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Voice-over to improve oral Production skills: the VICTOR project

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Abstract
The assessment of the potential of audiovisual translation in foreign language education has been receiving increasing attention in the past few years. Although subtitling as a didactic tool is the modality that has been studied the most, research on revoicing techniques, such as dubbing and audiodescription is also starting to become the focus of attention. The VICTOR project was conceived as an attempt to assess the potential of yet another revoicing option that needed to be addressed: voice-over. Students enrolled in English C1 at the Online Foreign Language Centre of the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) volunteered to take part in this pilot experience and produced various revoiced versions of four videos (chosen among ten preselected clips) over the course of two months. The researchers analysed the experience through language assessment tests (related to improvement in pronunciation), questionnaires and observation. A YouTube channel was created to share and peer-review the tasks carried out and an ad-hoc rubric was designed to assess the revoicing work performed on the videos. The results are promising enough in terms of oral production skills improvement to encourage further research in the area.

1. Introduction

The potential benefits of audiovisual translation (AVT) in Foreign Language Learning (FLL) have been the focus of attention of a growing number of researchers over the last two

decades. However, no study had yet centred on the didactic use of voice-over, that is, on having the students recording their voices to produce new clips with an extra audio track where they would repeat and/or recreate the existing dialogues, leaving the original soundtrack in the background (at a lower volume), with a slight delay in the synchronization.

Dubbing as an FLL tool (especially intralingual dubbing, from L2 to L2, or interlingual reverse, from L1 to L2) has already been used and tested in FLL by various scholars. In this type of task, students record themselves trying to mimic this AVT modality, i.e., substituting the actors' voices with their own and doing their best to match their words with the characters' mouth movements, in order to make the resulting audiovisual (AV) product as natural as possible. However, when teachers use dubbing in the classroom, it is often challenging to make learners include the performance element real actors introduce, the one that would provide the definite touch of realism to the task. That is why the modality of voice-over, where the voice and the tone are typically more neutral than in dubbing, and do not necessary imply a performance element, was thought to be even more suitable for the educational context.

The teaching innovation group ARENA (Accesibilidad, tRaducción audiovisual y aprEndizaje de leNguAs), based at the UNED, put forward the research project VICTOR (Voice-over to improve oral Production skills) during the academic year 2016-2017. Researchers from other universities (Universidad de Zaragoza, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Sheffield Hallam University, University College London, Manchester Metropolitan University and Queen Mary University of London) also collaborated in the experience.

The main objective was to evaluate the validity of voice-over as a didactic resource and the project's main research question was whether voice-over would help enhance FLL oral production skills, especially in terms of pronunciation and intonation. A secondary hypothesis as to how voice-over could enhance other FLL skills in an integrated manner was also put forward given the expected potential benefits of such task, as will be explained below. Provided that the positive didactic effects of dubbing had already been proved by a series of scholars, the tasks students were presented with contained not only voice-over but also guided dubbing and free or creative revoicing. In the course of two months, students were asked to work on four videos they could choose out of a preselected list of ten, following three stages: voice-over, guided dubbing and free/creative revoicing (where they were free to choose either voice-over or dubbing). To assess the didactic potential of this AVT modality used in FLL, participants were assessed on their improvement in terms of pronunciation (comparing a pre-test with the final recordings of the fourth video) and a post-questionnaire was passed. The data gathered was triangulated with the observation on the part of the researchers on the assessment of the evolution of the students' work on revoicing through the different videos.

2. State of the art

The use of AVT in FLL introduces various elements that make the corresponding task (be it subtitling, dubbing, audiodescription, etc.) extremely effective: the technological context is

always present, information is received and produced through a combination of channels (visual, oral and written), and both the mediation element of translation and authentic materials are an intrinsic part of the task.

The benefits of AV language, a type of language that imitates authenticity from a controlled angle, i.e., following a script, is also of special note in this scenario (Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera 2015*a*). This type of language is commonly deprived of unnecessary hedges, hesitations, repetitions or self-corrections that can sometimes hamper language acquisition, especially at lower levels. Hence, AVT in FLL implies the use of authenticity and technology within a controlled and familiar setting: it is controlled in terms of the type of language involved and the use of specific software (subtitling, video editing, etc.) and familiar because it introduces elements of everyday life (AV technology) into the educational context.

It must be noted that the use of AVT tools that is considered for the purposes of this study is always an active one where the students are the sole producers of the translation, i.e., they do not profit from the reception of subtitles or revoicing used as a support to develop specific FLL skills, but they are actually performing the AVT tasks. Various scholars have analysed the potential of the diverse AVT modalities used actively in the FLL context in the course of the last two decades. In terms of subtitling, Williams and Thorne 2000, Talaván 2010, Incalcaterra and Lertola 2011, Sokoli *et al*. 2011, Borguetti and Lertola 2014 or Lertola 2015 provide good examples of short-term projects that have backed up through relevant data how the creation of subtitles by the students themselves can be beneficial to improve most FLL skills. As far as dubbing is concerned, although there is a fewer number of related studies, researchers such as Burston (2005), Danan (2010), Chiu (2012) or He & Wasuntarasophit (2015) can be counted among the most relevant exponents who have undertaken individual projects that have tested the validity of having the students dubbing specific pre-selected clips to improve oral skills in FLL contexts. The accessible modality of audiodescription is also starting to receive attention in scholarly circles (Ibáñez and Vermeulen 2014; Ibáñez et al. 2015), although its relevance in terms of research is only starting.

