categories for interaction activities (online, literature, plurilingual, pluricultural and sign languages) as well as new descriptors have been introduced to encourage the development of mediation activities and related strategies for language use. Another key innovation of its descriptive schema is the replacement of the four traditional skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) with the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction, and mediation, where the latter is in the very centre, combining them three (as seen in Figure 1).

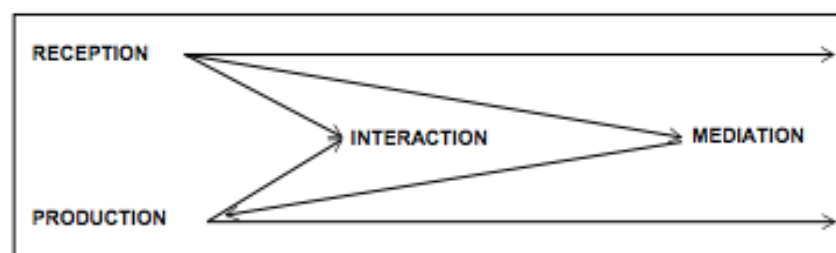


Figure 1. Interrelation of the four modes (Council of Europe, 2018: 32).

When referring to AD practice, Navarrete (2020) highlights its key element of social agency as the learner mediates between the clip and its audience translating images into words for visually impaired users. With the recent addition of sign language to the new version of the Framework, this author promotes the idea of incorporating the categories of AD and Subtitling for Deaf and Hard of hearing (SDH) to the new version of the CV, as these modes involve practices aiming at making clips accessible to people with either auditory or visual

impairments. In this article, we will present the updated descriptors for AD developed by Navarrete (2020), together with an additional set for didactic revoicing, hitherto not developed.

Figure 2 below shows a range of categories for mediation activities, adapted from the most recent Framework. The previous CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) descriptors are given in white, the new CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018) descriptors, in blue, and our new categories, in green. As figure 2 shows, an additional type of mediation activity has been created, named “Mediating a sequence of images from a clip” (see green highlight), which allows illustrative descriptors and their scales for AD practice to be incorporated. Some of the descriptors have been adapted from the group of activities titled “Mediating a text”, highlighted in blue

