Didactic Audiovisual Translation in Online Contexts: A Pilot Study

Traducción audiovisual didáctica en contextos en línea: un estudio piloto

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Abstract: The didactic applications of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) to Foreign Language Learning refer to the use of AVT modes (subtitling, dubbing, etc.) as didactic resources. It is a line of enquiry that has been receiving increasing attention in recent years, from researchers and practitioners alike. The TRADILEX Project has aimed to reinforcing this area of study by designing and testing a methodological proposal where various AVT modes (subtitling, voice-over, dubbing, and the media accessibility modes of audio description and subtitles for deaf and hard of hearing people) have been applied to enhance integrated skills in English as a foreign language. This article will offer an account of the whole online piloting process undertaken within TRADILEX. It will show how the methodological design, the lesson plans, and the instruments were confirmed as functional, reliable, and effective for integrated skills enhancement, before undertaking the pre-experimental long-term study that lays at the core of the project.

Keywords: Didactic audiovisual translation, English as a foreign language, Integrated skills enhancement, Mediation, Pilot study

Resumen: La aplicación didáctica de la traducción audiovisual (TAV) en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras se entiende como el uso de las modalidades de TAV (subtitulación, doblaje, etc.) como recursos didácticos. En los últimos años, este campo de investigación ha atraído cada vez más atención tanto en el ámbito académico como en el educativo. El Proyecto TRADILEX se planteó como objetivo reforzar esta línea de investigación a través del diseño y la evaluación de una propuesta metodológica que hiciera

uso de diversas modalidades de TAV (subtitulación, voces-superpuestas, doblaje, audiodescripción y subtítulos para personas con discapacidad auditiva) para desarrollar destrezas integradas en una lengua extranjera. Este artículo se centra en describir en su conjunto el estudio piloto en línea que se llevó a cabo en el Proyecto TRADILEX; en él, quedó demostrada la funcionalidad y la efectividad tanto de la propuesta metodológica, como de los planes de clase y los instrumentos utilizados, como paso previo necesario para llevar a cabo el estudio pre-experimental longitudinal posterior.

Palabras clave: Traducción audiovisual didáctica, Inglés como lengua extranjera, Desarrollo de destrezas integradas, Mediación, Estudio piloto

INTRODUCTION

Didactic Audiovisual Translation (henceforth, DAT) is a relatively new area of enquiry that can be said to share alliances with two major scientific fields within Humanities: Applied Linguistics (as far as language learning is concerned) and Translation Studies (provided that AVT is applied to education in DAT). It refers to the use of AVT modes, such as subtitling or dubbing, as didactic resources in language education (henceforth, LE). In other words, it relies on the pedagogical design and application of language tasks where learners have to subtitle, dub, audio describe, etc., a pre-selected clip by themselves (using the technology available).

Research in this field has mainly focused on small-scale short-term teaching innovation studies, and so the TRADILEX Project (based at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, UNED) was created with the aim of achieving a wider scope, both in terms of pedagogical design and empirical application.

This article will present the results of the complete pilot study carried out within TRADILEX, where a refined methodological proposal for the application of DAT to B1 and B2 English language learners was evaluated. Once the proposal and the data-gathering instruments (tests of integrated skills, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews) were pre-tested by a group of research experts in the field, the various didactic sequences contained in the methodological design were piloted with small groups of students over a period of one and a half months each. The pilot tests started with a pre-pilot trial that applied a sequence of six didactic voice-over tasks to a total number of 31 subjects. After gathering preliminary results and making the necessary changes to the design and the instruments, the remaining DAT sequences for B1 and B2 (on subtitling, dubbing, audio description, and subtitles for deaf and hard of hearing people) were piloted with different

groups of learners. The main research questions that will be answered after analysing the results of this pilot study are the following:

1. Do DAT sequences based on a single AVT mode contribute to the enhancement of integrated skills in adult intermediate students of English as a foreign language?
2. Do language students find DAT tasks motivating and efficient?
3. Are there any changes necessary in terms of the design of the pre-experiment as a whole?

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

DAT needs to be understood as the pedagogical use of AVT modes (such as dubbing or subtitling) in LE. This discipline can be said to date back to the 1980s when a series of scholars and practitioners started to explore the benefits of using subtitles as support in LE (Holobow *et al.*, 1984; Price, 1983; Vanderplank, 1988). This started to gradually attract attention, and the positive impact of this practice and its assessment has resulted in an ever-growing research field that continues today (Baltova, 1999; Bolaños-García-Escribano, 2017; Caimi, 2006; Caruana, 2021; Danan, 2004; Frumuselu *et al.*, 2015; Ghia, 2012; González-Vera, 2019; Pujadas & Muñoz, 2020; Teng, 2022; Vanderplank, 2016, to name just a few).