Most of the researchers who have been involved in VICTOR come from an extensive background on teaching innovation projects on the application of AVT resources to FLL that have taken them to the present project, where they felt the need to assess the use of voice-over as a didactic task. As a summary of their evolution through the various AVT modalities used to enhance different FLL skills, it should be noted that subtitling has been the task that has received most attention in this scenario. Projects such as CATIL (Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón 2014*a*; Talaván *et al.* 2016), C1 (Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón 2014*b*), or iCAP (Talaván *et al.* 2016) have attempted to provide hands-on experience of the use of active subtitling in online distance learning environments in different combinations (interlingual –direct and reverse, intralingual or combined with dubbing), to improve listening and/or writing skills in an integrated manner, often complemented with lexical acquisition and the enhancement of oral production skills.

On the other hand, CONTACT (Talaván *et al.* 2014), DST (Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera 2015*b*) and iDUB (Talaván and Costal 2017) were projects that aimed at providing evidence of the didactic value of dubbing in online environments; this AVT modality was tested first in

combination with active subtitling (following the interlingual reverse combination, from L1 to L2) and then on its own (working on the intralingual realm, from L2 to L2), to improve speaking production skills. Additionally, two studies involving accessibility modalities have also been undertaken: RECORDS (Talaván and Lertola 2016) and SubLITE (Talaván and Costal 2017). These two projects aimed at assessing the potential of both audiodescription and the production of subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing or SDH in online FLL contexts to enhance speaking fluency and writing skills respectively.

The next logical step seemed to be trying out voice-over, especially considering that the dubbing productions of the participants involved in the aforementioned dubbing experiences seemed to be too neutral and lack the expected element of natural performance that would mimic the dubbing actors' voices. Besides, we considered that, when using voice-over, the original would always be there (in the background) and so integrated listening (to the original), speaking (producing the new audio track) and writing skills (creating the dialogue to be recorded) could be enhanced at all times. When the decision as to whether to select the interlingual or the intralingual combination was to be taken, the interlingual reverse one (that had already proved beneficial for dubbing) was discarded, provided that leaving the L1 in the background was not expected to produce any specific relevant benefits. Consequently, the intralingual (L2-L2) option was selected for the students to work with while translating and revoicing the videos.

It should be noted that the technical challenge involved in leaving the original soundtrack in the background at a lower volume was considered to be a potential hindrance given similar related challenges faced when other less technically involved experiences were set up (e.g., just synchronizing the voice with the video was a problem for some students in dubbing projects). This fact together with the innovative character of the task (no previous test existed to acknowledge the potential success of the didactic use of voice-over) led to the final design that was decided upon, where voice-over was combined with dubbing, in order to ensure at least part of the expected didactic benefits. This deeply thought-through design, where methodology and resources play a key role, is detailed below.

3. Project design

As previously mentioned, the project was designed with great attention to detail. After planning which type of tasks were going to be carried out by the participants, the research team considered all the elements that had to be provided to assist the students with those tasks, and all the steps that would build the structure of the project. As will be explained in this section, nothing was left to chance and every part of the design was thoroughly put together. For the sake of clarity, this section will be divided in two subheadings: methodology and resources.

3.1 Methodology

VICTOR was set up as a task-based project. The tasks involved the production of new audio tracks (through revoicing) for a selection of short classic American advertisements from the 1950s and 60s. The students had to work individually first and then collaboratively assess the work

carried out by two of their peers. The aim was to determine whether this type of activity would improve the oral production skills and enhance other linguistic and related competences of a group of FLL students. The participants chosen to assess the validity of using voice-over as an FLL active resource in online environments were C1 English students of the UNED online language centre. It was considered a very appropriate level to evaluate the practice in a pilot phase, as their knowledge of English would avoid potential problems derived from a lack of confidence on the use of their oral production skills while recording their voices and synchronizing them to the preselected videos.

The workload was intense, as a minimum of 3 to 4 hours per week had to be devoted to completing the tasks. All the different activities would need to be carried out approximately in two months, from early December 2016 to late January 2017, and the project was organised in five steps.

It was first announced in the online C1 course and those students who showed interest in taking part were invited by email to join a project community, also online, where they had access to all the didactic materials. The first step that they had to follow was to complete a pre-questionnaire and an introductory task (a pre-test). The questionnaire asked about general details, including how they would describe their general proficiency in English and in specific competences and their use of AV materials. The introductory test consisted of the recording of a radio advertisement in which the students had to speak for 60 seconds using some words and expressions provided in order to guide their speech. This task was similar to what they would have to do later on in the project and so the resulting videos were assessed by the researchers as to gather each student's initial level of oral production skills.

In the next step, the participants had to visit the VICTOR Project YouTube channel (https://goo.gl/elXukl) to watch the video tutorials and have a look at a sample task. The first of the two tutorials introduced the project and the tasks that had to be carried out (with a version for Windows and one for MAC), and the second one explained how to complete the different stages of activities to be performed for each of the chosen videos. The sample task introduced the participants to the type of activities that they would do later, with examples of all the different phases learners had to follow with each video.

