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Audiovisual Translation in Language Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

This chapter explores the use of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in the field of language teaching and learning, focusing particularly on classroom and teacher-mediated environments where AVT tasks are performed by learners. It begins with a historical overview of the use of AVT in the language classroom and discusses the most relevant and recent contributions in this area, highlighting key research methods and scholarly research themes. It further discusses how technological developments and the availability of free resources are impacting on this area of research and concludes with indications for future directions and suggestions for further debate.

A history of the area

AVT has been used extensively in language teaching and learning ever since technology first enabled the projection of audiovisual material in combination with some form of translation, usually intra- and interlingual subtitles, and dubbing. Intralingual (or bimodal) subtitles are in the same language as that spoken on screen; interlingual ones, on the other hand, are presented in a language different from that spoken on screen and can be standard — i.e. audio in one's foreign language (L2) and written text in the mother tongue (L1) written text) — or reversed — L1 audio and L2 written text. Traditionally, especially in the earlier days, AVT was provided in a ready-made format to learners: the standard or reversed subtitled version of an audiovisual text was shown and complemented with a number of additional activities. More recently, however, learners have been involved in the AVT process itself, performing tasks such as subtitling, dubbing, and adding audio description (AD) or voice narration to video clips.

Subtitled material in language learning

Anecdotal evidence, empirical studies and scientific research on the impact of subtitled material on language learners have flagged up its beneficial effects not only on receptive skills and cultural awareness (Vanderplank 1988, Price 1983, Garza 1991, Winke *et al.* 2010, Abdolmanafi Rokni and Jannati Ataee 2014), but also on speaking skills (Borrás and Lafayette 1994) and learning strategies in general (Caimi and Mariotti 2015). Studies have also shown the effectiveness of subtitled videos and programmes in teaching and learning national languages, especially in countries with several indigenous languages, like Cameroon, South Africa or India, to name but a few, where subtitles have been linked with and advocated for the promotion of not just bilingualism but also multilingualism (Kothari *et al.* 2004, Kruger *et al.* 2007, Ayonghe 2009).

In an article published in 1988, describing one of the first studies on the effects of exposure to intralingual teletext subtitles, Vanderplank reported that initial reactions to the deployment of this new approach were not particularly supportive. Indeed, subtitles in language learning were seen as distracting and hampering the acquisition process, and it was felt that they could 'create a form of text dependency and lead to laziness' (1988: 272). Vanderplank's study however, showed otherwise: fifteen European exchange students of English as Foreign Language (EFL) who watched English language BBC programmes with teletext subtitles reported better understanding of fast speech and unfamiliar or regional accents, and feedback activities pointed to a high level of language retention and recall. At the same time, and in line with several subsequent studies, this research found that intralingual subtitles benefit learners with higher levels of language proficiency, rather than beginners and lower intermediate students. However, other variables also need to be considered in this respect, such as the length of the video, the occasional or systematic exposure to subtitles and, of course, the lexical and syntactical complexity of the text. Indeed, Talaván (2011) suggests that systematic exposure to short subtitled clips improves listening comprehension skills even among beginners.

Some doubts have been voiced as to whether improved comprehension of video material with intralingual subtitles is really due to good listening, rather than to good reading. Bird and Williams (2002) conducted two comprehensive experiments to verify the positive effects of this type of AVT on language learners. Although they found that the combination of auditory and visual (written) information seems to be beneficial only when there is ambiguity in the auditory input, they suggest that 'orthographic information can, under certain circumstances, have a significant facilitatory impact on long-term implicit and explicit learning of spoken word forms' (*ibid.*: 19).

