

Ein Friedlicher Tag: Innovations in Academic Training in Audio Description for Animated Short Films Among University Students

Ein Friedlicher Tag: *innovaciones en la formación académica en audiodescripción
de cortos de animación para estudiantes universitarios*

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ABSTRACT

Audio description (AD) is a valuable tool not only for facilitating access to content for individuals with visual disabilities but also for educational purposes for the general public (Le Bihan, 2020; Starr, 2022). AD encompasses various film genres, each requiring specialized training, particularly in the case of animation (Martínez-Martínez, 2010; Génim & Martin, 2023).

This paper presents the results of a didactic activity conducted in the subject *Translation 1 C-A (German)* at the University of Granada (2023-2024). The activity involved translating an audio-described animated short film from German to Spanish. It enhanced students' linguistic and translation skills, provided motivation, and raised social awareness, proving to be an innovative educational experience.

KEY WORDS: access to information; animated films; audio description; didactics; translation.

RESUMEN

La audiodescripción (AD) es una valiosa herramienta, no solo para facilitar el acceso a los contenidos por parte de personas con dificultades visuales, sino también para fines educativos destinados al público en general (Le Bihan, 2020; Starr, 2022). La AD abarca varios géneros cinematográficos, cada uno de los cuales requiere una formación especializada, en particular en el caso de la animación (Martínez-Martínez, 2010; Génim & Martin, 2023).

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una actividad didáctica realizada en la asignatura Traducción I C-A (Alemán) de la Universidad de Granada (2023-2024). La actividad, que consistía en traducir un corto de animación audiodescrito, del alemán al español, mejoró las habilidades lingüísticas y traductoras de los estudiantes, reforzó su motivación y aumentó su consciencia social, demostrando ser una experiencia educativa innovadora.

PALABRAS CLAVE: acceso a la información; películas de animación; audiodescripción; didáctica; traducción.

1. INTRODUCTION

Animation currently stands out as one of the genres with significant social prominence and economic impact in the entertainment industry (Statista, 2022). Over the decades, animation has evolved beyond merely children's entertainment. Today, animated productions tell complex stories capable of captivating audiences of all ages, evoking emotion and reflection (Boyer, 2020).

The remarkable versatility of animation has allowed its expansion into every artistic genre, showcasing highly diverse aesthetic and stylistic expressions (Martínez Martínez, 2010; Wells, 2007: 9). Among them, cinema remains a cornerstone of popular culture, adept at addressing political and social issues with great depth. Certain animated films have become generational touchstones and serve as powerful vehicles for essential discussions and critiques.

Accessibility, as a means to ensure access to leisure and culture—a human right enshrined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948)—is crucial for conveying information in any audiovisual or textual product. This premise becomes even more critical in the context of cinema, particularly animation, given its wide-ranging audience. Today, animated films are consumed not only by viewers without disabilities but also by individuals with low vision, blindness, or deafness. Thus, accessibility, and the translation modalities it encompasses, are vital for adequately transmitting the messages and content of films to a diverse audience.

This paper focuses on the case of AD in animated films. AD is an intra- or interlinguistic and intersemiotic translation modality integrated within audiovisual translation and accessibility studies (Kruger & Orero, 2010; Mazur, 2020). Accessibility is essential for conveying visual information to blind and partially sighted audiences and is beneficial to the general public due to its educational potential (Le Bihan, 2020; Starr, 2022). Furthermore, the benefits of AD in second language teaching and learning (Álvarez de Morales et al., 2014) are widely recognized, as is its innovative role in translation education. Multimodal translation is not only important for language teaching (Díaz Cintas, 2012: 1), but also for learning to translate. It introduces variety, includes non-verbal communication elements and, more importantly, allows students to observe the interaction between languages and cultures in a real context.