In the third step, each participant had to choose four out of the ten classic American advertisements that had been compiled by the researchers, and in the following step the participants started to work on the revoicing activities. They had 7-10 days for each video, where they were asked to complete the following three stages: (1) voice-over, in which the student had to produce a faithful transcript of the advert, use it as a script to record his/her voice and merge it with the video (with a slight delay in the synchronisation) lowering the original sound; (2) guided dubbing, through the creation of a new script using a specific list of words and expressions provided by the researchers (for each video), thus the learner had to record a new audio track and substitute the original; and (3) free revoicing, where the student could choose between voice-over or dubbing in order to provide a free and creative adaptation of the advertisement.

In the fifth and final step of the project, each participant had to upload the three versions of their chosen adverts to the VICTOR YouTube channel, as each participant had to create his/her own playlist, and later self-assess their work and evaluate that of at least two of their peers. This process would be repeated with all four advertisements at the rate of two per month, that is two in December and two in January. Again, no aspect of the project had been left to chance and the guided dubbing mentioned in step four had a particular purpose. The words and expressions selected to guide the students in each video contained all of the eighteen phonemes that, according to Herrero de Haro and Andión (2012), are commonly considered difficult to pronounce for Spanish students, as they exist in Received Pronunciation (RP) but not in Spanish. These phonemes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Difficult phonemes for Spanish speakers (adapted from Herrero de Haro and Andión 2012: 6-8).

	Phoneme	In Spanish	In English - RP
1	/v/	--------	Visit
2	/z/	--------	Zebra
3	/ʃ/	--------	Shoe
4	/ʒ/	--------	Treasure
5	/h/	--------	How
6	/ʤ/	--------	Jacket
7	[ɬ]	--------	Hell (allophone of /l/)
8	/ŋ/	--------	Reading / link
9	/s/ + consonant at the beginning of word	--------	Speed, student
10	/iː/	--------	Free
11	/uː/	--------	Two
12	/ɪ/	--------	Bit
13	/ʊ/	--------	Could
14	/ə/	--------	Again
15	/ɜː/	--------	Third
16	/ʌ/	--------	Bus
17	/ɔː/	--------	North
18	/æ/	--------	Bat

In order to illustrate this point, an example of this attention to phonemes can be seen in the guide provided by the researchers for the advertisement for *3M*, in the table 2. It shows how the eighteen sounds are represented at least in one of the words that the students had to use in stage two, guided dubbing, when this video in particular was selected.

Table 2: Phonemes included in the guided dubbing of the *3M* advertisement.

Word or slogan	Phonetic transcription	Phonemes it contains
Having	ˈhævɪŋ	5, 18, 1, 12, 8
Hundred	hʌndrəd	5, 16, 14
Challenges	ʧæləndʒɪz	18, 7, 14, 6, 12, 2
Speed	spi:d	9, 10
Slow Motion	sloʊ ˈmoʊʃən	13, 3, 14
Usually	ˈjuʒəwəli	11, 4, 14
For	fɔr	17
Versatility makes us champions	vɜrsəˈtɪləti meɪks ʌs ˈʧæmpiənz	1, 15, 14, 12, 16, 18, 14, 2

This list (there was a specific one per video) was also used by the researchers to assess the progress in each student's pronunciation in the analysis of the final versions of the last video each participant worked with, as part of the language assessment post-test.

The last activity that the participants had to carry out consisted of filling in a post-questionnaire that aimed to gather their opinions about the project. They were asked about the videos that they had selected, the improvement they considered they had achieved, their favourite activity and their opinion of the tasks that they had performed.

3.2 Resources

There are three specific resources used to guide the students through the different steps of VICTOR that need to be highlighted: the videos selected, the revoicing rubric and the oral production rubric.

As previously mentioned, in step three each student had to select four out of the ten classic American adverts to work with, whose titles, topics and direct links are shown in Table 3. This list of videos had been compiled by the researchers according to several characteristics. They had to be old enough so they would not be subject to any copyright issues, contain an interesting topic and some humorous aspect, belong to the same AV type, be self-contained and with enough contextual clues in order to be easily understood without the need for any more information, have one single speaker to make it possible for an individual student to do the revoicing tasks, and be around a minute in length to keep the students' workload down as there were three stages that had to be performed for each of the chosen videos.

Table 3: The 10 American advertising videos offered to the students.

Brand name	***Advertised product***	***Link to the video***
3M	Photocopiers	https://goo.gl/iuR6k1
Aetna	Insurance	https://goo.gl/1C4xDv
Ansco	Cameras	https://goo.gl/QpyfA1
Band Aid	Adhesive bandages	https://goo.gl/ddj98k
Remington	Electric saber	https://goo.gl/H81Lmo
Source	Carpeting	https://goo.gl/UGZrXD
Texaco	Service stations	https://goo.gl/jsCQrA
Vitalis	Hair tonic	https://goo.gl/j20sUJ
Volkswagen	Cars	https://goo.gl/k5jcUn
Zenith	Radios	HYPERLINK "https://goo.gl/QnJLjc" https://goo.gl/QnJLjc

Once the students had produced their own audio files, merged them with their chosen videos and uploaded them onto their YouTube playlist, they had to self-assess the work that they had done and also that of at least two of the other participants. In that way, the researchers created an ad hoc rubric (table 4) that would ease the process and highlight the most interesting features of the work performed by the learners, which were: synchrony, characterisation and sound effects or creativity, put together with the more specific aspects that would provide answers to the project's main research question, i.e., whether voice-over would help enhance FLL oral production skills, especially in terms of pronunciation and intonation.