Further concerns relate to the negative consequences of the redundancy effect studied under Cognitive Load Theory. Advocates of the use of what are commonly referred to as 'multimodal texts' (texts which convey information through different channels: auditory, visual, verbal) in language teaching often refer to the positive impact on cognition (and consequently on learning) of the combined delivery of verbal and visual information, as hypothesized in Dual Coding Theory — which will be discussed further in the next session. Conversely, Cognitive Load Theory maintains that the redundancy effect obtained when information is presented simultaneously through more than one channel increases the cognitive load, and therefore redundancy does not facilitate comprehension or learning. Indeed, studies comparing the impact of inter- and intralingual subtitles found that bimodal L2 subtitles (audio in L2 and subtitles in L2) were the least beneficial for lower levels of fluency, arguably because the cognitive load imposed on the learners hampered comprehension (Lambert and Holobow 1984). More recently, Kruger (2013) carried out an experiment with 21 students of North-West University in South Africa, delivering a 30-minute recorded lecture in Economics with intralingual subtitles. In order to establish whether presentation speed has an impact on cognitive load and comprehension, the students were divided into three groups, and three versions of the video of the lecture were

prepared — with subtitle presentation speed of either 132 words per minute (wpm), 110wpm or 74wpm. Students then watched individually one of the versions of the lecture and answered questions. Whilst Kruger warns that generalization of his findings require further investigation with larger numbers of students, his initial results seem to support the redundancy effect theory: higher subtitle speed carry higher cognitive load and impact negatively on the processing of subtitles. As he himself puts it, 'it would seem that a lower presentation rate results in a stronger relationship between comprehension and attendance to salient visual codes' (*ibid*.: 48). Significantly, as Kruger notes, 'subtitles, like any other teaching aid, cannot be used indiscriminately' (*ibid*.: 30), it is therefore necessary to gauge the audiovisual text and its translation accurately before engaging language students, considering not just the appropriateness of the linguistic and extra-linguistic content of the scenes for the level of proficiency of the students, but also the lexical density, syntactic linearity and presentation rate of subtitles.

Researchers working with interlingual subtitles have reported improved performance among learners of different ages with both low and high level of proficiency. However reversed subtitles appear to be the most beneficial, especially for beginners. Danan (1992) carried out a pilot and two experiments with learners of French at beginner and intermediate level, concentrating on active recall of lexical items following viewings with standard subtitles (L2-L1; pilot only), bimodal subtitles (L2-L2; experiments only), reversed subtitles (L1-L2) and audio with no subtitles. Danan consistently found that the reversed mode yielded the highest recall results and that bimodal input is to be preferred to standard.

The findings of a large longitudinal study (Mariotti 2015) involving nearly 2000 participants (primary, secondary and tertiary teachers; secondary school and university students; adult learners with different educational backgrounds), carried out by the Subtitles in Language Learning research group, revealed that teachers find bimodal subtitles particularly suitable for intermediate and advanced learners. Students in general expressed a preference for interlingual combinations, but 'extremely motivated learners preferred L2-L2 subtitles' (*ibid*.: 140). Data collected confirmed the positive attitude to subtitles of students in formal and non-formal learning settings. Teachers' responses were equally positive, although some would like to see simplified subtitles for language learners. The same study revealed that students also raised concerns about the discrepancies between subtitle and audio, speed of subtitles and the inability to read and watch at the same time, showing the relevance of Cognitive Load Theory in this context.

Whilst most research has concentrated on vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension, a number of studies have also explored the impact on L2 syntax acquisition showing that when exposure to subtitled material is short, there is no evidence of improvement (d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun 1997, van de Poel and d'Ydewalle 2001). By contrast, when the period of exposure is increased, positive results in the acquisition of L2 syntax have been noted (Ghia 2007, 2011, 2012).

Active AVT tasks in language learning

Discussing the findings of his 1988 study, Vanderplank wonders 'to what extent, in Krashen's terms, can watching television be considered meaningful interaction in the target language?' (*ibid.*: 276). As Vanderplank goes on to explain, watching television is 'a mainly passive activity' and '[f]or students to become proficient in the language, productive practice would also be necessary at various intervals' (*ibid.*: 279). Whilst it could be argued that negotiating the intersemiotic connection between the various meaning-making modes at play in audiovisual texts — as realized in the verbal, visual and auditory channels — requires the activation of digital literacies and a number of cognitive strategies, the fact remains that watching and reading are, if not passive, certainly receptive skills.

