Didactic audiovisual translation

Interlingual SDH in the foreign language classroom

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This paper discusses the uses and applications of interlingual subtitling for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) in the language classroom and builds on a pilot experiment involving over a hundred students who partook in a didactic initiative based on the use of SDH.

The present study forms part of the TRADILEX (2020–2023) international project, which draws on action-oriented approaches to produce didactic sequences of didactic audiovisual translation (AVT) and media accessibility (MA) tasks in foreign language education (FLE).

A pilot experiment involving didactic interlingual captioning (Spanish into English) was carried out with two cohorts of students ($N=104$) from two undergraduate programmes at a Spanish higher-education institution. The results shed light on the students' perception of didactic SDH, as well as the pedagogical benefits of learning English by captioning video clips. The students boosted their translation skills in different ways, and awareness was raised on the importance of analysing visual, acoustic and paralinguistic information when localising clips.

Ultimately, this paper examines the potential benefits of action-oriented captioning tasks and advocates for integrating didactic AVT-MA into the FLE curriculum.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, media accessibility, foreign-language learning, teaching innovation

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1. Introduction

This article sets out to investigate how action-oriented audiovisual translation (AVT) tasks, with an emphasis on the uses and applications of subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), can be employed in the language classroom. For a number of decades now, AVT has been at the core of a growing body of scholarship on the didactic values and pedagogical benefits of revoicing and subtitling practices in the classroom (Talaván 2020). Media accessibility (MA) practices, however, have only started to receive greater attention from the scholarly community recently. To the best of our knowledge, only a few attempts have been made at embedding SDH in foreign-language education (FLE) settings (Herrero, Sánchez-Requena, and Escobar 2017; Talaván 2019; Ávila-Cabrera 2021; Pereira-Rodríguez and Lorenzo-García 2021; Talaván, Lertola, and Ibáñez 2022), whereas audio description (AD) has received considerably greater attention (Ibáñez and Vermeulen 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017; Ibáñez, Vermeulen, and Jordano 2016; Talaván, Ávila- Cabrera, and Costal 2016; Walczak 2016; Navarrete 2018).

Drawing on the latest literature available, this study aims to better understand the role that MA practices may play in the classroom. For this purpose, we have analysed – and herein discuss – the data obtained from a pilot activity involving over a hundred students who partook in a didactic initiative to further explore didactic SDH in FLE. This study is part of the larger, long-term research endeavours carried out by scholars belonging to the TRADILEX project.

By fostering the use of AVT and MA tasks in FLE settings, the TRADILEX project advocates for a more comprehensive integration of AVT and MA practices (including SDH) to enhance language competence as well as transferrable skills (including mediation). Whereas many AVT courses at universities and in professional environments offer specialist training, the use of revoicing and subtitling tasks in conventional FLE environments is still rare. The teaching of AVT practices is far from new and may be implemented in the FLE classroom in many different ways (Díaz-Cintas 2008; Talaván 2013). Didactic AVT – which is the term that seems to have been adopted in scholarly circles to refer to the use of AVT to learn a language (Talaván 2020) – is still far from becoming mainstream in the FLE classroom. Against this backdrop, TRADILEX endeavours to establish closer connections with FLE educational centres, in tertiary and further education, and proposes action-oriented didactic AVT courses in both face-to-face and e-learning environments.

In the next few sections, the various benefits of MA are examined, with a special emphasis on SDH through action-oriented learning, and within FLE contexts beyond higher education.

2. Didactic audiovisual translation and media accessibility

The language classroom constitutes a breeding ground for the use of audiovisual materials (henceforth, *media*). Educators have oftentimes used media to offer examples of oral communication in non-artificial situations (e.g., British Council 1979). However, media are often used in a *passive* way (i.e., through observation), and the focus on the *active* engagement of learners through action-oriented tasks in which they play a central role in the learning process (i.e., through creation) is more recent. In one of their latest publications on didactic AVT, Incalcaterra McLoughlin, Lertola, and Talaván (2020) established that the use of active AVT tasks promoted the honing of receptive and productive tasks, but also critical thinking, pragmatic and intercultural awareness, as well as the ability to extract and infer information from multisemiotic texts.

As posited by Talaván, Lertola, and Ibáñez (2022), didactic AVT has gained wider currency in recent years, and teaching experiences often rely on the *active* captioning and revoicing of video clips by learners. The manifest integration of AVT in FLE scholarship has been particularly pivotal in the last few decades (Incalcaterra McLoughlin, Lertola, and Talaván 2018), and the positive outcomes have contributed to the development of various strands of inquiry and experimental research (Lertola 2019; Talaván 2020).

The various benefits of intralingual and interlingual subtitling in FLE courses have been raised by many scholars since before the turn of the century, e.g., Vanderplank (1988), Caimi (2006), and Talaván (2011, 2013, 2020), among others. Yet, the many pedagogical benefits of lesser-known subtitling modes, and in particular SDH, have yet to be further investigated. The same goes for e-learning environments in FLE, since research projects often rely on in-person teaching to test the potential of AVT through experimentation.

Leading research projects, such as ClipFlair (2011–2014), have laid the foundations for further research on didactic AVT in online FLE environments. ClipFlair advocated the use of interactive revoicing and captioning tasks to learn languages and carried out experiments involving 1,213 learners, 37 tutors and 12 languages (Baños and Sokoli 2015). A set of exercises can be found on the resulting online platform, which also boasts an AVT system that allows educators and students to create and complete revoicing and subtitling exercises in a web-based environment. Alongside the aforementioned ClipFlair project, there have also been numerous research projects, on a somewhat lesser scale, that have endeavoured to further examine the pedagogical benefits of AVT, including LeVis (2006–2008), SubLanLearn (2009–2012), Babelium (2013–2015) and PluriTAV (2016–2019).

However, given the rapid evolution of technologies, dedicated tools resulting from some of these projects have now become outdated and discontinued, thus hampering their integration into the FLE classroom. TRADILEX (2020–2023) builds on the fruits yielded from previous projects and capitalises on the most recent update of the Council of Europe's (2011) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), which now includes the *Companion Volume with New Descriptors* and has recently been republished in English and translated into Spanish (Council of Europe 2020). Henceforth, this will be referred to as *CEFR/CV*.