The paper presents the results of a didactic experience aimed at exploring the understudied interlinguistic translation process of an AD script for an animated short film and the intra- and extra-linguistic and cultural challenges it poses. In this activity, students created their own AD script in Spanish, employing all necessary skills to achieve a high-quality final product. As we know, translation is both a science and an art. It involves reflection, analysis, comparison, adaptation, and choice, as well as a deep understanding of both languages and their cultural contexts. As Álvarez de Morales Mercado (2016: 718) notes, translating a children's informational book is very different from translating one for adults, just as translating an adventure novel differs from translating a classic drama,

an objective biography, or a film. Our goal is to contribute to the advancement of specialized training that considers the variability and complexity of AD, providing specific knowledge to meet the needs and requirements of each audiovisual genre.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the theoretical foundation of AD in the field of animation, exploring its particularities and challenges. Section 3 offers a brief comparison of AD trends in Spain and Germany, countries relevant to our experimental studies. Section 4 outlines the study's methodology. Section 5 presents the significant results of the study, in which a group of novice translators tackled the task of audio describing a German short film into Spanish. Finally, section 6 summarizes the conclusions and limitations of the study and proposes new directions for the continuity of this research line.

2. AD IN ANIMATED PRODUCTIONS

Animation as an audiovisual genre has undergone rapid evolution since its inception in 1928 with the short film *Steamboat Willie* (Disney & Iwerks, 1928). The advent of computers marked a turning point in animated productions (Bendazzi, 2003: 449). Later, the development of 3D animation technologies, such as *TRON*, opened new avenues that have since coexisted with Disney's traditional style, led by Pixar. Both styles have produced significant hits that remain embedded in the collective imagination of millions.

Despite new trends and the exponential growth of its production, the essence of animation remains unchanged. In its classical form, animated productions are metaphorical representations of the world (Romaguera i Ramió, 1991; Wells, 2007). Their messages should be believable, even if not entirely realistic, and convey concepts with enough simplicity and accessibility to be understood by all audiences. Furthermore, animated films are expected to deliver a clear moral by the end.

These defining characteristics, unique to animation, must also be reflected in AD, as an extension of the film itself. While adhering to the fundamentals of animation, AD should be adapted to the message, particularities, and style of each film. As an accessibility product, AD must remain true to the genre's definition, independent of adult animation despite its broad appeal, and always prioritize its primary audience—children. Just as animated films must be understandable and entertaining for children, so too must AD.

AD scripts, resulting from the intersemiotic translation process from a film's visual message to text, should reflect the foundational principles of animated film creation. The expectations for an AD script of an animated film include clarity and high specificity in the description of images, time, and space (Vercauteren, 2012), balanced with the stimulation of imagination and creativity, which is essential for the genre.

Through a corpus study analyzing AD scripts from producers like Pixar and Disney, Martínez Martínez (2010: 301-302) confirmed that despite some internal variability due to adaptation to the film's

style and producer, there are several core principles that must be adhered to in any AD script for an animated film. These include:

- Using simple descriptions of actions and emotions while maintaining an informal tone.
- Employing repetition to reinforce meanings and ideas.
- Using language that supports linguistic, social, and affective development.
- Maintaining a linear structure.
- Properly identifying characters.
- Describing all necessary details and actions to understand the plot without overwhelming children cognitively.
- Avoiding AD during songs to enhance learning.
- Using rhetorical devices that capture attention, such as onomatopoeias and rhymes.

The corpus analysis also provided insights into the key elements in AD scripts for animation. After narratively tagging the AD scripts studied, the most frequent tags were, in order, visual elements (descriptive image details), actions, characters (physical identification), and emotional states. These results align with the aforementioned guidelines and confirm their application in Spanish AD scripts for animation. Some independent AD guidelines in Spain also confirm this trend, such as the one from Red de Comunicadores con Discapacidad Visual (2022: 12), which favors the explicitation of actions, leaving the physical description of the characters as a secondary aspect.

