Towards the integration of audiovisual translation in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in higher education

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La rivoluzione digitale ha promosso lo sviluppo di nuove forme di insegnamento delle lingue. Contemporaneamente, la traduzione nell'insegnamento delle lingue, oggetto di dibattito per anni, è stata rivalutata in una prospettiva comunicativa (Cook 2010). Negli ultimi due decenni, l'applicazione pedagogica della Traduzione Audiovisiva (TAV) – il trasferimento del linguaggio verbale negli audiovisivi – ha attirato l'attenzione sia di studiosi sia di istituzioni europee. La ricerca empirica mostra che la TAV nella classe di lingua può favorire sia le competenze ricettive sia quelle produttive, oltre alle competenze IT (Lertola 2019a). Questo articolo propone l'integrazione della TAV e, in particolare, delle attività di sottotitolazione e doppiaggio nell'insegnamento dell'inglese come lingua straniera a livello universitario. L'articolo fornisce uno stato dell'arte con particolare riferimento alle precedenti esperienze di integrazione della TAV nell'insegnamento delle lingue. Inoltre, presenta e analizza il feedback fornito da 38 studenti di laurea magistrale in un questionario di valutazione sulla loro esperienza di apprendimento utilizzando attività di sottotitolazione e doppiaggio (L2-L2; L1-L2; e L2-L1) come parte integrante del loro modulo di lingua inglese.

Parole chiave:
traduzione audiovisiva, traduzione nell'insegnamento delle lingue, sottotitolazione, doppiaggio, inglese come lingua straniera, università.

Keywords:
audiovisual translation, translation in language teaching, subtitling, dubbing, English as a Foreign Language, higher education.

1. Introduction

The acknowledgment of the importance of Translation in Language Teaching (TILT) by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) was ground-breaking considering that translation has been a subject of debate for decades (Cook 2010; Lertola 2018). A recent revision of the CEFR (Council of Europe 2018) emphasises the role of mediation in foreign language learning, and points out that its previous version seemed to reduce mediation to interpreting and translation only; whereas mediation indicates a wider range of activities (e.g., paraphrase and summary) that allow a third party to access a text.

Communicative approaches in language education have tended to avoid any type of translation in the language classroom. Translation was merely seen as an application of the grammar-translation method, usually employed in the

teaching of classical languages like Latin and Greek, where emphasis was on grammar learning through the memorisation of rules and translation of written texts. However, the CEFR highlights that learners can foster their communicative competence while performing written or oral mediation activities. The main objective of communicative language approaches is to develop learners' communicative competence, in other words to allow learners to use the language for meaningful communication. Considering that approaches are subject to individual interpretations in the application of principles, which can be adapted to new practices, and considering the increasing use of ICT in education, the fact that language teachers are using not only translation but also Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in their teaching routine can be considered a natural shift (Lertola 2018).

The potential of AVT in foreign language learning has raised the attention of authorities and researchers. European institutions have funded research-led projects, namely LeViS (Learning via Subtitling) a Socrates/Lingua (2006-2008) project with the participation of 5 universities, and ClipFlair (Foreign Language Learning through Interactive Revoicing & Captioning of Clips)[1] a Lifelong Learning Programme project (2011-2014) with the participation of 10 universities. More recently, the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation has funded TRADILEX (Audiovisual translation as a didactic resource in foreign language education), an I+D+i project (2020-2023) coordinated by a research group of the UNED (*Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*) which involves Spanish and international higher education institutions.

Over the last twenty years, scholars have investigated the educational application of both captioning (i.e., written language transfer procedures) and revoicing (i.e., oral language transfer procedures). In language learning, AVT modes can be interlingual either standard (i.e., from a second language, L2, into the first language, L1) or reverse (from L1 into L2) as well as intralingual (from L2 into L2). Among the AVT modes, scholars have mainly focused on the use of subtitling and dubbing in the language classroom, and more recently on audio description and voice-over. The application of AVT in language education has a great potential since it can be used as a support as well as a task, thus fostering both receptive and productive language skills.

This paper discusses the integration of subtitling and dubbing tasks in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in higher education. First, the paper provides a state of the art on the field by recalling previous experiences on the integration of AVT tasks in language learning. Then, it presents and discusses the feedback provided by 38 English-studies postgraduate students in an evaluation questionnaire – designed to elicit factual, behavioural, and

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[1]   http://clipflair.net/. It should be pointed out that the ClipFlair Studio, which allows to carry out captioning and revoicing tasks is no longer updated.

attitudinal data – on their learning experience using intralingual, interlingual standard and reverse subtitling and dubbing tasks (L2-L2; L1-L2; and L2-L1 respectively) as a regular part of their English-language course.