Table 4: Rubric for the self- and peer assessment of videos.

	Poor (5%)	Average (10%	Good (15%)	Excellent (20%)
Synchrony				
Pronunciation				
Intonation				
Characterisation				
Sound effect OR creativity/ vocabulary used				
				Total: (out of 100%)

In this rubric, the term synchrony takes into consideration the degree of correspondence between image and speech; pronunciation assesses the accuracy and correctness of the oral delivery at the word and phrase levels; intonation refers to whether images, gestures, body movements and facial expressions match the sound track adequately; characterisation highlights the existence of clear vocal adaptations to convey the distinguishing features of a particular individual; and finally, sound effects include every other element in the soundtrack apart from the dialogues. This same rubric was also used by the researchers in the observation phase to contribute towards the triangulation of the data gathered in order to prove whether this project design had any impact on the participants' English oral production skills and to what extent, as will be discussed later.

The previous rubric was complemented and enriched with the other assessment rubric, the one that evaluated the oral production skills of the two language assessment tests: the first one was the pre-test, or introductory task, and the second followed the analysis of the final two versions (guided dubbing and free revoicing) of the last video that each student had created. This rubric (available online at https://goo.gl/Cf8RXi) was designed only for the use of the researchers and it highlights several aspects: general features, fluency and the pronunciation of the phonemes previously mentioned, all of it in detail, with items such as 'fast and continuous speech (speed)', 'easy to follow speech', 'pronunciation', 'naturalness when speaking (intonation)', 'characterisation', 'hesitations and wavering', and all the 'consonant' and 'vowel' sounds to be evaluated.

4. Preliminary results

Before analising the preliminary results gathered from the VICTOR project, a description of the sample needs to be presented (according to the data drawn from the pre-questionnaire). After clearing the answers from the subjects who enrolled but did not follow the experience through to the end, the final group of participants was made up of two males and six females, all native Spanish speakers, with an average age range of 45. 37.5% of them had no higher education qualifications and only two subjects had lived in an English speaking country (both for more than one year). Most of them considered their language skills in English either good or very good, but it is of note that this perception decreased a little when it came to the assessment of their speaking production skills, where the option 'very good' was not selected by any participant ('bad' and 'very bad' were also discarded), as can be appreciated in figure 1.

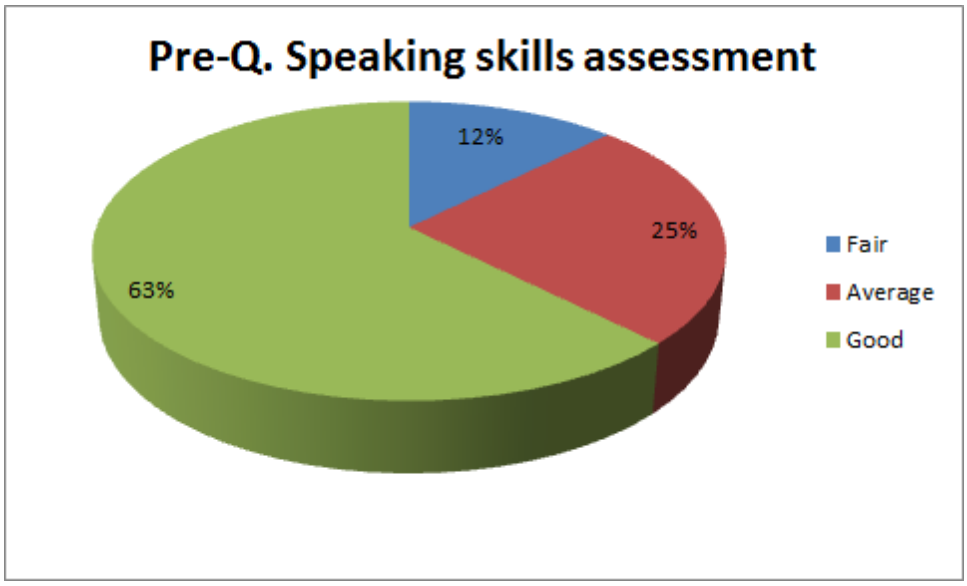

Figure 1. Self-assessment of speaking production skills (previous to VICTOR).

Additionally, most of the students (except one) were familiar with the use of AV materials in the FLL class, especially in terms of films, sitcoms and DVDs from FLL students' books, and they were all used (with various degrees of frequency) to devoting time outside the class to learning English with the support of AV resources. On the other hand, they did not seem very familiar with voice-over, and most of them (75%) affirmed they preferred watching AV products in their original version and subtitled (in the source language). As far as their ICT skills are concerned, the students considered them either average (62%) or very good (38%), but none had ever recorded their voices synchronized with a video (with the exception of one person). Finally, their expectations regarding their involvement in the VICTOR project were quite high, since the majority of participants expected it to enhance their reading comprehension, written production, listening comprehension and oral production in English (especially these last two), as well as expand their vocabulary.

