Moving online: using Zoom and combined audiovisual translation tasks to teach foreign languages to children

Francesca Nicora[1] · https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3148-539X

University of Galway

University Road, Galway, Ireland H91 TK33

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the reshaping of an audiovisual translation (AVT)-focused language course to make it suitable for children in an online context. Captioning and revoicing have shown to be powerful tools, given the potential of rich, contextualised audiovisual input to keep learners' motivation high, promote well-being and facilitate foreign language acquisition. Nonetheless, the use of combined AVT modes has received scant attention, and the number of studies devoted to young people is very limited. Therefore, resources available are understandably lacking for teachers who continue to report difficulties in managing online contexts and designing effective learning experiences in the extended pandemic period. This is the first study appraising children's perceptions of the use of both Zoom and AVT-based tasks in the learning of Italian online. It also proposes a theoretical framework and provides a practical example for moving an AVT-focused language course online. After two years from its initial blended implementation, the course entitled 'Impariamo coi cartoni! Learning Italian by captioning and revoicing cartoons' conducted as part of the Youth Academy programme at the University of Galway, Ireland, was rethought to be moved online. The 6-week course ran three times and involved 38 children, aged 9-12 years. Data have been collected from an end-module questionnaire, a final interview and in-class observations. Findings reveal the suitability of an AVT-focused language course online for children who show a positive attitude towards Zoom and both AVT modalities. They prefer revoicing as an online synchronous collaborative activity, which prevents isolation and fosters sociability. Captioning was perceived as the most difficult AVT task, although some had fun experimenting as remote independent learners. Results show that young people are able to use the Aegisub software autonomously but also need parental support at home. The benefits and challenges identified during the learning process were crucial for formulating recommendations for teachers and call for further research on AVT in early educational contexts.

Keywords: moving online, online children education, online language teacher education, audiovisual translation, captioning and revoicing tasks, Zoom.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora la estructura de un curso de idiomas basado en Traducción Audiovisual (TAV) con el objetivo de adecuarlo para su impartición a niños en un entorno virtual. Dado el potencial de los programas audiovisuales, ricos en información contextualizada, las varias prácticas de TAV se presentan como herramientas poderosas para mantener un nivel alto de motivación entre los discentes, promover su bienestar y facilitar la adquisición de la lengua extranjera. No obstante, el uso de la TAV en estos contextos ha recibido escasa atención y son pocos los estudios realizados con estudiantes jóvenes. No sorprende, pues, que escaseen los recursos didácticos para profesores y que estos informen de dificultades a la hora de gestionar entornos virtuales y de diseñar experiencias efectivas de aprendizaje, especialmente durante el periodo de la pandemia. Presentamos aquí el primer estudio en el que se evalúan las percepciones de los niños sobre el uso tanto de Zoom como de tareas basadas en TAV a la hora de aprender el italiano de manera virtual. Dos años después de que se implementara en su formato inicial híbrido, el curso *Impariamo coi cartoni! Learning Italian by captioning and revoicing cartoons*, impartido como parte del programa *Youth Academy* en la Universidad de Galway, Irlanda, se reestructuró para adecuarlo a un entorno virtual. El curso, de 6 semanas de duración, se impartió tres veces, a un total de 38 niños de edades comprendidas entre los 9 y los 12 años. Se han recopilado datos a través de una encuesta y una entrevista realizadas al final del módulo así como observaciones recogidas durante las clases. Los resultados demuestran la valía de un curso de idiomas con enfoque en TAV impartido a niños en un entorno virtual. Su actitud es positiva en relación tanto con la plataforma Zoom como con las dos modalidades de TAV. Los participantes expresan preferencia por el locutado de las traducciones que ven como una actividad colaborativa síncrona, realizada en línea, que combate el aislamiento y promueve la sociabilidad. Su opinión sobre el subtitulado es que es una tarea más difícil, aunque algunos disfrutaron con sus experimentos como aprendices independientes remotos. Los resultados revelan que los niños son capaces de utilizar el software Aegisub de manera autónoma,

[1]   **Corresponding author** · Email: francesca.nicora@universityofgalway.ie

aunque también necesitan el apoyo de sus progenitores en casa. Los beneficios y retos identificados durante el proceso de aprendizaje han sido esenciales a la hora de formular recomendaciones para profesores y señalan la necesidad de realizar más investigación sobre la TAV en contextos educativos tempranos.

Palabras clave: educación infantil virtual, formación virtual del profesorado, traducción audiovisual, tareas de subtitulado y loculato, Zoom.

1. Introduction

In 2020-21, governments across the world implemented measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and ensure the health and safety of their citizens. Educational institutions were closed until the situation improved and in no time witnessed a substantial change in teaching-learning processes. As far as the pandemic restrictions in the Republic of Ireland are concerned, the Department of Education and Skills chose to set up clear guidelines (Burke & Dempsey, 2020). However, during lockdown teachers were forced to teach online and reshape education practices, even if they had no specific skills and competences tailored to online language teaching. Similarly, given the sudden closure of schools, young people were encouraged to learn in the online environment without any training or psychological support. According to recent investigations, Irish adolescents and children experienced adverse mental health effects throughout the lookdown period, including feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and stress over home-schooling (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). Online education for young people continues to be perceived as a controversial topic among educators and parents both in terms of the use of technology and of psychological well-being.

On the other hand, a considerable amount of research has long provided evidence that supports the potential of audiovisual translation (AVT) activities as powerful tools that promote the learning of foreign languages and improve learners' motivation, psychological well-being and quality of life (Lertola, 2019; Dore & Vagnoli, 2021). The employment of multimedia and authentic materials seems to be extremely helpful in increasing confidence when producing output (Weyers, 1999), and cartoons are particularly well-suited to creating a child-friendly atmosphere in which young people learn through enjoyment. The didactic value of captioning and revoicing has been proved in relation to all basic language competences and transferable skills, mostly involving university students in both face-to-face (López Cirugeda & Sánchez Ruiz, 2013) and online learning environments (Talaván et al., 2014, Talaván & Avila-Cabrera, 2015). By contrast, the examination of the benefits of AVT in early educational stages remains largely undeveloped (Fernández-Costales, 2021a, 2021b), and no investigations to date on the teaching of foreign languages to young people by employing AVT task-based activities in an online setting seem to have been performed. Resources available are understandably lacking for teachers, who continue to report difficulties in managing online contexts and designing effective learning experiences.

The study presented here stems from a previous investigation (Beltramello & Nicora, 2021) exploring children's responses resulting from a 6-week AVT-focused language course entitled "Impariamo coi cartoni! Learning Italian by captioning and revoicing cartoons[2]". The course was designed and implemented as part of the Youth Academy which offers subjects outside of the primary school curriculum and gives high-ability primary students the opportunity to enrol in a university course and attend classes on its campus. The course has run five times at the University of Galway, Ireland since the autumn of 2017, involving a total of 45 children aged 9-12. The study aims to develop a new didactic proposal focusing on the use of combined AVT modes tailored for beginner learners of Italian as a foreign language (FL) and to measure its effectiveness in terms of engagement and motivation. Classes took place on Saturday morning and lasted approximately two and a half hours. The first

---

[2]   The course was shortlisted for the European Language Label award in 2019.

hour was spent in the classroom, where children learned lexicon, grammar and pronunciation. After a break, students were accompanied to the language laboratory, where they worked autonomously with videos under the supervision of the teacher. The animated cartoons chosen as didactic resources, *The adventures of La Pimpa* and *Lupo Alberto,* are currently broadcast on Italian national TV. Clips were selected on the basis of authenticity (Italian cartoons for cultural relevance), level of interest for children (in order to enrich the learning experience) and language content (simple, repetitive and comprehensible). Data collection from an end-of-course questionnaire and in-class observations was conducted over a three-year period. Results from a descriptive statistical analysis showed a positive attitude from participants to both AVT modes. Most of them preferred creating subtitles over putting voices to cartoon characters. Beyond learning style preferences, the author argues that this could be the result of several technical issues encountered when recording voices due to outdated computers. However, the most significant finding is that all students enjoyed the course and expressed the desire to learn other languages at school through AVT modes.