This paper focuses on didactic SDH, an AVT practice often subsumed by its umbrella term 'subtitling'; however, SDH is also an MA practice insofar as it aims to make audiovisual products for persons with auditory impairments or deafness. As posited by Zárate (2021), SDH has traditionally been considered an intralingual practice (i.e., L1 to L1), but interlingual SDH (i.e., L1 to L2, or vice versa) has gained ground in recent years.

As with intralingual and interlingual subtitling, the SDH process involves creating captions that will include rendition of the narrations and dialogue (i.e., verbal elements conveyed acoustically) as well as any text on screen (i.e., verbal elements conveyed visually), when relevant. However, the main characteristic of SDH is that captions also portray the relevant non-verbal signs conveyed acoustically (e.g., music and sound effects) and those conveyed simultaneously through the acoustic and visual channels (e.g., speaker identification). As SDH does not only aim to render dialogue but also paralinguistic details and further information that is delivered aurally, captions are considered essential for the understanding of the diegesis (Szarkowska 2020). According to Zárate (2021), the main specific requirements that SDH should endeavour to observe are speaker identification (achieved by means of either colours, labels, or dashes), music (including lyrics), sound effects (including vocal non-verbal sounds related to actions or emotions), silence, and other paralinguistic features such as accents, pronunciation, intonation, emphasis, sarcasm, whispering, pauses and hesitations, and voice qualifiers (including pitch and articulation).

This paper reports on an activity involving interlingual SDH (Spanish into English) for FLE purposes and considers the above-mentioned specificities.

3. Action-oriented approach and mediation in foreign-language education

When it comes to FLE, as posited by Piccardo and North (2019), the Council of Europe (2020) has traditionally aimed at a more democratic society while taking

into consideration social mobility and cohabitation among cultures and peoples. The *CEFR/CV* proposes a reconceptualisation of language learning around the notion of social agency, in which the learner becomes a social agent who can understand, interpret, and reproduce knowledge while mediating with others. It also shifts the focus of FLE courses towards the acquisition of 'how-to' skills (aka 'competences') and finetunes its action-oriented approach (AoA) framework further.

AoA shares many common points with previous communicative trends, but mediation acquires a pivotal role for language users in the *CEFR/CV*. Indeed, this approach draws on the relationship between the nature of language tasks (purposeful and collaborative for the attainment of a certain outcome), the way tasks are viewed (interactive for the co-construction of meaning), and the role of the resources used (encouraging learners to identify similarities and differences). It also contributes to the transparency and coherence of language learning but ought to be considered as a practice in search of a theory (Piccardo and North 2019). This statement might refer to the fact that "language teachers and curriculum developers have noticed the potential of this practice, but have been seeking some sort of conceptualization since the term started to be used" (Navarrete 2020, 60).

The concept of 'mediation' was first raised by FLE scholars before the turn of the century. This mode complemented interaction, production and reception with yet a new layer, which is to be understood as "the construction of new meaning, in the sense of new understanding, new knowledge, new concepts" (Piccardo, North, and Goodier 2019, 21). It was marginally included in the 2001 volume, and it is in the latest *CEFR/CV* that this area has become its core theme. New categories for interactive activities (i.e., online, literature, plurilingual, pluricultural, and sign languages) as well as new descriptors have been introduced to encourage the development of mediation activities and their strategies for language use. Since its inception, the *CEFR/CV* replaced the four traditional skills (i.e., speaking, listening, writing and reading) with the linguistic modes of reception, production, interaction and mediation, with mediation being the highest expression of language skills, as it is the synergy of the three other linguistic modes. Of particular relevance for AVT is the fact that mediation includes translation- and interpreting-related tasks (North and Piccardo 2016).

The last two categories under 'Mediating a text' – i.e., expressing a personal response to creative texts and analysis and criticism of creative texts – are particularly relevant for didactic AVT and MA tasks inasmuch as media localisation practices always entail a high degree of creativity, but are also restricted by industry parameters and conventions.

When referring to MA practices, such as AD, Navarrete (2020) highlights social agency as a key element insofar as the learner mediates between the clip and

its audience, translating images into words for visually impaired users. The same applies to SDH, although the learner would mediate between the clip and its audience translating music, sound, and aural triggers into words for aurally impaired users. Didactic SDH is advocated by Talaván (2019), who also stresses the importance of having a clear outcome for the learning experience. These authors, alongside researchers from the TRADILEX project, promote the idea of incorporating new categories of AVT (e.g., revoicing and subtitling), including MA practices (e.g., AD and SDH), into the new version of the *CEFR/CV*.

The creation of new categories and descriptors is an endeavour carried out by scholars, such as Navarrete (2020), and TRADILEX. In this paper, we propose a new set of categories (see Figure 1) and descriptors (see Table 1) for SDH that are ready for future validation.

Table 1. Proposal for new illustrative descriptors for building (interlingual) SDH into the CEFR/CV

Level	Descriptor
C2	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers, using highly sophisticated re-wording and paraphrasing (when needed) for the subtitles to be in synchrony with the video clip (following professional standards on isochrony). Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using an outstanding degree of sophistication in the usage of highly relevant vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing subtitles of a remarkable quality that systematically consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification (following professional standards).
C1	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers, using sophisticated re-wording and paraphrasing (when needed) for the subtitles to be in synchrony with the video clip. Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using an excellent degree of sophistication in the usage of highly relevant vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing intelligible subtitles that systematically consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification.
B2	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers, using appropriate re-wording and paraphrasing (when needed) for the subtitles to be in synchrony with the video clip. Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using a very good degree of sophistication in the usage of relevant vocabulary and grammar structures.

Table 1. *(continued)*

Level	Descriptor
	This should be done by producing intelligible subtitles that normally consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification.
B1	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers, using appropriate re-wording and paraphrasing (when needed) for the subtitles to be in synchrony with the video clip. Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using a good degree of sophistication in the usage of relevant vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing subtitles that often consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification.
A2	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers, using appropriate re-wording and paraphrasing (when needed) for the subtitles to be in synchrony with the video clip. Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using some relevant vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing satisfactory subtitles that may consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification.
A1 & Pre-A1	Can caption the original dialogues in a clip (in Language B) taking into consideration isochrony and relevant visual elements of a video clip for aurally impaired viewers. Can recognise and verbalise aural triggers using some basic vocabulary and grammar structures. This should be done by producing basic subtitles that might consider sound effects, music, paralinguistic information, and character identification.

