Introduction

Bridging the Gap: Didactic Audiovisual Translation at the Nexus of Linguistics, Translation, and Pedagogy

Introducción

Construyendo puentes: La traducción audiovisual didáctica en el cruce de caminos de la Lingüística, la Traducción y la Educación

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The field of Applied Linguistics has always sought dynamic methodologies to foster plurilingual and intercultural competence in language learners. In this context, a few decades ago, one area emerged to provide a fertile ground for innovation: Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT). This area of research and practice deals with the pedagogical applications of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) modes—such as subtitling, dubbing, audio description (AD), or descriptive subtitles (also known as Subtitles for the Deaf and hard of Hearing or SDH) within a well-founded methodological framework that results in a multimedia, creative and engaging task-based scenario for language learners and translator trainees (Talaván et al., 2023).

The rise of DAT can be said to be linked to both the present ubiquity of digital media and the changing landscape of translation derived from the technological, multimodal and multilingual society we live in. By engaging with DAT activities, students encounter authentic linguistic input in the language or languages they are learning and they are also challenged to mediate between an original text and a potential target audience, be it in interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic terms; besides, these mediation tasks are performed under specific spatial, temporal, and linguistic constraints that vary depending on the AVT mode chosen for the DAT task, which constitutes an extra motivational challenge. In pedagogical terms, the cognitive effort required to condense, adapt, rephrase, and reformulate meaning so as to convey it across different channels (aural and visual) and modes (linguistic and semiotic) has proved to enhance critical thinking, metalinguistic awareness, digital skills, and creativity, apart from developing integrated communicative skills and cultural awareness (Plaza et al., 2024).

This special issue of *HIKMA: Journal of Translation* is proudly originated from a careful selection of proposals derived from the *1st*

International Conference on Didactic Audiovisual Translation (TRADIT23), hosted by the TRADIT Research Group (https://tradit.uned.es/en/tradit-research-group/) in Madrid at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in March 2023. *TRADIT23* served as a lively international forum for leading academics and practitioners to showcase the most recent research in a field that seems to be moving from niche experimentation (specially resulting from teaching innovation projects) to mainstream pedagogical integration (thanks to the support of bigger and longer-term projects, such as ClipFlair, PluriTAV or TRADILEX). The core objective of the conference was to shed light on the most tangible, empirical evidence that supports the use of AVT as a relevant and effective tool in the context of language education and translator training. All the information and the complete videos of the conference are openly available here: https://blogs.uned.es/tradit23/. The present special issue intends to share the main objective of *TRADIT23* by providing relevant related samples of research within DAT, that were disseminated at the conference (see also Bolaños-García-Escribano et al., 2024, Plaza et al., 2024, and Sánchez Requena & Frumuselu, 2024).

The collected articles herein represent a meticulously curated selection of studies focusing on empirical testing, novel methodological frameworks, and the practical implementation of various DAT practices across diverse educational contexts. Collectively, all papers underscore the relevance of DAT as not merely an auxiliary pedagogical resource but as a didactic approach on its own right. The seven papers can be grouped on four specific areas: Media Accessibility, Plurilingualism, Technology and Innovation, and Specialized Languages and Translator Training.

A significant thread running through this issue is the focus on media accessibility modes—specifically didactic SDH (or descriptive subtitles) and AD, and their usefulness in fostering general language skills (Talaván & Tinedo-Rodríguez, 2025). These modes require students to develop a deep understanding of audience-specific needs, hence developing accessibility awareness in both learners and practitioners. Besides, they imply more demanding tasks, since the type of translation implied goes beyond the mere linguistic realm and requires learners to perform the extra challenging effort of transferring paralinguistic information, from sounds, emotions, images, etc., into words. Two articles within this issue explicitly measure the impact of these activities on language education. It should be noted that the commitment to research into this area, exemplified by the TRADILEX project mentioned in one of the articles, demonstrates an ethically grounded effort to link DAT with the wider social goals of accessibility and inclusion.

Today, the concept of plurilingualism—as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2020)—has been brought to the forefront of language learning, where educators are expected to help individuals develop the so-called plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) as part of their language learning, unified with their linguistic knowledge and skills (Fonseca-Mora & González Davies, 2022). However, the specific role of DAT in fostering PPC has not been widely researched as yet (Baños et al., 2021); fortunately, once again, two of the selected papers of this issue address this gap.

Beyond traditional subtitling, this special issue also highlights the emerging potential of more technologically advanced AVT modes, such as Respeaking. This mode involves speech recognition technology to produce subtitles, so it represents a unique cognitive challenge, since it combines oral proficiency with interpretation and transcription skills. The article dedicated to respeaking also emphasizes the pedagogical advantages of integrating real-time technology into the educational setting.

Finally, three of the selected papers also explore the use of DAT in more specialised contexts like English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and translator training, where learners require precise, context-specific communicative abilities (Botella Tejera et al., 2025). In the first case, the corresponding work shows how by translating (for subtitling and/or voice-over) complex, domain-specific audiovisual content (as it is the case of a pharmacy postgraduate setting), students are forced to internalize specialised terminology and discursive structures, a task far more engaging and memorable than traditional vocabulary memorization. In the context of translator training, on the other hand, the two works contained herein scrutinize how DAT can be used to cultivate macro-competences, particularly concerning relevant social issues such as gender. Such approach may help future translators to better navigate ethical and sociolinguistic challenges in their professional practice (Rodríguez Muñoz & Blázquez Rodríguez, 2024).

