

Review: Talaván, Noa, Lertola, Jennifer, and Fernández-Costales, Alberto (2024). *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and foreign language education*. Routledge.

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Book review

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ABSTRACT

EN Foreign language educators are constantly on the lookout for innovative ways to engage students and improve learning outcomes. *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* by Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola, and Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) promises to be a valuable resource in this quest, championing the use of Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT) as a powerful pedagogical tool.

Key words: FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION, ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION, DIDACTIC AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION, COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

ES Los docentes de lenguas extranjeras buscan constantemente metodologías innovadoras para involucrar a los estudiantes y mejorar los resultados en el proceso de aprendizaje. *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* de Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola y Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) se revela como un recurso valioso a la luz de este objetivo, abogando por el uso de la Didáctica de la Traducción Audiovisual (DAT por su sigla en inglés) como poderosa herramienta pedagógica.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS, INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA, TRADUCCIÓN AUDIOVISUAL, DIDÁCTICA DE LA TRADUCCIÓN AUDIOVISUAL, DESARROLLO DE COMPETENCIAS

IT Gli insegnanti di lingue straniere ricercano costantemente metodi innovativi per coinvolgere gli studenti e migliorare i risultati nel processo di apprendimento. *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* di Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola e Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) si rivela una risorsa preziosa alla luce di questo obiettivo, sostenendo che l'uso della Didattica della traduzione audiovisiva (DAT nella sua sigla inglese) sia un potente strumento pedagogico.

Parole chiave: INSEGNAMENTO DELLE LINGUE STRANIERE, INGLESE COME LINGUA STRANIERA, TRADUZIONE AUDIOVISIVA, DIDATTICA DELLA TRADUZIONE AUDIOVISIVA, SVILUPPO DELLE COMPETENZE

In the rapidly evolving context of foreign language education, there is a constant need for cutting edge approaches that engage students and improve learning outcomes. The recent publication *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* by Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola, and Alberto Fernández-Costales (Routledge, 2024) makes a significant contribution to this search, by presenting Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT) as a powerful and valuable pedagogical tool. Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in DAT research, as evidenced by the work of Hornero-Corisco and Gonzalez Vera (2020) and Bianchi (2015). A pioneering contribution to DAT came from Talaván (2013; 2019), who demonstrated the benefits of active subtitling in EFL classrooms. DAT is an emerging area of research, traditionally linked to FLL (Foreign Language Learning) and connected with neighbouring fields. The interest in this line of enquiry has been increasing and has called for an updated monograph to “set the bases of DAT as a discipline in its own right, providing the necessary methodological ground [...] to specify all possibilities, combinations and potential benefits of the various didactic AVT modes” (Talaván et al., 2024, p. 5).

Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education shows the countless benefits of employing DAT as a language teaching tool. These benefits include fostering motivation through engagement with affective factors, promoting autonomous learning, stimulating cognitive development, encouraging social and oral interaction through teamwork and pair-work, developing literacy, language and cultural awareness and competence, promoting students’ mediation skills, and offering structured learning through scaffolding activities (pp. 55-63).

The positive impact of DAT is also acknowledged by European institutions, which have actively supported its development through funded projects, such as Le-ViS (Learning via Subtitling, 2006-2008) – the first project to set the basis for international collaboration in DAT – and its follow-up project ClipFlair (Foreign language learning through interactive revoicing and captioning of clips, 2011-2014), which offered task-based and ready-to-use DAT activities for several target languages on a user-friendly platform, making it accessible for teachers and learners alike (p. 13).

The structure of the volume effectively guides readers through the theoretical background and practical applications of DAT. To this end, the first part of the book is devoted to an updated review of the literature arranged based on the various sub-branches of DAT. However, going beyond a mere exploration of DAT’s theoretical discourses, the book also explores its practical application. It guides educators in preparing lesson plans for each DAT modality, including didactic subtitling, dubbing, and audio description. Accompanying assessment models provide valuable tools for assessing student progress. Importantly, this thought-provoking book emphasizes the broader pedagogical potential of DAT in Language Education (LE) by demonstrating its effectiveness not only in foreign language (FL) learning but also in teaching learners’ first language (L1), minority languages, and even bilingual education programs (p. 1).