2. Literature review

Research on the pedagogical applications of AVT has witnessed an incremental growth over the last two decades. Scholars have primarily investigated the benefits of standard and reverse interlingual subtitling with regards to listening comprehension (Talaván 2010, 2011; Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón 2014a), writing skills (Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón 2014b; Burczyńska 2015; Talaván et al. 2016), vocabulary acquisition (Lertola 2012, 2019b), integrated language skills (Talaván 2006a, 2006b), intercultural education (Borghetti 2011; Borghetti & Lertola 2014), and pragmatic awareness (Lopriore & Ceruti 2015; Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola 2016). Although research on intralingual subtitling reports encouraging results in the development of writing skills, it is still quite limited (Talaván et al. 2016). A novel recent application is the use of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) as a pedagogical task to enhance integrated skills, namely written production and listening comprehension (Talaván 2019). Moreover, subtitling has been used in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and in bilingual education contexts (Fernández Costales 2014, 2017).

Among revoicing tasks, scholars have mainly focused their attention on dubbing. First suggestions to use dubbing in language teaching and learning date back to the 1990s (Zohrevandi 1994; Kumai 1996), but empirical studies on intralingual and interlingual dubbing are far more recent. Experimental studies on intralingual dubbing show positive results in promoting speaking skills and, although restricted, research shows that interlingual dubbing can foster speaking as well as writing skills (Danan 2010; Sánchez-Requena 2016; Talaván & Costal 2017; Sánchez-Requena 2020). Lately, researchers have demonstrated an increasing interest in audio description (AD) tasks for enhancing vocabulary acquisition as well as oral, writing and integrated language skills (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen 2013, 2014; Talaván & Lertola 2016; Calduch & Talaván 2018; Navarrete 2020. Voice-over is also considered as a suitable AVT task to foster speaking skills, but further research is needed (Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón 2018).

Furthermore, scholars have explored the combination of captioning and revoicing tasks. The focus has been mainly placed on the application of combined reverse interlingual subtitling and dubbing, and to a smaller extent to combined intralingual captioning and revoicing. Combined reverse interlingual subtitling and dubbing has been shown to enhance L2 speaking and writing skills as well as pragmatic awareness (Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera 2015; Lertola & Mariotti 2017). Although limited, experimental research on intralingual

captioning and revoicing has reported promising outcomes in the development of productive and receptive skills by employing intralingual subtitling and revoicing tasks as well as audio description and SDH tasks (López Cirugeda & Sánchez Ruiz 2013; Herrero et al. 2017). Finally, subtitling, dubbing and audio description have been successfully employed in translator training for the development of translation skills (Cambeiro Andrade & Quereda Herrera 2007; Incalcaterra McLoughlin 2009; Jüngst 2013; to name a few).

According to a recent state of the art on AVT in the language classroom (Lertola 2019a), English is one of the two languages involved in the pedagogical tasks of most experimental studies, often being the target language. A great majority of studies have been carried out in face-to-face university environments, involving a minimum of ten participants whose language levels range from A1 to C1. Generally, the audiovisual input employed is either a movie or a sitcom excerpt. Subtitling software used are Learning via Subtitling, ClipFlair, Subtitle Workshop or Aegisub. Whereas, revoicing tasks are carried out mainly with ClipFlair, Windows Movie Maker and VISP mobile app.

Built on the LeViS experience, ClipFlair is specifically designed for interactive revoicing and captioning in language learning. One of the main objectives of ClipFlair is to promote the integration of AVT modes in the language classroom by offering an online platform that allows teachers and learners to create and access ready-made activities in more than 15 languages (Baños & Sokoli 2015; Sokoli 2020). Furthermore, ClipFlair activities have been successfully tested in online, face-to-face and blended learning contexts (Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón 2014a; Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola 2015; Lertola & Mariotti 2017). In order to suit a variety of learning situations, ClipFlair has been designed to meet teacher-driven as well as independent learners' needs. However, most of the studies that tested ClipFlair took place in teacher-driven university environments.