Consequently, the seven articles selected for this special issue represent a comprehensive and pertinent analysis of the current state of the art in DAT. They provide both empirical evidence and methodological pathways for researchers and practitioners who may wish to integrate these practices into their corresponding professional contexts.

The issue begins with "Gender and translation macro-competence: The role of didactic subtitling in training legal translators", by María Luisa Rodríguez Muñoz. This work links DAT to the professional realities of legal translation, as it describes how didactic subtitling can effectively sensitize trainee translators to the complexity of translating gendered and culturally sensitive legal discourse. It proposes and implements a Lesson Plan that uses a short extract from the film *Kramer vs. Kramer* with the aim of developing the

translation macro-competence and it specifically targets towards the cultural sub-competence of legal expert knowledge through a gender approach. The study demonstrates (through a thorough quasi-experimental research design) that this intervention significantly improved students' cultural knowledge related to gender issues, together with a marked improvement in their abilities to handle legal translation tasks.

The next selected paper is titled "Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Audio Description as Integrated Activities in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom: An Exploratory Study," and is authored by Micol Beseghi. Here, a successful didactic project that implemented SDH and AD in an Italian university's English Language Master's course to promote C1-C2 language and mediation skills is presented. The findings of the related study, based on student questionnaires and learning diaries, demonstrate significant benefits in fostering productive skills, motivation, media accessibility awareness, as well as intralingual and intersemiotic mediation skills.

The article "Respeaking in didactic audiovisual translation and its application in the modes of communication", written by Luz Berenguer Cortés, details the didactic benefits of respeaking; that is, it moves beyond traditional DAT activities (like subtitling or dubbing) to focus on the conversion of oral text into written text via speech recognition technologies. The work outlines the factors, classroom applications, and evaluation principles of respeaking, describing how it can simultaneously develop core linguistic skills (especially oral-to-written transfer and listening comprehension) and make language students aware of the modern communication demands of the present society as regards AVT and media accessibility.

The fourth article moves from pedagogical theory to exploratory practice via well-grounded quasi-experimental research. In "The Impact of Didactic Audiovisual Translation on Plurilingual Competence: a Quantitative Exploratory Study," Anna Marzà and Beatriz Cerezo-Merchán merge DAT with the core precepts of multilingual education, specifically regarding the development of PPC. The work presents the PluriTAV project as the first attempt to quantitatively analyse the impact of DAT modes (in particular, dubbing, subtitling, AD and free commentary) on university students' PPC development. Conclusions offer a very interesting point of departure for related research and also point towards a refinement of empirical methods to assess PPC in future studies.

The pedagogical scope of the special issue keeps widening in the following article: "Didactic Intralingual Subtitling and Voice-Over to Enhance Writing and Speaking Skills: Training English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Tutors and Teaching Pharmacy Postgraduates", by Jennifer Lertola. This study represents, once again, well-grounded research that provides empirical

evidence on DAT's practical impact, specifically focusing this time on didactic intralingual subtitling and voice-over applied to an ESP setting. Apart from complementing previous research on the efficiency of didactic subtitling and voice-over for developing writing and speaking skills, probably the greatest interest of this proposal lies in the combination of ESP and teacher training. Thus, the article offers both a proven methodological approach accompanied by evidence of efficacy that may well serve as a model for future related implementations.

Bringing the collection to a close, "Under His Eye! Translating The Handmaid's Tale with the Support of AV Materials", by Mazal Oaknín, provides a model for integrating didactic literary translation with transmedia texts to enhance plurilingual and translation skills in higher education learners. It utilizes *The Handmaid's Tale* across its novel, series, and real-world news formats to create task-based, practical mediation exercises compliant with the CEFR. The methodology is innovative as it includes multimodal input—where book passages are combined with cinematography, casting, and news clips— to help students deepen their cultural and linguistic understanding, tackle complex translation challenges, and foster creativity and intercultural awareness. Additionally, the gender approach included in the second article of this special issue is brought back here by comparing the fictional adaptation to the current sociopolitical reality, hence helping readers to understand audiovisual materials' potential, once more, not just as a language learning resource, but as a vehicle for promoting social and civic values.

Concluding the issue is "The TRADILEX Project: students' L2 improvements based on didactic audio description and SDH," co-authored by José Javier Ávila-Cabrera and Antonio Roales Ruíz. This final paper addresses the two main didactic media accessibility modes again (didactic AD and SDH), but this time within the framework of the TRADILEX Project. In this case, with the help of a control group and an experimental group, relevant data was gathered and assessed both quantitative and qualitatively so as to validate the ability of didactic media accessibility to enhance integrated linguistic skills, promote intercultural development, and critically, foster accessibility awareness among language students.

Collectively, the articles in this special issue of *HIKMA* can be said to stand as a testimony of the growing vitality and empirical foundation of the field of DAT. They offer researchers, educators, and curriculum developers a comprehensive toolkit and a robust body of evidence that can help them understand the discipline. Through the various articles, it has been proven that by teaching learners to develop mediation skills in audiovisual settings they can better understand the complex plurilingual and multimodal world around them. All in all, the overall picture painted by these studies is one of a

multidimensional and multidisciplinary field, where DAT is presented as a discipline with multiple possibilities derived from its great flexibility, proven efficiency and power of adaptability, that is expected to grow exponentially in the years to come.

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