The subcategories shown in Figure 1 (in green) observe the intrinsic characteristics of SDH as a form of constrained mediation. The first one, 'Mediating a sequence of images', takes into account the fact that information added in written snippets of text (i.e., captions) ought to be in synchrony with the visuals, and characters need to be identified for the benefit of users who might have difficulty identifying who utters each part of a dialogue (i.e., identity tags). The second category is 'Mediating music and sound effects', which stresses the importance of describing aural information (e.g., music, sound effects, and aural triggers) that appears in the video clip. Lastly, the third category is 'Mediating a dialogue', which is common to all subtitling practices and refers to the relaying of verbal information uttered by the narrators and characters in a video clip (which can be intralingual or interlingual depending on the type of practice).

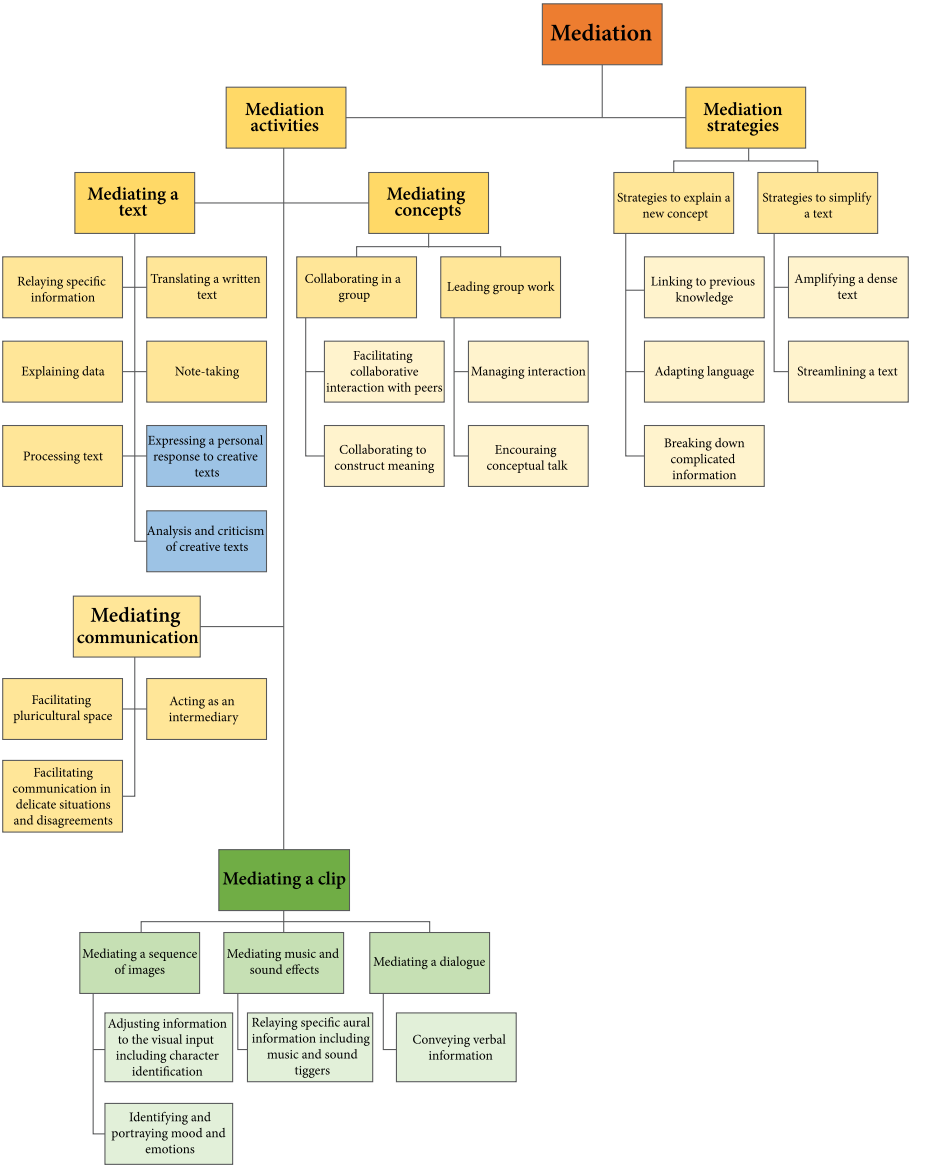

Figure 1. Proposal of new categories for mediating a clip for integration into the CEFR/CV

MA practices require specific competences that learners ought to develop. Some of these competences have informed the mediation categories and descriptors that have been produced for SDH (see Figure 1 and Table 1, respectively). In Díaz-Cintas' (2007) proposal, some salient features are linguistic creativity, the importance of semiotics, the use of captioning tools and related technologies, and

other aspects that are intricately linked to mediation. When it comes to attributing descriptors to didactic SDH, it is essential that specificities, such as the transmission of verbal and non-verbal acoustic elements (e.g., speaker tags or sound effects), be taken into consideration with an emphasis on the overarching mediation competence.

It is paramount that FLE scholars propose new categories and descriptors to complement those from the *CEFR/CV*. In this case, developing categories and descriptors for mediating a clip allows for a more seamless integration of other AVT modes. The subcategories already created as part of the project (i.e., AD, dubbing, SDH) are also pending validation, which requires subsequent testing sessions, alongside data collection among FLE tutors and specialists, as part of the project's continuation. As North and Piccardo (2016) explain, the creation of mediation categories and descriptors involved a thorough validation process. The existing AVT descriptors are currently being tested with students at different levels (B1 and B2), and it is hoped that the rest of the descriptors will be developed and tested in future research endeavours.