Due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the teacher[3] was required to rethink the course so that it would be more suitable for an online context and could be launched in the autumn of 2020. These requirements encouraged the teacher to reflect on the management of the course with a view to embedding the didactic proposal into a different learning setting. This reflection stemmed from a desire to guarantee the continuity of lessons during an emergency, the outcome of which neither institutions nor individual citizens could know. What could be done to guarantee the continuity of the course? The first general issue was how to reshape the structure of the course to make it suitable for an online context. This quickly led to other, more specific issues linked to the theoretical framework underpinning online education for children, teaching methods, educational tools to be employed, and motivational tasks to be utilised during the learning process. Furthermore, it was necessary to consider the mental health of the children and promote their psychophysical well-being. The first research question (1RQ) is: what is the most effective theoretical framework to apply in the teaching of foreign languages online to children? This question leads to two subsequent questions: how can Zoom be fully exploited and how can captioning and revoicing activities be embedded in the online foreign language curriculum to create a healthy and friendly digital environment for children? Zoom is indeed considered as a fairly, immersive and easy-to-use tool (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020) and it has been chosen by the Youth Academy (University of Galway, Ireland), which has promoted the reshaped AVT-focused language course above mentioned, to teach synchronously online. A second issue pertains to the impact of the new online environment on children's active participation and engagement. Children's opinions are of paramount importance in showing the difficulties they may encounter and in providing language teachers with a template for how to move an AVT-focused language course online effectively. The second research question (2RQ) is: what is the attitude of children towards captioning and revoicing cartoons and using Zoom in the learning of foreign languages online? The third research question (3RQ) concerns the challenges and issues encountered in the development of innovative online courses: what are the challenges and issues in moving an AVT-focused language course online and in keeping it effective and engaging for children?

In this article, I will address each of these questions. After an introduction to the issues involved in moving an AVT-focused language course online and an overview of studies on captioning and revoicing for pedagogical purposes, a teaching method that advocates the creation of a child-friendly environment and combines a variety of theories, approaches, and methods, including the use of Zoom, will be presented. An outline will then be given of the study, the new didactic proposal and the data collection of children's perceptions on the overall

---

3   The teacher, also the author of this paper, has been working in Higher Education and has been conducting research in AVT in the teaching of Italian language and culture for more than 8 years.

course, by means of descriptive statistical analysis. The aims of this contribution are threefold and closely intertwined, and are as follows:

- To outline a teaching method that advocates a child-friendly online learning environment, combines captioning and revoicing as well as the use of cartoons, and relies on the potential of Zoom to offer a pleasing learning experience.

- To evaluate the potential and suitability of the above-mentioned teaching method, including the structure of the course, AVT modalities and the use of Zoom, according to children learners of Italian as a foreign language.

- To provide teachers with a template for moving a blended AVT course online in terms of theoretical framework, educational approaches, and lesson planning.

This paper links the field of research in didactic Audiovisual Translation to Children's Education by examining young people's perceptions on AVT modes[4] in online language learning, which have thus far been largely neglected (Fernández Costales, 2021a; 2021b). It also focuses on the combined use of captioning and revoicing activities, which has been hereto grossly overlooked, as most studies concentrate on one AVT modality (Lertola, 2019). Furthermore, analysing children's opinions is of paramount importance in shedding light on the difficulties they may encounter during the course and when experimenting with captioning by themselves at home. Finally, this study intends to provide a useful example for moving classes to an online setting, for boosting teachers' creativity, as well as for increasing their awareness of the challenges in embedding AVT tasks in a course tailored for children.

2. The theoretical framework

2.1. Moving an AVT-focused language course online

Online learning is considered a controversial issue and differs from traditional settings from many points of view. These differences can be seen in access to education, the process of adjustment to a new learning environment, as well as the capacity of online learning for autonomy, for the student to assume more responsibilities, to self-monitor and to self-assess efficiently. There is also the new role of the teacher to consider, the construction and delivery of immediate feedback, and the challenge of sustaining high motivation and engagement during the online language course. Although attempts to overcome challenges relating to online teaching have increased over the years, considerable uncertainty regarding the need to move classes online seems to remain. At the time of publication, more than two years will have passed since classes transitioned from face-to-face to online environments due to the Covid-19 pandemic, putting a huge strain on all stakeholders, who are still exploring fruitful, alternative solutions to the traditional classroom setting. Moving online requires a depth of knowledge of theoretical approaches and methods underpinning models of online learning, and during lockdown teachers were forced to rethink and innovate education, despite having no specific competences and skills tailored to online language teaching. Both novice and experienced teachers reported a number of issues arising from the design of activities, the application of strategies, the effective use of educational tools, and the attempts to create a real community, and establish an assessment system (Nicora, et al., 2022; Nicora et al.,

---

[4] AVT modes can be divided in two main groups: captioning, which refers to written language transfer procedures (subtitling, subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, creative subtitling) and used in this study a hypernym to refer to "ANY thing done in terms of […] writing on the screen" (Zabalbeascoa et al., 2012, p 18); and revoicing, which encompasses oral language transfer procedures and all kinds of recording speech on video, including dubbing, creative dubbing, audio description, voice over, free commentary, karaoke singing and simultaneous interpreting (Sokoli, 2018).

2022). Managing asynchronous contexts can be demanding, and teachers cannot be immediately expected to dispel doubts or to clarify instructions or language structures, which may leave students at a loss. Live sessions pose challenges in terms of interaction and turn-taking, given the loss of the hitherto normal context for oral conversation. By and large courses were hastily adapted to the online modality without the specialist training needed for the delivery of a successful learning experience. The lack of teacher training along with the scarcity of professional development programs undermined endeavours to integrate technology, multimedia resources and AVT activities into the foreign language classroom.

Over the years scholars have advocated the potential of subtitling in the foreign language classroom (Díaz Cintas, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2008), since it can enhance vocabulary acquisition, cultural awareness and critical thinking regarding the linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of the multimedia resources employed (Wagener, 2006). Revoicing has proved to be beneficial for the development of pronunciation (Chiu, 2012) and prosodic features of speech (Kumai, 1996; Danan, 2010, Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013; Sánchez Requena, 2016; Navarrete, 2018). A recent and systematic review of studies carried out in the last twenty years offers an overview of the state of the art and encourages further research on the applications of AVT for pedagogical purposes (Lertola, 2019). In the context of this study, it is indeed worth noting some early attempts carried out to date to train language teachers in the use of AVT modes (Lertola, 2015), as well as recent efforts to provide language teachers with applications, sample task structure and assessment rubrics (Álonso-Pérez & Sánchez Requena, 2018; Talaván, 2020) that are currently emerging. Nevertheless, no investigations seem to have been carried out on the teaching of foreign languages online to children using AVT modes. The application of combined AVT modes has received scant attention (Talaván et al., 2014, Talaván & Avila-Cabrera, 2015; Lertola & Mariotti, 2017) and the number of experimental studies on combined intralingual captioning and revoicing is particularly limited and restricted to face-to-face learning environments (López Cirugeda & Sánchez Ruiz, 2013; Herrero et al., 2017).

Furthermore, research has mainly focused on university students, and research on the benefits of AVT activities in early educational stages remains vastly undeveloped. A recent study (Fernández Costales, 2021a) aims to examine teachers' perspectives regarding the use of subtitling and dubbing as teaching resources in Primary Bilingual Education. Overall results showed the positive response of the teachers regarding the didactic potential of AVT in children's education and confirm the suitability of subtitling and dubbing as pedagogical tools in primary schools and in CLIL contexts. Teachers perceived that vocabulary retention was enhanced and that AVT can contribute to boosting motivation and engagement in the classroom. Based on the teachers' perspective, dubbing seemed to be the most suitable modality for young people. Some challenges have been identified, such as the lack of required resources in schools to integrate AVT as a teaching strategy, the time-consuming task of preparing activities, the difficulty of synchronising audio tracks with an image, and, seemingly the most demanding hurdle for students, matching subtitles to images.