At the beginning of the 21st century, departing from the use of subtitles as a support, a related practice emerged, introducing the active side of subtitles as a didactic resource, that is, the application of subtitling as an activity, where students carried out the task of creating their own subtitles. The interest was primarily focused on this AVT mode, and it continues today (Borghetti, 2011; Incalcaterra McLoughlin, 2009; Lertola, 2019; Talaván *et al.*, 2016; Torralba Miralles, 2028). However, this soon gave way to the use of other didactic AVT modes, such as dubbing (Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Chiu, 2012; Danan, 2010; Jao *et al.*, 2022; Jüngst, 2013; Pamungkas *et al.*, 2019; Sánchez-Requena, 2016), audio description (Calduch & Talaván, 2017; Ibáñez Moreno *et al.*, 2016; Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013; Navarrete, 2020; Talaván & Lertola, 2016) and, to a lesser extent, other AVT modes, such as subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing people or SDH (Bolaños-García-Escribano & Ogea-Pozo, 2023; Couto-Cantero et al., 2023; Talaván, 2019; Tinedo-Rodríguez & Frumuselu, 2023), voice-over (Talaván, 2021; Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2018), or free commentary (Baños *et al.*, 2021; Lertola, 2021).

DAT has been known for many years under different titles, such as the didactic applications of AVT, the pedagogical use of AVT modes, the use of AVT in foreign language education, and related paraphrasing strategies. The increasing use of DAT in education and its ever-growing research field, where

various DAT modes have also been applied to English for Specific Purposes (Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Fuentes-Luque & Campbell, 2020; González-Vera, 2022), or even primary and secondary LE contexts via Content Integrated Language Learning or CLIL (Fernández-Costales, 2017, 2021), recently led to the search for a more specific term that could define the discipline in all its forms: didactic AVT or DAT (Talaván, 2020) was introduced a few years ago and every AVT mode used in this area has been labelled in similar terms: didactic subtitling, didactic dubbing, didactic AD, didactic SDH, etc.

The major boosters of DAT, which have made a definite impact on its evolution, have been the national and international research projects that have been devoted to the search for suitable methodological frameworks and technological resources to make the most of the application of AVT modes as didactic resources in LE.

The first one was the LeviS (Learning via Subtitling), a European Project (Socrates – Lingua II Funding) that took place between 2006 and 2008 (Sokoli, 2006-2008) and developed a subtitling simulator called LvS (Learning via Subtitling). This tool was intended to be used by language teachers to create activities based on what we know today as didactic subtitling, and by LE learners to undertake these activities with a methodological basis and specific guidelines (Sokoli *et al.*, 2011).

The follow-up to LeviS was another European project (Lifelong Learning Program this time, Key Activity 2 Languages) called ClipFlair (Foreign Language Learning through Interactive Captioning and Revoicing of Clips), that lasted from 2011 to 2014 (Zabalbeascoa & Sokoli, 2011-2014) and set out to define a conceptual framework that could start establishing the methodological bases of the discipline (Zabalbeascoa *et al.*, 2012), as well as build a new, more complete and stable software and online platform for teachers and students interested in using AVT modes (both in terms of captioning and revoicing) as didactic resources. ClipFlair was a great boost for DAT and its platform had more than one thousand users who provided very relevant feedback that positively impacted further research on the discipline (Sokoli & Zabalbeascoa, 2019; Sokoli, 2015).

Although there was another European project related to DAT (Babelium Project, Lifelong Learning Program, 2011-2014) that designed a collaborative platform with more than 250 videos available in English, German, Spanish, and French and was tried and tested with a good number of students, its impact was not comparable to that of ClipFlair, possibly due to the fact that the researchers involved were mainly Information Technology (IT) experts (Pereira Varela, 2014). Nonetheless, the IT effort was enormous, and the

number of students who tried out the DAT activities was sufficiently large (more than 500), as detailed in Babelium's final report.

Finally, there are two more recent projects, sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, which must be mentioned: PluriTAV and TRADILEX. The former (which stands for Audiovisual Translation as a Tool for the Development of Multilingual Competence in the Classroom) took place from 2017 to 2019 and was devoted to the design of didactic sequences based on the use of various DAT modes (Martínez-Sierra, 2017-2019), aimed at perfecting mother tongue skills and developing multilingual abilities (Baños *et al.*, 2021; Martínez-Sierra, 2021). All the aforementioned sequences (on subtitling, dubbing, free commentary and AD) are available online.