4. Methodology and materials

The ultimate goal of the TRADILEX project is to gain a better understanding of the pedagogical benefits achieved by using action-oriented AVT and MA tasks in FLE settings. To determine the degree to which SDH can be helpful in honing language skills, a total of twelve didactic sequences were produced, that is, six for each level of proficiency covered in this project (B1-B2 according to the CEFR). In this study, a lesson plan for B2 learners of English was used, and the students completed a one-hour sequence containing a number of guided exercises. It is understood that participants had Spanish as their L1 (or were fully bilingual) since they were enrolled on a bachelor's degree at a Spanish higher-education institution which requires applicants to have acquired (near-)native competence in Spanish.

Prior to fleshing out any details on the methodology of this particular study, it is important to establish that no previous or final tests were carried out. Therefore, this is not a comparative study, and neither does it attempt to provide statistical evidence in an attempt to demonstrate the acquisition of certain skills or the improvement of any areas of the respondents' L2 competence. Instead, this is an exploratory case study that aims to introduce the practice of interlingual SDH and establish its pedagogical values in the language classroom while raising awareness about MA practices.

4.1 Didactic sequence

The general structure of the didactic sequences used in the project is illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2. Didactic sequences in the TRADILEX project

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

In the case of the interlingual SDH sequence used for B2 learners of English (L2), it involved the following tasks:

1. Warm-up (10 minutes). Students watched an interview, in English, about physical disability and discussed the main topics and lexical items therein. Subsequently, they wrote a short text in the L2 and recorded an audio clip reading their written text aloud.

2. Video viewing (5 minutes). Students watched the Spanish short animation film *Cuerdas* (Solís García 2013) that would be used for the SDH task proper and answered comprehension questions. Then, they translated the title of the short film into English while applying creative translation strategies.
3. Didactic SDH (30 minutes). Students created subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing in English for a one-minute extract from the Spanish short animation film *Cuerdas*.
4. Post-AVT task (15 minutes). Students read a text (again in English), recorded a one-minute audio on disability and wrote a short text in the L2.

When it came to the SDH task proper, the students were introduced to the following conventions, as produced by the TRADILEX project:

a. Character identification. A person with hearing problems needs to know who is saying what if more than one person speaks in the same subtitle. There are various ways of signalling character identification in SDH: the use of dashes (one per character), colours (one per character throughout the whole clip), and name tags in front of each character's intervention. In the pilot experiment discussed in this paper, students could freely choose their preferred technique, since all the available alternatives had been explained in previous lessons, and it was therefore considered interesting to allow them to make their own choices during the process.
b. Sound effects. They should be described in round brackets, and it is advisable to nominalise them whenever possible (e.g., (COUGH) instead of (He coughs)). The description should include the sound only, and not its reception (e.g., (SHOT) instead of (A shot is heard).) Sounds are usually placed on the top right corner of the screen; where this is deemed impossible, they can appear alone as a subtitle, or within a subtitle, occupying one of the two lines.
c. Paralinguistic information. Information related to mood, tone of voice, pitch, etc., associated with the expression of emotions, such as shouting, sighing, or laughing (Chaume 2004, 187), are typically captioned between round brackets, in capital letters, preferably in a single word and right in front of the corresponding text that is affected by the feature being described (e.g., (WHISPER) I miss you).
d. Music. If music is relevant to the plot, it should be included in the subtitles. The description of the type of music follows the guidelines indicated for sound effects (top right corner if possible), e.g., (Classical music). If the subtitles contain the lyrics of a song or need to signal that a character is singing, a musical note (♪) or a hashtag (#) should be placed at the beginning and at the end of every subtitle involving the song. Again, students could choose

their preferred protocol for signalling the songs, as the different options were studied in previous lessons.

e. Technical aspects. A reference was made to the *English Timed Text Style Guide* published by Netflix (2021), as it is a major streaming content platform whose website provides open and comprehensive guidelines for their application in the work environment. Thus, students can resort to the subtitling standards as many times as needed and feel motivated by the fact that a professional project is simulated. These subtitling standards stipulate, *inter alia*, a limit of 42 characters per line (CPL) and two lines per subtitle, and a reading speed of up to 20 characters per second (CPS) for adult viewers.

f. Text reduction and line breaks. Sentences should be synthesised by means of condensation, reformulation, and omissions, and distributed over the two lines of the subtitle in accordance with semantic segmentation norms. As well as Netflix's style guide (2021), the conventions published by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021, 169) were also indicated as necessary to follow in order to complete the tasks.

It is worth noting that no aural nor verbal items were listed in the original subtitle template. As a result, students had to decide where and how to place the appropriate descriptors and tags in the captions.

4.2 Sample description

The participants taking part in the practical SDH activity, which took place in December 2021, were 104 undergraduate students from two separate groups, namely 87 final-year students of Translation and Interpreting (T&I) and 17 final-year students of Film and Culture (F&C), from the University of Córdoba, Spain. Although both groups seem to be admittedly not comparable, this gap in the number of students might be explained by the fact that the total number of enrolments in each programme is remarkably dissimilar: while T&I was launched in 2005 (with over 100 students every year), F&C was implemented in 2017 and the enrolments are significantly lower (with only two cohorts having graduated so far).

Most T&I students (64, 74.5%) were 21 years old, whereas ten of them (11.6%) were 22, five (5.8%) were 20, and the rest (7, 8.1%) were between 22 and 29 years old. Unfortunately, a T&I student failed to hand in the final questionnaire, so the final number of survey responses must take this into account ($N = 103$). Many respondents were native speakers of Castilian Spanish (82, 95.3%), while two of them (2.3%) had Italian as their mother tongue, one (1.2%) had Russian, and another one (1.2%) was a bilingual speaker of Arabic and Spanish. Over half of the respondents (48, 55.8%) held a B2 certificate in English, while 18 of them

(20.9%) had a B1-level qualification; ten (11.7%) had a C1 certificate, two (2.3%) had obtained a C2-level qualification, and eight (9.3%) had not yet acquired any English-language certification. The F&C students' age range was more diverse: only one of them (5.9%) was 20 years old, whereas eleven ranged between 21 (7, 41.2%) and 22 (4, 23.5%), and the rest of the group (5, 29.5%) were between 25 and 54 years old. The latter would be considered mature students. When it comes to their level of English, eight participants (47.1%) had no English-language certificate, one (5.9%) had obtained a B1 one, six (35.3%) had a B2 level, and two (11.8%) were C1. It was soon established that this group might struggle more with language-related tasks as a consequence of the lower levels of proficiency reported.