A second study (Fernández Costales, 2021b) focuses on primary education children's perceptions of the combined AVT modes in language learning. The questionnaire used to gather their feedback along with in-class observations reveal the positive views of Spanish children who are learners of English on the use of AVT and reveal a slight preference for dubbing over subtitling. These studies pave the way for further research that connects the two fields of AVT and children's education more comprehensively. Nonetheless, such studies on the application of AVT practises in the foreign language classroom tailored to children are few and far between. The lack of significant findings thus far on children's attitudes toward AVT in the online context has made it difficult to set up valuable recommendations for teachers.

2.2. A healthy online environment for children

The integration of AVT practices into an online course tailored for children comes with risks and limitations for teachers, who are required to provide safe learning environments that are appropriate to this target audience. The students' well-being is the foundation of successful language teaching, and maximising the likelihood that young people will benefit from their participation, regardless of context, age, or educational level, is of paramount importance (Noble et al., 2008). A healthy online environment always involves a culture of engagement, pause points, procedures and routines, elements of surprise and, in the case of this study, special attention to children's needs. First, proper use of online resources has been proved to encourage students to participate in and enhance their learning process (Dickson et al., 2018), and exposure to authentic videos has yielded considerable benefits for language learning. In this respect, cartoons are considered a source of authentic input particularly suited to children. Cartoons comprise essential cultural aspects of present-day society and real-life situations, as well as characters with which children can identify on a personal level. The authenticity of the cartoons is closely related to the fact that learners correlate with the content acquired in class and succeed in transferring a number of new words and expressions into their real-life situations (Sarko, 2008). Additionally, as they are entertaining, funny and appealing, cartoons stimulate mental well-being, relieve stress, and break the daily routine. Another key element in the development of a healthy learning environment is the use of humour, which serves as a means to reduce affective barriers and has a significant impact in language learning (Askildson, 2005). Interestingly, Schmidt & Williams (2001) proved that humorous sentences in cartoons were recalled better than non-humorous sentences in lists containing both sentence types. Furthermore, primary students engage in many interactive play-based activities via music, singing, games and story time (Szente, 2020). The more fun an activity is for children, the better they will retain the language learned. Playful language and ideas engage children more socially and actively with the target content and capture their attention more effectively (Meskill & Anthony, 2018). This is especially true during the circumstances of a pandemic in which students feel isolated and tend to seek out and achieve social satisfaction while online. One way to make learning more fun is also to involve learners in the creation of tangible output, therefore the idea to integrate captioning and revoicing activities would seem suitable.

As far as the theoretical framework underpinning online teaching and learning is concerned, one of the most recent trends called microlearning seems to be particularly adept for children who, compared to adults, have a more limited attention span. This approach is based on the idea that short forms of learning can be better adapted to support individual needs, and small chunks of content help learners to avoid cognitive overload so that information may be successfully stored in long-term memory (Paas & Sweller, 2014). Microlearning activities increase focus and engagement, whereas it is generally known that the online learning process can easily lead to problems such as loss of motivation or a decrease in attention level. Successful lesson planning for children is based on varying the types of activities and moving constantly from activity to activity, because they become bored easily. The introduction of captioning and revoicing as elements of surprise outside of traditional canons serves to fight boredom for those who have never been introduced to it.

On the other hand, the establishment of lesson schedules would appear to be a good strategy, as children enjoy the repetition of certain classroom routines and activities. In an online setting, student-centred learning is highly recommendable in that learners act as active recipients of information, and the teacher plays the role of a facilitator who offers advice when necessary. In line with this approach, the flipped classroom can be considered one of the best methods to employ online, by providing students with materials in advance and giving them the opportunity to discuss difficulties, address misconceptions and push towards a deeper understanding of the material in live sessions. In reshaping a course for an online context, this paper advocates a teaching method

based on the development of a child-friendly online learning environment that relies on a combination of the above-mentioned approaches, methods and strategies that have long proven to be effective in foreign language acquisition. Moreover, it promotes the use of captioning and revoicing as ground-breaking activities and elements of surprise to foster students' motivation.

2.3. Zoom: searching for new data

Over the recent decades of rapid technological and multimedia progress, educational tools have multiplied, and the current pandemic situation has recently marked the start of a new era in which Zoom is considered one of the most effective pedagogical tools (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020). Zoom is a video conferencing platform supported by mobile devices, tablets and computers, allowing users to connect online via video conference meetings, webinars and live chat. Its features include a white board, breakout rooms, live polling, an in-meeting chat, screen and video sharing, interactive options, and virtual backgrounds. All these functions are of utmost importance for pedagogical purposes in online language education and are particularly beneficial for synchronous classes and the use of authentic language materials (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020).

The effectiveness of Zoom has been demonstrated in facilitating English foreign language learners' skills and motivation in language learning (Nuryanto, 2021; Konotop et al., 2021), and Zoom meetings seem to have a positive impact on learners' reading achievements in terms of 'increased interest in and motivation towards learning', 'self-directed learning', 'active interaction', 'ease of access', and 'ease of information retrieval' (Kim, 2020) and in order to improve speaking skills (Risma, 2021). Furthermore, research conducted in Indonesia shed light on junior high school students' positive perception of using Zoom at home (Mu'awanah et al., 2021). Although there is great potential for this educational tool, young people lament not being able to join the virtual class well due to poor internet access, inadequate devices, and/or an unsupportive home environment (Mu'awanah et al., 2021). On the other hand, teachers reported difficulty engaging children online and insufficient support from parents for learning activities, which reduced the respondents' willingness to embrace future online teaching; in general they felt they had not received suitable training for teaching online (Hu et al., 2021). Further investigation revealed that teachers are still dealing with many issues such as 'loss of motivation', 'cognitive overload', and 'screen fatigue' (Amponsah et al., 2021). It has also been claimed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (2020) that no time limit has been placed on the duration of screen time for six year-old students, even though it has been acknowledged that massive exposure to Zooming can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Spicer, 2020). However, all the above-mentioned investigations into the use of Zoom in online education seem to have been conducted in a specific country, and data have been gathered from different types of learners and through diverse methodologies. As a consequence, the findings cannot be generalised and/or compared. In addition, there is a paucity of studies focusing on children's perceptions on the use of Zoom. For these reasons, the search for optimal methods of using Zoom to increase the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages should be considered as an area for further research. The present paper intends to collect children's opinions on using Zoom in order to show the difficulties they may encounter and to provide teachers with recommendations for fully exploiting its functions. It also argues the potential for embedding AVT activities via Zoom and especially for introducing revoicing as an activity to foster collaboration among students.

3. The study

3.1. Hypotheses and aims

The review of the literature previously presented draws attention to the absence of studies on the impact of captioning and revoicing on children's engagement in an online context. Therefore, no guidelines exist for teachers who need to move an AVT-focused language course tailored for children online, and further research is needed on many other aspects of AVT in children's education, such as their needs, attitude, preferences, challenges, and issues. The hypotheses addressed in this study are:

- 1HP: Building a theoretical framework based on microlearning, chunking lesson planning, a flipped classroom model and children's needs paired with cartoons can facilitate language learning for children in terms of engagement during an AVT-focused language course carried out online.

- 2HP: Despite findings to the contrary in a previous experiment carried out in a blended learning environment for children (Beltramello & Nicora, 2021), a preference for revoicing over captioning is expected in light of the addition of synchronous revoicing activities, which alleviate isolation and promote sociability.

- 3HP: A positive attitude from children towards both the online context and the use of Zoom, as well as some typical disadvantages of this new setting, such as poor internet access, inadequate devices, and/or an unsupportive home environment, are expected.

