

Learning foreign languages through telecollaboration: embedding didactic audiovisual translation in the language classroom

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Introduction

In today's globalised world, international collaboration, primarily fuelled by the internet and new communication technologies, is increasingly present in higher education. Nowadays, interaction between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is a widespread reality, and work environments have changed considerably in light of new modes of remote communication. There are, for instance, a greater number of professionals working in cross-cultural teams and communicating with each other via digital platforms and videoconferencing tools. To stay in tune with these systemic changes affecting work patterns, future professionals, such as linguists and translators, need to acquire twenty-first-century soft skills. For example, they ought to be capable of working in multilingual and multicultural teams, be they face to face or remote, and of managing and leading projects involving international members. The COVID-19 pandemic has enhanced off-site work, making remote and flexible work and international collaboration key aspects for businesses to succeed worldwide.

Higher education has been no exception to these substantial changes. In a very short space of time, particularly as a result of the lockdowns imposed in many countries across the globe in early 2020, universities had to embrace new communication systems and adapt

their workflows to continue providing education with the use of remote technologies such as videoconferencing and online learning platforms, or learning management systems (LMSs). In blended learning – a learning approach that combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online activities and materials – online platforms such as Blackboard or Moodle have traditionally proved to be useful, albeit limited, for learning and teaching synchronous lessons online. Communication pathways among students are often insufficient in these systems, which are designed as online repositories fully controlled by instructors. Despite the evident disadvantages of abruptly switching to online teaching, the globality of lockdowns also created opportunities for learners to interact with each other online in a similar fashion to telecollaboration teaching approaches (Huertas-Abril 2020; Beecroft and Bauer 2022). Telecollaboration, herein understood as a form of virtual mobility (O'Dowd 2013), existed well before the eruption of the pandemic (see, for instance, Belz 2003; Dooly and O'Dowd 2018). As a matter of fact, telecollaboration had previously been adopted by university educators in Europe and elsewhere in projects involving students from a wide variety of schools and universities, and it is claimed to foster twenty-first-century competences, including linguistic, intercultural, digital and teamwork skills (Sevilla-Pavón 2020). In light of increasing scholarly interest in embedding telecollaboration in translator education (Marczak 2023), this chapter examines the application of telecollaboration practices in the teaching of a foreign language (FL) for the development of communicative competences.

There is an abundance of language-related literature that demonstrates the utility of telecollaboration for international interaction between students, which enables them to communicate using their FL skills. This chapter presents a telecollaboration project proposal focused on using didactic audiovisual translation (AVT) in language learning settings. In particular, we discuss how to embed telecollaboration in an English-language module for student translators offered at the University of Valencia (UV), Spain, and a Spanish-language module for linguists in training from UCL in the UK. The discussion builds on teaching experiences from pre-pandemic times, in which students were exposed to innovative tasks that they completed in international teams. We hereby propose a number of synchronous and asynchronous activities, as well as the use of online tools and platforms, for English- and Spanish-speaking students to work collaboratively in international teams. The students study, analyse, compare, translate and revise video clips, which include topics such as gender, feminism, media accessibility and LGBTQI+ identities. This confirms the project's commitment to

enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This chapter ultimately explores how telecollaboration can positively impact language training, not only for linguists and translators in training but also for language learners from other areas in higher education. Telecollaboration tools can also be affordable alternatives to language exchange programmes involving international travel, and it is therefore our belief that this methodology serves a twofold purpose. We ultimately claim that didactic AVT represents a pedagogically challenging, and rewarding, experience for language instructors wishing to challenge the physical boundaries of their classrooms and to embrace diversity.

Pedagogical translation in foreign language education

Translation, broadly understood as the linguistic and cultural transfer between two texts across languages, has traditionally featured in most FL teaching theories and methodologies (Pintado Gutiérrez 2012). The very understanding of (pedagogical) translation, alongside its usefulness for FL learning and teaching, has experienced fluctuations, which have been directly affected by mainstream language teaching methods, notably communicative approaches. Against the backdrop of new communicative theories, interlingual translation is oftentimes considered a type of cross-lingual activity pertaining to the faded grammar translation method (Thornbury 2011). Indeed, translation was virtually banished from FL classrooms for a long time, as it was associated with this method (Atkinson 1987; Carreres 2014). ~~The grammar translation method was~~ inherited from Greek and Latin language-teaching techniques that delved into the study of grammar and rhetoric through rule-memorisation activities and direct and reverse translation exercises of decontextualised sentences (Richards and Rodgers 2003), while ignoring the development of oral skills (Cook 2010, 10). ~~On the other hand,~~ translation scholars started to lose interest in the role of translation in language teaching following the development of dedicated professional translation programmes (Pym 2018).

Leading translation scholars such as Holmes (1972/2000) considered the two fields irreconcilable, but the relationship started to change with the advent of communicative approaches in language education. House (1977) summarised the ongoing debates between translation scholars and language educators. One of the key ideas from those debates was that translation was the ‘fifth skill’ in language learning, alongside speaking, writing, reading and listening. However, new light

was shed on translation with Lavault's (1985) works and Duff's (1989) seminal book about sense-for-sense translation theory, which ~~consists of~~ text-to-text language-transfer activities for the honing of FL skills. Several decades later, three official documents published by the Council of Europe – the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (2001), its *Companion Volume* (2018) and the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (2013) – recognised translation as a necessary skill to activate communicative, plurilingual and pluricultural skills, which are basic skills if we want to train polyglot intercultural citizens. This recognition of translation as a communicative mediation tool reinforces the benefits of its use as a pedagogical tool in ~~(foreign-) language~~ education.

Moving away from grammar-based approaches and drawing on communication-focused approaches, action-oriented theory gives mediation a pivotal role in language learning. The language learner thus becomes a social agent enabling knowledge while mediating texts and communications with other speakers (Piccardo and North 2019). In designing language tasks and utilising authentic resources, mediation becomes an ~~ever more~~ important skill. Mediation emphasises 'the two key notions of co-construction of meaning in interaction and constant movement between the individual and social level in language learning, mainly through its vision of the user/learner as a social agent' (Council of Europe 2018, 36). According to Navarrete (2021), mediation has to be conceptualised considering that it was marginally included in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) and its potential in language learning still remains to be further ascertained.