In Germany, guidelines created by DBSV (n. d.) address relevant aspects of AD for animated films, focusing on children aged 6 to 10. This specific and useful document contrasts with the lack of a similar guide in Spain. However, many German recommendations align with the findings of Martínez Martínez's (2010) corpus analysis. German guidelines recommend selecting visual details that prioritize acoustic relevance and suggest giving preference to actions over specific details. For characters, it is recommended to identify them and, in recurring cases, add a significant external attribute, such as "die rothaarige Lilly" (redhead Lilly), a practice rarely used in Spanish AD scripts. Regarding emotions, it is suggested to indicate them using different voice tones, prioritizing the use of a sad tone instead of merely stating that someone is sad.

The needs of children, the producer's style, and the characteristics of the film itself are not the only elements that influence the AD script. Palomo López (2010) demonstrated that linguistic and cultural differences between languages also play a significant role. In her study, she analyzed the AD script of the same animated film, *Lady and the Tramp* (Geronimi et al., 1955), in English and Spanish. The English AD adhered explicitly to Ofcom's recommendations, while the Spanish AD, created before the publication of the UNE Standard 153020 on AD (AENOR, 2005), deviated from most of the guidelines it would later contain. Despite these circumstances, the English AD favored the use of highly precise and specific vocabulary with simple syntax, while the Spanish AD occasionally opted for more

complex vocabulary and syntax. The tone of the speech was also different—the Spanish AD was more exaggerated than the English AD, although both shared the film’s cheerful and evocative tone.

Similarly, Wang, et al. (2024) showed through the comparison of the Chinese and English ADs of the animated short film *Feast* (Osborne, 2014) that, despite detecting similar translation strategies in both AD scripts—such as compensation, iconic description, and substitution—the Chinese version used reduction to make space for adaptation and technical descriptions. These differences highlight the importance of linguistic and cultural elements in the effective translation of AD, requiring the personalization and application of theoretical knowledge to adapt to the audience of this complex modality of intersemiotic translation. Other studies have also found notable differences in various linguistic combinations (see, for example, Bourne & Jiménez-Hurtado, 2007; Sanderson, 2011 for English-Spanish; Limbach, 2012 for English-German; Arma, 2012 for English-Italian; and Liu & Tor-Carroggio, 2022 for Chinese-Spanish).

These results indicate certain essential characteristics for an AD script for an animated film: (1) the need to adapt it to children, the primary audience, using simple language that stimulates creativity, facilitates message transmission, and describes essential information for understanding; (2) respect for the film’s idiosyncrasies and the particularities of its creation and production process; and (3) ensuring linguistic and cultural acceptability for the target audience, adapting to their needs and preferences.

However, this study also reveals the current reality of AD as a research field: its limited scientific exploration, aside from the aforementioned studies, those mentioned in the following section, and other practical studies (e.g., Mihalache, 2023), does not allow for guidelines tailored to the needs of animation. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on the interlinguistic and intercultural variability of film AD, and practical examples demonstrating the complexity and variability involved in the AD process depending on the script’s production language. Didactically, this reality hinders the teaching of this translation modality and the professionalization of audio describers, who face a wide range of genres posing different challenges when adapting AD guidelines to the final translation.

It is imperative that research contributes to creating a specialized training program tailored to the characteristics of each genre, facilitating the training of AD professionals, especially in animation (Génim & Martin, 2023). This study aims to approach the description of variability in animation between two specific languages—Spanish and German—through the analysis of results from a didactic experience with novice translators, reflecting on the translation challenges in converting a German AD script into Spanish.

Before presenting the study results, we will briefly review the prevailing practices in film AD in the two countries of interest: Spain and Germany.

3. AD TRENDS IN SPAIN AND GERMANY

The proposal of a study on AD in animation, and specifically on its interlinguistic translation between German and Spanish, has highlighted that the research gap in this accessible translation modality extends beyond animation. The previous section also reveals that there are very few studies investigating and comparing the general similarities and differences in AD trends across various languages.