TRADILEX (which stands for Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education), on the other hand, is the last project to be mentioned and the one that lies at the basis of this publication. It started in 2020 and finished in 2023, and set out to assess the validity of DAT as a discipline for integrated skills enhancement (Talaván, 2020-2023). After designing a robust methodological foundation (Talaván & Lertola, 2022), and a series of thorough data-gathering tools (see Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2021 as an example) to be used to assess the implementation of the didactic sequences included in the methodological design, the pilot phase of the project took place. Although TRADILEX then went on to implement the main long-term experiment, to focus on teacher training and to design a DAT web platform, the piloting phase threw very relevant results in terms of the various DAT modes, some of which are also available (Plaza-Lara & Fernández-Costales, 2022; Plaza-Lara & Gonzalo Llera, 2022; Tinedo-Rodríguez & Frumuselu, 2023). This paper will present the complete piloting process and the data-gathered from the whole experience in terms of the total number of 107 students involved in all the DAT piloting sequences.

2. METHODS

The TRADILEX Project has been developed with the main goals of consolidating the innovative line of research of DAT by highlighting the benefits of the combined use of technology, audiovisual media, and mediation so as to enhance students' second language (L2) integrated skills, especially their communicative competence (Talaván & Lertola, 2022).

This use of audiovisual materials in L2 teaching and learning, with the double acoustic and visual input, aids understanding and makes the interpretation of the meaning of a dialogue and a context less challenging than is the case with traditional learning via one channel with exclusively written or aural input. However, it is essential to design the activities in order to adequately achieve the goals intended. Simple student exposure to the

enriched input is not sufficient, and a carefully and expertly planned framework must support the learning process. The idea behind this paper is to explain how such a framework can be piloted to ensure that all the didactic (as well as data-gathering) tools and procedures work correctly, and how those aspects may be backed up by the results obtained to help perform a subsequent long-term pre-experiment on the complete methodological proposal adequately.

In this project, the methodology is robust and, in order to explain all its aspects accurately, this section will be divided into two parts: a first one which will address the didactic details of the project and a second which will present information about the pre-piloting and piloting stages that the didactic contents have undergone to solve any potential challenges or problems.

2.1.   Didactic sequence

The didactic sequence for the project starts with an Initial Integrated Skills Test (ITIS) that aims to assess the L2 level of the participants before they start to work on the DAT tasks. ITIS is a comprehensive test, with listening and written reception, oral and written production activities, all of them connected through mediation. It contains closed questions for which the students obtain automatic assessment (in both listening and writing reception tests), as well as open items; the latter are marked by researchers (in both speaking and writing production tests) to offer full feedback to the participants. A series of rubrics were designed specifically for the assessment purpose of those open tasks and are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

SPEAKING	Poor (0-5%)	Adequate (6-10%)	Good (11-15%)	Excellent (16-20%)
Pronunciation and intonation				
Range of vocabulary				
Grammar				
Fluency				
General coherence				

Table 1. Rubric for speaking tasks
Source. Elaborated by the TRADILEX Project

WRITING	Poor (0-5%)	Adequate (6-10%)	Good (11-15%)	Excellent (16-20%)
Spelling				
Grammatical precision				
Punctuation				
Word usage				
Text composition, coherence, and cohesion				

Table 2. Rubric for writing tasks
Source. Elaborated by the TRADILEX Project

Moving on to the Lesson Plans (LPs), which represent the core of the project, the methodology has been articulated around a scaffolded didactic sequence involving five different AVT modes (subtitling, voice-over, dubbing, audio description, and subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing people). It contains a total of 60 complete LPs, six per AVT mode, 30 for B1 and 30 for B2 level students. Each LP takes approximately one hour per week to complete and is designed for online self-study. Their structure always follows the steps illustrated in Table 3.

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Warm-up (10 minutes) Reception and/or production task (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and/or mediation).	Anticipating video content, characters, and events, presenting new vocabulary, structures, or cultural information.	To gather the necessary background knowledge to face the video viewing and the didactic AVT phases.
Video viewing (5/10 minutes) Reception and mediation task (listening, reading, and mediation).	The video extract is watched at least twice, with or without subtitles, and accompanied by related tasks.	To understand the messages to be translated and to get familiar with the key linguistic content.
Didactic AVT (30 minutes) Reception, production, and mediation task (listening, writing and/or speaking, and mediation).	Students work on the AVT of the one-minute clip extracted from the video, making use of the recommended software in each case.	To work on AV mediation skills and strategies and to develop lexical, grammatical, and intercultural competence.
Post AVT task (15 minutes)		

Production and/or reception task (writing, speaking, reading, listening, and/or mediation).	Related production (and/or reception) tasks to practise elements present in the video.	To make the most of the linguistic and cultural content of the video and to complement the previous mediation practice.

Table 3. Structure of Lesson Plans
Source. Talaván & Lertola, 2022

After the selected sequence of LPs is finished, a second test is conducted, in this case the Final Integrated Skills Test (FITIS), which follows the same design as ITIS and is marked using the same rubrics shown in Tables 1 and 2.