The level of knowledge and experience in AVT was reportedly resemblant across both cohorts, even though the two groups were independent, since the teaching method, contents and in-class exercises were similar and taught by the same lecturer during the first semester of the same academic year. Even though the students had practised interlingual subtitling previously, none of them had any prior experience in either intralingual or interlingual SDH.

4.3 Experiment design and materials

For a two-hour face-to-face session (i.e., experiment), the students were provided with the following materials: (1) a presentation on SDH theory and industry conventions (the goal being learning how to mediate a clip); (2) a Moodle forum to send questions and exchange information; (3) a video file (.mp4) and a subtitles file (.srt) for the clip; and (4) the online lesson plan developed by the TRADILEX project. For the SDH task, the students were asked to work with the open-source subtitling software Aegisub and submit an .srt file, in English, containing their captions.

The 1-minute clip prepared for the experiment included 18 pre-timed subtitles and entailed a number of challenges as displayed in Table 3:

Table 3. Challenges found in the excerpt for the SDH task

Challenge	Subtitle	Context
Character identification	1, 5, 8	(Characters speaking) María, the four pupils simultaneously and the teacher, respectively
Paralinguistic element	1, 3	(Emotion) María shows enthusiasm while playing football with Nico
	7	(Emotion) Pupils manifest agreement

Table 3. *(continued)*

Challenge	Subtitle	Context
Music	4	Samba music playing during the football game and revealing María's feelings
	8	Emotional melody when María is taking care of Nico
Song	9	María sings a Spanish children's song
Sound effect	9, 13, 18	The school bell rings

As illustrated in Table 3, students had to face various types of challenges to mediate the text, such as (1) discerning the scenes in which characters must be identified, (2) conveying emotions through lexical units (i.e., when María jumps and cheers simultaneously, and when the other pupils utter mocking sounds towards her), (3) decoding the function of sound effects and music in the plot to objectively describe what they portray (samba depicts the traditional bond between Brazil and football and symbolises the girl's excitement while playing, and the second melody represents María's persevering care for Nico), and (4) mediating culture-bound linguistic items such as a popular Spanish children's song which could be replaced by an equivalent in the target culture. Once the students had decided what information should be portrayed in the captions, they carried out the interlingual translation task and inserted the relevant descriptors in English.

Upon completion of the SDH activity, the students' captions were individually assessed by the language tutor following an assessment rubric that was adapted for didactic SDH (see Table 4).

Table 4. Assessment rubric for the SDH task

	Grade and score			
Variables	**Poor**	**Adequate**	**Good**	**Excellent**
Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text	0–5 points	6–10 points	11–15 points	16–20 points
Subtitle length: CPL and CPS	0–5 points	6–10 points	11–15 points	16–20 points
Condensation and segmentation strategies	0–5 points	6–10 points	11–15 points	16–20 points
Correct description of sound effects and music	0–5 points	6–10 points	11–15 points	16–20 points
Paralinguistic information and character information	0–5 points	6–10 points	11–15 points	16–20 points

The main objective of the analysis in the next sections is to shed light on the different results obtained by participants who belong to two different backgrounds. Therefore, the *ad hoc* rubric served as a benchmark to analyse the students' scores, which were tested quantitatively. The variables, explained below, were measured through the aforementioned rubric and had a value of $x \in [0, 20]$ each, meaning that each of the five variables measured by the rubric ranges between 0 and 20, and the maximum value is 100 (the sum of the five variables).

a. 'Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text' concerns linguistic suitability, terminological precision, as well as fluency and idiomatic load in the L2.
b. 'Subtitle length, CPL and CPS' focus on the extent to which participants had applied the subtitling protocols provided and described previously.
c. 'Condensation and segmentation strategies' refers to the basic principles for text reduction by means of condensation, reformulation and omissions, as well as semantic segmentation.
d. 'Correct description of sound effects and music' concerns aural information related to music and sound effects which are relevant to the plot and their descriptions by means of effective lexical units.
e. 'Paralinguistic and character information' is crucial to assess participants' appliance of SDH conventions for identifying characters and paralinguistic information.
f. 'Overall mark': this variable ranges from 0 to 100. It consists of the addition of the totality of variables (accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text, subtitle length and protocols, condensation and segmentation strategies, correct description of sound effects and music, and paralinguistic and character information).

The analysis conducted in the following section builds on these variables to assess the performance of both groups of students, in order to determine their strengths and the skills they need to develop further so as to enhance their language learning process and improve their SDH skills, acknowledging their different backgrounds.

5. Data analysis and results

As mentioned previously, the sample consists of $N = 104$ participants (the number of students who completed the SDH task). Each variable has been studied independently to test the students' performance, and the overall scores have also been analysed alongside. Table 5 contains the frequency distributions.

Table 5. Frequency distribution and descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation, variance)

Frequencies and descriptive statistics						
N = 104	Total Score (out of 100)	Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text	Subtitle length and protocols	Condensation and segmentation strategies	Correct description of sound effects and music	Paralinguistic information and character information
Mean	70.98	16.31	16.33	16.73	11.63	9.99
Median	72.00	17.50	19.00	19.00	12.50	10.00
Std. Deviation	13.603	3.791	4.691	4.248	3.914	4.045
Variance	185.048	14.370	22.009	18.043	15.322	16.359

Taking the disparity of the groups into account, non-parametric tests were applied. The combination of both groups reveals that data is normally distributed, showing a negative skewness of up to −1.438, except for the last two categories (i.e., correct description of sound effects and music, along with paralinguistic information and character information). Group A shows greater negative skewness (in all categories) than Group B, whose data appears to be more normally distributed as seen in Table 6:

Table 6. Skewness indexes to obtain data distribution normality

Skewness indexes						
Sample	Total Score	Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text	Subtitle length and protocols	Condensation and segmentation strategies	Correct description of sound effects and music	Paralinguistic information and character information
Group A (*N* = 87)	−0.126	−2.135	−1.656	−1.881	−.216	0.133
Group B (*N* = 17)	−0.380	−0.146	−0.545	−0.225	0.858	1.565
Both groups (*N* = 104)	−1.106	−1.438	−1.189	−1.209	−0.172	−0.027

According to Norris et al. (2012), the Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test of the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that for a randomly selected member from the T&I group (A) another randomly selected member from the F&C group (B), the probability that the grade obtained by B exceeds the grade obtained by A is the same as the probability that B exceeds A. In other words, there is no significant difference between the two groups. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that both groups are independent.