Among the body of comparative studies examining AD in multiple languages, only two address the German-Spanish combination: Seibel & Jiménez-Hurtado (2007) and Matamala & Rami (2009), both analyzing the AD of the German film *Good Bye Lenin!* (Becker, 2003) in both languages. Although these analyses focused on the treatment of cultural references, other notable trends were detected, such as a higher concentration of information in the German AD and an increased use of adjectives describing emotions. In this section, we present a small analysis offering preliminary results regarding the presence or absence of a coincidence in the results from previous studies when discussing animated films for children.

Our search for examples focused on the Netflix streaming platform. This platform was chosen because its style guide is available in several languages online, allowing us to first compare the specific guidelines regarding AD in children's products in German and Spanish and then check them against actual practice by analyzing several fragments of films with AD. The specific information about children's content is very scarce and equivalent in both languages¹. Both of them emphasize the need to adjust the tone to the age of the primary audience, favoring a "more intimate style" when needed, and using "we" instead of the third person in interactive or didactic products directly addressing the audience to avoid possible misunderstandings with on-screen characters (Netflix, 2024a; 2024b).

Once both guidelines were compared, we searched the platform's catalog to find animated films with AD in both German and Spanish (the original language was not considered, as we believe it is irrelevant if it is a third language different from the two under study). This process posed a challenge in finding adequate examples since Netflix, despite allowing searches for subtitled or dubbed products in certain languages, does not yet have a similar filter for AD or subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. Additionally, not all films and series have AD in languages other than the original, and when they do, it is often in Spanish rather than in other languages such as German.

This manual search identified two children's animated films with AD in both German and Spanish: *Leo* (Smigel, et al., 2023) and *Ultraman: Rising* (Tindle, 2024). Given that comparing both AD scripts are not the main purpose of this study, the goal was simply to extract several examples that could show and explain the existence of different AD trends in both languages. Thus, after identifying the fragments of both films with significant AD presence, we conducted a comparative analysis of the most interesting ones. Tables 1 and 2 provide some illustrative examples from both films with their respective frames. Bold text indicates the most significant differences between the Spanish and German ADs.

¹ Links to respective sections of the guidelines in Spanish and German.





Frame	German AD	Spanish AD
	Er macht Liegestützen und schaut hoffnungsvoll zu Squirtle.	Hace flexiones.
	Mit grimmiger Miene tritt eine breite Frau mit grauem, halblangem Haar ein.	Una señora corpulenta con gafas y pelo cano avanza hacia la mesa de la profesora.
	Hinter ihr auf der Tafel steht Wortes Tages: Toleranz.	-
	Und schreibt Ms. Malkin.	-

Table 1. Examples from the Spanish and German AD scripts of the film *Leo* (Smigel, et al., 2023).


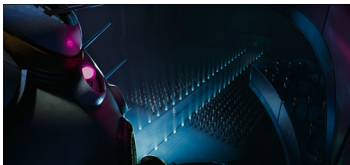

Frame	German AD	Spanish AD
	In weißer Schrift: Dr. Onda, Leitender Offizier der KDF.	Dr. Onda, Jefe de Operaciones de la FDK.
	Ein großer Mann geht mittig durch einen Gang zwischen penibel aufgereihten Menschen in einer großen Halle.	El Dr. Onda camina en un lugar oscuro [...]. Una multitud a su alrededor lo observa.
	Er kommt an einer riesigen mechanischen Kugel an [...].	Llega al final del camino.

Table 2. Examples from the Spanish and German AD scripts of the film *Ultraman: Rising* (Tindle, 2024).

The previous fragments allow us to draw conclusions that align with the findings of Seibel & Jiménez-Hurtado (2007) and Matamala & Rami (2009). Both films demonstrate a trend in German AD to include a higher concentration of details compared to the Spanish AD. This is evident not only in the descriptive elements within the frame (such as the blackboard information in examples 3 and 4 of Table 1 and the details of the command centre in examples 2 and 3 of Table 2), but also in formatting aspects unrelated to the film itself, such as the typography of the inserts (example 1 from Table 2). Additionally, there is an increased use of evaluative adjectives like “penibel” (example 2 from Table 2) and adjectives associated with emotions, such as “hoffnungsvoll” (example 1 from Table 1) or “grimmiger” (example 2 from Table 1).