The aims of the study are multiple: 1) to outline a teaching method that advocates a child-friendly online learning environment, combines captioning and revoicing along with the use of cartoons and relies on the potential of Zoom to offer a pleasing learning experience; 2) to evaluate the potential and suitability of the above-mentioned teaching method, including the structure of the course, AVT modalities and the use of Zoom, according to children learners of Italian as a foreign language; and 3) to provide teachers with a template as to how to rethink, reshape and reconfigure an AVT-focused language course for the online context. The new didactic proposal will be described in detail (3.2) and the procedure for data collection will be presented (3.3) in order to analyse children' responses to the use of Zoom and AVT tasks and to promote AVT in early educational contexts.

3.2. Didactic proposal

As previously mentioned, the new didactic proposal stems from the need to move the blended course 'Impariamo coi cartoni! Learning Italian by captioning and revoicing cartoons' to the online learning environment. Due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the teacher was asked to transform the course so that it would be suitable for online classes. The proposal was launched online in Fall 2020. The purpose of the course remained the same: to promote Italian language and culture among children and provide them with a learning experience outside conventional canons.

3.2.1. Participants

The 6-week, AVT-focused language course was launched online in Fall 2020 and ran a total of three times: Fall 2020 (8 children) and both Spring and Fall 2021, which saw two groups attending classes in different time slots (8-12 participants per each group). The total participation was made up of 38 children aged 9-12 who lived in the western part of the Republic of Ireland in urban, semi-urban and rural settings. A background questionnaire was administered to them to collect information on their age, previous knowledge of Italian and experience of

language learning. This data collection tool outlined the participants as follows: the majority of the children had never learned Italian before the course (97.4%), nor watched Italian cartoons (78.9%) and none of them had previous experience regarding either captioning or revoicing. The population is fairly homogenous and involves subjects of Irish nationality (83.4%), and a small percentage (15.7%) of children born to parents of different nationalities (four Irish-English-Polish and two Irish-English-Spanish children). Additionally, an Irish-English-Italian child was included in the experiment because the subject's exposure to the target language since birth was insufficient to enable the subject to comprehend and speak Italian.

3.2.2. The structure of the course

The course started with the Italian alphabet and pronunciation, and gradually moved on to cover grammatical structures and to build up vocabulary. Communicative objectives were self-introductions and descriptions of cartoon characters, family, daily routine, food habits, while prioritising the children's enjoyment and engagement in the activities proposed. The teacher provided a lesson schedule and activity routine for the participants. In line with a flipped classroom model, the teacher decided to transform the lessons, which had previously taken place face-to-face on campus at the university, into video recordings. Every week, participants were required to watch the video and to complete the activities included in the booklet that had been created and sent to their homes before the course started. Each Saturday morning, they joined live sessions on Zoom and engaged in the lesson with the teacher. The live session ran for the duration of an hour and a half[5], and participants practiced the language previously learned from watching the teacher's videos by taking a quiz, after which AVT tasks were introduced. While revoicing tasks were performed on Zoom and involved all the students who collaborated to produce a tangible product, a captioning task was instead given to children as homework to foster independent learning. The course consisted of both synchronous and asynchronous sessions.

3.2.3. Materials

Materials selected for the previous experiment were reemployed (Beltramello & Nicora, 2021). An appendix with Aegisub instructions for adding subtitles was inserted into the booklet. Clips used for filling the gap captioning activities are usually longer than those chosen for revoicing and include an entire episode lasting about 4-6 minutes, while the video for revoicing lasts no longer than two minutes. Six videos were developed by the teacher from scratch by means of Zoom and then uploaded to the Youth Academy's private YouTube page. The teacher communicated in a very simple and clear way. Each video lasts around 20 minutes and consists of a wide range of diverse activities each lasting 5 – 10 minutes. Gamification and chunking strategies were applied to overcome issues relating to loss of motivation and attention span. In addition, the teacher varied voice intonation to maintain students' attention, using humour and fun to involve them more fully. Some activities were to be completed while students were watching the video, and other tasks were assigned as homework and then corrected in the live sessions, in accordance with the guidelines of the flipped classroom.

---

[5]   The duration of live sessions on Zoom was decided by Youth Academy, it was not possible to change the format. Apart from this, the teacher was permitted to reshape and plan the course and lessons.

3.2.4. AVT tasks

One of the aims was to integrate AVT modes as task-based activities in the teaching of Italian language online. As outlined in Table 1, all the AVT tasks were conceived as reinforcement activities to help students retain vocabulary, grammar rules and linguistic structures and to improve intercultural competence and speaking skills. The first task was simple. The teacher shared the screen to show participants how to use the Aegisub software, insert captions and save their work. Then, students were required to listen to a word and type it in the chat. Once lines were completed, the teacher inserted, saved and shared the correct captions as .ass files via the chat. The second part consisted of giving voices to cartoon characters. As with all the other intralingual revoicing activities, this task was carried out through a collaborative live session. Children were asked to work in pairs in front of their peers and to act out the dialogue between the two characters, or each child was assigned a line to perform in order to create a tangible output (a recording) that involved all the participants. Revoicing activities function as imitation tasks to improve not just pronunciation, but mainly intonation, rhythm, fluency and rate of speech. They are particularly enjoyable because the voices of the characters differ and present characteristics such as nasality and shrillness that children enjoy imitating. The teacher's involvement and attitude were of vital importance in putting participants at ease, creating enjoyment to strengthen the relationship and facilitating the development of a friendly atmosphere. With regard to captioning activities, the filling the gap exercise called "La Pimpa e la Balena Milly" was conducted via Zoom, although students were required to download the video and subtitles, perform the task on their own, while feedback was provided immediately afterwards. This exercise was a propaedeutic utilised to introduce participants to working autonomously at home. The following week the captioning task was assigned as homework so that the participants could review numbers and hours. Unlike the blended course, "La Pimpa e i coniglietti" aimed to review some topics (greetings and colours), was replaced with a video named "La Pimpa e Rosita" to allow children to better retain food vocabulary and improve prosodic skills in the run-up to the final lesson devoting to revoicing.

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Week 1	La Pimpa e il pavone Alfonso Fill-the-gap captioning task + Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity	Review greetings and presentations + Retain vocabulary + Reinforce word recognition, writing and speaking skills
Week 2	La Pimpa e la balena Milly Fill-the-gap captioning task	Review of greetings and presentations + Retain vocabulary (nouns, adjectives) + Develop intercultural competence
Week 3	Lupo Alberto: L'ultimo spettacolo Captioning task	Retain vocabulary (numbers and hours)
Week 4	Lupo Alberto: Cappuccetto Rosso Revoicing: audio narration	Reinforce grammar rules (present tense of regular verbs)
Week 5	La Pimpa e Rosita Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity	Retain vocabulary (food) + Reinforce FL prosodic skills
Week 6	La Pimpa e la fabbrica delle pizze Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity	Retain vocabulary (food) + Review regular verbs + Reinforce FL prosodic skills

Table 1. Online AVT-focused language course for children: list of the six AVT activities (adapted from Beltramello & Nicora, 2021).

3.2.5. Tools

The Aegisub software was selected because it is the only subtitling software available for both Mac and Windows users. Guidelines on how to download and use the software were sent to the children's parents along with the link of the free tutorials available on YouTube, and the first live session on Zoom included a brief

introduction to the software. For the revoicing activities, the teacher took screenshots from the clips and created a video sequence of the images by using Filmora video editing[6]. Each image was timed in order to allow participants to act out the line. All the Zoom functions mentioned were fully utilised for both pedagogical purposes and collecting responses during the interview. Most importantly, screen sharing enabled the teacher to introduce and use the Aegisub software, thereby embedding both AVT modes. Students were able to share their screen and show what they had done by themselves at home as captioning tasks. Non-verbal interactive icons were used for immediate feedback, for asking checkpoint dual-choice questions or as a reward system (as was the use of virtual backgrounds). In-meeting reactions were introduced for conducting interviews and giving students the opportunity to respond quickly and send a thumbs up or clapping emoji that appears for five seconds on the monitor, while in-meeting icons encompass solicited (yes, no, agree, disagree, thumbs up and down) and unsolicited (raise hand, go slower, go faster, applause) visual feedback. These were useful functions throughout the lesson and the interview. The whiteboard and the chat were helpful for showing learners the mismatch between their language production and the target form, or for encouraging the most timid and hesitant students to take part in the lesson by interacting in written form. Polls and surveys could be conducted anonymously, and recaps of asynchronous lessons were included to monitor the learning progress. Breakout rooms were used to facilitate collaborative learning, interaction and creativity. Depending on the task administered, students were placed in smaller groups or pairs to practice the target language, or engage in spoken discussions, role playing, games, or storytelling.