5.1 Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text

The null hypothesis, H_0, would be that the distribution of the variable 'Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text' is equal for groups A and B. As can be seen in Figure 2, the grand median is 17.5, while the mean for group A is 17.03 ($\sigma = 0.375$)[1] and its median is 19, the maximum being 20 and the minimum 0. When it came to group B, data reveals that its mean is 12.59 ($\sigma = 0.725$) and median 12, while its maximum is 18 and minimum 6.

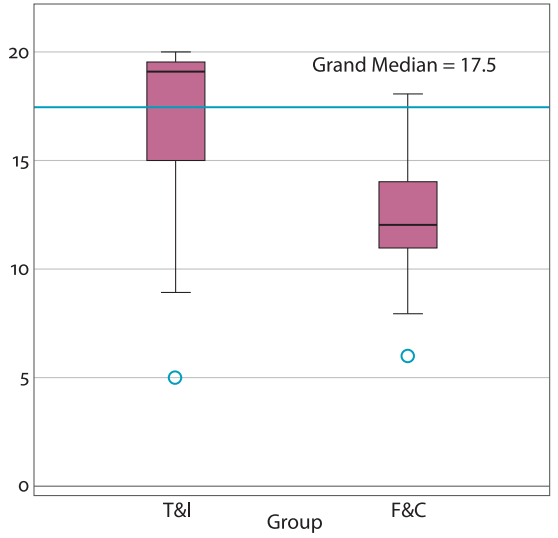

Figure 2. Samples median test for 'Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text'

Additionally, Table 7 reports the statistical test results:

Table 7. Statistical information on 'Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text'

	Accuracy and appropriateness of the translated text
U of Mann-Whitney	191.000
W of Wilcoxon	344.000
Z	−4.878
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	< 0.001

1. Standard deviation will be signalled with the lowercase Greek letter sigma (σ).

Hence, the results obtained for this demonstrate that the H_0 hypothesis should be rejected. Since the median of group A is 19 and the median of group B is 12, there was a high probability that students in the former obtained a higher score than those in the latter.

5.2 Subtitle length and protocols

As for the second variable, Figure 3 shows that the grand median is 19.0. The mean for group A is 17.25 (σ=0.453) and its median is 18, whereas the maximum is 20 and the minimum is 5. Group B has a mean of 11.59 (σ=1.000) and its median is 14, being the maximum 16 and the minimum 5.

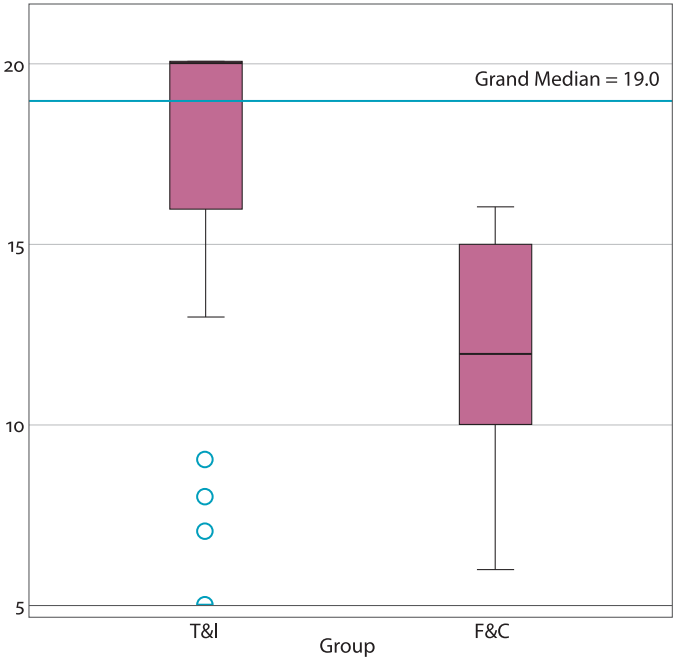

Figure 3. Samples median test for 'Subtitle length and protocols'

As illustrated in Table 8, the data retrieved shows a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating strong evidence against H_0.

Table 8. Statistical information on 'Subtitle length and protocols'

	Subtitle length and protocols
U of Mann-Whitney	200.000
W of Wilcoxon	353.000
Z	−4.969
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	<0.001

The results for the variable 'Subtitle length and protocols' indicate that H_o should be rejected again. The likelihood that participants belonging to group A have a higher score than those in group B stems from the fact that the median for A is 17.25 and the median for B is 11.59.

5.3 Condensation and segmentation strategies

The results obtained from the samples provide a grand median of 12.5, as may be observed in Figure 4. The mean of group A is 17.69 (σ= 0.400) with a median of 18, its highest value being 20 and the lowest at 5. As for group B, the mean is 11.82 (σ= 0.801) while the median is 12, the maximum being 16 and the minimum 6.

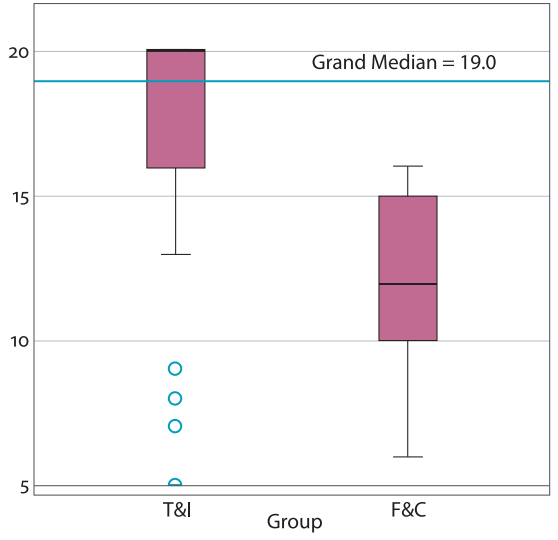

Figure 4. Samples median test for 'Condensation and segmentation strategies'

Table 9 reveals the data obtained, indicating a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.001.