The tendency to include more information in the German AD leads to other consequences, observable across the entire AD of both films upon review. Generally, the speech in the German AD tends to overlap certain sounds from the film (e.g., door squeaking, breathing). This overlap does not occur in the Spanish version, which tends to preserve dramatic pauses and ambient sounds, even if it means losing some visual details.

As expected, this brief analysis indicates that certain trends observed in film AD are also present in the animation genre, while also highlighting specific characteristics that should be studied and documented. This would ensure a translation process that facilitates the work of the audio describer and allows the final AD script to respect linguistic and cultural conventions, distinguishing them from the producer’s or film’s style. Both the theoretical overview and the examples provided reinforce the idea that the lack of research in certain subgenres hinders the creation of specific training programs on AD. This results in AD scripts that do not provide concrete solutions to the unique challenges posed by translating animated films.

The results of our experimental study, presented in the following section, aim to be an initial exploration into the field of animation. Our goal is to describe the types and quantity of translation problems novice translators encounter when working on the interlinguistic translation of an AD script for an animated film, as well as the effectiveness of the strategies they use to address the linguistic and cultural challenges involved.

4. METHODOLOGY

To conduct this study, we employed a quantitative and qualitative research methodology using three questionnaires. This study is based on a pilot activity focusing on a specific modality of audiovisual translation, AD, to explore the translation process and approach the resolution of intersemiotic translation problems. In the following section, we will demonstrate that, thanks to this activity, our students have enhanced their linguistic skills according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020), specifically in written expression, as well as oral and reading comprehension. Additionally, the activity aimed to transcend the traditional translation classroom by

introducing students to a new translation modality, utilizing a technological tool, and raising awareness about visual disabilities, thereby fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

Next, we will discuss our sample, instruments, and materials, concluding with a breakdown of the sessions in this pilot activity.

4.1. Sample

The participants of this study were 17 students from the Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, enrolled in the subject *Translation 1 C-A German (group B)* during the 2023-2024 academic year. All participants (N = 17) shared German as their second language (L2) and were in the third year of study, with a German proficiency level of A2.2 according to the CEFR (2020). The ages of the participants range between 21 and 23 years, with a distribution of 13 women and 4 men.

A unique characteristic of this Bachelor's Degree is that Spanish is the primary working language or mother tongue for the majority of the students (Language A). Specifically, 76% (N = 13) have Spanish as their mother tongue, including one student from Peru. Additionally, 12% (N = 2) of the participants are Italian, 6% (N = 1) are Hungarian, and 6% (N = 1) are Turkish. The students whose mother language is not Spanish are part of the Erasmus program. It is important to note that the 24% (N = 4) who do not have Spanish as their mother tongue already possess a high level of linguistic and cultural competence in Spanish, equivalent to a B2 level according to the CEFR (2020).

4.2. Materials

All necessary materials were provided to the students throughout the course sessions via the University of Granada's Moodle platform, PRADO (Plataforma de Recursos de Apoyo a la Docencia). The materials were made available by both professors as the planned didactic sessions progressed. Thus, students had access to the short film *Ein friedlicher Tag* and two PowerPoint presentations on the main characteristics of AD, cinematic language, and types of shots. Additionally, numerous AD examples in German and Spanish from different film genres were provided, with half of them belonging to the realm of animation. Finally, students could also access the original AD script for the short film in a Word document.

The short film *Ein friedlicher Tag* was created by Sieglinde Hamacher in 1984 and funded by the DEFA Foundation and the company Video to Voice GmbH. This animated video tells the story of a beetle escaping from a bird. The beetle finds no safe hiding place until it finally hides in a dark crack, where the bird's beak cannot reach it. In the end, the beetle mocks the bird from the space between the ground and a musician's shoe sole, unaware of its true location.

This video, with a total length of 4 minutes and 24 seconds, does not pose significant grammatical challenges and is suitable for the students' level. However, it is important to note that it contains a

high presence of adjectives and movement verbs, which can be challenging from a translational perspective due to their specificity.