3.3. Data collection

Participants were asked to take part in an end-of-course questionnaire and final group interview regarding the overall didactic experience and the use of Zoom and combined AVT modes. The questionnaire administered in this study had been developed for the previous investigation on children's perceptions of captioning and revoicing cartoons in a blended environment (Beltramello & Nicora, 2021). The structure of the questionnaire aligns with the question answering process-model (Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988) and the Satisficing theory (Krosnick, 1991), and complies with the guidelines of effective questions proposed by Bell (2007). Some changes were made in order to obtain their responses on the new structure of the course delivered online. The questionnaire was created by using Google modules, and the link was shared among students on Zoom. All 38 participants responded anonymously to the questionnaire, and, in Fall 2021, 15 of them (divided into two groups of 7 and 8 people) took part in the final group interviews at the end of the course. The recording of the interviews lasted a total of 49 minutes, and the results were also useful in clarifying some responses given in the questionnaire. Additionally, a new, detailed survey on the use of Zoom was created ex novo and administered to them at the end of the course. This survey included yes/no questions and twelve close-ended questions, in which a fully labelled verbal and visual scale along with emoticons to engage young people was inserted. Finally, the last two questions were open-ended questions to capture their impressions on the advantages and disadvantages of using Zoom.

4. Results and findings

The main results of the questionnaires are presented below. A descriptive statistical analysis in combination with in-class observations and responses gathered from the final interview were used to explore the perception of

---

6   https://filmora.wondershare.com/

young people towards the use of AVT modes and Zoom in the learning of Italian as a foreign language online. A template for moving an AVT-focused language course online is then presented.

4.1. Participants' responses to the overall course and AVT tasks

The impact of the course on children's interest seems to have been positive, with the result that 89.4% of students endorse the use of both AVT modalities in other language classes. By and large, they found the course to be entertaining, interesting and very helpful in terms of approaches, modality, resources and tools employed. Almost all the students claimed to have been an active participant in the course (97.5%) and 50% of this majority declared that they had been highly engaged. Participants really appreciated the booklet (94.8%) and the cartoons (97.4%), corroborating findings previously obtained (Beltramello & Nicora, 2021), as well as the video-recordings received each week before the live sessions (97.4%). With regard to the AVT tasks, participants enjoyed learning Italian through these types of activities (97.4%), and the majority expressed a high level of enjoyment (57.9%). Furthermore, the vast majority (94.7%) enjoyed learning new skills such as creating captions and giving voice to cartoon characters, with most expressing great enjoyment (68.4%). One participant commented, "With this course I was able to learn how to use the Aegisub platform, which was something I had never done before." Some enrolled in the course because they were attracted by the innovative use of computer-assisted language learning, which they considered challenging but satisfyingly so. From the interviews, it also emerged that participants found the course fairly "easy" due to the teacher's instruction and teaching methods. They specified the use of the word "easy" in a positive sense but also highlighted that they loved the challenges and difficulties. Inserting AVT-based tasks as an element of surprise is definitely an aspect to consider for increasing motivation. These findings differ from those obtained in the previous experiment conducted in a blended learning environment, during which participants performed AVT activities autonomously in the language laboratory using the ClipFlair platform, sharing only the final result with their peers, where revoicing resulted as the activity they liked the most (Table 2). The reason for this correlates to the fact that the task was carried out online in a collaborative way, and students were requested to work together to obtain a final tangible product. This type of activity fosters social interactions, and, at a time marked by pandemic-let restrictions on face-to-face interventions, can be a key didactic tool for the prevention of isolation in an online setting. Participants' comments on AVT activities can be referenced in Table 3 and better explain this preference: they enjoy revoicing because they found it to be more fun and engaging. Moreover, the humour used in class by teachers who imitated cartoon voices encouraged them to act as a real dubber, thereby offsetting anxiety and timidity. This approach strengthened the relationship between the teacher and students, developing a friendly atmosphere, decreasing the affective filter and promoting well-being.

Revoicing	Captioning	Both	Not sure
54.2%	25.7%	5.7%	14.2%

Table 2. Online AVT-focused language course: children's preference on revoicing over captioning.

Revoicing	Captioning
Revoicing because I could hear myself	I enjoyed captioning the most as my voice sounds weird on video
Revoicing because it was easier	Captioning because it was easier
Revoicing because sometimes you can put on funny voices and be dramatic	I liked the one where we filled in the gaps, that way we can learn new words and try and translate them
I like talking like the character and making different voices	I preferred the captioning to the revoicing because it was easier to do over Zoom and I also liked trying to figure out what the characters were saying
The one about pizza, it was interactive socially	
Lesson 6, revoicing the videos with my classmates	
The last one because the instructor made it very fun and enjoyable	

Table 3. Online AVT-focused language course: children's comments on both AVT activities.

These results must be interpreted in light of the fact that students who defined captioning as the most difficult activity (see Table 4) also lamented having encountered some technical issues in the use of Aegisub in the phase of downloading and especially in doing the filling-the-gap exercises on their own as homework. The specific learning task was to understand the words and spell them properly. However, they were beginners and encountering the Italian language for the first time. So, even though the cartoons selected were geared towards beginners, it seems logical that some students would experience these types of difficulties. As the interviews clearly reveal, all students reported that their parents helped them to download the software. Students aged 11-12 did not report issues in getting acquainted with the software and using it successfully on their own. One student enjoyed it so much that she subtitled a cartoon for a friend living in America and sent it to her. Another student declared, 'I like when we each got a line to say and also subtitling outside of the Zoom calls on our own would have to be my favourites.' When the teacher asked participants to share their screen and show the captions in live sessions, respondents were in fact always those that were older. By contrast, younger participants aged 9-10 needed parental support both to download the software and to complete the exercise. Participants also claimed that the software did not work properly one week after installation and that they did not have time to do it. However, half of them used the software at home and claimed to enjoy creating captions.

In terms of preference, a quarter of the class stated that they preferred captioning over revoicing, as they do not like to listen to their own voice in a foreign language and considered it to be an effective and more challenging didactic tool in recognizing words and sharpening listening skills in a foreign language. Some students found it hard to pronounce Italian words or remember the correct pronunciation. This means that they need to be more aware of how the melody of Italian works in terms of intonation and stress. They also need greater visualisation of the words, which could be effectively addressed through the use of the white board tool. A significant percentage of students suggested that both are equally difficult or fairly easy activities.

Revoicing	Captioning	None/Not sure
25%	37.5%	37.5%

Table 4. Online AVT-focused language course: children's comments on the most difficult AVT activity.

Concerning the single AVT-based tasks most appreciated by participants, the revoicing activities ranked in the top three positions, followed by the two captioning activities and the combined AVT-based task used in the first lesson (Table 5).

AVT TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES	Little	Not so much	Much	Very much
La Pimpa e la fabbrica delle pizze Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity		2.6%	13.2%	84.2%
La Pimpa e Rosita Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity		5.3%	23.7%	71.1%
Lupo Alberto: Cappuccetto rosso Revoicing: audio narration		10.5%	21.1%	68.4%
Lupo Alberto: L'ultimo spettacolo Captioning task	5.3%	10.5%	26.3%	57.9%
La Pimpa e la balena Milly Fill-the-gap captioning task	5.3%	13.2%	47.4%	34.2%
La Pimpa e il pavone Alfonso Fill-the-gap captioning task + Revoicing: intralingual dubbing activity	2.6%	7.9%	34.2%	55.3%

Table 5. Online AVT-focused language course: children's preferences on AVT modes.