3. Integrating AVT in language teaching

The previous literature review on the pedagogical applications of captioning and revoicing acknowledges an increasing number of studies that support the integration of AVT tasks in language learning, especially in EFL at university level. As Incalcaterra McLoughlin et al. (2020: 1) point out:

> interest in the application of audiovisual translation techniques in language teaching has grown beyond unconnected case studies to create a lively network of methodological intertextuality, cross-references, reviews and continuation of previous trials, ultimately defining a recognizable and scalable trend.

From a theoretical perspective, Ragni (2020) contributes to the debate on the integration of subtitling in language learning by evaluating a number of theories, from second language acquisition to cognitive psychology, in order to support captioning tasks in the language classroom. Talaván (2013) provides valuable

resources for both researchers and teachers as she presents the theoretical framework that sustain the use of subtitling as a pedagogical task. The author refers to communicative language teaching, and, in particular, to task-based learning and teaching within the guidelines established by the CEFR. Talaván (2013) also gives clear instructions for its practical applications in the classroom. Likewise, Lertola (2015) endorses subtitling as an effective pedagogical tool, and provides suggestions on how teachers can integrate interlingual subtitling in their classes. To this regard, she proposes an adaptation of professional subtitling norms, as well as linguistic and technical assessment criteria for pedagogical purposes.

Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena (2018) analyse AVT tasks from a teacher's perspective, and offer their views on the current and future use of such tasks in language teaching. As many as 56 teachers from 15 countries – teaching nine foreign languages in different levels of education – completed an online questionnaire. Questionnaire responses show that most of the participants teach English (66%) or Spanish (32%) face-to-face to intermediate-level students (i.e. B1 and B2) in higher education. Teachers reveal that the most used AVT modes are as follows: subtitling (79%), dubbing (41%), audio description (36%), Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as voice-over (16%), and free commentary (14%). AVT modes are used both interlingually (75%) and intralingually (68%). Interestingly, only one participant reported to use a multilingual combination (i.e., at least three languages). According to the participants, the application of AVT tasks in the language classroom serves to develop a number of learning aspects in the following order: listening comprehension (73%), vocabulary acquisition (70%), intercultural awareness (59%), motivation (57%), oral (54%) and written expression (48%). Regarding the frequency of using AVT tasks, more than half of the teachers claim to use them 'often' or 'very often' suggesting that such tasks are part of a regular module. It can be noted that overall these results coincide with the general outline of experimental studies: AVT tasks, mainly subtitling, are generally employed with EFL learners in face-to-face university environments (Lertola 2019a). Regarding their experience, teachers consider "motivation, fun, stronger bonds, reward, and IT knowledge" the five most positive elements (Alonso-Pérez & Sánchez-Requena 2018: 15). Conversely, among the negative aspects, teachers mention the time-consuming preparation of AVT tasks, the heavy reliance on ICT, and the absence of evaluation guidelines. Nevertheless, teachers see positive future perspectives as more than half of them (55%) believe that AVT tasks could be flawlessly integrated in the foreign-language curriculum for both face-to-face and online education. Beside motivating learners and allow them to develop a number of language skills, teachers consider that AVT tasks can foster their ICT skills and digital literacy. In order to warrant a smooth transition, teachers call for proper teacher training and a

common ground on the selection and assessment of AVT material, as well as further empirical research.

Apart from experimental studies employing AVT tasks as one-off activity, the literature offers examples of integration of AVT tasks in foreign-language courses. Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola (2014) propose a methodological framework, based on the CEFR, for the inclusion of subtitling in the foreign-language curriculum in third-level undergraduate courses, and report on students' feedback on the subtitling module regularly offered in the second year of the Bachelor of Arts degree at the National University of Ireland, Galway as part of the language course in Italian as a foreign language. As many as 40 out of 49 undergraduate students who attended the module over four academic years filled in an online evaluation questionnaire. Responses are overall positive since almost all students involved (91%) enjoyed the interlingual subtitling task from L2-Italian into L1-English. Students provided homogenous comments, as "they found subtitling a 'very good way of learning', since 'it is a challenging and immersion task which creates an atmosphere that promotes learning'" (Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola 2014: 78-79). In line with Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón's (2014a) results, students felt that they improved their listening and writing skills. Remarkably, almost all students (95%) considered to have enjoyed having subtitling as a regular part of their foreign-language course, and suggested to have the subtitling module in more years of their Bachelor degree. Moreover, years after taking the module, students acknowledged to still be able to remember some of the lines and phrases they subtitled showing that the task also benefitted vocabulary acquisition. Finally, students acknowledge to have found the subtitling module beneficial not only for the development of language learning skills but also for developing translation skills, and they believed that it offered them an opportunity to have an insight into subtitling as a profession.