It should be noted that the preliminary results presented below will focus on the speaking production improvement as well as on the students' revoicing progress. Both aspects are based on two of the resources detailed in the section devoted to the project design: the speaking and the self-assessment and peer-assessment evaluation rubrics.

To begin with, the comparison between the data gathered from the two language assessment tests (the pre-test and the analysis of the final versions of the last video) showed a very significant improvement in terms of oral production in general, and more particularly, as regards the pronunciation of seemingly challenging sounds. Figure 2 summarizes the general improvement observed as far as the main items of the rubric relevant to the enhancement of oral production are concerned.

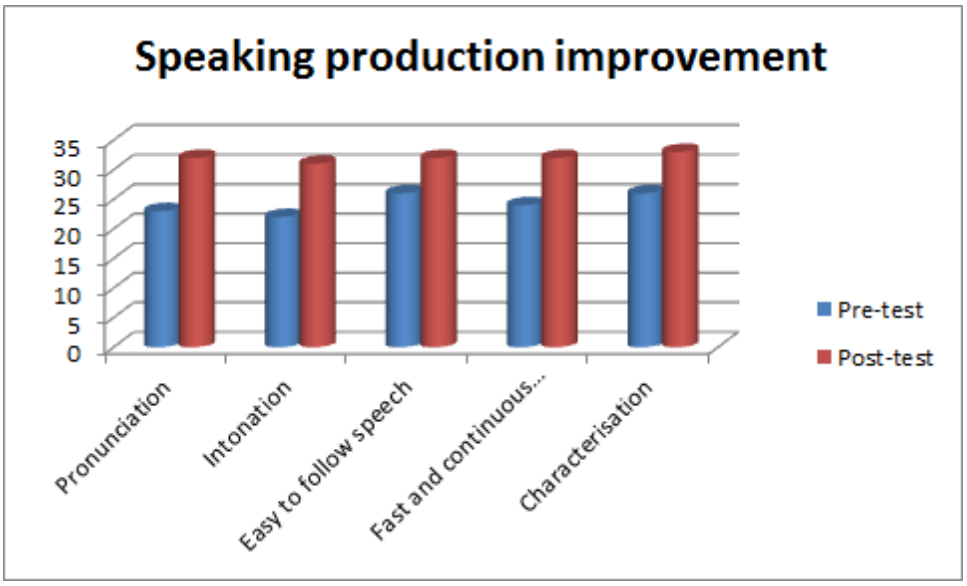

Figure 2. Comparison of data from the language assessment tests.

The most noticeable improvement is seen in both pronunciation and intonation, as expected, given the care students were supposed to take in preparing their recordings in order to sound as natural as possible and given the model of pronunciation and intonation they could follow from the original soundtrack. Although the concepts of 'easy to follow speech' and 'fast and continuous speech' may not seem as significant in a task where participants would most likely read from a script, it is relevant to note the progress in these aspects of fluency too. Finally, in terms of characterisation, there is also a relevant change; the pre-test was also an advert (which they had to compose following guidelines) but the final one they recorded positively differs from it in terms of the quality of the performance and the naturalness and realism of the result.

Focusing now on the analysis of the specific consonants and vowels that had been preselected to be the object of assessment, an important point needs to be made: the level of the students being B2 (learners studying C1), some of the consonants and vowels preselected had to be taken out of the comparison because all or most of the students already pronounced them correctly in the pre-test; it is the case of /h/, /ʤ/, [ɬ], /ŋ/ and /s/ + consonant at the beginning of a word. Hence, the ones assessed in terms of the learners' improvement through VICTOR were only /v/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Figure 3 presents a summary of the students' progress in this regard.

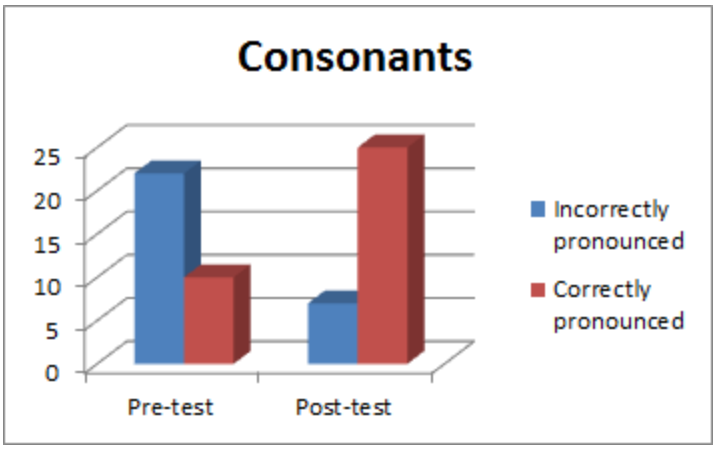

Figure 3. Change in the pronunciation of challenging consonant sounds.

These four sounds showed a very positive move from a majority of incorrectly pronounced marks to a scenario where most of the participants pronounced them well (especially in the case of /z/ and /ʃ/, where all of them did).

Regarding vowels, a few of the preselected sounds had to be discarded once again (for the aforementioned reason of the students' level that accounted for the correct pronunciation of some of them); this was the case for /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ɔ:/ and /æ/. Consequently, the sounds analysed and compared in figure 4 below are /i:/, /u:/, /ə/ and /ɜ:/, which are those that still reflected some problems in pronunciation.