This book contains six chapters. The opening chapter introduces DAT as a discipline and offers a well-curated review of key publications since the early 2000s, including seminal monographs by Lertola (2019) and Talaván (2013), and several Ph.D. theses (from Talaván’s 2009 dissertation to Bayern’s in 2023). The strong foundation for understanding the theoretical framework of DAT is followed by Chapter 2, which explores the educational benefits of different AVT modes. Research demonstrates how dubbing, subtitling, audio description (AD), and voice over (VO) all contribute to successful language learning. In fact, they not only appeal to affective factors, such as motivation and engagement, but also reduce stress and anxiety. In addition to this, AVT promotes autonomous learning and interaction, thus developing the CEFR’s 4 “Cs” (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity) across education levels and types, from infancy to higher education. Teacher training programs, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), and EMI (English Medium Instruction) approaches are also highlighted as potential areas for AVT implementation.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 delve into didactic subtitling (DS) and didactic SDH (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing), didactic dubbing (DD) and didactic voice over (DVO), and didactic audio description (DAD) and didactic free commentary (DFC), respectively. Since DAT is not meant to train students as possible audiovisual translators, general guidelines accompany each task, as students might be tackling with AVT tasks for the first time.

Subtitling, to start with, can occur either interlingually, i.e., between two distinct languages, or intralingually, when the source and target languages coincide. An example of the latter can be found in productions specifically tailored for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH). Also didactic subtitling (DS; see Chapter 3) also takes on multiple forms based on translation type and direction. The main types are:

- a) intralingual (that is, subtitling within L2, thus rephrasing the source text by resorting to condensation and reformulation strategies, such as the omission of unnecessary elements), more suited for intermediate to advanced proficiency levels (B1 to C2);
- b) interlingual (meaning, subtitling from or into students' L1/L2, also known as direct/standard and reverse subtitling, respectively), recommended for A1 to B1 levels;
- c) creative DS, in other words either didactic keyword captions or pre-spotted subtitling: the former simulates a fill-in-the-gaps exercise, while the latter can be used as a final scaffolded step where spotting is done, and students only insert linguistic content. Creative DS involves recreating the source text by reproducing a different version of the original dialogues, either intra- or inter-lingually (direct/standard or reverse).

Didactic subtitling allows learners to enhance a series of integrated skills, including listening and written comprehension, mediation, and writing skills, in addition to oral production, vocabulary acquisition, grammar content, and cultural awareness.

Didactic dubbing (DD) and didactic voice over (DVO) also include three types (see Chapter 4): intralingual, interlingual, and creative. Didactic dubbing and didactic voice over ask students to produce a script and, subsequently, an L1/L2 audio from a video in L2. These tasks enhance oral comprehension (audiovisual receptive skills), writing/spelling and speaking/pronunciation skills (audiovisual productive skills) in a contextualized, structured, guided, thorough, and authentic way (Talavà et al., 2024, p. 107). They also promote audiovisual mediation skills, in the same manner as DS and didactic SDH, as learners are supposed to provide a service by ensuring access to the original audiovisual message for a receiver who cannot access it otherwise. Each dubbing or voice-over type and direction (standard, reverse, or creative) can be used for any proficiency level, but the selected video needs to be pondered appropriately.

In contrast, both didactic audio description (DAD) and didactic free commentary (DFC; Chapter 5) might be either intersemiotic or creative. These two AVT modes entail revoicing techniques: the former translates the visual content into words during the silent intervals between utterances. Originally developed for the sake of accessibility, it provides visually impaired audiences with the visual information they could not access otherwise. DFC translates and adapts the original dialogues into an L2 by adding clarifications (if necessary) or comments on intercultural elements. In both modes, learners need to revoice – to record – a previously-prepared script. DAD and DFC can enhance all language skills, plus mediation, in an integrated manner.

Moving beyond theory, the book provides practical resources for educators. Each category of DAT techniques explored in Chapters 3-5 is accompanied by practical examples and lesson plan samples as developed by the TRADILEX project. TRADILEX (Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education) is an ongoing national research project sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Innovation in Spain. It has developed and designed a total of 60 lesson plans, 5 short-term didactic sequences on one AVT mode each, and a long-term didactic sequence which combines five different modes (p. 5). The main outcomes are illustrated in the first chapter of this book.

The intended audience for this volume includes academics, practitioners, and postgraduate students interested in DAT, who have been previously introduced to the pedagogical applications of AVT in language education (p. 6). In this sense, teacher training is crucial for introducing re-writing and re-voicing AVT modes into language classes, primary and secondary education not excluded. Unfortunately, DAT has so far been primarily employed in higher education and degrees in translation and modern languages (p. 147).

The book acknowledges the need for continued exploration in DAT. The conclusions offer insights into several areas for future research endeavours. One focus is the long-term impact of DAT on learners' language competence, thus aiming to understand the lasting effects of this innovative approach. The limited number of participants involved in the mentioned projects so far calls for more intensive and extensive analyses, which need to employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods and tools, such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and classroom observations. In addition, this work encourages investigating DAT scope by exploring further AVT modes e.g., videogame localization and respeaking. The use of DAT for accessible and inclusive language education is another area requiring further exploration.

While future research could explore the long-term impact of DAT on learners, the book's contribution to the field is undeniable, as it empowers educators with a versatile and engaging tool to turn classrooms into dynamic spaces for language acquisition.

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