North and Piccardo (2016) proposed mediation descriptors, according to which the interlingual translation of a given text is also considered a textual mediation activity in its own right. Such publications are indicative of a growing interest in pedagogical translation in language learning environments. However, as Pym (2018) points out, this recent interest in the role of translation in the language classroom calls for a necessary dialogue between translation and ~~(foreign-) language~~ education theories. As argued by Pym (2018, 219), language educators have to put translation 'into the right kind of learning situations and encourage the full range of things that can be done in translation', including the fact that students ought to be able to produce and discuss different translations for the same input, thus learning to mediate a text depending on the communication context.

Contextualising language teaching and embedding telecollaboration

Understandings of language teaching, let alone the average student profile, can differ enormously between courses offered by British and Spanish universities. To understand how pedagogical translation is embedded in British curricula, we first analyse two compulsory language modules offered at UCL. These modules feature in the first two years of an undergraduate degree with Spanish and are worth 15 credits (that is, 30 credits in the European Credit Transfer System [ECTS]) each. This constitutes a total of 40 contact hours (across 10 weeks) and ~~excludes~~ independent work and office hours as well as additional oral-language seminars. Each module comprises three main components (Grammar and Communicative Skills, Translation from and into Spanish, and Additional Contents and Skills) and covers different varieties of Spanish as well as translation tasks that prepare students for a future Year Abroad programme. The module is taken by students majoring in any discipline offered at UCL's Joint Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences, including not only other languages but also Business Administration, Political Sciences, History and many other disciplines. The students' backgrounds are therefore diverse and the student mixture is rich, which in turn means that the module must be generic enough to cater for students who are planning to become linguists or translators but also contain specific content for those who are learning Spanish for specific purposes. Additionally, the module must cater for students who will take a mandatory Year Abroad course as part of their degree course, thereby enhancing their language and intercultural skills and international experience. These modules differ from optional language courses offered by language centres.

The teaching of English as an FL in Spain can take multiple forms. In Spain, the training of translators and interpreters in tertiary public institutions officially began in 1974 with the creation of the Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas y Traductores at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Muñoz Raya 2004, 14). Multiple separate institutions for the training of translators and interpreters were established shortly after, including the specialist schools at the universities of Granada and Barcelona in the 1970s and 1980s. At the time of writing, in 2023, there were almost 40 undergraduate programmes for the training of translators and more than 80 language-specific undergraduate programmes, according to Spain's Registry of Universities, Centres and Degrees (Registro de Universidades, Centros y

Títulos). This means that translator training is provided in the form of dedicated translation and interpreting degrees, and that the training of linguists takes place in language-specific undergraduate programmes. In the latter, however, translation is not generally part of the curriculum and is an optional tool at the disposal of the teacher. A case in point is UV, which offers a module entitled English Language, taught to students in language degrees as well as to those in a specialised translation degree. It is worth 6 ECTS credits, which constitutes a total of 60 contact hours (across 15 weeks) and ~~excludes~~ independent work and office hours as well as additional speaking seminars. For language degrees, the subject focuses on developing speaking, listening, writing and reading skills according to a textbook, which ~~includes~~ very few mediation or translation tasks. The teacher can choose to ~~include~~ additional activities involving mediation or translation, but these are not part of the syllabus. In contrast, in the translation degree, the same textbook is used, but the aim is for students to learn grammar and develop communicative competences in English up to a B2 CEFR level, so that they can apply those skills to carry out translation and mediation professionally. To achieve this aim, many teachers employ pedagogical translation tasks, which can take the form of additional tasks or projects, including AVT tasks as further discussed in this chapter.

Considering the element of EDI in ~~language~~ education, some clear differences can be observed between the average student profiles at UCL and UV. Being a bilingual region of Spain, Valencia tends to have a student body comprised of speakers of Spanish and Valencian. Another difference is that students are not formally required to complete a one-year exchange programme abroad and seminar groups tend to be large (30–35 students per group). As UCL is a London-based university, seminars (usually involving up to 12 students) are plurilingual spaces, because many students are not native English speakers, and language courses involve a mandatory, credit-bearing Year Abroad programme. In light of the different experiences of these cohorts, we envisage that telecollaboration programmes can bridge important gaps, such as enhancing the international aspect of the studies and bringing plurilingualism into the classroom.

Using audiovisual translation to teach foreign languages

When it comes to fostering mediation skills in the language classroom, special attention must be paid not only to linguistic competences, as described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

(Council of Europe 2001), but also to plurilingual and pluricultural competences, as suggested in its *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe 2018) and the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Council of Europe 2013).

Recent approaches to didactic translation have also shed light on the uses of AVT practices (for instance dubbing and subtitling) in the FL classroom (Lertola 2019; Talaván 2019a). Interlingual translation of video material requires translators to have expert knowledge of the languages and cultures involved, as well as a special sensitivity towards language and multimodal information. Students ~~often~~ struggle to analyse, interpret and ultimately comprehend the different layers of meaning entangled in an audiovisual text (Zabalbeascoa 2001), not least because text analysis in an FL poses additional challenges ~~depending~~ on the student's proficiency. Just like with other creative works, such as literature, students may struggle to recompose and rewrite the source texts (that is, dialogues and narrations from video clips) if their linguistic and rhetorical resources in the FL are limited. To tackle this common issue, AVT scholars have conducted studies focusing on dubbing and on subtitling for didactic purposes (Incalcaterra McLoughlin and Lertola 2011; Lertola 2012; Talaván 2013; Borghetti and Lertola 2014; Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera 2015; Sánchez-Requena 2016; Talaván and Costal 2017; Lertola and Mariotti 2017; Sánchez-Requena 2018; Talaván 2019a) and on media accessibility practices, such as audio description and subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) (Ibáñez and Vermeulen 2013; Ibáñez et al. 2016; Calduch and Talaván 2017; Navarrete 2018; Talaván 2019b).

In the last two decades, research projects on internet-based learning applications with a focus on AVT have laid the foundation for further research on AVT as a tool to develop linguistic, plurilingual and pluricultural skills across international borders. One of these projects was LeViS (Learning via Subtitling), funded by the European Commission (Socrates/Lingua), from 2006 to 2008. Within the framework of this project, the first specific tool for making subtitles in a language learning environment was created, and activities in six different languages were designed and tested. According to the LeViS final surveys, learners not only consolidated and improved their language skills, but were also enthusiastic about the innovative nature of the subtitling activities (Sokoli et al. 2011). ClipFlair (<http://clipflair.net>), also funded by the European Commission, was developed from 2011 until 2014, and its main aim was to use interactive revoicing (including dubbing, audio description, karaoke singing and reciting) and captioning (including subtitling and

video annotations) to teach FLs. The resulting online platform includes ready-made exercises and an AVT system to create and complete revoicing and subtitling exercises. This platform was perceived as pedagogically useful for FL teaching purposes after being piloted by 1,213 learners with the help of 37 tutors in 12 different languages (Baños and Sokoli 2015). Alongside the LeViS and ClipFlair projects, other smaller-scale research projects have endeavoured to further examine the pedagogical benefits of AVT, including Babelium (2013–2015) and SubLanLearn (2009–2012).