Regarding the evaluation of the final product, two scoring rubrics were used. The first, already familiar to the students, addressed grammar errors, punctuation, orthography, inconsistencies, excess information, coherence, and cohesion. This rubric was used throughout the entire subject. The second rubric was created specifically to evaluate the quality of the final AD. Its creation was based on the guidelines of the UNE Standard 153020 on AD (AENOR, 2005) and Netflix's guidelines (2024) for general aspects and on the recommendations of the DBSV guidelines (n.d.) and the results of Martínez-Martínez's (2010) corpus analysis for specific characteristics of animation.

4.3. Didactic procedure

This study was conducted over five sessions spanning nearly three weeks. The didactic sequence included detailed explanations for each activity and three questionnaires, whose dimensions will be explained below. Most activities were conducted in the classroom, except for a few that took place outside the classroom, which will also be detailed below. Before assigning any activity outside the classroom, it was ensured that all students had access to a computer and the internet to avoid any form of discrimination.

Table 3 presents a summarized distribution and content of each of the sessions:

SESSION	ACTIVITY	MINUTES
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to the activity - Initial questionnaire - Introduction and screening of the short film <i>Ein friedlicher Tag</i> - AD script reading - Outside the classroom: video screening and script reading 	120
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of the main characteristics of AD in Germany and Spain - Main characteristics of AD for the animated genre - Review of examples - Outside the classroom: review of theoretical notions 	120
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Question solving - Explanation on cinematic language and types of shots - Intermediate questionnaire - Outside the classroom: translation of the AD script to Spanish 	120
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and correction of the Spanish AD - Discussion of evaluated elements - Explanation of the software tool Audacity for oral recording - Outside the classroom: recording of the final version of the AD 	120
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correction of videos with AD - Discussion of the evaluated final product with the established rubric - Final questionnaire - Debate 	120

Table 3. Planning of the didactic sequence for the activity.

In the first session, the activity was presented to the students. They were then asked to complete the initial questionnaire, which included general questions about AD and predictions regarding the main translation challenges they might face during the activity. The video was shown once, and the AD script was introduced. Afterward, several comprehension questions about the audiovisual plot were asked. Notably, no external materials, such as the internet or other sources, were allowed for this questionnaire. Outside the classroom, students were instructed to watch the video at least two more times with the AD script and to look up any terminology they could not infer from the images on their own.

In the second session, the professors explained the main characteristics of AD in Spain and Germany, including its definition, target audience, regulations, basic guidelines, and steps in the translation process. These concepts were supported with numerous AD examples in Spanish and German, particularly from animated films and series. Special emphasis was placed on the unique characteristics of AD in the animated genre. After this session, students were asked to review the theoretical materials to clarify any questions they might have.

The third session began with addressing students' questions. Different aspects of cinematic language and types of shots were then explained for them to consider in creating their own AD. After that, students completed the intermediate questionnaire to assess their understanding of theoretical concepts. Outside the classroom, they were assigned the full translation of the AD into Spanish, which would be reviewed in the next session.

During the fourth session, ADs were reviewed and corrected, and questions about translation problems in the AD script and the video were resolved. Differences between German and Spanish ADs were emphasized, despite working with the same video in both languages. Later, the software tool Audacity (Muse Group & contributors, 2024) was introduced, with an explanation of its basic functions. Outside the classroom, students were to correct their AD scripts and orally record the AD.

In the final session, some of the students' AD recordings were reviewed. During this time, recommendations were provided to enhance the quality of the final product. Lastly, the final questionnaire was completed, and the activity concluded with an enriching debate on the main learnings.

This structure allows for a balance between theory and practice, enhancing learning and the application of key concepts for AD.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As detailed in the previous section, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from three questionnaires and the activities conducted throughout the study. These data were gathered with two main objectives: firstly, to evaluate the benefits of implementing AD as a translation modality within the context of general translation, and secondly, to identify areas for improvement for future iterations of this activity. Below, we present the most relevant results from each of the questionnaires.