Additional participants' comments include the desire to increase the duration of the course, with some students claiming they missed the course a lot on the weekends. As for in-class observations, the teacher noted that children became more confident in completing the activities proposed during the course, and that they particularly enjoyed imitating cartoons and modulating their voices and tones in the last two lessons. The attitude of the teacher was crucial in motivating them: the more fun the teacher creates, the more fun students have. Undoubtedly, revoicing has a playful side that stimulates motivation and is very useful for improving prosodic features of speech. Not surprisingly, students were often asked to increase the rate of speech to stay within time limits. Furthermore, class management was fairly easy due to the limited number of 12 participants all together. Occasionally a student forgot to turn off their mic, sometimes letting in loud background noises, but in general the participants were polite, silent and focused. AVT task-based activities are time-consuming, especially that of synchronising the captions with the video. Revoicing was more demanding in terms of class management, as some students did not always follow instructions properly, requiring the teacher to explain the exercise once more.

4.2. Children's responses to the use of Zoom

The majority of students had already used Zoom (94.1%) at the time of the start of the course, and most declared that they had experienced successful spoken communication with the teacher in the online class (94.1%). As far as written communication is concerned, although the majority of the students did not report any problems in contacting the teacher (80.6%), the rest (29.4%) claimed that it was not so easy. This leads to the conclusion that students needed to receive training on the functions of Zoom, such as the private chat, despite its widespread use as a web conferencing platform and the fact that they had used it before, so were familiar with at least its basic functions. Most students believed that it would be easier to communicate and discuss the lesson with the teacher (82.4%) and with classmates (70.6%) in a face-to-face class compared to online live sessions. The participants were aware that communication with the teacher and classmates differs when occurring in online learning contexts. The majority agreed that group work in breakout rooms gave them the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and get to know each other better (70.6%).

Significantly, all of them loved using polling quizzes to recap previous lessons/topics (100%), while most of them believed that the whiteboard or chat features were useful in analysing the written form of an Italian word (88.2%). Many students (58.8%) claimed to feel comfortable learning a language on Zoom, especially when giving voices to the cartoon characters (70.6%). Among the advantages of using Zoom, children point out the advantages of only having to click on a link to join a class, waking up minutes before the lesson starts, being

able to go to the kitchen and eat something when necessary, having many people together at once, communicating during the Covid pandemic from anywhere at any time, and of using virtual backgrounds and filters. In line with previous studies on the use of Zoom, children complained of difficulties in communication due to malfunctions, lack of internet connection and technological glitches (41.2%). This is not surprising given that the majority of participants connected from rural settings where the internet service was unstable and poor. Some of them lamented the lack of netiquette when learning online, as the meetings were sometimes too noisy due to microphones being left on. In conclusion, they also emphasized that getting to know your classmates was not as easy as in person.

During the interviews, some important points came up regarding the introduction of AVT activities into primary school language learning in general in present-day Ireland. Some schools have laboratories, computers and iPads, but participants claimed that they were not often used, and especially not for learning a foreign language. The main language taught was Irish, with other languages being introduced in secondary schools. During lockdown, most of them used Zoom maybe once a week to recap topics, correct work, do fun activities all together and talk to classmates. Teachers used an app to post work and upload pages of the workbook. Interestingly, children claimed to have performed mainly writing and reading activities, while listening and speaking were neglected. Only two of them declared that they had improved all four language competences equally. This could point to a lack of training for teachers who are being required to teach foreign languages online.

4.3. A template for teachers

In the light of participants' responses to the course, the combination of diverse theories and approaches underpinning online teaching along with the application of AVT-based tasks, the use of cartoons and of Zoom proved to be effective in teaching foreign languages online. The strengths of the course are closely related to the breadth of the theoretical framework, to the development of a child-friendly environment to promote mental well-being and capture their attention, and to maximising the use of Zoom, also in the embedding of captioning and revoicing activities.

As can be seen in Table 6, the first change in moving an AVT-focused language online was to rethink the theoretical framework, drawing on different theories and approaches more suitable for the online setting and tailored for online children's education. Microlearning, chunking lesson planning, a flipped classroom and collaborative learning were introduced in consideration of the limited attention span of children and with the aim of keeping motivation high. As far as educational tools are concerned, Zoom was needed for access to live sessions, as was a subtitling software available for Mac and Window users, which led to the replacement of ClipFlair with Aegisub. Both asynchronous and synchronous modalities were exploited to make the most of the online learning environment. As a consequence, the teacher devised video recordings to introduce topics and explain linguistic structures, sharing them with students before the live Zoom session in accordance with the flipped classroom construct. In this way, on Zoom the focus was moved to AVT activities. Games, which are of utmost importance for children, such as *Witch commands colours*[7] or *One two three stay there*[8], were substituted

---

[7]   One player is picked to be the "witch". He/she calls out a colour (for example: blue). The other children run to touch an object of the colour that has been called out. If the "witch" catches a child, he/she becomes the next witch, otherwise the last one who touches an object of the colour that has been called out becomes the next witch. The original "witch" joins the other kids.

[8]   One person starts out as what we call the "traffic light" and stands at one end of the room, with his/her back to the other players, who are at the other end. The "traffic light" says "one, two, three stand there!" and quickly faces the group and everyone must freeze. When the "traffic

with polling quizzes which were highly appreciated by the entire class. Zoom was considered an effective tool, in that it gave students the opportunity to perform revoicing in a collaborative way, effective in dispelling feelings of isolation and in fostering sociability and well-being. Zoom was furthermore useful for captioning tasks, as it provided a way for students to receive immediate feedback and to share the correct words via chat. In conclusion, the role of the teacher was adapted to that of a facilitator, especially for captioning activities, while in the language laboratory activities were completed under the supervision of the teacher who could immediately intervene.

	Blended	Online
Theoretical Framework	Layered learning Gamification Autonomous learning	Layered learning Gamification Microlearning Collaborative learning Autonomous learning Flipped Classroom model Chunking lesson planning
Tools	White board ClipFlair studio	Zoom Aegisub software
Modality	Synchronous	Synchronous Asynchronous
Materials	Booklet Cartoon Video Clips	Booklet Cartoon Video Clips Video recordings
Games	Witch commands colours One two three stay there	Guess who Polling quiz
AVT	Autonomously in the language laboratory under the supervision of the teachers	Autonomously under the supervision of the teacher and as a homework assignment Collaborative learning in live sessions
Role of the teacher	Active	Facilitator
Role of the student	Active	Active

Table 6. A template for teachers to move an AVT-focused language course online.

Zoom deserves a separate discussion. It was fully exploited, as all the functions it offered were utilised either for pedagogical purposes and for collecting responses during the interviews. Most importantly, screen sharing enabled the teacher to introduce and utilise the software, thereby allowing for the integration of both AVT modes. Additionally, students were able to share their screens and show what they had done by themselves as captioning tasks at home. Non-verbal interactive icons were used for immediate feedback (Wang & Loewen, 2016), for asking checkpoint dual-choice questions or as a reward system, as was the use of virtual backgrounds. In-meeting reactions were introduced for conducting interviews and giving students the opportunity to respond quickly and send a thumbs up or a clapping emoji that remained visible for five seconds on the monitor, while in-meeting icons encompassed both solicited (yes, no, agree, disagree, thumbs up and down) and unsolicited (raise hand, go slower, go faster, applause) visual feedback. These were useful functions throughout the lesson and the interviews. The whiteboard and/or the chat was helpful for learners in discerning the mismatch between their language production and the target form (Schimdt, 1990), or in encouraging the most timid and hesitant students to take part in the lessons through written interaction. It was possible to conduct polls and surveys anonymously and this allowed for a recap of topics covered in asynchronous lessons and for monitoring the learning progress, while breakout rooms facilitated collaborative learning, interaction and creativity. Depending on the task assigned, students were placed in smaller groups or pairs to practice the target language and to engage in spoken

---

light" turns his or her back, the group tries to get as close to that person as possible. If anyone is spotted moving, they have to go back to the starting place. The first person to tag the "traffic light" wins and takes on the role of the next "traffic light".

discussions, role playing, games, or storytelling. Potential communication activities included greeting each other, small tasks before the lesson, games, private conversation with the lecturer and group discussions (Rayahu, 2020).