More recent research projects with a strong focus on AVT are PluriTAV, funded by the Spanish government and the European Regional Development Fund, and TRADILEX (Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education), funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain.¹ PluriTAV was carried out from 2017 to 2019 and its main aim was to explore the benefits of mediation activities following the Council of Europe's frameworks with a focus on plurilingual and pluricultural competences. The project consisted of designing and testing a set of didactic sequences involving the active use of different modes of AVT in higher education FL teaching. The results of the project (see, for example, Cerezo Merchán and Reverter Oliver 2022; Torralba et al. 2022) show an encouraging development of plurilingual and pluricultural competences among the students who participated in the pedagogical experiments. TRADILEX took place between 2020 and 2023. The main aim was to produce an ad hoc online learning tool to include ready-made didactic sequences with hands-on AVT exercises. The platform offered differentiated teacher and student access, allowing the language learning process to be fully monitored by educators. Similarly to PluriTAV, the results (Talaván and Lertola 2022) are promising and show that didactic AVT tasks have a positive effect on the honing of written and oral skills, thus confirming the findings of previous work in this field (Lertola 2019).

Telecollaboration in foreign language education environments: Discussing a previous experience

~~This section elaborates on telecollaboration and its application in language learning settings.~~ Telecollaboration experiences can take multiple forms. They can be academic or professional, when stakeholders from beyond academia are involved. In this chapter, we follow a user-centred approach and limit the application of telecollaboration to purely academic scenarios.



In the words of Dooly, telecollaboration can be defined as:

the process of communicating and working together with other people or groups from different locations through online or digital communication tools (e.g., computers, tablets, cellphones) to co-produce a desired work output. Telecollaboration can be carried out in a variety of settings (classroom, home, workplace, laboratory) and can be synchronous or asynchronous. In education, telecollaboration combines all of these components with a focus on learning, social interaction, dialogue, intercultural exchange and communication all of which are especially important aspects of telecollaboration in language education. (2017, 169–170)

Telecollaboration has ~~much~~ potential to promote social interaction, dialogue, intercultural exchange, debate and communication, all essential in (foreign) language education. According to Dooly and O'Dowd (2018), there is a solid body of literature on telecollaboration nowadays; indeed, it is sufficiently vast to allow for multiple definitions and terms to define online collaborative initiatives (for instance virtual exchanges, social connections and tandem activities, among others). Groundbreaking technological advances in our internetised society, such as real-time videoconferencing tools, and particularly their democratisation, have been fundamental in enabling remote exchanges by means of telecollaboration.

Global interest in telecollaboration has grown significantly in recent years, and several regional, state and European projects have been financed to explore this exciting field. Many of these projects involve university students, such as the EU-funded project INTENT (Integrating Telecollaborative Networks into Foreign Language Higher Education, 2011–2014), the main output of which was the development of an online platform (www.unicollaboration.org) where educators can find the resources and training materials necessary to set up telecollaborative exchanges in higher education. Another two important projects are TILA (Telecollaboration for Intercultural Language Acquisition, 2013–2015) and TeCoLa (Telecollaboration and Gaming for Intercultural and Content Integrated Language Teaching, 2016–2019), funded by the European Commission, with the main aim of using gamified telecollaboration technologies to enhance FL teaching and learning by supporting online pedagogical exchanges between secondary school students throughout Europe. Additionally, international commercial initiatives, including but not limited to

Conversify and Tandem, were often marketed among higher education institutions as providing FL students with (paid) environments in which they could practise their oral skills.

Following the 2020 lockdowns ~~in several countries around the world~~, many universities had to adapt their teaching through the use of remote technologies such as videoconferencing and online learning tools. Existing blended learning tools, such as Blackboard or Moodle, proved useful albeit limited for online education. Communication among students often falls short in these systems, and even the use of live sessions through videoconferencing tools is far from ideal, as interaction becomes artificial in a virtual environment where students can stop sharing access to their camera and/or microphone and disengage more easily. As mentioned earlier, despite the evident disadvantages of swiftly switching to online teaching, the widespread lockdowns also created opportunities for learners to interact with each other online in a similar fashion to telecollaboration teaching approaches (Huertas-Abril 2020; Beecroft and Bauer 2022). Telecollaboration practices, however, existed long before the outbreak of the pandemic (Belz 2003; Dooly and O'Dowd 2018). Furthermore, from an EDI point of view, it is paramount to acknowledge that, during the pandemic, for many students the only chance to have an international experience and to gain fluency in their language of study was through a telecollaboration programme.

Collaboration is an essential component when it comes to embedding translation in the classroom; it thus constitutes the core of user-centred approaches to FL education. Contrary to transmissionist perspectives, whereby the learner is a passive listener and consumer of knowledge, socioconstructivism sees learning as 'a personal, holistic, intrinsically motivating and socially effectuated construction process' (Kiraly 2000, 23). Learning is not transmitted from the teacher to the students, but rather proactively constructed and transformed in collaborative learning processes. Coincidentally, this is also advocated by curriculum decolonisation efforts, which endeavour to enhance student-teacher collaborations by putting the learner at the centre of the learning experience.

Following the above principles, a telecollaboration project was carried out between two higher education institutions, namely UCL and UV. In the 2018–2019 academic year, a term-long telecollaboration project was conducted between 91 first-year students (divided into 8 seminar groups) of Spanish as an FL at UCL, and 66 second-year students (divided into 2 groups) of English as an FL at UV. Our main goal was to enhance the development of students' cultural awareness and language

competences, by fostering their motivation to learn. The participating students, who were intermediate users of their corresponding FL, furthered their linguistic and communicative competences and fostered generic skills, such as media literacy, teamwork and problem-solving, by carrying out tasks in international teams. More specifically, an emphasis was put on intercultural communicative competence (that is, being able to interact with speakers of other languages and cultures in a seamless manner) and language competence (that is, being able to understand, produce and interact in the FL fluently) following the CEFR's descriptors (Council of Europe 2018). In addition to the main competences outlined above, by setting up an international rapport with fellow students, we were contributing to a friendly and safe learning space in a blended ecosystem, thereby enhancing the students' understanding of learning contexts other than their local ones and stimulating authenticity through student-centred and collaborative learning.