Addressing these concerns, the most recent developments present AVT to students as an active task that requires their involvement in translating the verbal soundtrack and creating their own subtitled or revoiced version. Early investigations on the potential of this use of AVT date back to the late 1980s, but they developed further during the following decade for both dubbing (Duff 1989, Kumai 1996) and subtitling (Díaz Cintas 1995). Since then, researchers have examined its impact on mnemonic retention, pragmatic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, specialist languages, pronunciation and intonation, autonomous learning and motivational factors as well as translation skills. Indeed it was the potential of AVT in translation courses that alerted researchers to the likely advantages of AVT performed by learners. In his 1995 article, Díaz Cintas laments the scarce attention afforded, until then, to the translation of audiovisual texts compared to literary and other written texts and argues that the need for reduction in subtitling forces students to distinguish between salient and redundant information and reflect on the coherence and internal cohesion of the target and source texts — which improves their understanding of the translation process and enhances their reflective and critical skills. Díaz Cintas also hints at the positive impact of the novelty of subtitling on language learners' motivation. Surprisingly, however, research has since then concentrated mainly on the active use of AVT in language acquisition, rather than on its implications for translator training. Neves' (2004) contribution is one of the few that looks at subtitling from both perspectives and describes how the various stages of the subtitling process in an undergraduate degree course on translation had a positive impact on advanced learners' receptive and productive skills. She also notes that, more generally, subtitling raised their language awareness in L1 and L2, and boosted their ability to extract information, infer opinions and attitudes, deduce meaning from context, as well as recognize discourse patterns and markers.

Another AVT mode which can be exploited in in the context of language learning and applied linguistics is dubbing, which has so far received less attention than subtitling — possibly, as Danan (2010) points out, because the original soundtrack is replaced by its dubbed version. Yet, already in 1989 Duff highlighted the effectiveness of synchronization in translation training, as it raises awareness of various issues influenced by time and length constraints. Perhaps the most obvious application of dubbing in language learning pertains to the domain of phonetic and phonological training. Using inexpensive equipment and some ingenuity, Kumai (1996) introduced

'karaoke movies' to his Japanese students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), who performed live dubbing of the movies paying attention to rhythm, intonation, emotion and speed. Indeed, Burston (2005: 81) argues that 'dubbing requires students to pay particular attention to timing, which fosters more native-like speech delivery', and notes that the images, facial expression and body language on the screen help students to empathize with the characters and their emotions. Burston adds that dubbing is a better option than role-plays because with the former students can listen to their own performance and improve it as many times as necessary. This view is consistent with the findings of other empirical studies. For example, Danan's (2010) comprehensive experiment involving 82 students of Dari, Pashto or Farsi between 2007 and 2010, showed the improvement of the participants' speaking skills and speed. On the other hand, Chiu's (2012) analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected from 83 Taiwanese EFL students revealed that those participants who carried out dubbing activities significantly outperformed learners who had worked only with conversation; likewise, it showed that dubbing improves the use of intonation, reduces mispronunciation and improves the students' fluency and speech delivery rate. In a recent study, Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera (2015) have combined reversed subtitling with dubbing with a view to improving both oral and written production skills, as well as translation skills. Their findings suggest that, in the students' opinion, dubbing was more rewarding than subtitling, and that the former had contributed more significantly to the development of their translation skills.

Whilst earlier studies tended to rely mainly on qualitative data (students' and/or teachers' input and feedback), the next section surveys a range of pilot and case studies conducted towards the end of last decade to further demonstrate the positive effects of AVT on language learning, gauge the extent of that improvement through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, develop a theoretical framework for the use of AVT in language learning contexts, and propose strategies to integrate AVT in the syllabus.

Key theoretical perspectives

The theoretical framework underpinning the bulk of research on AVT and language learning is primarily informed by Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1969, 1986), Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2005), Krashen's (1982) Theory of Second Language Acquisition, in particular the affective filter hypothesis, and a revised understanding of the role of translation in second language acquisition.

Paivio's Dual Coding Theory conceptualizes cognition as the dynamic association of representations from two independent systems. From this theoretical standpoint, it is argued that the association and interplay between the linguistic information stored in the verbal system and the imagery stored in the non-verbal system enhances memory. Research work informed by this theory therefore seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the intersemiotic processes through which verbal and non-verbal resources interact with and complement each other within multimodal texts.