5. Conclusion and future research

Rethinking an AVT-focused language course for an online delivery requires knowledge of the theories, approaches and methods underpinning online education, the types of activities most suitable in a synchronous or asynchronous context, the platforms, software and educational tools available, the strategies to apply, and how to instruct students to facilitate autonomous and collaborative work. Concerning the first research question, the template provided for teachers who need to reshape a traditional AVT-focused language course for an online setting not only underlines the importance of taking children's needs into consideration, but also points to a change in the theoretical framework and in the tools, modalities, and materials employed. The cornerstone of the didactic proposal is based on small learning units that are more suitable for children who have comparatively shorter span attention. The proposal also suggests a flipped classroom model, which is structured around the idea that students are introduced to content at home and practice working in live sessions in order to encourage active learning and increase students' responsibility. With this structure in mind, revoicing is envisioned as a synchronous online collaborative task-based activity that fosters sociability and mental well-being. Captioning was also integrated as a homework assignment to allow participants to identify issues they may encounter in producing subtitles on their own and in the role played by parents in the process of language learning. In addition, an in-depth analysis was performed on the potential of Zoom as an online course delivery platform and examples were provided for teachers who wish to deliver synchronous live sessions and make the learning process more engaging for young people.

The preliminary findings from data collected from this innovative experience confirm the effectiveness of the online experience regarding children's active participation and engagement and suggest that the use of captioning and revoicing activities can be successfully embedded in an online learning environment. With regard to the second research question, all participants enjoyed the course and expressed a desire to carry out these kinds of activities at school as part of the learning of other foreign languages. Children preferred revoicing to captioning because they were required to collaborate all together in the creation of a tangible and shareable product thereby preventing isolation and increasing enjoyment through social interaction. Captioning, however, was perceived as the more difficult activity, although some loved creating captions to learn new words and trying to translate them. All participants really appreciated the use of the different Zoom features, including quizzes, reaction icons and virtual backgrounds.

To respond to the third question, the challenges in moving an AVT-focused language course online were then identified. First of all, the successful development of a healthy, child-friendly online environment into which you can then embed AVT activities requires a comprehensive understanding at both theoretical and practical levels of online children's education. Therefore, this paper outlines the urgent need to develop specialised training for language teachers and for the continuation of AVT experiments tailored for children. Secondly, data from the interviews highlighted that not all schools and students have access to the tools required to integrate AVT into the foreign language curriculum, and that even when schools are equipped, teachers often do not utilise these resources, especially in the teaching of foreign languages. Thirdly, despite the resources provided, such as the appendix in the booklet, instructions delivered on live sessions and training available on YouTube, all the students needed parental assistance in downloading the software and, in some cases, in the creation of captions. In attempting to complete the AVT based task autonomously, participants reported difficulties in segmenting

words into phonemes, finding word boundaries in speech and then in writing them correctly. Most interestingly, although perhaps no unexpectedly, older children aged 11-12 were found to be able to use the Aegisub software on their own, while the majority of younger children struggled to use technology.

In a nutshell, findings confirm the suitability of both AVT modalities explored as teaching resources at early stages in an online learning environment and advocate their integration into primary schools curriculums. Captioning and revoicing can be valuable didactic tools, as they are surprise elements, that stimulate interest and curiosity and give participants the opportunity to create tangible products. Moreover, participants really appreciate AVT as a tool in that it promotes autonomous learning, but at the same time fosters collaboration and social interaction. Future investigation may concentrate on the following aspects: longitudinal studies to evaluate the effect of using AVT in the foreign language classroom, the replication of existing experiments but with differing language combinations, the creation of a database of cartoon video clips to be utilised in the foreign language classroom to avoid the time-consuming preparation of materials and encourage teachers to integrate them at schools, the employment of new tools, platforms or strategies to make AVT more collaborative in an online learning environment, or the insights gleaned from combined AVT task-based activities in the development of children's lexical competence during the process of language learning.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

About the author

Francesca Nicora is a JSPS (Japan for Society of the Promotion of Science) Post-Doc Fellow at Kobe University in Japan. She holds a MA in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (Università degli Studi di Pisa, Italy), a MA in E-learning and E-teaching Italian to Foreigners (University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy) and a PgCert in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, University of Galway, Ireland). She has completed her Structured-PhD Degree in Italian Studies from the University of Galway, Ireland, with a thesis entitled 'Prosodic training in foreign language: a study with Hiberno-English learners of Italian', winner of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics Postgraduate Award, the European Doctorate Award and the Grant-in-Aid of Publication fund (Moore Institute, University of Galway). Her research interests span from second language acquisition, phonology of intonation, speech prosody, corpus linguistics, to audiovisual translation practices and technologies applied to language learning.

Acknowledgements

References

Alonso-Pérez, R. & Sánchez-Requena, A. (2018). Teaching foreign languages through audiovisual translation resources: teachers' perspective. *Applied Language Learning, 28*(2), 1-24.

Amponsah S., van Wyk, M. M., & Kolugu, M. K. (2021). Academic experiences of "Zoom-fatigue" as a virtual streaming phenomenon during the covid 19 pandemic. *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies, 17*(6), 1-16.

Askildson, L. (2005). Effect of humor in the language classroom: humor as a pedagogical tool in theory and practice. *Arizona Working Papers in SLAT, 12*, 45-61.

Bell, A. (2007). Designing and testing questionnaires for children. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *12*(5), 461-469.

Beltramello, A. & Nicora, F. (2021). Captioning and revoicing activities to learn Italian as a foreign language: A didactic proposal for children. *The Journal of Language and Teaching Technology,* Rutgers University Press, Italian Studies, III: 1-23.

Burke, J. & Dempsey, M. (2020). Covid-19 Practice in primary schools in Ireland report. National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland. https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2020/04/Covid-19-Practice-in-Primary-Schools-Report-1.pdf [10/11/2021]

Chiu, Y. H. (2012). Can film dubbing projects facilitate EFL learners' acquisition of English pronunciation? *British Journal of Educational Technology, 43*(1), 41-44.

Danan, M. (2010). Dubbing projects for the language learner: a framework for integrating audiovisual translation into task-based instruction. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 23*(5), 441-456.

Díaz Cintas, J. (1995). El subtitulado como técnica docente. *Vida Hispánica, 12*, 10-14.

Díaz Cintas, J. (1997). Un ejemplo de explotación de los medios audiovisuales en la didáctica de lenguas extranjeras. In M. Cuéllar (Ed.), *Las nuevas tecnologías integradas en la programación didáctica de lenguas extranjeras* (pp. 1818-191). Universitat de Valencia.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2001). Teaching subtitling at university. *Paper presented at the Traning Translators and Interpreters in the New Millennium*. Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2008). Introduction. The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation. In J.Díaz Cintas (Ed.), *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 1-18). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Dickson, K., Richardson, M., Kwan, I., MacDowall, W., Burchett, H., Stansfield, C., Brunton, G., Sutcliffe, K., & Thomas, J. (2018). Screen-based activities and children and young people's mental health: a systematic map of reviews. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College of London. https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=3748 [10/02/2022].

Dore, M. & Vagnoli, L. (2020). Amateur dubbing and humour to promote well-being among hospitalised children and adolescents. In M. Dore (Ed.), Humour translation in the age of multimedia (pp. 158-176). Routledge.

Fernández-Costales, A. (2021a). Audiovisual translation in primary education. Students' perceptions of the didactic possibilities of subtitling and dubbing in foreign language learning. *Meta: Translators' Journal, 6*(2), 280-300.

Fernández-Costales, A. (2021b). Subtitling and dubbing as teaching resources in CLIL in primary education: the teachers' perspective. *Porta Linguarum, 36*, 175-192.