This term-long telecollaboration project, which encompassed synchronous and asynchronous tasks, was designed so that students had to communicate with each other in the classroom (face-to-face interaction) but also remotely with their international counterparts in a blended learning environment. A Padlet visual board was utilised for teachers and students to share content.  To communicate and complete the asynchronous tasks, Padlet and Google tools were used, although most students (72.29 per cent) reported having mainly used their institutional email. Skype was encouraged for setting up regular meetings with fellow international students, because it offers licence-free group meetings (39.16 per cent used it). Tasks were intertwined with the existing curriculum and ranged from digital stories to oral presentations, promotional videos and online questionnaires, among other activities. Following the existing lesson plans, these new tasks promoted reflection on a range of topics as well as on written and oral production; the added international component allowed students to practise and receive feedback from their peers, thus further justifying the usefulness of the activities at hand.

To better understand the learners' perspective on this telecollaboration experience, pre- and post-questionnaires were handed out. The pre-questionnaire (N=145) was filled in by 57 UV students and 88 UCL students, whereas the post-questionnaire (N=88) was filled in by 21 UV students and 67 UCL students. Overall, the experience yielded excellent results, but only 22 respondents (25 per cent) wished to repeat it, compared to 22 (25 per cent) who did not and 44 (50 per cent) who were unsure or preferred not to say.

Engagement and motivation levels were not always shared equally among team members; in fact, 10 participants (11 per cent) reported not having enjoyed working with other students (compared to 57, that is, 65 per cent, who enjoyed it very much) and 21 participants (25 per cent) reported low levels of motivation upon project completion (compared to 46, that is, 52 per cent, with a higher degree of motivation). Surprisingly, 32 students (27 per cent) would have preferred to work on their own, rather than in groups, during their language classes. National, social and cultural factors also led to incompatible schedules – indeed, over 54 students (51 per cent) reported that it had not been easy to communicate with fellow students via telecollaboration, with many noting that different times and lifestyles affected the ways in which they worked together towards their learning goals. Having said that, only seven students (9 per cent) considered that cultural misunderstandings had hampered teamwork altogether.

Alongside the questionnaires, in-class observations were carried out, and some students shared their experiences in writing on the Moodle learning platforms used. Some of the main bottlenecks that had impacted the project to a considerable extent were identified. The aims and learning outcomes varied between the two universities and across groups, and so did students' understanding of the purpose of studying an FL, which affected their engagement with the activities. These drawbacks have informed a new proposal for the teaching of AVT practices by means of telecollaboration in which language students can take advantage of working in international teams and collaborate towards common learning goals. Among the lessons learnt, we identified that group sizes had an effect on how effectively and regularly students communicated with their international counterparts, and it was established that closer monitoring – for instance through regular reports or forum posts to discuss work progress – were key to ensure students remain motivated and do not discontinue their participation. As Dooly and O'Dowd (2018, 25) claimed, 'telecollaborative projects require teacher know-how to coherently sequence the activities (both in and out of class)'; in our below proposal we therefore discuss telecollaboration sequencing in further detail.

A proposal for telecollaboration: an international didactic audiovisual translation experience

Drawing on our previous telecollaboration experience, as well as on the many fruits yielded by previous AVT-focused projects, ~~but~~ especially PluriTAV and TRADILEX, this chapter ~~includes~~ a methodological proposal for incorporating telecollaboration into the teaching of AVT practices in the ~~language~~ classroom for prospective linguists and translators.

Our pedagogical proposal for collaborative work using didactic AVT activities revolves around four main modes: dubbing, subtitling, SDH and audio description. It involves undergraduate students who are taking Spanish as a core subject at UCL and students from the undergraduate degree in Translation and Intercultural Mediation at UV who are studying English as an FL. The below proposal is for language modules that take place in the first year of these degrees, that aim to develop students' communication skills up to an intermediate level (B2) and that include interlingual translation as an essential component of their syllabi. The synchronous and asynchronous activities prompt English- and Spanish-speaking students to work collaboratively in international teams in order to study, analyse, compare, translate and revise audiovisual texts that touch on the representation of social minorities (BAME-BIPOC and LGBTQI+), disability and gender, with the ultimate objective of making teaching materials more diverse and inclusive. Additionally, tasks are designed to be developed in international teams so that students in mostly homogenous, monolingual environments can fully benefit from the experience.

Our didactic proposal would be suitable for a telecollaboration lasting approximately 20 hours, which we have divided into 6 sessions of 1 hour each, in class, plus 14 hours of independent work ('after class' activities) over a period of approximately 12 weeks (depending on term duration). This sequencing can, however, easily be adapted to other educational contexts by tweaking the methodology and replacing the video materials.

Throughout the proposal, there is a wide variety of activities in terms of reasoning (inductive and deductive), agency (individual, in pairs and in groups), learning setting (in class or at home), assessment (self-evaluation, peer review and tutor-marked), tools (a dedicated online platform, file-sharing tools, video-editing systems and subtitling editors) and resources (written and audiovisual materials). In terms of competences, communicative and plurilingual competences are predominantly addressed, but we would also like to help students to develop digital literacy, teamwork and creativity and to increase their motivation.

Following a task-based approach, and drawing on the PluriTAV and TRADILEX methodologies, as well as Baños's (2021) structure for AVT tasks, the project's phases are discussed in the sections that follow.

Phase 1: introduction to the project

Aims:

- To introduce students to telecollaboration in language learning settings
- To foster intercultural communication skills in higher education settings
- To raise awareness about the importance of diversity and an inclusive curriculum in language education

Grouping: Individual, in pairs and in international teams

Approximate duration: 120 minutes (60 minutes in class and 60 minutes after class)

Materials: Initial questionnaire

Steps:

In class:

1. Students fill in an initial questionnaire to report any previous experiences in telecollaboration projects, translation tasks, learning technologies or audiovisual content.
2. Each educator explains the rationale behind the telecollaboration project, emphasising the importance of meeting deadlines and staying in touch with team members regularly. The first lesson is devoted to discussing UCL's Liberating the Curriculum initiative and foregrounding the use of EDI materials in translation classroom to address the development of a more inclusive curriculum in language and translation programmes.
3. International teams are formed by the teachers, based on timetables and other requirements that students may have (such as reasonable learning adjustments, including for learning disabilities). Every team should be composed of at least one member from each university (ideally two, depending on group sizes). Teams of more than four students should be avoided.
4. Students in each team set up their own communication channel and file-sharing tool, such as Google Drive, and identify a suitable time

slot to meet, at least once a week, using a videoconferencing tool of their choice. In addition, students choose a team leader, who will communicate with other teams and the teachers involved in the project in case any problems arise.