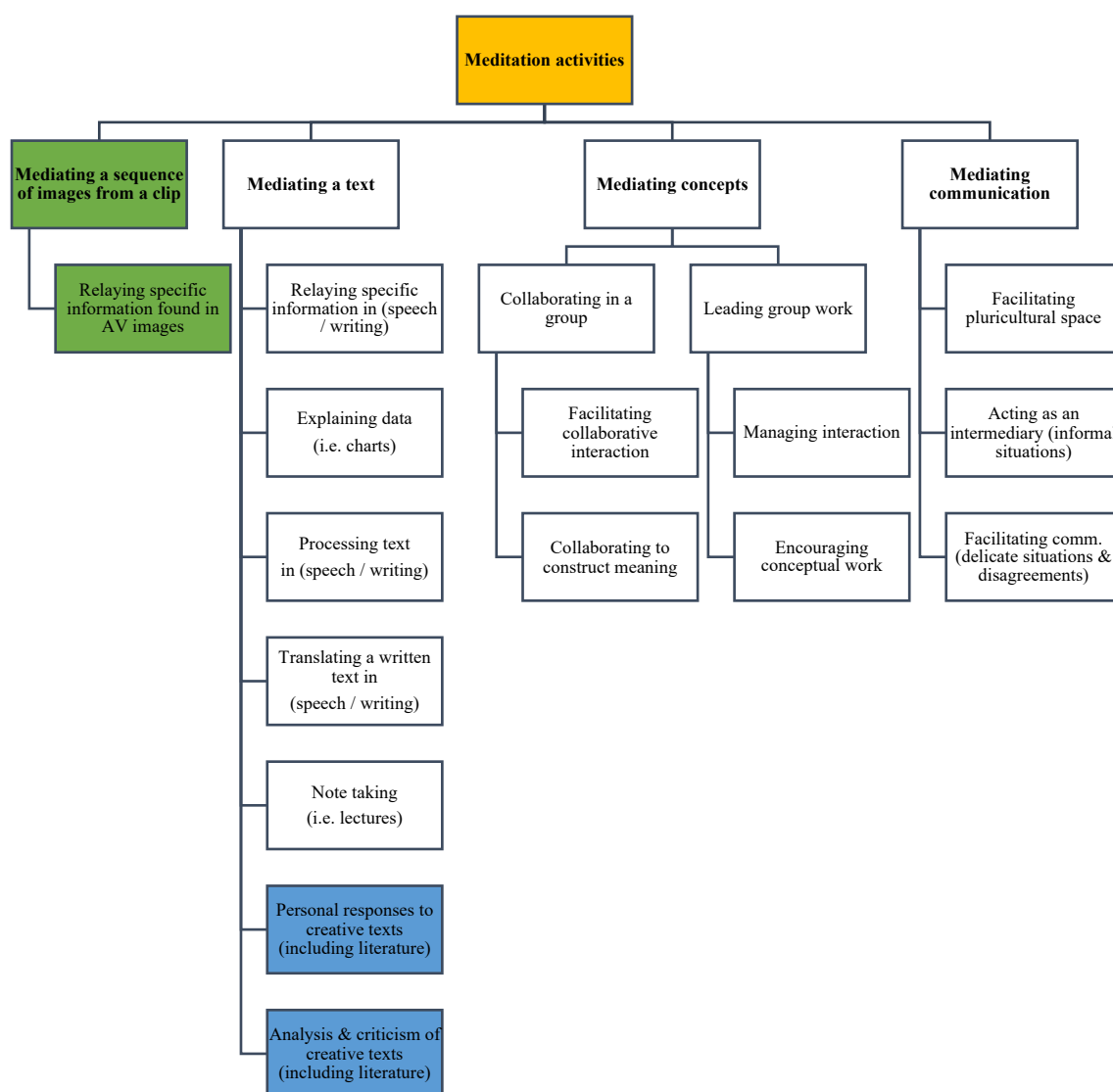


Figure 1. Mediation Activities in FLL; Adapted from the CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018: 104) categories and scales, in addition to Navarrete’s categories (2020).

AD practice combines both writing and non-spontaneous speech, as learners have to write their script before their narration is recorded. Therefore, the illustrative descriptors for both of these categories have been selected and rewritten for learners to work on AD tasks, as seen in Table 1 below, resulting in a new category called “Relaying specific information from AV images in written discourse and in non-spontaneous speech”. These

two categories have been organized mirroring the existing scales in the CEFR/CV (2018), that is from a scale of Pre-A1 to C1, but incorporating a proficiency level C2, which was not included in the most recent version of the CEFR/CV (2018). For this level, unlike C1, professional standards in AD are expected from learners. This new scale ranges from using basic words and simple structures that do not require much reformulation for AD speech, to advanced and sophisticated linguistic items that can be adapted to all sorts of speech reorganisation. A key element for all six scales is the need to maintain the narration in synchrony with the images, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions, as this is what makes AD different from non-AV modes of interaction. For the upper levels (C1 and C2), learners are assumed to have acquired in-depth lexical and grammatical competence for the relevant synthesis and summarising techniques needed for such practice. We should point out that Navarrete's proposal (2020) did not take into consideration the intelligibility of speech in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation; therefore, a line for each descriptor (in italics) has been added to assess these important features. These scales range from a basic level (A1 and pre-A1) to an excellent level (C1-C2) of spoken discourse intelligibility.

Level	Descriptor
C2	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using very sophisticated vocabulary and minimalistic structures (when needed) for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions (following near-professional standards).</p> <p><i>This should be done producing an outstanding level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has an outstanding control of prosodic features, he/she can speak with very few hesitations, reproduce correctly all sounds and intonation will have very little influence from other languages that he/she speaks.</i></p>
C1	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using sophisticated vocabulary and minimalistic structures (when needed) for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p><i>This should be done producing an excellent level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has an excellent control of prosodic features, he/she can speak with few hesitations, reproduce correctly all sounds and intonation will have little influence from other languages that he/she speaks.</i></p>
B2	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using a certain degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and structures whilst implementing the necessary reorganisation steps for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p><i>This should be done producing a very good level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has a very good repertoire of learnt words and phrases, he/she can speak without many hesitations, reproduce correctly most sounds and intonation will have minor influence from other language(s) that he/she speaks.</i></p>
B1	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using a basic degree of sophistication in the usage of vocabulary and structures whilst implementing the necessary reorganisation steps for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p><i>This should be done producing a good level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has a good repertoire of learnt words and phrases, he/she can speak without too many hesitations, reproduce correctly many sounds and intonation will have some influence from other language(s) that he/she speaks.</i></p>