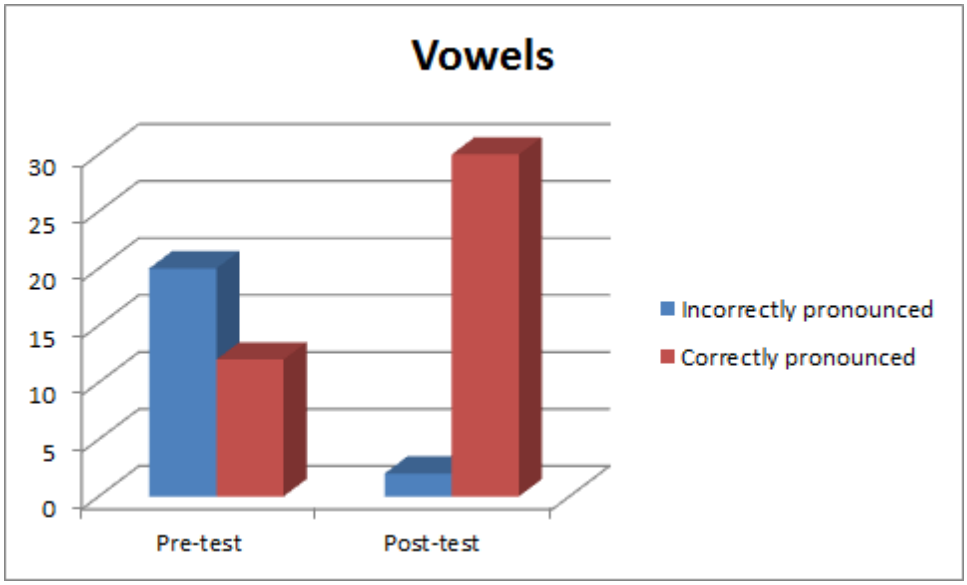

Figure 4. Change in the pronunciation of challenging vowel sounds.

The four vowel sounds analysed reflected a very positive move from a majority of incorrectly pronounced marks to a context where most of the participants (or all, as happened with /u:/ and /ɜ:/) pronounced them well in the last videos they recorded, i.e., in the post-test.

Therefore, the improvement in terms of oral production skills derived from the language assessment tests (the pre-test and the two final recordings of the fourth video) seems relevant enough, not only in terms of speed and naturalness (fluency) but also (and specially) as far as pronunciation (clearly confirmed through the analysis of the specific consonant and vowel sounds aforementioned) and intonation are concerned.

Moving on to the participants' revoicing improvement evaluated through the self-assessment and peer-assessment rubric students used for each of the videos they produced with the new soundtracks, there are several interesting aspects worth mentioning. The first one is that all students were harder when assessing their own work and gave themselves a lower mark than those provided by their peers. Another remarkable aspect is that they considered that the worst part of their work was the sound effects, although this was not particularly highlighted when their peers were producing the marks; this is probably due to the technical challenge involved in the project, which was more personally perceived through the whole process.

Other aspects that the participants found challenging were intonation and pronunciation, in that order; this acknowledges the fact that they were concerned with improving these two oral production skills, something that they accomplished according to the data just presented. Synchrony was marked lower in stages 1 and 2 than when an original soundtrack was produced; this result was expected given the freedom provided in the free revoicing phase and perhaps also due to the fact that this stage was generally considered as the most enjoyable judging by the comments that the participants posted next to their self-assessments.

Adding to this the researchers' assessment of the participants' revoicing progress, it is also interesting to highlight how their marks in intonation and pronunciation seemed to agree more with those produced in the self-assessment than with those of the evaluation produced by peers, where learners seemed more lenient with those types of errors. It is also noticeable that both intonation and pronunciation improved by stage three of the work for each video, confirming, once again, the enhancement derived from the language assessment tests analysed above.

Synchrony was judged in a very similar way by researchers and peers with higher marks than those provided in the self-assessment. The same applies to sound effects and characterisation, which obtained higher marks in the researchers' and peers' assessment than when the participants evaluated their own work. Figure 5 illustrates the average marks for each item in the work of each student, thus comparing the totals for the three evaluation processes that each video went through from self-, peer-and researchers' assessment.