5.1. Initial questionnaire

Our first objective was to determine whether students were already familiar with the concept of AD. Surprisingly, 82% (N = 14) answered affirmatively, while 18% (N = 3) admitted to having no prior knowledge. However, when asked to define AD, 14% (N = 2) of those who claimed familiarity confused it with subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Given that the students had already completed two courses in direct translation from their B language (English or French) over the past two semesters, we inquired about the translation challenges they anticipated. The responses indicated a general lack of awareness regarding this translation modality, although 12% (N = 2) mentioned cultural references and 18% (N = 3) pointed to the spatio-temporal characteristics common to all types of audiovisual translation.

The short film was then shown in class, followed by two comprehension questions. The first question, about the plot, revealed that all participants (N = 17) understood the main storyline, albeit generally and without much detail. We believe the dynamic imagery contributed to this comprehension. The second question, asking who the main characters were, yielded varied responses, indicating incomplete understanding. Specifically, 47% (N = 8) correctly identified the beetle and the bird as the main characters, 29% (N = 5) said all characters were main characters, 18% (N = 4) mentioned the musician and the beetle, and 6% (N = 1) pointed only to the beetle. No other options were selected (N = 0).

Subsequently, the students watched the video a second time and were asked if their plot comprehension had improved, using a three-point Likert scale. 88% (N = 15) responded affirmatively, while 12% (N = 2) still had some doubts. They were then asked to read the AD script to see if it further enhanced their understanding. The results showed that 82% (N = 13) said yes, 12% (N = 2) were unsure, and 6% (N = 1) said no, likely due to a lack of specific vocabulary knowledge.

Finally, the students were asked if they could now identify specific translation problems. All participants (N = 17) focused on spatio-temporal limitations, indicating a better understanding of the challenges associated with AD.

5.2. Intermediate questionnaire

During the third session, the comprehension of classroom explanations was assessed through a series of theoretical questions. The first question addressed the definition of AD. This time, 100% (N = 17) of the students provided an accurate definition. The second question aimed to verify their understanding of the use of timecodes in the AD script. As with the first question, 100% (N = 17) of the students could explain its usefulness, emphasizing its importance for the voice actor to know when to deliver the AD (Vázquez Marín, 2019: 46).

An additional question concerned the significance of different types of cinematic shots. In this instance, 82% (N = 14) of the students answered correctly regarding their relevance, while 18% (N = 3) still had doubts. They were also asked whether they considered the job of the audio describer to be difficult. Using a three-point Likert scale, 53% (N = 9) responded yes, 41% (N = 7) were unsure, and only 6% (N = 1) answered no.

Lastly, they were asked about the differences between Spanish and German AD. If they identified any, they were requested to list the most significant ones. 41% (N = 7) did not notice major differences, whereas 59% (N = 10) did not find them noteworthy. Among those who did note differences, some highlighted the tone, speed, and length of the ADs, observing that German AD tends to be longer than Spanish.

5.3. Final questionnaire

In the final session, a questionnaire was conducted primarily focusing on the students' motivation regarding this activity. 88% (N = 15) reported that they enjoyed working with this translation modality, while 12% (N = 2) were not satisfied.

The second question asked about the main translation difficulties they encountered. 94% (N = 16) of the students identified spatio-temporal challenges as the most difficult, while 6% (N = 1) mentioned the creativity required to produce an accurate AD.

Additionally, students were asked if all the difficulties they encountered had been addressed in class. All respondents (100%, N = 17) confirmed that they had, indicating a successful resolution of all the translation problems presented during the sessions.

Another key aspect of this work was to assess whether the activity contributed to enhancing the students' linguistic skills, as it is essential to have strong skills in the source language to translate accurately. Therefore, students were asked if they believed their linguistic skills had improved, excluding oral expression, which was not relevant to this task.