There are several possibilities for implementation of the LPs: a full sequence of 30, six per AVT mode, following the order mentioned earlier; a shorter one of six LPs of just one AVT mode; and a longer sequence of 15 LPs of a combination of AVT modes, three LPs of each type. The piloting of the LPs was done using short sequences of each of the AVT modes for both levels of proficiency, and then the longitudinal pre-experiment took place using the long sequences for B1 and B2.

The LPs are scaffolded per AVT mode, by the level of difficulty, and cognitive and creative demand on the participants. In the LP1 the students are offered an introduction to the DAT mode in technical terms, then the support provided is lowered, and becomes nearly non-existent by the LP6. The activities go from filling gaps with missing words in the transcription of what learners hear in the video, to creating their own dialogue to fulfil a specific function in a specific context, even allowing for some inclusion of humour. The students play a constantly active role in making use of their critical thinking skills.

The videos used were meticulously selected considering the L2 levels of B1 or B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018), as were the tasks associated with them. Although the chosen clips are two-minutes long, the students only perform the AVT tasks of a 60-second section. The videos are not adapted or created for teaching. Therefore, the audiovisual input exploited in all the LPs is from an authentic primary source. They have been chosen for their content, which highlights issues of gender bias, violence against women, awareness of people with disabilities, etc. and can be considered to teach civil and moral values. The selection has followed Talaván (2013), who explained that the videos selected for L2 teaching should ideally be between one and three minutes long and their narrative preferably self-contained. That means that no additional information should be required to understand its contents.

In TRADILEX the selection has taken one more step to incorporate elements that may help reduce the affective filter of the students. According to Krashen (1988), if this lowering of the affective filter is achieved, L2 learning will be enhanced. That is because when good choices in materials and design are made, the effect on the self-confidence and motivation of the students is increased and their level of anxiety lowers. Thus, all three variables related to the affective filter are influenced. The students feel so interested in understanding the message, that they forget that it is all part of an L2 didactic sequence. Thus, they acquire the L2 unconsciously, without reviewing lists of verbs or grammar rules, and both incidentally and intentionally; that is, they are incidentally acquiring knowledge through a passive intake of the input while simultaneously learning intentionally by making an active effort to create their own product by re-working the contents of the video.

All the LPs can also be used outside the existing Moodle platform as they have complete keys for assessment in the form of right answers for multiple choice questions, or sample answers for open questions (all LPs are now available for self-learning in the online free platform https://www.tradilex.es/). Therefore, they are also useful for independent self-study. However, in all the piloting studies carried out, the researchers marked the AVT tasks that the students had completed using an *ad-hoc* rubric for the corresponding AVT mode. An example for one of the rubrics can be observed in Table 4, in this case the one used for assessing dubbing activities.

Dubbing	Poor (0-5%)	Adequate (6-10%)	Good (11-15%)	Excellent (16-20%)
Linguistic accuracy (pronunciation and intonation)				
Lip synchrony				
Fluency and speed of speech (naturalness)				
Technical quality				
Dramatization				

Table 4. Rubric for dubbing tasks
Source. Elaborated by the TRADILEX Project

The learning outcomes expected after the students work on the didactic sequences for their particular L2 level are not only to develop audiovisual reception and production skills but also to improve their mediation competence as they have been performing tasks in which they had to transfer

a message to a receiver who could not access the original for linguistic, cultural or accessibility reasons. Therefore, the students become mediators by rephrasing a text orally or in writing in order to convey its meaning, which is in line with the definition of mediation included in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). These creative tasks in turn support the development of intercultural competence and are performed through technological resources, thus enhancing those transferable skills, in a context that the students find motivating.

2.2.   Piloting process

To guarantee the quality of the final DAT sequences and ensure that they served the purpose for which they were created, every part of the sequence had to be piloted. This stage is necessary to avoid any problems at a large-scale implementation phase (Malmqvist *et al.*, 2019) as it can reveal the weaknesses and strengths of the contents and the data-gathering tools and assist the researchers in making any number of suitable adjustments accordingly.

All the steps of the didactic sequence were pre-piloted. ITIS and FITIS were assessed by two experts and two students. Each of them produced a report after their review and their findings were implemented for the improvement of the contents and/or the structure. The rubrics used to mark the students' oral and written productions were further developed and improved following the experience of several previous projects (Ávila-Cabrera & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2021, for example).

Each of the LPs was also pre-piloted in two different ways: through two expert informers who studied their contents and made suggestions for improvement; and two volunteer students. That is, there are 120 expert reports and a total of 120 student reviews of the LPs available, a significant amount of information that helped to smooth out any unclear aspects or mistakes of the contents of all the didactic sequences. Once the improvements had been implemented, each of the short sequences for each AVT mode was tested (for B1 and B2 separately) by one student volunteer who completed a report, therefore producing a total of 12 extra reports. Again, any issues that were highlighted through this phase were improved accordingly.