After class:

5. Students join a dedicated online platform (for instance MS Teams, Padlet or any other learning tool that the teacher has selected). Each student produces and uploads an introductory one-minute video in the FL, to introduce themselves to their team and the rest of the cohort.

Assessment: Students submit two deliverables: a questionnaire and an introductory video about themselves, in their FL.

Phase 2: pre-translation activities

Aims:

- To analyse and interpret audiovisual texts through observation
- To discuss media content, after examination, with peers
- To identify, discuss and engage with EDI-related issues in video clips

Grouping: Individual, in pairs, in groups and in international teams

Approximate duration: 120 minutes (60 minutes in class and 60 minutes after class)

Materials:

- *In a Heartbeat* (Bravo and David 2017); 4 minutes, 5 seconds
- *Phenomenal Woman* (Masucci 2015); 4 minutes, 44 seconds
- *Cuerdas* (Solís García 2014); 10 minutes, 53 seconds

Steps:

In class:

1. First, the teacher explains to the students that in this second session they will discuss and engage with EDI-related issues in video clips. Then, in small groups, they are asked to think of two series or films that deal with these issues. English-language programmes can include the likes of *Pride* (Warchus 2014), *Green*

Book (Farrelly 2018), *POSE* (Murphy et al. 2018–2021) and *Atypical* (Rashid 2017–2021). As for Spanish-language programmes, *Vis a Vis* (Escobar et al. 2015–2019), *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar 2019), *Campeones* (Fesser 2018) and *Roma* (Cuarón 2018) could be considered. Students select one film or series, read the synopsis in their FL – using an online film database such as Filmaffinity or IMDB – and write down three or four keywords. The keywords are then shared with the whole class, and the teacher writes them on the board to discuss the semantic similarities that there might be in the terminology produced by the students. Finally, students translate the keywords into their mother tongue, looking for as many synonyms as possible and paying attention to the context of each programme.

2. Students watch a short film about love and tolerance called *In a Heartbeat* (Bravo and David 2017). In pairs, students answer some comprehension questions, such as:
 - What happened in the story?
 - Who was your favourite character?
 - How are the red and the dark-haired boys feeling at the start of the short film?
 - What does the heart tell the red-haired boy to do? What is he afraid of?
 - What purpose was the short film intended to serve? Do you feel that it fulfilled its purpose?
 - What audiovisual resources were used to reinforce this purpose (visuals and music)?
 - How did the short film make you feel?
3. Finally, in pairs again, students write a dialogue for the short film in the FL, which can include dialogues between the red-haired boy and his heart and dialogues between the two boys. In class, students practise reading their dialogues aloud. Firstly, they read their dialogue aloud and make sure that they know how to pronounce all the words and that they give the sentences the correct intonation. Secondly, they read their dialogue aloud again while the video is playing and pretend they are voice actors recording their voices in a studio. In this second reading, students pay special attention to whether the text is too short or too long to be in sync with the image and sound of the video and make the appropriate changes. If there is enough time, the teacher can ask one or two pairs of students to

~~simulate recording~~ the dialogue of the short film aloud with the video playing in the background without sound, allowing for a final reflection on the activity.

After class:

4. After class, Spanish-speaking students watch a short film in English and English-speaking students watch a short film in Spanish. The following are two examples of videos that could be used, one of which deals with women's empowerment and the other with disability, equality and solidarity:
 - *Phenomenal Woman* (Masucci 2015), in English
 - *Cuerdas* (Solís García 2014), in Spanish.
5. The team meets to discuss the following questions:
 - What was the short film about?
 - What purpose did the short film serve? In your opinion, is it successful?
 - What audiovisual resources were used to reinforce this purpose (visuals, music and sound effects)?
 - How did the short film make you feel?
 - In your opinion, how are minorities represented in the media nowadays?
 - Do you have any favourite short films or films on minority representations?
6. Finally, students write a report, individually, in the FL of about 300 words on the discussion and (dis)agreements in opinion among classmates.

Assessment: Students submit two deliverables: the dialogue in the FL for the short film *In a Heartbeat* and the 300-word report in the FL.

Phase 3: revoicing – dubbing

Aims:

- To become familiar with race-specific vocabulary while stimulating critical inquiry
- To develop an understanding of revoicing methods and the principles of dubbing
- To master revoicing software and manage a team

Grouping: In pairs and in international teams

Approximate duration: 240 minutes (60 minutes in class and 180 minutes after class)

Materials: *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* (Foreman 2019), narrated by William DeMeritt for *The Atlantic*; 2 minutes, 44 seconds; 383 words

Language combination: English into Spanish

Steps:

In class:

1. Students watch the video *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* (Foreman 2019) to prepare a discussion, moderated by the educator, on the (in)visibility of race and the alienation experienced by African Americans in the previous century as well as today. The discussion revolves around African American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois's metaphor of 'the veil' (that is, a visual manifestation of the colour line that works as a social barrier and leads to race inequality), which students have to define using their own words in the FL.
2. Students are shown a transcript of the narrated video and are provided with a revoicing template to fill in. As illustrated by Table 3.1, the revoicing template can be a simple document containing a table with two main columns: on the left-hand side, names of characters or narrators, inserted manually by students; on the right-hand side, the Spanish translation of the original narration alongside the in and out time codes for each utterance. The principles of interlingual dubbing are explained, ~~putting~~ a particular emphasis on the importance of isochrony (that is, using in and out time codes in the translation to match the duration of the utterances) to follow the pace and content of the video.

Title of clip	
Character	Translation (dubbing)
Name of character or narrator	Please indicate the time codes (minutes and seconds) before each translation (e.g. 00.00 / 01.00). Your translation of dialogues, narrations and any other utterances should appear here.
...	...