Furthermore, students of the two-year online Diploma in Italian at the National University of Ireland, Galway, regularly carried out subtitling and dubbing tasks within the Language Laboratory module during their second year (Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola 2015). In order to correspond to the linguistic content of the course syllabus, audiovisual input for ClipFlair subtitling and dubbing tasks was carefully selected. Besides helping achieving linguistic learning objectives, subtitling and dubbing tasks proved to motivate learners and develop communicative competence in intercultural contexts. These two aspects are especially relevant in language education, particularly in online settings.

4. EFL learners' subtitling and dubbing experience

This paper reports on the responses of 38 postgraduate students of a Master of Arts (MA) in English Studies in an Italian University to an evaluation questionnaire on their learning experience using subtitling and dubbing tasks as

a regular part of their English-language course. The structure of the module as well as the evaluation questionnaire were piloted in the previous academic year with 10 postgraduate students enrolled in the same MA. The module took place over nine weeks for a total of 30 hours with an average of four-contact hours per week (two hour per class). The first two hours of the module served to introduce the postgraduate students to the module structure and content as well as to subtitling and dubbing, by providing theoretical and hands-on information. Classes were held in the university language laboratory, hence each student could use a computer individually to carry out the captioning and revoicing tasks. Each computer was provided with headphones and a microphone. After being introduced to the use of ClipFlair using a tutorial activity, participants were required to regularly carry out a number of AVT tasks based on short video clips of no more than three minutes in length during the module. The AVT tasks were as follows:

- intralingual (English-English) and interlingual standard (English-Italian) subtitling of two excerpts of an American sit-com (first and second excerpt of "How I met your mother");
- reverse interlingual subtitling (Italian-English) of an excerpt of an Italian movie (first excerpt of "*La mafia uccide solo d'estate*");
- intralingual (English-English) and interlingual standard (English-Italian) dubbing of two excerpts of two American sit-com (first excerpt of "Gilmore girls" and third excerpt of "How I met your mother");
- reverse interlingual dubbing (Italian-English) of an excerpt of an Italian movie (second excerpt of "*La mafia uccide solo d'estate*");

Intralingual subtitling and dubbing (English-English) tasks aimed at enhancing listening as well as writing and speaking skills respectively. Interlingual standard subtitling and dubbing tasks (English-Italian) involved transcription of the original dialogue as well as translation from L2 into L1 and aimed at fostering listening, writing and translation skills. While interlingual reverse dubbing tasks (Italian-English) aimed at the development of translation as well as writing and speaking skills respectively.

Before captioning or revoicing the clip, students were provided with subtitling norms adapted for pedagogical purposes (Lertola 2015), as well as with basic norms for dubbing (see Figure 1 below).

Basic norms for didactic AVT

Subtitling

- o The **quality of the translation** should be **high**.
- o The **register** should be **appropriate**.
- o **Dialogue** should be **condensed** and avoid obvious repetition.
- o **Each subtitle** should be **meaningful** and **self-contained**.
- o The subtitle text should be distributed over a **maximum of 2 lines** in blocks of meaning and/or grammatical units.
- o Subtitles should remain on screen for a **minimum of 1 second and a maximum of 7 seconds**.
- o **Film dialogue** and **subtitles** should be **synchronised** as far as possible.
- o **Language** should be **grammatically correct** and make use of **punctuation**.

Dubbing

- o **Rehearse the dialogue** beforehand.
- o Pay particular attention to the following aspects:
- • **speed of speech**,
- • the **synchronisation between the movement of the lips and the dialogue**,
- • **pronunciation**,
- • **intonation**,
- • and **characterisation** (i.e., imitation of the actor's performance).
- o If necessary, repeat the same phrase several times to imitate speed and intonation.
- o In order to **respect time constraints** - as in subtitling - the dialogue can be condensed (e.g., by omitting superfluous information such as repetition of names, etc.).

Figure 1: Basic norms for subtitling and dubbing (adapted from Lertola 2015).

Furthermore, before carrying out subtitling or dubbing tasks, learners were allowed to check their own transcription of each video with the original video script in order to correct it, and thus avoid language mistakes that can easily occur when transcribing. During the classes, learners acknowledged that transcribing is a challenging but rewarding exercise that becomes easier with regular practice.