Then the first piloting phase with a student group took place with two questionnaires added, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the didactic sequence. The initial questionnaire was used to gather information about the students' previous experience with AVT and their perception of their L2 level in different skills. The final questionnaire was designed in four sections with open and closed questions that aimed to gather information

about the participants' experience working with the materials. It includes the students' impressions on the LP process, the results, the integrated development of both the L2 and cultural skills and, finally, some general observations. This pilot used the voice-over sequences of six LPs for B1 and B2 and had the ITIS and FITIS assessment incorporated to the didactic sequence. The students were volunteers from the Translation course within the Degree of English Studies at the UNED and a total of 32 learners completed all the tasks and activities.

After gathering their feedback and making some more small adjustments in the contents, the piloting in the Moodle platform, specifically designed for the TRADILEX courses, started. This time, 10 participants from the English Studies Degree at the University of Jaén finished all the activities of the B2 subtitling sequence of six LPs.

After receiving positive feedback about the LPs, platform and tools, more piloting studies started at different universities. The next ones took place in different contexts: one with volunteer students from the Language Centre at the UNED, who worked on the sequences of audio description and dubbing for B1 and B2 (four courses of six LPs each in total), where 29 subjects finished the corresponding tasks; a second group of students came from the Degree on English Studies at the UNED and undertook the SDH B2 sequence of six LPs (25 subjects completing the course); a third group of 11 B1 and B2 students came from the English Studies Degree of the University of Zaragoza and did all the activities of the subtitling sequence of B1; and a final small sample of three B1 students from the English Teaching Degree at the University of Córdoba completed the SDH B1 sequence.

As a final stage, some of the participants were invited to volunteer to take part in a personal semi-structured interview (that had previously been pre-piloted by two experts) with several questions about the learning experience.

Apart from testing the running of the sequences, and acting on any issues that were highlighted, all the data collected from the ITIS and FITIS tests and the initial and the final questionnaires have been used for the triangulation of the results and demonstrate the improvement in the skills of the participants in each particular group (Couto-Cantero *et al.*, 2022; Plaza Lara & Fernández Costales, 2022; Plaza Lara & Gonzalo Llera, 2022; Tinedo-Rodríguez & Frumuselu, 2023). The next section of the present paper details the results of the piloting process, taking all groups ITIS and FITIS results into consideration. A total of 107 students took part in the various pilot studies, a clear success, and a significantly large number for this type of research. Thus, TRADILEX piloting process has provided enough data not only to improve the

contents of the LPs and the tools for gathering quantitative and qualitative data before the long-term pre-experiment was undertaken, but also to prove preliminary validity and usefulness of DAT (based on sequences of a single AVT mode) for integrated skills enhancement in LE.

3.   RESULTS

With the aim of answering the main research question of the pilot study, that is, to assess to what extent integrated skills were enhanced thanks to the application of short DAT sequences based on a single AVT mode, a descriptive analysis of the data-gathered from the ITIS and the FITIS tests was performed first. The results are illustrated in Table 5.

TEST	AVER. MARK	ST. DEV
ITIS Listening	7.81	1.42
FITIS Listening	**8.11**	1.67
ITIS Reading	8.43	1.62
FITIS Reading	**8.86**	1.29
ITIS Speaking	6.69	1.59
FITIS Speaking	**7.74**	1.47
ITIS Writing	6.73	2.42
FITIS Writing	**8.58**	1.239

Table 5. Descriptive analysis
Source. Elaborated by the authors

It is clear from the data included in Table 5 that there was progress in the four skills, hence descriptively we may infer that there was integrated skills enhancement of the L2 thanks to DAT. The improvement was more noticeable in production skills (writing and speaking) than in reception skills (listening and reading). In fact, there seems to be a significant difference between writing skills enhancement (+1.88 difference between pre-test and post-test) and reading skills enhancement (+0.43 difference). The standard deviation reflects homogeneity in the results, and it decreases in most cases, showing a certain degree of normality in the tendency towards improvement among all subjects involved in the piloting process.

In order to evaluate whether the differences observed in the descriptive analysis were significant, an inferential statistics analysis was carried out, so that the results could be generalised to a population beyond this specific group

of students. A normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)[1] was performed, but the p-value was < 0.001 for the set of quantitative variables, which implied that the sample did not meet normality conditions; hence, a parametric test was discarded. The non-parametric Wilcoxon test[2] was then applied to assess the significance of the improvement observed in the descriptive analyses, combined with the signed-ranked test. The main results of the Wilcoxon test are reflected in Table 6.