Table 3.1 Sample revoicing template for inputting time codes and text

- Before the students start translating the script, they answer some comprehension and pre-translation questions to confirm their understanding of the main ideas in the video. In order to provide a guided approach to this exercise, the teacher selects challenging passages from the script and asks students to translate them into Spanish. Then, the teacher suggests the maximum number of words each utterance should have, depending on the duration of the utterance and taking into consideration an expected speaking rate of approximately 150 words per minute in spoken Spanish.

After class:

- Each team divides the narration into two main chunks of approximately 190 words and each team is split into two subgroups. Ideally, students work on their translations with a fellow student from the international partner university so that they can mediate the clip and hone their production skills while negotiating the work. During the translation process, the Spanish-speaking student(s) can add any annotations on the transcript if they fail to understand some of the concepts so that the English-speaking student(s) can help decode the text. Conversely, the English-speaking student(s) can add comments on any passages of their translation if they struggle to produce natural-sounding, idiomatic translations. Once the translations are finished, the team members merge the translations and provide feedback to each other. When the team meets to exchange feedback, comments and questions are addressed, and a final version of the translation is agreed upon by all team members.

5. Assuming that the final version of the translation has already been produced in writing, students now ~~produce~~ a new audio track in Spanish. Students can use any free video-editing or screen-recording tool (for instance Screencastify) to watch the (muted) original video and voice their narration using the time codes they had previously fixed. Each member performs, in Spanish, a proportional chunk of the translation. The native Spanish speakers help their English-speaking fellow students with challenging passages and pronunciation-related queries.
6. As a follow-up activity, students can read Du Bois's article, entitled 'Strivings of the Negro People' (published in *The Atlantic* in 1897), on which the video was based. With or without having read said article, students produce, individually and in their FL, a 300-word reflection on their understanding of race ~~nowadays~~.

Assessment: Students submit three deliverables:

1. the written translation, in Spanish, of the narration
2. the revoiced clip
3. the 300-word reflective commentary in the FL.

Since this is the first practical activity involving hands-on AVT practice, it is advised that the language instructors carefully monitor not only the process but also the outcome of the activities and provide feedback accordingly. Therefore, an assessment by the teacher is recommended shortly after submission of the revoiced clip and the written commentaries. Feedback can be offered in writing (through a submission slot or on each team's online platform) or shared verbally and collectively in class. Assessors should focus on isochrony, orality and naturalness, and how the resulting translation follows the pace of the video comfortably. If the narrations are either too slow or too rushed, the instructors can show examples of best practice and provide alternative translations that better match the video.

Phase 4: revoicing – audio description

Aims:

- To raise awareness about the importance of media accessibility
- To identify accessibility practices and their rationale
- To interpret visual information and produce verbal descriptions
- To develop translation skills by producing audio description scripts

Grouping: In international teams

Approximate duration: 240 minutes (60 minutes in class and 180 minutes after class)

Materials: *Hope* (Simoes 2022); 1 minute; 180 words

Language combination: Intralingual (English or Spanish)

Steps:

In class:

1. Teachers initiate a discussion on the concept of disability and the many physical and mental forms it can take. Students watch the Royal National Institute of Blind People's video entitled *What Is Audio Description?* (RNIB 2019) and are given a set of questions to answer in pairs. These questions relate to the nature of audio description as well as its uses and the target audience (blind and partially sighted viewers, in this case).
2. Students watch Southeastern Guide Dogs' short film entitled *Hope* (Simoes 2022) and examine the video in pairs using Fryer's (2016) recommendations on how to describe video content for the blind and partially sighted. More specifically, they have to indicate what and who they see in the clip and where and when the action is taking place; additionally, they can discuss how and why the action takes place. They compare their responses with a team sitting next to them to ascertain whether their interpretations of the clip are similar. At the end of the lesson, the teacher provides students with the English-language script and shows the video description. A comparison is established between the elements on which the describer focused in their description in contrast with the students' analysis of the visuals.

After class:

3. Each team is divided into two sub-teams at each institution. Students have access to the original clip and a revoicing template (see Phase 3: revoicing – dubbing). Students are prompted to insert the time codes themselves following basic audio description principles (for instance, create a new row after a pause of 3 seconds or more).
4. Students produce the description script in their FL using the relevant time codes in the template provided. Once the script has been finalised, each sub-team shares its written descriptions with its international counterpart to receive feedback. When peer reviewing the scripts, students can add comments with suggestions on how to pronounce challenging passages.

5. Once the feedback has been exchanged, each sub-team uses a tool of their choice to watch the (muted) original video and voice the descriptions using the amended script. Each member narrates, in the FL, a proportional chunk of the description. Figure 3.1 shows how students would voice a clip using the Screencastify plug-in on a browser (in this particular scene, students have to describe how the man is hanging decorations on his Christmas tree). The resulting video is shared with their fellow students to receive feedback on their performance in terms of oral skills, with an emphasis on not only fluency and prosody but also naturalness and idiomaticity. Depending on the feedback received, each sub-team may consider repeating the work and producing an improved version of the described clip.
6. Students submit their work in the form of two deliverables: the audio description script and the voiced video. The Spanish-speaking team provides the files in English, whereas their English-speaking counterparts produce the script and video in Spanish.
7. As a follow-up activity, the teacher shares the official audio description and the English-language script. Students check the official description against their own, and produce a 500-word report in their FL in which they discuss how their description of the clip compares to the one used by Southeastern Guide Dogs in English.

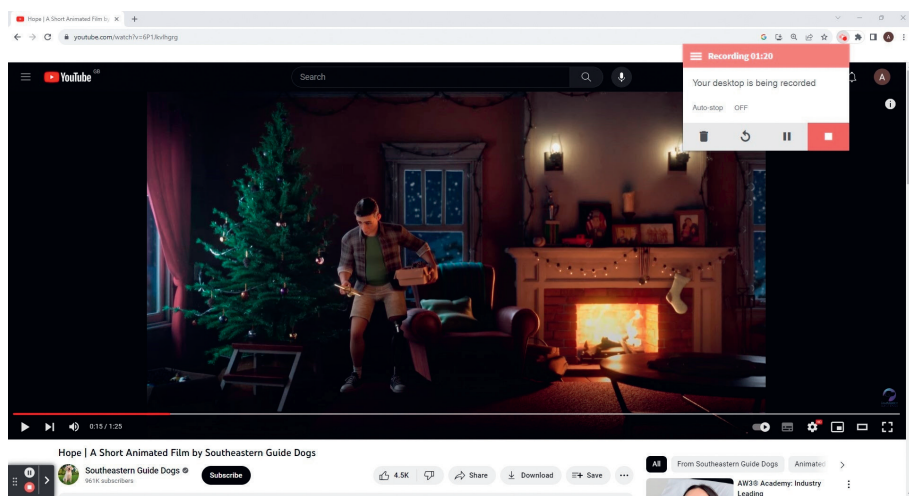


Figure 3.1 View of the screen-recording plug-in Screencastify, with a screenshot of the short film *Hope* (Simoes 2022). © Southeastern Guide Dogs.