Table 9. Statistical information on 'Condensation and segmentation strategies'

	Condensation and segmentation strategies
U of Mann-Whitney	172.000
W of Wilcoxon	325.000
Z	−5.279
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	< 0.001

Thus, strong evidence against H_0 is observed and it should be rejected in this case as well. Students from group A were more likely to receive a higher score than those from group B, since the median for A is 17.25 and the median for B is 11.59.

5.4 Correct description of sound effects and music

In this case, the grand median is 12.5, in accordance with the results derived from the test depicted in Figure 5. The mean for group A is 10.79 (σ = 0.386) and its median is 10, with a maximum 19 and minimum of 0. As for group B, its mean is 11.82 (σ = 0.801) and its median 12, with 16 being the maximum and 6 the minimum values.

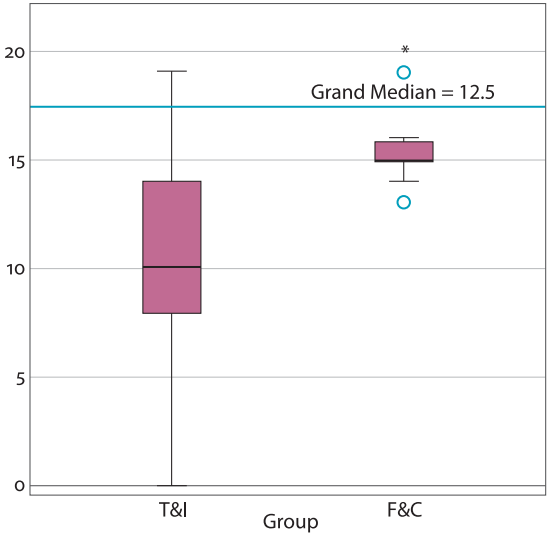

Figure 5. Samples median test for 'Correct description of sound effects and music'

Again, a p-value of 0.001 suggests strong evidence against H_0, as seen in Table 10:

Table 10. Statistical information on correct description of sound effects and music

	Correct description of sound effects and music
U of Mann-Whitney	170.500
W of Wilcoxon	3998.500
Z	−5.038
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	<0.001

Yet again, the results obtained for the variable 'Correct description of sound effects and music' led to the rejection of H_0. Be that as it may, it is still remarkable that students from group B were more likely to receive higher marks than those in group A, since the median for B is 15 while the median for A is 10.

5.5 Paralinguistic and character information

The grand median for the variable 'Paralinguistic and character information' is 10.0, as illustrated in Figure 6. The mean for group A is 9.02 (σ=0.392) though the median is 9, with a maximum of 16 and a minimum of 0. Regarding group B, its mean is 14.94 (σ=0.801), and its median is 15 (maximum: 19; minimum: 13).

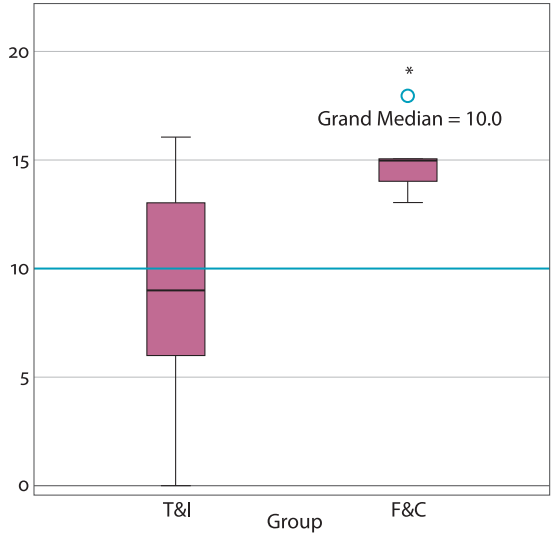

Figure 6. Samples median test for 'Paralinguistic and character information'

As illustrated in Table 11, the data retrieved reveal a p-value of 0.001, suggesting strong evidence against H_0, which should be rejected once more.

Table 11. Statistical information on paralinguistic and character information

	Paralinguistic and character information
U of Mann-Whitney	111.000
W of Wilcoxon	3939.000
Z	−5.570
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	0.000

Therefore, students in group B were more likely to achieve higher scores than those in group A, and this is because the median of B is 15 and the median of A is 9.

5.6 Overall mark

Since variables were worth 20.00 points each, their combination making a total of 100.00 points, the last variable considered in this analysis consists of the addition of all variables analysed earlier (see Figure 7). The grand median across all variables and both groups is 72.0 (out of 100).

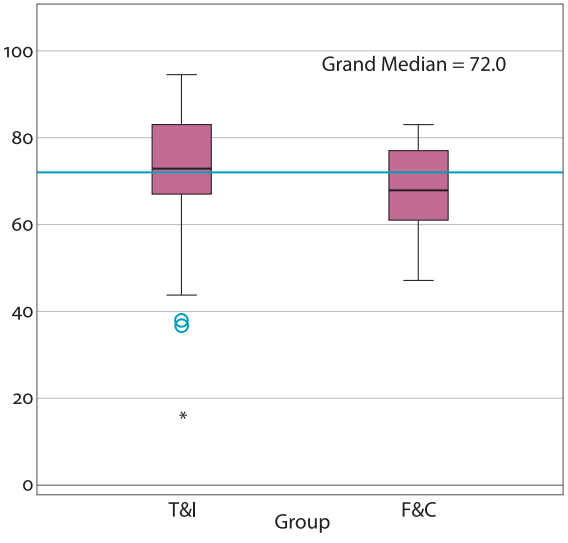

Figure 7. Samples median test for 'Overall mark'

The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests are displayed in Table 12. In this case H_o should be accepted, since after performing the Mann-Whitney U-test for unpaired samples, the significance level is 0.052, implying that the results are

approaching significance, so differences between both groups are likely, albeit not very noticeable.