Level	Descriptor
A2	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using familiar words and basic structures that do not require much reorganisation for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p>Can audio describe (in Language B) specific, relevant information contained in short, simple texts, labels and notices (written in Language A) and on familiar situations appearing in a video clip whilst keeping the synchrony with its images, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p><i>This should be done producing a satisfactory level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has a limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases, he/she can speak slowly, reproduce correctly a limited range of sounds and intonation will be clearly influenced from other language(s) that he/she speaks.</i></p>
A1 and Pre-A1	<p>Can audio describe (in Language B) relevant visual elements of a video clip to visually impaired viewers, using very basic words and structures that do not require much reorganisation for the narration to be in synchrony with the images of the clip, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions.</p> <p>Can audio describe (in Language B) specific, relevant points contained in predictable information about times and places, short and simple texts, labels and notices and on basic situations appearing in a video clip whilst keeping the synchrony with its images, avoiding any overlapping of dialogues and descriptions, and using short sentences.</p> <p><i>This should be done producing a (very) basic level of intelligible utterances in terms of fluency, pronunciation and intonation. As the speaker has a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases, he/she can speak quite slowly, reproduce correctly a very limited range of sounds and intonation will have a strong influence from other language(s) that he/she speaks.</i></p>

Table ¡Error! No hay texto con el estilo especificado en el documento.. Updated proposal for AD descriptors based on the CEFR/CV (2018).

As pinpointed by Navarrete (2020), the original descriptors of the CEFR/CV (2018) have been adapted from those that described the relaying of information, replacing the latter with AD-specific processes. These original descriptors differentiate between speech and written discourse, both included in “Mediating a text”, to reflect the fact that AD practice involves both written discourse (when creating their scripts) as well as oral speech (when recording narrations with their own voices).

To conclude this section, we would like to highlight the importance of having created a new category for mediating a clip as it would allow for the incorporation of other AVT modes in addition to the AD subcategories already created. As none of the existing AVT descriptors have been tested yet, we are hoping to both develop and test them all in the near future. In the current project, only the scales for B1 and B2 will be tested as these are the working levels for all AVT modes developed through the lesson plans created for the project.

4. Didactic Audiovisual Translation Lesson Plans: Action-oriented Audio Description

The TRADILEX project has now finalised one of its first stages, which consisted of producing 60 lesson plans for specific AVT modes – namely subtitling, SDH, VO, intralingual dubbing and AD) – and research members have started to test them in an attempt to collect data for research purposes. There are 30 didactic sequences for each intermediate-proficiency level, i.e. B1 and B2 as per CEFR/CV (2018), and six for each AVT mode within each level. Therefore, a B1 or B2 learner working individually, or in small groups, could complete up to six lesson plans for each of the five aforementioned modes reaching up to a total of 30 one-hour lesson plans (excluding separate training on how to use AVT tools). Students can work independently (i.e. homework) or in

a face-to-face class (i.e. in-class exercise) in one of the associated language schools² that are taking part in the project.

Level	Subtitling	SDH	Dubbing	Voice-over	AD	Total
B1	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	30 lessons
B2	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	6 lessons	30 lessons

Table 2. AVT modes, levels and number of lessons for the TRADILEX course.

Each lesson should last about an hour in a face-to-face format, but it can also be done during a period of several days for those independent learners working remotely. The lessons are divided into four stages with tasks coherently scaffolded so that students are prepared for the subsequent tasks. This is done by providing the relevant context for the understanding of the clip before students embark on viewing the clip and on the main AVT task. The cycle is completed with a final task that recycles linguistic and intercultural elements developed in the previous stages of the lesson. Table 3 below shows the stages of the lessons and outlines the corresponding objectives.

Stage	Time / (min)	Description	Objective
Warm-up	10	Discussing of topic areas or plot covered in the clip	Acquiring a general knowledge of the context in which the clip is situated
		Introducing lexical and grammar items, and intercultural knowledge	Practicing new lexical and grammar items needed to understand the clip in the next stage and to prepare for the AVT task
		Anticipating video content (plot, characters and action points)	
Viewing of the clip	10	Viewing the clip (at least twice)	Focussing on the messages conveyed by spoken discourse and by visual elements
			Anticipating problems for completing the AVT task
			Discovering temporal constrains
AVT task	30	Completing the AVT individually or in small groups using the software selected	Developing linguistic written and/or spoken skills and any other skills in an integrated manner
Written production tasks	10	Discussing relevant topics related to the content of the clip	Complementing the linguistic and intercultural content of the clip by working on additional production tasks that will develop all L2 skills
		Carrying out role-plays or writing tasks to further practice the linguistic and intercultural elements contained in the clip	

Table 3. General structure of an AoA AVT lesson plan for TRADILEX.