Assessment: Students submit three deliverables: the script, the described clip and the 500-word reflection. Since this activity has already encompassed two peer-review phases within each team, it is advisable that the instructor assess each team's submissions and provide feedback accordingly.

Phase 5: subtitling – interlingual subtitling

Aims:

- To become familiar with LGBTQI+-related terms while stimulating critical inquiry
- To develop an understanding of subtitling techniques and the principles of subtitling
- To develop summarising and analytical skills, as well as soft skills such as empathy and understanding
- To produce subtitles using specialist software

Grouping: in pairs, in international teams

Approximate duration: 240 minutes (60 minutes in class and 180 minutes after class)

Materials: *Cocodrilo* (Yúdice 2019); 4 minutes, 54 seconds; 417 words

Language combination: Spanish into English

Steps:

In class

1. The activity in this phase revolves around the topic of communicating emotions between parents and children, especially when it comes to issues related to sexual preferences. Students watch *Cocodrilo* (Yúdice 2019), a short film that conveys a powerful message of reconciliation between Victor and his parents. Then, in pairs, they answer the following questions in their FL:
 - What seems to be the problem between Victor and his parents?
 - Why do you think Victor has not spoken to his parents for two years?
 - Why does the mother hide the screen when her husband comes into the house?
 - What purpose does this short film serve?
 - How did the ending make you feel?

2. In pairs, students write a summary of the short film, in no more than two lines and in Spanish. In doing so they put their summary skills into practice, as these are essential in subtitling.
3. Students are provided with a transcription containing dialogue gaps. They watch the first half of the video again. Students fill in the gaps with the missing words and expressions, in Spanish, and then translate them into English.
4. The teacher introduces the principles of interlingual subtitling, putting a particular emphasis on the importance of synthesising information. Reduction and condensation techniques are presented, and students are briefed on the need to ensure that translations allow for comfortable reading by the viewer and that they sound natural and idiomatic. The instructor provides the students with the video file of the short film and a Spanish-language pre-timed subtitle template containing the first 40 subtitles approximately. Should the instructor be unable to produce a subtitle template with the in and out time codes and the corresponding transcriptions, an auto-generated subtitle file could be retrieved from commonly used streaming platforms such as Microsoft Stream or YouTube Studio. The template should include approximately 40 subtitles, corresponding to the first 2 minutes of the video. Finally, the teacher shows the students how to import the video and the Spanish subtitle template into a subtitle editor of their choice. If the teaching institution does not have a licence for professional commercial software, freeware such as Aegisub, Subtitle Edit or Subtitle Workshop can be used; these can easily be found on the internet. The teacher demonstrates how to translate the original subtitles using the software program and how to save and share their work (that is, producing and exporting an SRT file containing the subtitles). For more details on the software used, the teacher may consider providing access to a tutorial or sharing easy guides available on the internet.

After class:

5. Each team divides the template into two parts of approximately 20 Spanish-language subtitles each. Each international team is divided into two subgroups: Spanish-speaking students in one group and English-speaking students in the other. Each group translates 20 subtitles into English. Once the translations are finished, the team merges the translations and the two subgroups provide feedback to

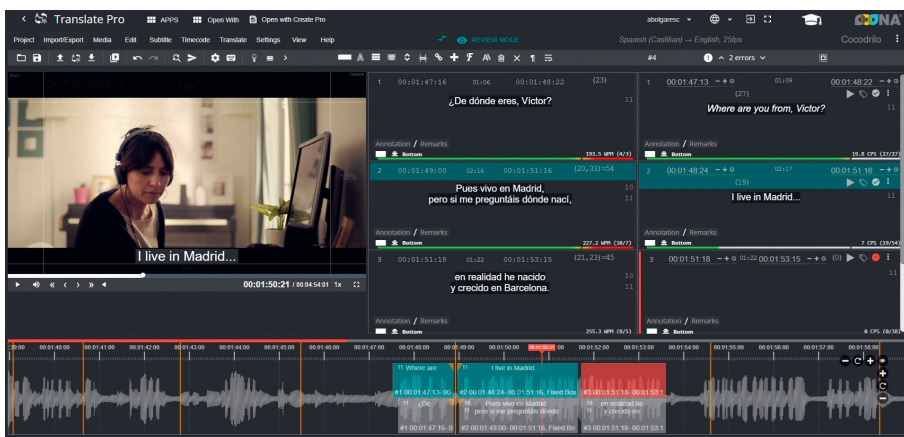


Figure 3.2 View of online subtitling tool OONA Translate Pro, containing the source and target subtitles (with the relevant in and out time codes) for the short film *Cocodrilo*, directed by Jorge Yúdice (2019). © Jorge Yúdice for screenshot of *Cocodrilo*; © OONA for screenshot of OONA Edu (Translate Pro).

each other while discussing the experience on a videoconferencing tool of their choice or via any other communication channel of their choice. Students have to agree on a final version of the subtitle template and export the file in a shareable format using the subtitling editor (as per Figure 3.2).

6. As a follow-up activity, students write, individually and in their FL, a 300-word commentary on unspoken elements and how filmic language helps to construct the narrative. As special emphasis should be put on LGBTQI+ -related issues, students are prompted to hypothesise on whether the protagonist's sexual orientation had anything to do with his family issues. The commentary can revolve around the audiovisual component of the clip and its triggers, including the boy's gaze, his tears and the representation of his father, among other visual elements.

Assessment: Students submit their work in the form of two deliverables: the subtitled file (to be peer reviewed by fellow students from different groups as well as ultimately assessed by the teacher) and the 300-word reflective commentary in the FL.