	ITIS/FITIS Listening	ITIS/FITIS Reading	ITIS/FITIS Speaking	ITIS/FITIS Writing
Z	-2.048	-2.508	-8.103	-8.361
p-value	0.0205	0.006	<0.001	<0.001

Table 6. Wilcoxon test results (ITIS-FITIS)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

Since the p-value obtained for the Wilcoxon test is below 0.05 in all cases, it can be derived that the difference of marks for each variable is statistically significant. However, to make sure that the descriptive statistics provided above can be confirmed and ratified and the subsequent results generalised from this particular sample to the population of intermediate students of English in adult LE courses, the singed-ranked test was performed. The results are summarised in Figure 1.
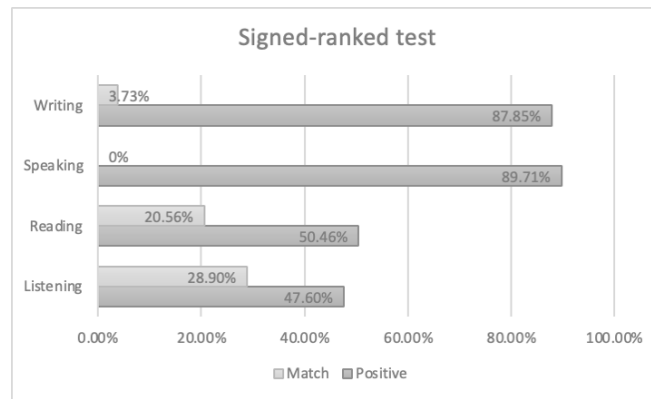
Figure 1. Direction of improvement for the variables under study.
Source. Elaborated by the authors

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[1] A statistical method used to determine whether two samples are drawn from the same probability distribution.
[2] A non-parametric statistical hypothesis test used to compare two paired samples. It assesses whether the median difference between paired observations is significantly different from 0.

As derived from the previous graph, there was improvement in all variables, more significantly in production than in reception skills again, with most subjects improving their marks from ITIS to FITIS, in 87.85% in the case of writing and 89.71% as regards speaking, and where not a single participant kept the same mark from ITIS to FITIS. It should be remembered here that reception tests were based on closed multiple-choice items and production tests were assessed by the teachers with the help of a rubric.

To complement this data, correlations were established between all the variables in both tests to detect and analyse possible relationships of causality that might help to complement previous results and findings, as will be discussed in the following section. The results of the Pearson Correlation coefficient[3] applied to all ITIS and FITIS tests reflected in Table 7 support previous data.

		ITIS List.	ITIS Read.	ITIS Spe.	ITIS Writ.	FITIS List.	FITIS Read.	FITIS Sp.	FITIS Writ.
ITIS List.	Pears.	1	0.076	0.259**	-0.072	.337**	-0.004	0.299**	0.124
	p-val.		0.218	0.004	0.230	< 0.001	0.483	< 0.001	0.102
ITIS Read.	Pears.	0.076	1	0.185*	0.020	.218*	0.245*	0.226**	0.257**
	p-val.	0.218		0.028	0.420	.012	0.005	0.010	0.004
ITIS Spe.	Pears.	0.259**	0.185*	1	0.060	0.307**	0.137	0.723*	0.454**
	p-val.	0.004	0.028		0.270	< 0.001	0.079	< 0.001	< 0.001
ITIS Writ.	Pears.	-0.072	0.020	0.060	1	-0.014	0.093	0.106	0.185*
	p-val.	0.230	0.420	0.270		0.441	0.170	0.140	0.029
FITIS List.	Pears.	0.337**	0.218*	0.307**	-0.014	1	0.260**	0.246**	0.185*
	p-val.	< 0.001	0.012	< 0.001	0.441		0.003	0.005	.029
FITIS Read.	Pears.	-0.004	0.245**	0.137	0.093	0.260**	1	0.238**	0.355**
	p-val.	0.483	0.005	0.079	0.170	0.003		0.007	< 0.001
FITIS Spe.	Pears.	0.299**	.226**	0.723**	0.106	0.246**	0.238**	1	0.551**
	p-val.	< 0.001	0.010	< 0.001	0.140	0.005	0.007		< 0.001
FITIS Writ.	Pears.	0.124	0.257**	0.454**	0.185*	0.185*	0.355**	0.551**	1
	p-val.	0.102	0.004	< 0.001	0.029	0.029	< 0.001	< 0.001	

Table 7. Pearson Correlation (unilateral significance)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

As outlined in Table 7, there is an important number of relevant correlations that reinforce the previous data on the significance of the

[3] A test used in statistics to measure the linear relationship between two variables; it is calculated by dividing the covariance of the two variables by the product of their standard deviations.

students' enhancement in every skill that had been made evident by the Wilcoxon singed-ranked test. This integrated skills enhancement is thus confirmed when all FITIS tests show correlations between themselves and also with ITIS tests: FITIS listening significantly correlated with all tests (both ITIS and FITIS); FITIS reading with ITIS reading, as well as with FITIS listening, speaking and writing; FITIS speaking with all ITIS tests except for writing, and with all FITIS tests; and FITIS writing with all ITIS, except for listening, and with all FITIS variables.