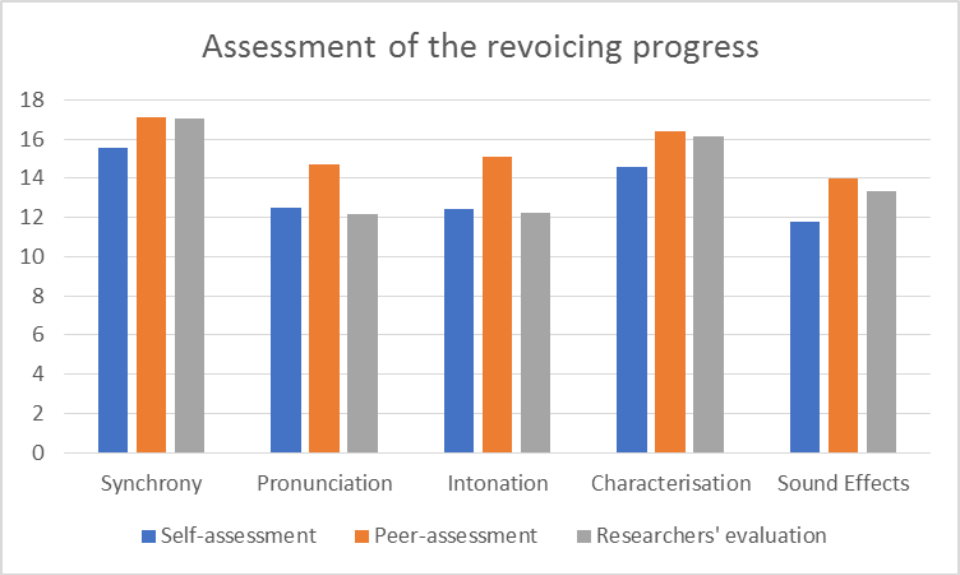

Figure 5: A comparative of the marks produced in self-, peer- and researchers' assessment processes.

As the previous figure illustrates, the average marks for intonation and pronunciation are very similar in the self-assessment and researchers' evaluation processes. However, the opposite effect is highlighted in items such as characterisation, synchrony and sound effects, in which peer-assessment is closer to the evaluation marks provided by the researcher than to those produced by the participants' analysis of their own tasks.

5. Discussion

The data gathered from the post-questionnaire (taking into account the responses of the eight subjects who completed the experience) is used to triangulate the preliminary results offered in the previous section, so as to discuss the main outcomes of the VICTOR project from a more thorough perspective that may provide a higher significance and reliability to the data presented in this paper and so allow for a certain degree of generalisation of the results of this pilot study.

First of all, it should be noted that all the 10 preselected videos attracted the students' attention (some more than others), since all were used at least by one participant, as figure 6 clearly shows.

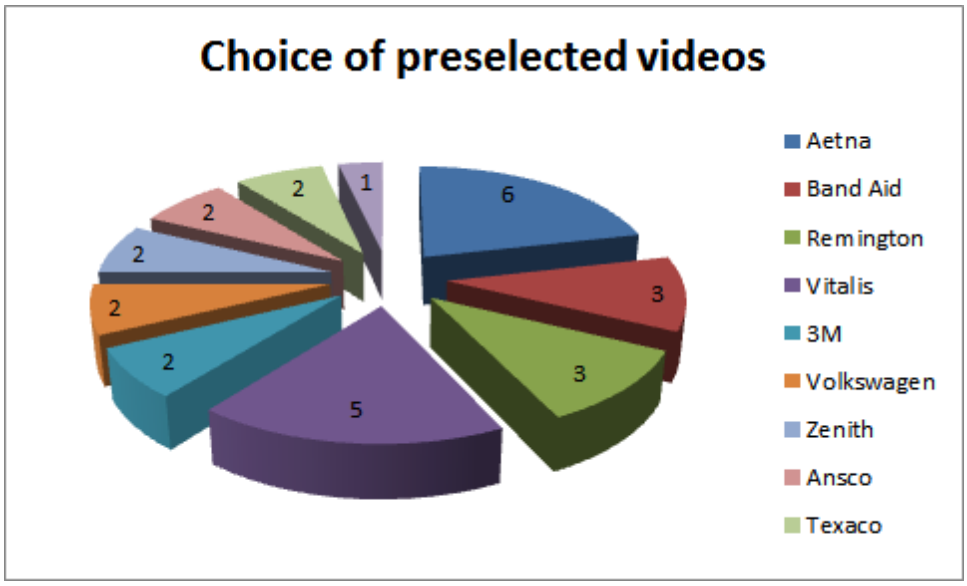

Figure 6. Distribution of videos in use.

There are two videos in particular, *Aetna* and *Vitalis*, that seemed especially interesting given the number of students who decided to work on them. The rest, except for *Source* (chosen by one participant only) appear to be equally relevant and motivating.

Even if the main objective of the project was the development of oral production skills through the use of voice-over, we considered this AVT modality capable of enhancing other related FLL skills in an integrated manner. To assess this potential from a preliminary stance, we decided to check on the students' perceptions in this regard, and the results are very encouraging as can be appreciated in figure 7.