Mayer's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning Channels, on the other hand,

draws attention to the limited capacity of those two information-processing systems to encode information by using only verbal or visual resources. In light of such limitations, it postulates that learning takes place through the co-deployment of verbal *and* visual representations, i.e. through a combination of words and pictures. This study builds on an earlier one (Mayer *et al.* 2001) that, apart from identifying the limitations exhibited by each channel, shows how the integration of verbal and non-verbal information demands a bigger cognitive effort from the text user. Specifically, the authors demonstrate that, when written text is superimposed on an animation film, 'learners must split their visual attention between the on-screen text and the animation, failing to adequately attend to some of the presented material' (*ibid*.: 190). Furthermore, their findings indicate that the amount of cognitive effort required from viewers increases when the audiovisual ensemble is presented to learners at a relatively fast pace and the text viewers cannot adjust the information delivery rate — as previously suggested by Kruger (2013). In instructor-mediated language learning settings, however, the simultaneous deployment of spoken and written language through different channels is not so cognitively taxing, as the learners' viewing experience is normally preceded by a range of preliminary activities seeking to manage and contextualize the learners' engagement with various aspects of the text, including the register and other conversational dynamics.

Since its formulation in the 1980s, Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory has had a considerable impact on second language pedagogy and generated a cascade of welcome theoretical discussions. It consists of five hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, which distinguishes between the subconscious process of acquisition and conscious learning; the Monitor Hypothesis, which postulates the existence of an editing system within the learning process that allows learners to monitor, plan and modify utterances; the Natural order Hypothesis, which suggests that grammatical structures are acquired following a predicted, natural progression, regardless of learners' age, first language, exposure and so on; the Input Hypothesis suggests that people are more likely to acquire language when they understand input that is just above their level of competence and finally the Affective Filter Hypothesis stresses the role played by affective factors such as self-confidence, motivation and anxiety in the acquisition (or hindrance to acquisition) of input. Low anxiety contexts help learners to lower their affective barriers, thereby allowing more input to pass through the filter.

Apart from the theoretical models surveyed in this section, researchers who advocate the employment of active AVT tasks for language learning purposes tend to rely on the work of Cook (2010) and Laviosa (2014), who have recently spearheaded a revival in the use of translation as a pedagogical tool in the language learning classroom.

Research issues and methods

Current research in this area is prioritizing the systematic integration of AVT tasks in the language curriculum. By providing detailed guidance on how to achieve an optimal level of curricular integration, specialists aim to ensure that AVT tasks are no longer dealt with as isolated add-ons, but combined with an array of pre- and post-

task activities to help learners elicit and recall information and assist trainers with the feedback delivery process (Talaván 2006, 2007; Incalcaterra McLoughlin and Lertola 2011, 2014). However, some of the most recent work in the fields of AVT and language learning involves the collection of quantitative data for statistical analysis, in an attempt to add an objective dimension to empirical observations. Pilot and case studies at the centre of this research strand tend to rely on relatively small cohorts of university students, including non-traditional students (adult and distance learners). Typically consisting of sets of pre-, post- and delayed tests for the experimental group and, in some cases, also a control group, these studies often rely on the triangulation of results and curves of statistical variations in relation to a number of hypotheses.

One of the first contributions to this research strand is Bravo's (2008) analysis of the impact of screen translation on foreign language learning based on three experiments with Portuguese learners of English. The first two make use of ready-captioned material, while the third combines the use of an L2-L2 intralingually subtitled text (English audio and English subtitles) with the subsequent creation of L2-L1 interlingual subtitles (English into Portuguese) by students. The aim of this study was to establish whether learners' understanding of idiomatic expressions would significantly improve after viewing and reading the L2 material, and gauge the extent to which this would allow them to re-use such expressions correctly in written production. Ten idiomatic expressions were identified in the audiovisual text and tests were administered before and after viewing the episodes, and then again after the completion of the subtitling activity. Students who initially appeared to understand the selected expressions correctly ranged from 0-50%, with the comprehension of seven expressions below or at the 20% mark. After viewing the episode, correct answers increased significantly to between 50-100% (for one expression). Bravo (*ibid.*: 185) claims that:

> it was not the written input alone which made comprehension possible, as the expressions had previously been presented to the students in a written format. It was the correspondence between written text and spoken text, in the form of monolingual subtitles that transformed intersemiotic reception, using the two channels of visual perception of images and hearing, into multi-semiotic reception.