Interlingual subtitling and dubbing tasks required the translation of the audiovisual text. Thus, learners had to translate either in their L1 or in the L2. To this regard, machine translation was forbidden but learners were allowed to use online dictionaries. After each subtitling and dubbing task, students were asked to offer peer-to-peer feedback to another classmate following a number of suggestions in form of questions provided by the teacher on the screen projector, and based on the subtitling and dubbing norms provided. The peer-to-peer feedback on the subtitling task included the following questions:

- • Is the condensed dialogue coherent?
- • Is the subtitled text distributed in sense blocks and/or grammatical units?
- • Has superfluous information like name repetitions been deleted?
- • Do *in and out times* of subtitles follow the speech rhythm of the dialogue?
- • Do subtitle appear at least more than 1 second and no more than 7?
- • Is punctuation correct?

While, the peer-to-peer feedback on the dubbing task contained the following questions:

- Is the speed of the speech adequate?
- Is there synchronisation between the speech and the movement of the lips?
- Is the pronunciation correct?
- Has the intonation of the actors been imitated correctly?
- Overall, is the characterisation (i.e., imitation of the actor's performance) adequate?

After completing the captioning and revoicing tasks, students were asked to submit their version to the teacher. In the following class, the teacher would discuss the submitted tasks with the students by showing samples of subtitling and dubbing that allowed for discussion and reflection on different aspects by also comparing them to the original subtitled or dubbed version. Particular emphasis was placed on linguistic choices and AVT constraints.

4.1 The evaluation questionnaire

The evaluation questionnaire administered at the end of the 30-hour course was designed with the aim to elicit factual (e.g., gender, nationality, etc.), behavioural (i.e., language learning experiences), and attitudinal data (i.e., learners' opinion on the learning experience) (Dörnyei 2010). The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first one collected factual and behavioural data; the second and third sessions elicited attitudinal data about subtitling and dubbing respectively. It should be noted that the questionnaire was administered in English, and all the students answered the open-ended questions in English.

According to the questionnaire responses, 35 out of 38 participants were Italian native speakers. While three of them had a different mother-tongue namely Spanish, Rumanian and Ukrainian. However, these three participants had a near-native competence in Italian. The great majority of participants involved were female (92%). Eight of the them attended the module in which the questionnaire had been piloted the previous year, and therefore stated to have already experienced subtitling and dubbing. The rest of the participants had never experienced AVT tasks before. When asked about their language skills, participants felt their audiovisual comprehension skills in English were advanced (40%), upper-intermediate (45%), and intermediate (11%). Their perception of writing skills was overall slightly more homogenous since as much as 50% considered it upper-intermediate, 37% advanced, and 13% intermediate. Regarding speaking skills, 50% of them felt to be at an upper-intermediate level, while 30% felt to be advanced, and 18% intermediate.

4.1.1 Learners' opinion on the subtitling experience

The second section of the questionnaire focused on the subtitling experience. Participants were asked to recognise the most challenging aspects of subtitling

and they were allowed to tick more than one option among those provided. Their responses revealed that respecting time constraints (i.e., synchronising oral and written language; subtitles of min. 1 sec.-max 7 sec.) was the most challenging aspect of subtitling (55%), closely followed by translating (47%), respecting space constraints (i.e., keeping each subtitle meaningful and self-contained on a max of 2 lines) (37%) and using an appropriate register (29%). All the participants provided further comments to their answers, specifically related to the two most challenging aspects, namely synchronisation and translation. One student (ST5) reflected on the subtitling task as follows:

> [a]t first I found it difficult to synchronise written and spoken language, especially when the dialogues were very fast. The synchronisation takes a lot of time at the beginning, but then one gets used to it. Translating is also a challenge because some sentences (such as puns) are difficult to render in another language.

Another student (ST23) acknowledged that:

> [w]hat really put us to the test is to find cultural equivalents from English to Italian and vice-versa. In doing so, we have to consider the intertwining of semantics, morphology, pragmatics, linguistic registers, and translation. All of these aspects have to respect the prosodic rhythm of the speakers. It is challenging, but it really made us analyse the language.

A third student (ST38) admitted that "[k]eeping subtitle text distributed in sense blocks and identifying sense units in L2 is a challenging exercise, and literary translation is not possible due to time and space constraints."