Table 12. Statistical information on all variables

	All variables
U of Mann-Whitney	518.500
W of Wilcoxon	671.500
Z	−1.944
Asymp. sig. (2-sided)	0.052

Even though each group stands out in different competences, the fact that both demonstrate some strengths seems positive, and the learning achievements could be perceived as accomplished. These findings shed light on the needs and potential for improvement in the teaching of AVT – more specifically, SDH – as well as FLE, for students from both degrees.

6. Discussion

The results show relevant differences between both groups, which were considerably different in terms of size, background and studies. Unsurprisingly, T&I students demonstrated better English-language skills, since the percentage of T&I students holding an English-language certificate at the time of the experiment was higher than in the case of the F&C students (only 9.3% of T&I students did not have any English-language certificate compared to 47.1% of their F&C counterparts). This difference may be explained by the former group's emphasis on linguistic proficiency as part of their language-focused studies. In addition, T&I students also excelled at cultural mediation. Thus, when facing the presence of an element bound to the original culture (i.e., a Spanish children's song), most T&I students (52, 59.7%) decided to replace it with equivalent English nursery rhymes, while only two F&C students (11.7%) opted for the substitution strategy.

F&C students seemed to have a deeper filmic awareness and hence were able to achieve a better comprehension of the semiotic codes that constitute the audiovisual text, all while recognising most non-verbal aural elements. Their main challenge was rendering their description in writing. For instance, while all of them (17) identified the ringing of the school bell, the verbalisation of the sound was far from perfect (e.g., the word 'doorbell' was often used when referring to the school bell). They also found some difficulties when choosing the correct wording for certain paralinguistic elements (e.g., one of the most common misuses was

the choice of the verb 'to scream' to reflect María's cheers of amusement). Conversely, T&I students were less accurate when it came to determining which non-verbal information should be captioned and did not always differentiate between aural and visual elements, adding descriptors referring to visual triggers such as 'bouncing', 'moving the wheelchair' or 'throwing the ball'. These misconceptions were not detected among F&C students. Interestingly, the description of music was found particularly elusive among both groups, with only 21 (24%) T&I students and 4 (23.5%) F&C students captioning the music (generally, with imprecise descriptors), among which only one T&I student and two F&C students specified that Brazilian music was heard. Another shortcoming common to both groups was the absence of captions to identify characters: only one T&I student included all of them, while another T&I student and one F&C student named some secondary characters, but not all of them.

The findings suggest implications for the didactic use of interlingual SDH. First, the background and language level of students have to be taken into consideration, as students may prove to have varied skills that allow educators to focus on different aspects of the tasks at hand. Secondly, the impact of using SDH in the classroom seems to be positive insofar as students demonstrate an ability to identify relevant paralinguistic information and convey it using the guidelines provided. Thirdly, it fosters linguistic skills as students search for adequate renderings. Students would thereafter develop a better understanding of semiotic codes and improve both written expression and terminological precision. In view of the varying degrees of performance among L2 learners, it is reasonable to posit that training should be adapted to the particular background of each group, in order to reinforce the learners' weaker skills and enhance their strengths.

The results prove that didactic AVT tasks, such as interlingual SDH, can be complex as they require a range of transdisciplinary skills, such as fluency in a foreign language, an understanding of the multiple codes of meaning involved, cinematographic literacy, and awareness of practice-specific conventions, among other skills. These skills fall under Díaz-Cintas's (2007) competence model proposal for audio describers, according to which skills can be subsumed under four main competences (linguistic, thematic, technological and personal competences), which are equally applicable to SDH. Both groups from this study have shown enough skills to complete the SDH task successfully, all by fostering some of these skills. However, the data collected and discussed so far has shown that some aspects still need to be further developed depending on the scores achieved by each group.

7. Conclusions

In this work, we have discussed some of the outcomes of an international project whose long-term objective is to prove that linguistic and intercultural skills can be honed through didactic AVT and MA tasks. Following the AoA framework, as well as the pivotal role played by mediation in FLE landscapes today, we have established that the project's methodology considers that social agency is at the very centre of the language learning experience. In general terms, learners of didactic AVT and MA (i.e., the social agents) mediate between a clip and an audience that cannot access the entire content of a clip due to linguistic, cultural, visual, or auditive impediments.

As a captioning service aiming at making video clips accessible to users with auditive impairments, SDH poses challenges for language learners (e.g., character identification, visual and time synchronies, sound triggers and music), thus a proposal of new categories and descriptors had to be created for us to utilise the current *CEFR/CV* in the project.

We have examined the general structure of the TRADILEX project and the resulting lesson plans, focusing on one example based on interlingual SDH practice for B2 learners. In this case, the students had to mediate a clip excerpt from the Spanish short film entitled *Cuerdas*, fully in Spanish, and had to produce captions in English. The main goal was to raise awareness about SDH-specific challenges and prompt students to produce intelligible captions in their L2.

One finding revealed in this paper is that students scored differently depending on their background and studies. For instance, whereas T&I students performed better at language transfer and accuracy, F&C students received higher scores in terms of paralinguistic information and the rendering of non-verbal, aural information in writing. However, there was a patent discrepancy between the two groups, concerning the size of each group, so this is a limitation to the article's findings that is worth being acknowledged. Be that as it may, and despite the differences observed, the overall performance was deemed satisfactory for the two groups, showing promising results in terms of fostering mediation skills in FLE by means of didactic MA.

It is worth highlighting the need for further training and awareness-raising in audiovisual accessibility to enhance the recognition of visual and aural triggers, as well as verbal and non-verbal elements, especially in the case of T&I students, whose curriculum is mainly focused on the linguistic dimension of the audiovisual text. The scores obtained by F&C students, however, suggested that further training in the L2 would be highly beneficial. Despite the F&C group being significantly smaller than the T&I one, these findings may be meaningful as they encourage the training of students from film studies in AVT and MA.

AVT and MA tasks seem promising as far as audiovisual accessibility and mediation for media content are concerned. The results confirm the need to approach SDH from a multidisciplinary perspective, with a special focus on film and language studies in learning environments beyond FLE. The similarities observed in the data obtained regarding the skills developed strongly suggest that students were capable of performing the interlingual SDH task successfully (see Section 5). These positive results have theoretical and practical implications of great significance (see Section 6), so it is hoped that future studies will continue exploring the potential of didactic MA, in particular SDH, in FLE environments.

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