To illustrate the above table with a sample lesson, we will be discussing one for the project on AD practice for level B2 (CEFR/CV). It uses a two-minute short film called *Eggs change*, which is about a “battle for eggs” between a lady farmer and a hen. The farmer manages to grab one of her eggs after a long dramatic fight, then, the hen takes the lady’s baby and hatches her baby instead. The warm-up stage of the lesson contains an activity

² These are over ten language centres from partner universities that signed a collaboration agreement with the TRADILEX project. Other international language centres have also been involved in the piloting of some didactic sequences.

with verbs that express either ways of looking or ways of moving (or moving something), where the learners have to tick the right boxes to show that they understand the meaning of each verb, and have to translate a few of them into their L1. A text on the basics of AD professional guidelines is also provided; students work with multiple choice questions in order to ensure that they have understood the text. For the second stage of the lesson, that is, the viewing of the clip, half of the video has been audio described in English (which is the learners' L2). Learners have been provided with linguistic tools to discuss the content of the video, that is, the verbs that were introduced in the first stage. In addition, learners have to infer basic guidelines on AD (also presented in the AD text of the first stage) by responding to a multiple-choice task where they are asked basic questions that help to understand key ideas on how to proceed with this AVT mode, i.e., what is described, what and who pronouns refer to, and what the verb tenses used are. The third stage of the lesson is the AD task where learners have to audio describe the second half of the video (1-minute long) using some of the verbs learnt. A reminder of key AD professional guidelines is also provided to facilitate their work, underscoring the need for lexical accuracy and richness, grammatical precision and reduction and creativity. The final stage consists of a production task with a brief, where learners have to write a short story based on a traditional tale. Lexical items and grammar structures from previous tasks can be reused for this final activity.

Printouts were produced for distribution among partner centres but have not been used with the students, to ensure sole reliance on online teaching ecosystems in which students can do the majority of the AoA tasks on the relevant platform.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, we have discussed the AoA foundations of TRADILEX, a project that aims to collect data to further demonstrate the enhancement of linguistic and intercultural skills through AVT tasks. Based on previous studies, such as Navarrete (2020) and Bolaños-García-Escribano and Navarrete (2022), we have assumed that AoA is a natural evolution of previous communicative approaches where a clear strategic focus on mediation has been developed with an element of social agency at the very centre of the learning experience. This is achieved by fostering a learning environment that integrates the new modes of production, reception, interaction and mediation, which have replaced the four traditional skills as described in the CEFR/CV (Council of Europe, 2018). The learner becomes a social agent who mediates between the clip and an audience that cannot access the entire content of a clip due to linguistic, cultural, visual or auditive impediments. We have focussed on a revoicing mode that is common in AVT and MA practice: AD (from images into L2). We have commented on the state of the art and idiosyncrasies of AD, and the particular challenges it might pose to language learners as well as on the potential benefits in FLE settings.

AVT categories were not included in the last version of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). In this paper, "Mediating a clip" has been added to allow for the creation of future subcategories that would encompass all modes of didactic AVT. An additional set of illustrative descriptors has also been created for intralingual dubbing and existing descriptors for AD practice have been updated accordingly in order to expand the potential of these newly proposed changes to the current framework. This paper has also discussed the general structure of the TRADILEX and lesson plans, focussing on one example based on AD practice for B2 learners. This can be illustrative of how AD can be integrated into FLE environments, aiming to foster language and mediation skills. As the authors of this article were unable to pilot their lesson plans in-depth, we have only provided some guidelines on how to complete this essential stage of the project.

This article has been written in the context of the lockdown generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where courses at primary, secondary and higher education levels have provisionally moved into a variety of learning environments for unspecified periods of time. We believe these new habits have increased the presence of all modes of AVT and that the TRADILEX project offers an innovative platform with didactic units that can support language users as they improve their linguistic, cultural and mediation competences, whether they work face-to-face or remotely.

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