4. DISCUSSION

Our main research question, "Does DAT contribute to the enhancement of integrated skills in LE?" has been positively answered in the previous section from a quantitative point of view thanks to inferential statistics. This section provides further insights on the data accounted for and it also triangulates such information qualitatively providing data extracted from the semi-structured interviews, so as to answer the second research question: "Do language students find DAT tasks motivating and efficient?". The discussion will close by providing an answer to the third research question ("Are there any changes necessary in terms of the methodological design as a whole?"), by summarising the corresponding information gathered through the piloting process.

Although DAT sequences based on a single AVT mode can effectively influence integrated skills enhancement in B1 and B2 students of English as an L2, from the descriptive analysis included above, there was a larger improvement in production than in reception skills. This could be expected as far as reading is concerned since it is not the main skill present in DAT tasks; however, listening is always present, and it would be expected to improve more significantly. Two potential reasons may lie behind this difference. Firstly, the type of assessment for production and reception skills differs, the former based on open evaluation by a teacher using a rubric and the latter on closed multiple-choice items. And secondly, learners often work more intensely on reception than on production skills in LE contexts.

The fact that DAT tasks work on writing and speaking intensely and effectively may have caused a bigger difference in the learners' proficiency level in the short term than for reception skills, which learners are more used to exercising on a regular basis in their LE lessons. Furthermore, the standard deviation decreases in most cases (in three out of the four ITIS/FITIS pairs, see Table 5), and this can be said to account for the normality of the enhancement direction. In fact, the skill that appears to improve the least (listening) is the only one where the standard deviation increases slightly

(+0.25), and the skill which improves the most (writing) shows the greatest decrease (-1.18) in that regard.

Similar deductions are derived from the application of inferential statistics: even if all skills improve significantly, provided the p-value obtained (< 0.05), production skills reflect a greater significance in terms of the difference between the marks obtained in the ITIS and FITIS tests (< 0.001 in both writing and speaking), while the difference in reception skills seems less significant, especially in terms of listening (0.0205). This goes hand in hand with the discussion of the previous paragraph based on the data derived from descriptive statistics, where production skills improved the most and showed a decreasing tendency regarding standard deviation, and listening improved the least and showed a slight increase in terms of standard deviation.

Hence, it is not remarkable to note that once the signed-ranked test is applied, the results follow a similar inclination. Listening seems to be, once again, the skill where there is less positive difference from ITIS to FITIS (47.60% of subjects improved their marks, while 29.90% kept the same mark), followed closely by reading (50.46% marks changed positively while 20.56% were matched). With a large difference in percentages, writing marks improved positively in 87.85% of cases (matching marks only in 3.73%), immediately followed this time by speaking marks improving in 89.71% of cases (with no matches). It is not pertinent to derive at this point that speaking marks improved more than writing because the number of negative marks (not included in Figure 1) were fewer in writing (8.41%) than in speaking (10.28%); so again, writing can be said to improve slightly more than speaking.

Once more, the data obtained from the Pearson correlation coefficient included in Table 7 clearly complements and triangulates the present discussion, since the skills that show the greater number of correlations (and the strongest ones) are production skills. However, it is noticeable how the correlations are significant and strong for the four skills, even slightly stronger in the case of reading than as regards listening. Therefore, integrated skills enhancement takes place thanks to the DAT short sequences implemented (based on a single AVT mode), and this enhancement shows a clear interrelated rapport among the four skills under study, probably reinforced by the mediation component that underlies DAT tasks and impregnates any L2 communicative practice.

To complement this discussion, here follows a summary chart (Table 8) including the main conclusions derived from the qualitative analyses of the four semi-structured interviews performed during the piloting process, where S1, S2 and S4 belonged to the same piloting group (SDH B2, English Studies

Degree, UNED) and S3 to a different one (Dubbing B2, Language Centre at the UNED).