Ibáñez Moreno, A. & Vermeulen, A. (2013). Audio description as a tool to improve lexical and phraseological competence in foreign language learning. In D. Tsigari & G. Floros (Eds.), *Translation in language teaching and assessment* (pp. 41-61). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2020). Online learning, teaching and education continuity planning for schools. https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/covid-19/pdfs/online-learning-continuity-planning-en.pdf [10/02/2022]

Herrero, C., Sánchez Requena, A., & Escobar, M. (2017). Una propuesta triple. Análisis filmico, traducción audiovisual y enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. *inTRAlinea Online Translation Journal, 19,* 1-17.

Hu, X., Chiu, M.M., Leung W.M.V, & Yelland, N. (2021). Technology integration for young children during COVID-19: towards future online teaching. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *52*, 1513-1537.

Huber, B., Tarasuik, J., Antoniou, M. N., Garrett, C., Bowe, S. J., Kaufman, J., & Team, S. B. (2016). Young children's transfer of learning from a touchscreen device. *Computers in Human Behavior, 56*, 56-64.

Kim, H. (2020). The efficacy of Zoom technology as an educational tool for English reading comprehension achievement in EFL classroom. *The International Journal of Advanced Culture Technology*, *8*(3), 198-205.

Kohnke, L. & Moorhouse, B. L. (2020). Facilitating synchronous online language learning through Zoom. *RELC Journal*, *53*(1) 1-6.

Konotop, O., Bykonia O. S., Bondar, O. Y., Shevchenko Y. V., & Kasianchuk, N. (2021). Practice of using GoToMeeting/Zoom in the study of foreign languages. *Journal for educators, teachers and trainers, 12*(3), 176-186.

Krosnick, J.A. (1991). Response strategies for coping with the cognitive demands of attitude measures in survey. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 5*, 213-236.

Kumai, W. (1996). Karaoke movies: dubbing movies for pronunciation. *The Language Teacher Online, 20*(9). https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare/articles/2049-karaoke-movies-dubbing-movies-pronunciation [03/10/2022]

Lertola, J. (2015). Subtitling in language teaching: suggestions for language teachers. In G. Yves, A. Caimi & C. Mariotti (Eds.), *Subtitles and language learning* (pp.245-267). Peter Lang.

Lertola, J. (2019). *Audiovisual translation in the foreign language classroom: applications in the teaching of English and other foreign languages*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593736.pdf. [03/10/2022]

Lertola, J. & Mariotti, C. (2017). Reverse dubbing and subtitling: raising pragmatic awareness in Italian ESL learners. *JoSTrans_The Journal of Specialised Translation, 28*, 103-121.

López Cirugeda, I. & Sánchez Ruiz, R. (2013). Subtitling as a didactic tool. A teacher training experience. *Porta Linguarum, 20*, 45-62.

Meskill, C. & Anthony, N. (2018). Teaching Children Online: a conversational-based approach. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters.

Mu'awanah, N., Sumardi S., & Suparno S. (2021). Exploring EFL students' perception of using Zoom during learning from home period. *Proceeding AISLET (Annual International Seminar on English language teaching), 6*(1), 191-204.

Navarrete, M. (2018). The use of audio description in foreign language education: a preliminary approach. *Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Contexts. Audiovisual translation in applied linguistics: beyond case studies*, *4*(1), 129-150.

Nicora, F., McLoughlin, L., & Bologna, O. (2022a) Higher Education and new trends in the digitalized labour market: broaden language students' horizons, In E. Domínguez Romero, J. Bobkina, C. Herrero, S. Stefanova Radoulska, I. Vanderschelden (Eds.) *Visual Literacy and Digital Communication: The Role of Media in New Educational Practices*. Editorial Comares, Granada, Spain. 79-100.

Nicora, F., Bologna, O., & McLoughlin, L. (2022b). Open Educational Resources for online language teacher training: conceptual framework and practical implementation. *International Journal on Integrating Technology in Education, 11*(3), 1-18.

Noble, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S., & Rowling, L. (2008). A scoping study on student well-being. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations.

Nuryanto, M. (2021). Fostering success and motivating EFL learners using Zoom meeting: a synchronous learning strategy. *Anglophile Journal, 1*(2): 1-21. https://dx.doi.org/10.51278/anglophile.v1i2.174 [03/10/2022]

O'Sullivan, K., Clark, S., McGrane, A., Rock, N., Burke, L., Boyle, N., Joksimovic, N., & Marshall, K. (2021). A qualitative study of child and adolescent mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,* 18,1602:1-15. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33504101/ [10/02/2022]

Paas, F., & Sweller, J. (2014). Implications of cognitive load theory for multimedia learning. In R. Mayer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning* (pp. 27-42). Cambridge University Press.

Rayahu, D. (2020). Synchronous Zoom web conference system: an exploratory study on students' e-learning experience. *Journal of ELT research, 5*(1). 68-79. https://journal.uhamka.ac.id/index.php/jer/article/view/4115 [10/02/2022]

Risma, S.N. (2021). An analysis of the utilizing Zoom application to English learners' speaking skill motivation. *Professional Journal of English Education, 4(*3): 433-45.

Sánchez Requena, A. (2016). Audiovisual translation in teaching foreign languages: contributions to dubbing to develop fluency and pronunciation in spontaneous conversations. *Porta Linguarum, 26*, 9-21.

Sarko, S. (2008). Teaching English vocabulary to children by using pictures and cartoon videos: A comparative study, at Sdncilubang ii, Bogor, Gunadarma University [Unpublished PhD Dissertation]. www.gunadarma.ac.id [10/11/2021]

Schmidt, R.W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11*(2): 129-58.

Schmidt, S. R., & Williams A. R. (2001). Memory for humorous cartoons. *Memory & Cognition, 29*(2), 305-311.

Sokoli, S. (2018). Exploring the possibilities of interactive audiovisual activities for language learning. *Special Issue of Translatiotn and Translanguaging in Multimedia Contexts, 4*(1), 77-100.

Spicer, A. (2020). Findings endless video calls exhausting? You're not alone. https://theconversation.com/finding-endless-video-calls-exhausting-youre-not-alone-137936 [10/11/2021]

Szente, J. (2020). Live virtual sessions with toddlers and preschoolers amid COVID-19: implications for early childhood teacher education. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 28*(2), 373-380.

Talaván, N. (2020). The didactic value of AVT in foreign language education. In L. Bogucki & M. Deckert (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of audiovisual translation and media accessibility* (pp. 567-592). Palgrave Macmillan.

Talaván, N., & Ávila-Cabrera, J.J. (2015). First insights into the combination of dubbing and subtitling as L2 didactic tools. In Y. Gambier, A. Caimi, & C. Mariotti (Eds*.), Subtitiles and language learning: Principles, strategies and practical experiences* (pp.149-172). Bern: Peter Lang.

Talaván, N., Bárcena, E., & Villarroel, A. (2014). Aprendizaje colaborativo asistido por ordenador para la transferencia de las competencias mediadora y lingüístico comunicativa en inglés especializado. In M. L. Pérez Cañado & J. Ráez Padilla (Eds.), *Digital competence development in higher education: an international perspective* (pp-87-106). Peter Lang.

Tourangeau, R. & Rasinski, K.A. (1988). Cognitive processes underlying context effects in attitude measurement. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 299-314.

Wagener, D. (2006). Promoting independent learning skills using video on digital language laboratories. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 19*(4-5), 279-286.

Wang, W. & Loewen, S. (2016). Nonverbal behaviour and corrective feedback in nine ESL university-level classroom. *Language teaching Research, 20*(4): 459-78.

Weyers, J. (1999). The Effect of Authentic Video on Communicative Competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, *83*(3), 339-349.

Zabalbeascoa, P., Sokoli, S., & Torres, O. (2012). ClipFlair foreign language learning through interactive revoicing and captioning of clips. Lifelong learning programmes – Key activity 2. Languages, multilateral project. D2.1. Conceptual framework and pedagogical methodology. Unpublished project deliverable available at http://clipflair.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/D2.1ConceptualFramework.pdf [10/11/2022]