Furthermore, participants were explicitly asked to leave a feedback on their subtitling experience. In general, according to their answers, participants found subtitling a useful experience, that proved to be challenging but rewarding. The great majority of them felt they had learned greatly and that they had developed different language skills (namely listening, speaking and translation) as well as acquired new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Translation was appreciated as a cultural mediation activity that can promote personal as well as professional development. Besides, participants acknowledged that subtitling was a new and fun activity that provided variety to the usual language class. Very few participants mentioned technical aspects of subtitling, suggesting that ClipFlair resulted to be a user-friendly subtitling software appropriate for the module.

In terms of the perceived language learning efficacy of intralingual (English-English) and interlingual (English-Italian and Italian-English respectively) subtitling, opinions were utmost positive. Participants found intralingual subtitling slightly more useful (97%) compared to interlingual standard and reverse subtitling (both 87%). As many as 32 out of 38 of the learners (84%) stated that they would like to have subtitling as a regular activity in their English class; five learners ticked maybe as an answer, while only one student said no. Among those who would subtitle regularly, many specified that they would like to have the three types of subtitling (Figure 2) as they could tick more than one

option. In particular, they would like to regularly practice intralingual (76%), interlingual standard and reverse (71% and 68% respectively).
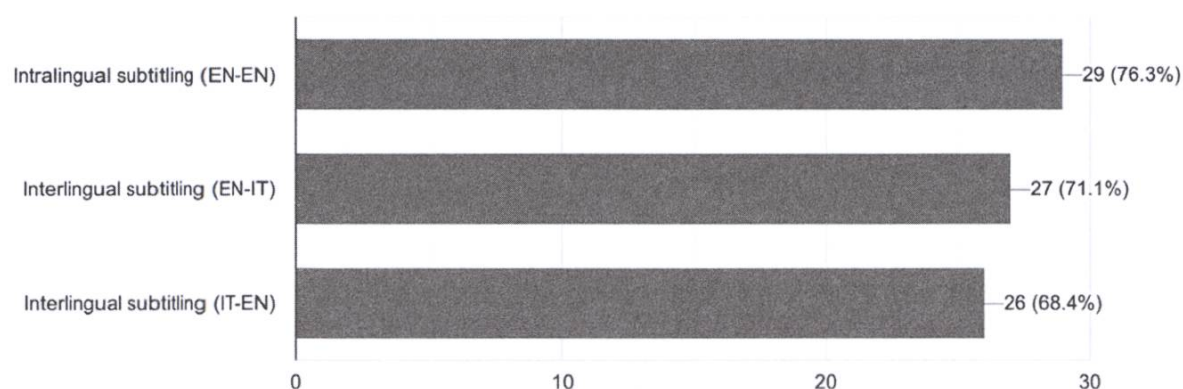

Figure 2: Subtitling modes participants would like to have in their regular English class.

Finally, participants provided a number of suggestions for the integration of subtitling as a regular activity in the English class. Since in the module the clips that had been used were excerpts of TV series and movies, participants suggested to add different types of clips such as documentaries and interviews. Most of them insisted that the more practice the better, and suggested to have an average of three hours per week. Some of them also suggested to include group work and at-home-activities.

4.1.2 Learners' opinion on the dubbing experience

The third section of the questionnaire had the same questions as the second section but targeted dubbing. Participants identified the most challenging aspects of dubbing as follows: respecting time constraints (i.e., synchronising the speech with the movement of the lips) (87%), imitating actors' intonation (45%), translating (37%) and imitating actors' performance in general (24%). In general, most of the students reported that imitating actors' intonation in a foreign language while synchronising their voice with actors' lip movements has been the greatest challenge. One participant (ST5) suggested that

> [s]ynchronisation was even more difficult than in the subtitling process. You have to be very precise to respect the correlation between spoken and written language. You also have to be very careful about not talking too fast, or too slowly, and in some cases it is necessary to repeat a sentence many times before getting it right. Translating puns was very difficult too.

Indeed, translation was another challenging aspect of dubbing. One participant (ST21) "found particularly difficult to respect time constraints in dubbing, especially in interlingual dubbing, as the translation does not match the original dialogue perfectly. Sometimes I didn't succeed in lip synchronization." Another participant (ST29) pointed out that:

> [t]ranslating the humour was also challenging; I felt free to completely change the type of humour, maybe making some technical mistakes, but it was important for me to create a true and credible humour in the target language.