After completing the subtitling component of this task, the participants' correct answers increased even further to reach 75-100% (for four expressions). In the written production test carried out three weeks later, 15 out of 20 students were able to use the English idioms correctly.

Possibly the first study involving a control group is Noa Talaván's (2010) experiment, which tested the listening comprehension skills of a cohort of 50 adult intermediate EFL learners divided into two groups. While only the experimental group carried out an active subtitling task, all participants — both in the experimental and the control groups — were exposed to a similar volume of L2 input. Members of both groups were presented with the same sequence of pre- and post-subtitling activities and viewed the video clip with bimodal subtitles. Results show that, while all students benefitted from the availability of bimodal subtitles, the experimental group members (who carried out the active subtitling task) returned statistically significant higher comprehension

scores. These findings were corroborated by the result of other projects involving students with varying degrees of EFL proficiency. In an identical experiment involving students with lower EFL proficiency, Talaván (2011) found that 'there is an intrinsic relationship between subtitling as a task and LC [Listening Comprehension] improvement' (*ibid*.:209) — which is also reflected, from a qualitative perspective, in the participant's interest and willingness to take part in similar activities in the future. Finally, Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón (2014) study of the impact of subtitling activities on the listening comprehension skills of advanced EFL learners shows that subtitling has a very positive influence on the latter, as well as on the participants' perceived improvement of their writing skills and, more generally, their satisfaction with their involvement in the study.

Other specialists have chosen to concentrate on the interface between AVT and vocabulary acquisition and writing skills. Lertola (2012) describes an experiment consisting of small experimental and control groups made up of intermediate students of Italian as a foreign language. Lertola's starting hypotheses were that exposure to new vocabulary items through the viewing of audiovisual texts would improve incidental vocabulary retention, and that the addition of a standard interlingual subtitling task (L2-L1) would further increase such retention. Participants in both groups sat carried out tests before, immediately after and some time after the viewing component. The scores for each group showed that both hypotheses were correct; however, members of the experimental group (the only one that carried out an active interlingual subtitling task) returned statistically significant higher scores for vocabulary acquisition when tested some time after the completion of the subtitling task. For her part, Burczyńska's (2015) study of the impact of reversed subtitling on the writing skills of Polish EFL students found significant improvements in the spelling and grammar of her experimental group subjects, vis-à-vis their control counterparts, after completing only 8 weeks worth of reversed subtitling practice (twice a week for 45 minutes).

The impact of AVT on language learning has also been examined by specialists in the intercultural dimension of language pedagogy — who study how learners manage the opportunities for immediate cultural transfer afforded by the interplay between the various semiotic channels found in audiovisual texts. Borghetti and Lertola (2014) identify three types of opportunities to raise cultural and intercultural awareness within the context of a subtitling task presented to a group of intermediate learners of Italian. These can be found during or shortly after watching the videoclip, while subtitling, and during or shortly after class discussions. Borghetti and Lertola's analysis of the students' behaviour (questions and responses) at these junctures showed that they are more concerned about cultural issues — i.e. the (lack of) correspondence between the source and target cultures — than linguistic ones, which suggests that subtitling can 'elicit outward behaviour which might be a marker of awareness development (*ibid*.: 436). Specifically, Borghetti and Lertola (2014: 426) foreground the difficulty derived from having 'to take all information transmitted through different semiotic systems into account' and the need to 'reach beyond mere verbal communication', and conclude that the complexity of this task develops their decision-making skills and fosters their responsibility. It is worth noting that Borghetti

and Lertola's study focuses on language learners rather than trainee translators, which might explain their 'conflicting findings' in relation to students' attitudes towards the source text and culture: participants tended to concentrate more on the target than the source. At any rate, the implications of this study are far reaching and pave the way for new approaches to the study of the translator's responsibility in training environments.

Against the background of growing interest in the interface between AVT and language learning, attempts have been made to facilitate the integration of AVT tasks in language learning curricula. Drawing on the premise that the longer the learners' exposure to subtitling practice, the bigger the boost for their language skills, Incalcaterra McLoughlin and Lertola (2014) advocate the introduction of subtitling modules within language degree programmes, for which they propose curricular templates and lesson plans.