Phase 6: subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing

Aims:

- To raise awareness about the importance of accessible subtitling
- To identify the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing people
- To interpret acoustic information and produce accurate written descriptions
- To become familiar with (professional) standards of SDH

Grouping: In pairs, in international groups

Approximate timing: 240 minutes (60 minutes in class and 180 minutes after class)

Materials: *Hair Love* (Cherry 2019); 6 minutes, 47 seconds; 163 words

Language combination: Intralingual (English or Spanish)

Steps:

In class:

1. First, students watch the US National Deaf Center's video entitled *What Does Deaf Mean?* (NDC 2018). Assisted by the instructor, students discuss, in small groups, what it means to be deaf, different types of deafness and how deaf people communicate, as well as how deaf people can access media content.
2. Secondly, the teacher asks the students what they think deaf people may not perceive if they watch a programme subtitled for hearing people. Answers should include information about sound effects, music, intonation, character identification and other sound triggers that are plot-relevant.
3. The teacher then explains the basic guidelines and conventions of SDH. Guidelines tend to be nation-specific for national TV channels, so instructors can perhaps resort to Netflix's guidelines, for example, which are very similar for both English (Netflix 2015) and Spanish (Netflix 2016).
4. Students watch the short film entitled *Hair Love* (Cherry 2019), which deals with prejudice towards and stereotypes of Black people and childcare by using caring for natural Afro hair as a metaphor for family love. The film contains only a few utterances, in English. Students answer comprehension questions such as:
 - What is the short film about?
 - Why does the girl show excitement after waking up?

- What is the girl watching on her tablet?
 - Why does her father want to cover her head with a hat?
 - What message is this short film trying to convey?
 - Do any relevant EDI-related issues feature prominently in this short film?
5. Finally, students watch the short film again and write down all the aspects that they would have to subtitle for deaf or hard-of-hearing people. They share their answers with the rest of the class and reflect on how they would indicate in subtitles the aspects they have noted down. Finally, these questions are shared with the class. Should the students be unable to identify appropriate sound triggers, the teacher can provide an answer sheet containing said triggers alongside approximate time codes of where they arise in the video.

After class:

6. Students from each country work in pairs. Spanish-speaking students do the SDH task of the short film in English, and English-speaking students complete the SDH task in Spanish. They produce subtitles using tags (that is, sound descriptions enclosed within brackets) to describe sound triggers while ignoring dialogue and other verbal information altogether. Students have to do the spotting (that is, inserting the input and output times of the subtitles with the subtitle editor software) of the subtitles alongside each sound tag (see Figure 3.3). Afterwards, the subtitle files are exchanged, and feedback is given both on the need to subtitle different elements and on how it has been done (formatting, positioning and reading speed).
7. As a follow-up activity, students read Shirley Campbell's (1994) poem *Rotundamente negra*. After having read said poem, students produce, individually and in their FL, a 300-word reflection on what the poem means to them and about the double discrimination against Black women – for being women and being Black – nowadays and in the past.

Assessment: Students submit their work in the form of two deliverables: the subtitled file and a commentary on ~~the poem by Shirley Campbell~~. The subtitle files are peer reviewed between the international teams, and the teacher reviews the commentary.

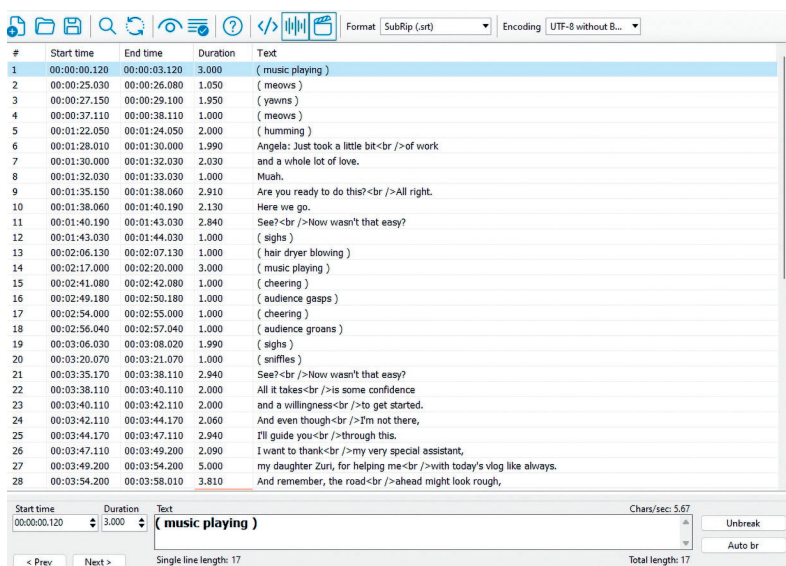


Figure 3.3 Representation of sound tags in Subtitle Edit, showing in and out times, durations and descriptions in brackets

Conclusion

This chapter has delved into the benefits of utilising didactic AVT tasks, more specifically the revoicing and subtitling of multimodal materials that deal with EDI issues, in telecollaboration settings. We have presented a task-based approach to hone FL skills using didactic AVT and have introduced the principles of a telecollaboration project involving international higher education institutions where English- and Spanish-speaking undergraduate students have to take English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English translation modules as part of their curricula. These principles were tested in a pre-pandemic initiative that was orchestrated by UCL and UV and that yielded positive results (Bolaños García-Escribano and Cerezo Merchán 2019).

For this purpose, a didactic sequence comprising six lesson plans has been designed, which covers four common AVT modes, namely intralingual SDH, interlingual subtitling, dubbing, and audio description for the blind and partially sighted. The lessons prompt the teacher and students to use specialist freeware programs to localise media content in international teams, with activities ranging from film analysis to timing texts and peer reviewing each other's revoiced clips. In doing these

activities, students find numerous opportunities to mediate not only the clips (that is, the source materials for the translation activities) but also intercultural communication with fellow students and other teams. The ultimate aim of utilising didactic AVT tasks is to foster reception and production skills in the FL by exposing students to materials in a multimedia format, which they have to translate using relevant techniques and strategies. The use of pre- and post-translation activities allows for the discussion of EDI-related topics, with students being prompted to read seminal works on identity and other societal issues.

The ultimate aim of this pedagogical initiative is that students gain a greater understanding not only of the FL they study but also of the cultural nuances that exist when discussing EDI in different languages and educational settings. The use of audiovisual materials also allows for the liberation of the curriculum by giving further visibility to minorities such as African American and Black communities and LGBTQI+ networks, among others. Furthermore, following the impact of recent political changes in the teaching of FLs in higher education – notably the impact of Brexit on Erasmus+ and Turing schemes – telecollaborative initiatives mean students can continue to develop their plurilingual skills when international travel is unaffordable or unfeasible.

Note

- 1 See <http://citrans.uv.es/pluritav> and <https://tradic.uned.es/en/proyecto-tradilex-2>.

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