Another participant (ST38) commented that:

> [i]f with subtitling we convey the meaning of what is being said, with dubbing we should also convey the feeling. It is also important to create a linguistic realism and sometimes it is difficult to create dialogues that sounds spontaneous.

Indeed, these comments provide a valuable insight on participants' dubbing experience.

Regarding the perceived efficacy of dubbing, similarly to subtitling, the opinion was extremely positive, although to a slighter extent. Participants found intralingual dubbing (English-English) the most useful (89%), followed by interlingual reverse dubbing from Italian into English (85%), and interlingual standard from English into Italian (80%). Participants' answers to the open-ended question that required them to leave a feedback on the dubbing experience offered valuable insights on their opinion to this regard. The feedback on the dubbing experience was overall positive but more heterogeneous compared to the feedback provided on subtitling. Some participants clearly pointed out that they preferred subtitling as they had found dubbing more difficult, especially interlingual dubbing due to the translation aspect. One participant (ST38) stated that when:

> translating for dubbing it is important to take into account the duration of the sentence in order to make the sentence easy to pronounce and at the same time it is important to find words/expressions that 'fit' the visual, and be careful of synchronisation.

Despite being a challenging and time-consuming activity, participants acknowledged to have really enjoyed it for a number of reasons. Many of them believe that dubbing had fostered their speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, intonation and fluency. They felt they had learnt new expressions through repetition, and improved their translation skills since they had to pay attention to convey cultural nuances. Similarly to subtitling, participants saw dubbing as a useful language learning tool that could also help them in their professional lives, and wished they could continue dubbing regularly. When explicitly asked whether they would like to have dubbing as a regular activity in their English class, more than half of them agreed (63%), a third was not sure (29%), and the rest did not agree (8%). In order to integrate dubbing as a regular activity, participants suggested to have an average of two hours per week (in contrast to the three hours they would like to have for subtitling tasks). One participant (ST23) also proposed that it would be ideal:

> to work in some sort of 'dubbing studio environment', so to say 'acoustically isolated', in order to work on intonation, rhythms and so on, and improve our oral skills. All kinds of clips are interesting, the more variety, the better. Or even projects of dubbing as if we actually had to have each one a role.

Participants did not mention particular technical issues, thus suggesting that ClipFlair was an appropriate software for dubbing too.

Lastly, 24 out of 38 of the learners (62%) indicated that they would like to have dubbing as a regular task in their English class. While 11 learners marked maybe as an answer (30%), and three participants answered no (8%). As they could tick more than one option, among those who answered yes and maybe (i.e., 35 participants), a considerable number of them specified that they would like to have the three types of dubbing (Figure 3).
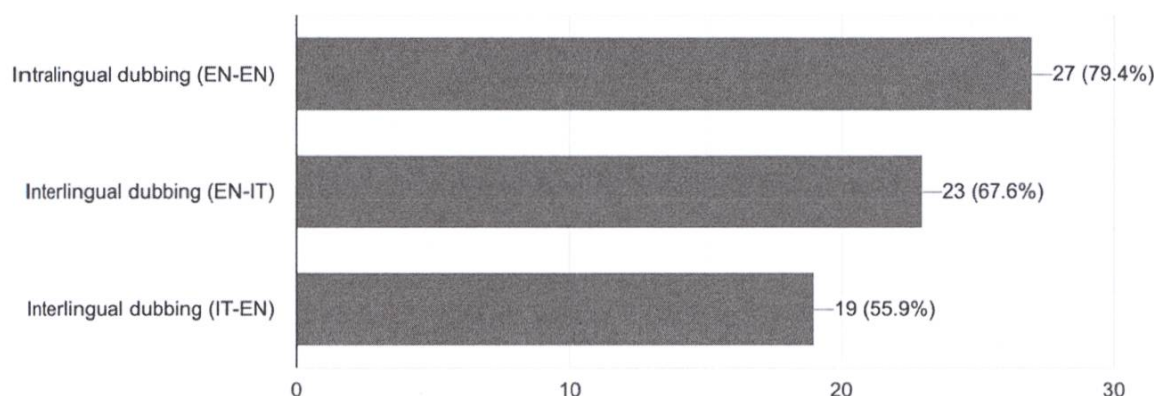

Figure 3: Dubbing modes participants would like to have in their regular English courses.