In terms of the range of AVT modalities investigated in past and current research driven by a language teaching and learning agenda, the bulk of the literature has tended to focus on subtitling and dubbing. AD, however, has also received attention, both in relation to its impact on language acquisition (Clouet 2005, Martínez Martínez 2012, Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen 2013, 2015) and translation competence (Martínez and Gutiérrez 2009). These studies note that AD enables second language acquisition, and boosts learners' motivations, class cohesion and teamwork dynamics.

AD is normally used to make video material accessible to blind or visually impaired viewers, who are provided with a verbal 'translation' of the information conveyed through the visual channel, normally during pauses in the dialogue or other parts of the programme that do not feature any aural information. Audio describers need to be attentive observers and describe what they see in a precise and concise manner. For Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen (2013), these very requirements make AD a particularly interesting activity for language learners, and their experiment with 52 adult students of Spanish shows that this AVT mode can foster lexical and phraseological competence. In a later experiment testing the use of VISP (VIdeos for SPeaking), a mobile application for language learning that they developed to facilitate AD activities in class, Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen (2015) found that there is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate that AD contributes to the development of learners' lexical accuracy. As is also the case in other studies involving the use of AVT in the language classroom, participants in Ibáñez Moreno and Vermeulen's experiment recorded their interest enjoyment, thus confirming the motivational advantages of employing a task-based communicative approach based on audiovisual material — a very familiar and ubiquitous medium in students' everyday life.

Research on the use of AVT in translator training is still limited, with initial evidence pointing to the fact that the manipulation of the source text to respond to the space, time and synchronization constraints of AVT can contribute to improving trainees' skills and abilities on various levels (Klerkx 1998, Rundle 2000, Neves 2004; and Incalcaterra McLoughlin 2009, 2012, 2015 in print). These articles do not focus primarily on the training of subtitlers, but on the effects that AVT can have on the

development of the professional and linguistic skills of future translators. They also explore didactic strategies which expand students' understanding of what constitutes a text and stimulate reflection on different linguistic and extralinguistic elements of meaning, the implications of manipulating or adhering closely to the source text, various aspects pertaining to the translator's responsibility and visibility, as well as on the transfer process itself.

Specifically, Rundle's (2000) article reports on the use of a subtitling software application designed by the author within a course on translation into L2 that not specifically focused on screen texts. Rundle identifies a number of fringe benefits for students, including the development of learners' transferable IT skills, students' exposure to professional tools, and the 'fun' element involved in subtitling practice. In addition, the author draws attention to the pedagogical benefits of creating 'self-contained, one-line units' in L2 — insofar as students should construct such blocks 'according to the syntax of the target language', while ensuring that their subtitles meet conventional readability standards. Qualitative data from class discussions and students' written comments reveal the extent to which learners became involved in the process, with the challenge of physical constraints pushing them towards more courageous choices than they would have dared to take in the context of a written translation, and fostering a more critical approach to the source text.

Detailed lesson and module plans have been suggested to enhance the presence of AVT in translator training settings. These exploit and incorporate multimodal analysis techniques devised by Thibault (2000) and Taylor (2003) and adapt pre-subtitling tasks described by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). For her part, Incalcaterra McLoughlin (2009) proposes a revised model for multimedia analysis that prompts translation students to reflect on the signifying codes which make up the semantic web of an audiovisual text with a view to stimulating critical reflection on translation strategies and choices. In a later work, Incalcaterra McLoughlin (2012) shows how this approach can be operationalized through a lesson plan comprising of 5 stages: motivation, globality, analysis, synthesis and reflection. ~~In a forthcoming article (2015, in print), S~~she also describes the structure of a whole subtitling course specifically aimed at trainee translators (2015). It is argued that pre-subtitling tasks such as transcription of the dialogue also have a role in sensitizing students to the peculiarities of speech acts, as the challenges of representing in writing salient elements such as tone of voice, repetitions, or emphatic traits, to give but a few examples become immediately obvious. The case study presented in this article suggests that reflection on such challenges helps to enhance learners' translation skills.

A promising development at the interface between AVT and translator training is the recent creation of a substantial corpus of student subtitles thanks to the LeCoS Project (Learner Corpus of Subitles), developed by Anna Bączkowska at the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. The project allows for the analysis of translation students' subtitling behaviour and provides useful training material which can be utilized in different contexts.