	Subject One (S1)	Subject Two (S2)	Subject Three (S3)	Subject Four (S4)
Clarity and structure (course, platform, and LPs)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Course duration	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT skills impact	X (already proficient)	✓	✓	✓
L2 communicative skills impact	✓ (integrated skills)	✓ (vocabulary)	✓ (integrated skills)	✓ (vocabulary)
Cultural awareness impact	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potential for teaching values	✓	✓	✓	✓ (a more inclusive society)
Primary and secondary education potential	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-learning potential/keys for self-assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7. Participants' perceptions from their experience following the course
Source. Elaborated by the authors

As derived from the transcriptions of the four interviews carried out, the participants who volunteered to take part considered the structure of the course, the Moodle platform, and the LPs clear enough, and the course duration appropriate; however, there were minor formatting aspects or specific elements from some of the instructions that could be improved and clarified at some points. As regards the specific effects of the course on learners' skills and competences, most of them appreciated the effect of the course on their ICT skills (except for one subject who was already very proficient on this area), and all observed improvement in their L2 communicative skills: two of them on integrated skills enhancement and the other two (more L2 proficient before taking the course) specifically on vocabulary.

Cultural awareness was also considered as positively affected after the intervention by all interviewed subjects. Likewise, they saw such a course as valid to teach values within the L2 context (one of them even remarked that

these tasks could contribute to create a more inclusive society), as well as very adequate for primary and secondary education environments. Finally, the four participants acknowledged the potential efficacy of this type of online DAT courses with the incorporated self-assessment keys (both for closed and open questions and tasks) for self-study through online platforms or mobile applications. However, although the four participants considered the keys useful to assess their work for each LP, two of them missed more immediate teacher feedback for their production tasks.

Other relevant comments derived from the interviews are related to the following elements: 1) LP duration (the four subjects agreed on the adequacy of an approximate duration of 60 minutes and on the good dynamics of each LP); 2) temporalization of DAT tasks (all of them suggested including this type of activities once a week or once a fortnight); and 3) pre- and post- tests and questionnaires (all subjects found them useful to open and close the course and to check on their departure point and their progress). As suggestions, S1 added the possibility of including more mediation tasks, and S2 having a longer course available (to learn and enjoy further), while S3 and S4 had nothing to add.

From the previous analysis, we may answer positively to the second research question, affirming that learners find DAT tasks and courses motivating and efficient. Finally, as regards the third question, where it was sought to consider which changes would be necessary in terms of the design of the subsequent long-term pre-experiment, no major changes had to be implemented. This is one of the reasons why the piloting process has been analysed as a short-term study for some of the groups independently and as a preliminary pre-experiment in the results presented in this paper, where the pilot study has been described as a whole. Nevertheless, as far as notes for improvement from the pilot to the subsequent main study, a series of changes were considered and undertaken: 1) the rubrics for teacher assessment were incorporated in all DAT tasks in Moodle to facilitate both teachers' work and immediacy of students' feedback; 2) *Genially* presentations were prepared and used to summarise, clarify, and simplify the main instructions included in the course; and 3) the Moodle course was formatted to have a more user-friendly appearance.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented a complete pilot study to assess the efficiency of DAT sequences, that was carried out with a double aim: 1) to test the procedures, materials, and resources to be used for a larger scale and longer-term study, and 2) to assess the efficacy of DAT short sequences based on a

single AVT mode for integrated skills enhancement on adult intermediate learners of English as a foreign language.

The basis of the present work is the methodological framework designed by the TRADILEX Project (Talaván & Lertola, 2022) that was meant to be tested in terms of short sequences of a single DAT mode (through the present pilot study) and through a longer-term intervention combining various DAT modes through a subsequent pre-experiment. Nevertheless, the piloting process was organised in diverse phases in order to assure the success of the preliminary study presented herein: firstly, 1) the LPs were passed through experts' reports; then, 2) voluntary students went through the corrected LPs and wrote their own reports as well; and 3) finally the complete short sequences were also taken by voluntary students who wrote reports that could point towards potential problems or possible improvements. The pilot courses proper also underwent three phases: a preliminary one for voice-over (both sequences, B1 and B2) in the UNED online platform, a second one in an *ad-hoc* designed Moodle platform with one of the subtitling sequences (B2), and a third phase with the remaining sequences completed in the previously designed Moodle platform, once some minor changes were introduced.

The discussion section of this paper has answered the research questions that were posed at the beginning, confirming first the potential efficiency of DAT tasks organised in short sequences and based on a single AVT mode (six LPs to be completed in one month and a half) for integrated skills enhancement for intermediate level (B1 and B2) learners of English. The second question related to the students' consideration of DAT tasks as motivating and efficient has been answered positively through the semi-structured interviews. Finally, regarding the third question, whether the pilot study could contribute to design a well-built and efficient pre-experiment, various minor changes were performed regarding the LPs and the data-gathering tools in the course of the piloting process (thanks to the relevant number of experts' and students' reports), and the platform structure and instructions were refined after the pilot experiences to accommodate the subsequent long-term study in the most appropriate manner.

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