As it can be appreciated in Figure 3, participants stated that the dubbing modes they would like to have in their English courses are as follows: intralingual dubbing (English-English) (79%), interlingual dubbing from English into Italian (68%), and interlingual dubbing from Italian into English (56%). It is worth noting that their first choice, intralingual dubbing, was regarded as the most useful in terms of language learning in a previous question. Whereas, in the same previous question, interlingual reverse dubbing (from Italian into English) was considered slightly more useful (+5%) compared to interlingual dubbing (from English into Italian). This could be due to the fact that dubbing in a second language, although useful, is more demanding as explained in their feedback.

5. Conclusions

The paper proposes the integration of subtitling and dubbing tasks in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in higher education by reporting on postgraduate students' feedback to an evaluation questionnaire on their subtitling and dubbing experience in their regular English-language class. The 38 MA students provided valuable insights through close- and open-ended questions that support the integration of subtitling and dubbing in the foreign-language curriculum. Learners expressed their desire to continue using the three types of subtitling, namely intralingual (English-English) and interlingual standard and reverse (English-Italian and Italian-English respectively) since they found these useful for language learning in a number of ways. The subtitling task helped them enhancing listening, writing and translation skills while

fostering knowledge of new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Subtitling proved to be a challenging but rewarding activity to the great majority of participants. Participants also considered the tasks of subtitling useful for their professional development.

Dubbing seemed to be more challenging for learners compared to subtitling. However, more than half of the participants wished to continue dubbing in the three modes, namely intralingual dubbing (English-English), interlingual standard dubbing from English into Italian, and interlingual reverse dubbing from Italian into English. Dubbing was an enjoyable activity that allowed them to enhance their speaking skills, especially pronunciation, intonation and fluency. Like with subtitling, learners felt they could increase their vocabulary and develop their translation skills. In addition, they perceived it as useful for the professional development. Overall, ClipFlair resulted to be a user-friendly captioning and revoicing software that suited the needs of the module.

The participants' feedback thus endorses the benefits of subtitling and dubbing tasks reported by previous experimental studies (Lertola 2019). In particular, the present study supports the integration of subtitling and dubbing as a regular activity in the EFL class in line with previous research (Incalcaterra McLoughlin & Lertola 2014, 2015). Participants see subtitling tasks as challenging but rewarding language learning activities that foster listening and translating skills as well as vocabulary acquisition (Talaván 2010, 2011; Lertola 2012, 2019b; Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón 2014a). The study supports the positive outcomes regarding the application of intralingual subtitling in EFL teaching (Talaván et al. 2016), and encourages further research. Participants' feedback also sustains the findings of experimental studies regarding the potential of intralingual and interlingual dubbing to foster speaking skills (Danan 2010; Sánchez-Requena 2016, 2020; Talaván & Costal 2017). Furthermore, the paper has innovatively considered the combination of captioning and revoicing tasks including the six combinations namely intralingual, interlingual standard and reverse subtitling and dubbing. Positive participants' opinion on the combined application of such tasks corroborates previous findings that noticed improvements in terms of both productive and receptive skills (López Cirugeda & Sánchez Ruiz 2013; Talaván & Ávila-Cabrera 2015).

Overall, the present study provides encouraging results for the application of AVT in the academic EFL classroom. However, it involved a limited number of participants, and it would be advisable to replicate similar research with a greater number of subjects. Despite collecting thorough answers to the open-ended question, after the questionnaire it could have been worthwhile to carry out a focus group to delve into certain aspects. No particular technical issues were faced but it proved time-consuming to prepare all the equipment learners needed for subtitling, and especially for dubbing. Since ClipFlair is no longer updated other software should also be tested. As noted by a few participants,

dubbing in a classroom environment can prove challenging. Ideally, a quieter space would benefit learners. As an alternative, the process of transcribing and translating could take place in the classroom, while the dubbing itself could be done outside the classroom as an at-home task. The latter being a suggested option by some of the participants. In addition, some participants mentioned carrying out dubbing tasks collaboratively rather than individually to create an output that resembles the professionally-dubbed audiovisual product.

Further research on the regular use of AVT modes, specifically subtitling and dubbing both individually and combined, is needed. In particular, research involving undergraduate as well as postgraduate students in different countries with diverse language combinations. Furthermore, students of different degrees could be involved in order to focus on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since experimental research on this regard is still quite limited. Finally, in view of the recent demand of online education, studies on the applications of AVT tasks in virtual environments – both in online and blended modes – would be very welcomed.

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