The influence of new technologies

The availability of reasonably priced or even free technological tools has greatly impacted the shape of language teaching in the digital era and encouraged experiments with new and exciting methodologies, which enhance not only linguistic and (inter)cultural skills but also transferable IT skills. This is particularly true in the area of AVT, where expensive professional software is matched by freely downloadable programmes which are perfectly suitable for class use. Among the most widely used at the moment are Visual Sub Synch, Aegisub Advanced Subtitle Editor, DivXLand Media Subtitler and Subtitling Workshop. At the same time, well known social networking sites such as YouTube have made subtitling possible at no cost and with little effort, and initiatives such as Lyrics Training make excellent use of this technique.

In addition, a number of projects funded by the European Union have provided free, easy-to-use captioning and revoicing tools and resources specifically designed for language teachers and learners. In 2006 the European Commission funded the Learning via Subtitling project, which resulted in the development of the LvS software application (the first subtitling application specifically designed for language learning that incorporates useful and intuitive feedback options) and a range of subtitling activities driven by a task-based approach. Evaluation questionnaires were distributed across 6 European countries to 104 students and 12 teachers of 8 different foreign languages. The results show that LvS tasks were well received, as 72% of students found them very or quite interesting and 70% of teachers reported higher participation by learners (Sokoli, Zabalbeascoa and Fountana 2011). One of the strengths of this project is the availability of highly structured and consistent lesson plans which facilitate inclusion of the tasks in the syllabus.

The success of this first venture inspired the development of a platform allowing users to perform AVT tasks online without the need to download any dedicated software application. The ClipFlair platform was therefore developed as part of a new project sponsored by the European Commission in 2011. ClipFlair goes beyond subtitling, as it allows for both captioning and revoicing in over 300 intralingual, interlingual, and multilingual activities in 15 European and non-European languages. As was the case for LvS, ClipFlair is also designed for language learning and each activity is accompanied by a description of learning objectives and the type of engagement expected from users, either repeating, rephrasing or reacting. The methodological framework (Zabalbeascoa and Torres 2012) which underpins the project defines learner-types in terms of their degree of dependence on the instructor, and their reliance on e-learning, wich allows for the matching between specific activities and learner-types.

These free projects and tools have facilitated the inclusion of AVT activities even in online language modules (Incalcaterra McLoughlin and Lertola 2015) and hence opened up new possibilities and trends in the use of AVT in language learning settings. However, commercial tools are now capitalizing on the benefits of these techniques, with apps like fleex.tv offering a subscription service for English language learners. Subscribers are able to watch videos in the original languages with a percentage of the dialogue subtitled in English and the remainder in their own

language. The higher the level of English the learner has, the higher the percentage of English text used in the subtitles.

Future trajectories and new debates

Since the use of AVT in language learning contexts is a relatively new pedagogical trend, most researchers have concentrated on case studies focused, perhaps inevitably, on a limited number of language combinations and/or participant samples. Whilst these provide invaluable material and an excellent starting point for the consolidation of this training trend, a wider approach is now fast becoming necessary, with larger, international collaborations, integration and triangulation of data, sharing of corpora and the development of proficiency descriptors and transparent evaluation criteria. A broader cross-section of learners should also be considered, in terms of age, native language, geographic distribution and learning environment. Future research should also consider learners' degree of familiarity with AVT in general, and subtitling in particular as the ability to absorb information quickly is higher in subjects who are used to subtitles, while those who are not tend to spend more time shifting their attention from verbal to visual information and vice versa. This is likely to influence test results and could have a bearing on the degree of effectiveness of the various types of subtitles.

Furthermore, new research should also address the issue of cognitive load specifically in the context of second language acquisition. Data and suggestions emanating from these new perspectives would help turn AVT into a mainstream language teaching strategy. EU-funded programmes, like the ones mentioned earlier, go a long way towards achieving this objective by providing an archive of ready-made activities and freeing language teachers from the considerable time it takes to prepare suitable AVT tasks. However, they have limitations in terms of range and sequencing of activities and require additional effort in order for these activities to be incorporated in the syllabus. Certainly, the involvement of publishing houses specializing in language manuals would contribute greatly to widen the exploitation of AVT for language learning purposes, if AVT tasks were, for example, added as an integral part of textbooks and course material.