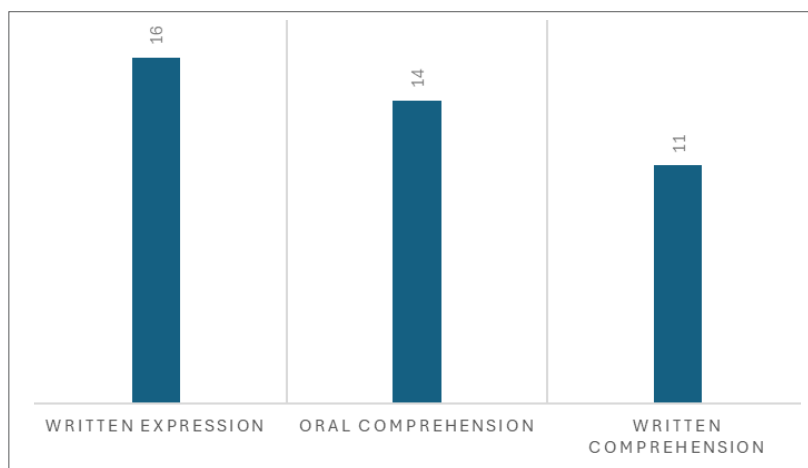


Chart 1. Students' acquired skills. Source: own elaboration.

As shown in Chart 1, the learning outcomes were very positive. Over 65% of the participants reported improvements in all three analyzed skills. Specifically, 94% (N = 16) improved their written expression, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, 82% (N = 14) enhanced their oral comprehension, and 65% (N = 11) advanced in their written comprehension.

Lastly, students were asked about their interest in becoming professional audio describers as a result of this activity. 18% (N = 3) expressed interest, 12% (N = 2) were possibly interested, and 70% (N = 12) were not interested. However, students highlighted that the activity was unique and unexpected, opening up new professional paths previously unknown to them. All participants showed increased awareness towards individuals with visual impairments and acknowledged the importance of this translation modality.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Translation training has undergone significant changes over the past decades, moving away from traditional methods and embracing new translation modalities and technologies that better motivate students to tackle the complexities of the translation process.

Among the emerging professional paths in the field of translation, accessibility shows a growing demand. One of its modalities, AD, has become highly sought after in the audiovisual sector. However, research to date has primarily focused on the intralinguistic translation process of this modality, neglecting the interlinguistic aspect. There is also a gap in understanding the broad variability of genres within audiovisual translation. These gaps result in a lack of theoretical and empirical knowledge necessary to develop specialized training programs that prepare professional translators to handle the specific challenges posed by translating different genres and language combinations.

Through a brief comparative analysis, we have highlighted that animation is one of the least studied genres within audiovisual translation, despite its significant challenges due to its unique characteristics. Additionally, our analysis suggests that each language and culture have distinctive features that further complicate the translation process of an AD script into another language.

This study represents an initial exploration into these translation challenges and the perceptions of translators before and after receiving specific training in film AD within the animation genre. To achieve this, we presented the results of a pilot educational experience involving the interlinguistic and intersemiotic translation of an AD script for a German short film into Spanish. The results demonstrated improvements in students' translation, linguistic, and technological skills.

One of the notable strengths of this study is that using this text typology enhanced students' interest, motivation, and social awareness. This experience was ideal for innovating, transcending the traditional translation classroom, and introducing students to a new translation modality that offers promising career opportunities.

However, our investigation is limited to the participants' perceptions of their motivation and improvement in linguistic skills. A logical extension of this study would be to analyze the academic performance of the subjects using pre-test and post-test trials with control and experimental groups to verify whether the methodology effectively enhances skills beyond descriptive statistics.

Despite the sample size, this pilot experience has proven very useful and supports previous research advocating the inclusion of new translation modalities in the classroom. Finally, our study highlights the necessity for specialized training, as each film genre has unique characteristics within AD itself. Moreover, there is a need for specific guidelines and informational materials addressing the challenges of each genre, as well as updating existing recommendations to recognize and propose solutions to the high heterogeneity of this translation modality, which is essential for an inclusive and accessible society.

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