Studies have so far concentrated mainly on subtitling and, to a lesser extent, dubbing. Further research should therefore address the impact that other AVT modes can have on language learners and on teaching methodologies. In this respect, further quantitative data collected from learners of non-European languages would be particularly welcome. Also, the effect that subtitling and dubbing tasks can have on the professional training of future translators — as opposed to future subtitlers and dubbers — is still under-investigated, as is the impact of preparation of audio description and dialogue reduction for subtitling on writing skills and development of syntactic proficiency.

Recent progress on the use of smart subtitles (Kovacs 2013), which give students the opportunity to use dictionary features by hovering over certain words, point to exciting future possibilities for interactive AVT tasks. At the same time, new

technologies, such as interactive television and the widespread use of social networking, point not only to new tools and approaches, but also to so far under-researched groups of learners such as independent adult learners operating outside the structure of a course and without the mediation of a teacher.

Finally, closer interdisciplinary collaboration between information technology and language teaching and learning scholars would certainly boost the pedagogical relevance of AVT in the language classroom, as would contribution from film studies scholars.

Summary

This chapter has explored the use of AVT in language teaching and learning settings. It has begun with a historical overview exploring the benefits of presenting language students with subtitled video material, and experimenting with different subtitle types: standard (audio in L2 and subtitles in L1), bimodal (audio in L2 and subtitles in L2) and reversed (audio in L1 and subtitles in L2). It has then moved on to focus more specifically on recent qualitative and quantitative studies involving the completion of active AVT tasks by learners, where AVT tasks and any other necessary preparatory activities are performed by students. Whilst subtitling is the most widely exploited AVT mode in the language classroom, this chapter has also shown that dubbing and AD have also been profitably and imaginatively applied in language teaching and learning contexts, and that, in some cases, two AVT modes have been combined in order to maximize their impact.

As far as research in this area is concerned, most students involved in pilot studies investigating different aspects of the interface between AVT and language learning are situated in face-to-face learning environments; however, participants enrolled in virtual learning environments have also participated in some trials. The theoretical framework underpinning these studies includes research into cognitive psychology, second language acquisition, translation studies and didactics of translation. Advances in technology and EU-funded projects have made AVT tools freely available to teachers and students and can facilitate the integration of AVT in language teaching curricula. Going forward, this chapter advocates a move towards mainstreaming active AVT tasks, which contribute not only to the linguistic and (interc)cultural development of language students, but also to the enhancement of learners' key digital skills and multimedia literacy. Research to be prioritized by specialists should take the form of large-scale international and longitudinal studies involving different languages and language combinations.

Further reading

Gambier, Y., A. Caimi and C. Mariotti (eds) (2015) *Subtitles and Language Learning. Principles, Strategies and practical experiences*, Bern: Peter Lang | *This collection of articles on the use of interlingual, intralingual and reversed subtitles in language*

teaching provides methodological guidance and scientific data for both researchers and teachers.

Garzelli, B. and M. Baldo (eds) (2014) *Subtitles and Intercultural Communication*, Pisa: Edizioni ETS | *The second section of this book, entitled* Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning in Europe and Beyond, *explores the use of subtitles in foreign language teaching and in translator training, with a particular focus on intercultural communication.*

Ghia, E. (2012) *Subtitling Matters. New Perspectives on Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning*, Oxford: Peter Lang | *This book contains and extensive overview of use of subtitled material in second language acquisition and introduces two experimental studies on the acquisition of English syntax through subtitled texts.*

Incalcaterra McLoughlin, L. and J. Lertola and N. Talaván (eds) (2018). *Audiovisual translation in applied linguistics: Educational perspectives. TTMC Special Issue 4(1). This collections of articles presents the latest research and didactic implementation of audiovisual translation in language teaching contexts, showcasing innovative approaches and recent case studies.*

Related topics

audio description, AVT and language learning, AVT training, corpus-based AVT, dubbing, multimodal corpora in AVT, multimodality, pragmatics, spoken discourse and conversational interaction, subtitling, technologization of AVT

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