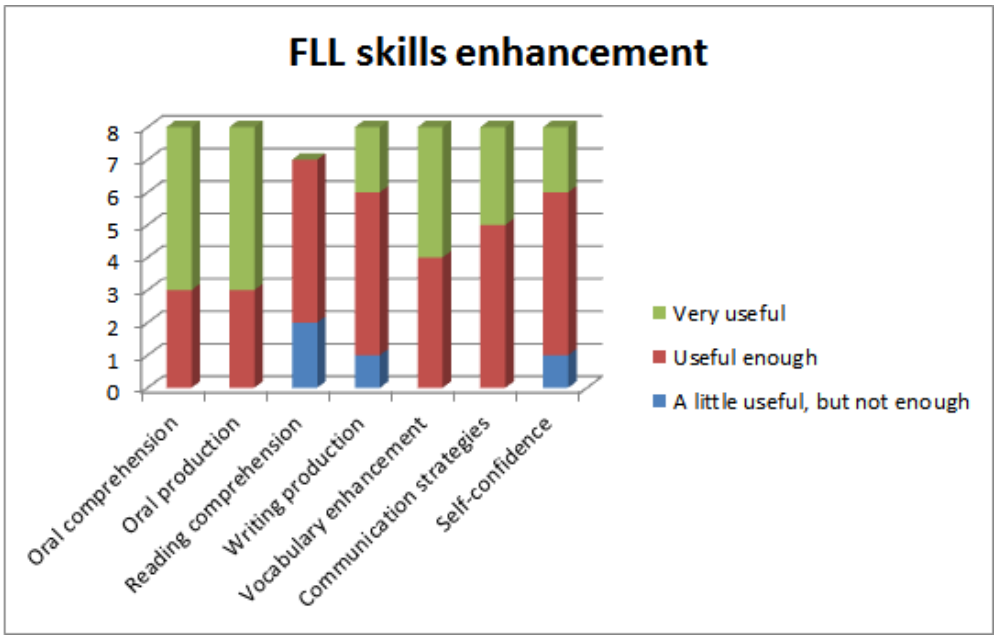

Figure 7. Integrated skills improvement.

Hence, the secondary hypothesis of the potential of voice-over to improve various FLL skills in an integrated manner is confirmed. Obviously, oral production stays above the other skills, as expected, thus triangulating and providing a higher degree of reliability to the data presented in the previous section on the improvement derived from the language assessment (pre- and post-) tests. It is also noticeable the parallel perception of progress as far as oral comprehension is concerned; this was to be expected because watching the videos repeatedly in the L1, together with the fact that voice-over leaves the original soundtrack in the background, was initially thought to help in this direction, i.e., to improve both oral skills equally in a retroactive manner. Then, although vocabulary enhancement was clearly expected as well, the remaining FLL aspects (writing production, reading comprehension, communication strategies and self-confidence in the use of English) were addressed simply to check the potential repercussion voice-over might have upon them. All in all, this AVT modality used in the didactic context appears to be considered useful enough to develop any FLL skill by most subjects, so implications for further research in several areas need to be seriously considered.

Apart from claiming that the experience had helped them improve their language skills in general and reflect about their own learning process, participants also affirmed to have developed their creative skills and improve their ICT proficiency. Provided that creativity was one of the items analysed in the pre- and post-tests' rubric, the previous data can be said to complement and confirm the results of the rubric in this regard, where there had been a clear improvement in terms of creative skills from the beginning till the end of the project, as can be derived from figure 8.

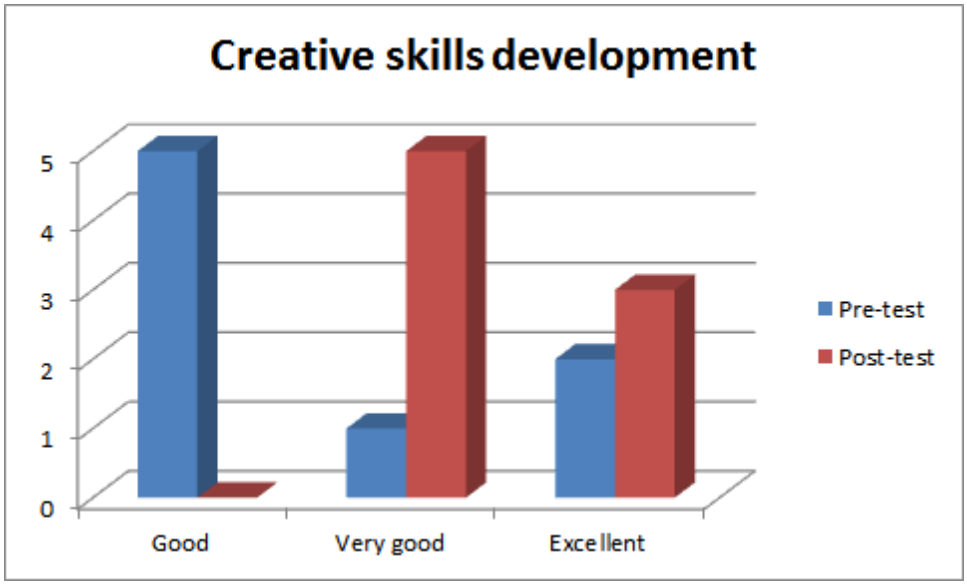

Figure 8. Improvement in creativity thanks to VICTOR.

Additionally, the participants asserted that the project had helped them to get more acquainted with the field of AVT, especially with voice-over and dubbing. The work with the clips was assessed as 'OK' by 25% of the students and 'very enjoyable' by the rest (all of them discarding the two negative options, 'not so enjoyable' and 'a bit boring'); this together with the

use of all the adverts on the part of the students (as it was mentioned above) can serve to evidence the correct pre-selection of the videos made by the research team involved in VICTOR. Moreover, the linguistic difficulty of the videos was assessed as expected, with 6 students considering them 'a bit hard', 1 'OK' and 1 'very hard' (discarding 'quite easy'), and 87% of participants considering all (25%) and many (62%) of the videos motivating.

The VICTOR project can be said to have met the students' expectations, in terms of the development of their language skills in general, the enhancement of their ICT skills and in the way the project evolved. However, the difference in terms of expectations when comparing the three stages of work with every video (voice-over, guided dubbing and free revoicing) needs to be observed. Most students were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the three modalities, but while guided dubbing and free revoicing received exactly the same assessment, voice-over remained a bit behind because one student claimed to be just 'a little [satisfied], but not enough'. When asked about which phase they enjoyed the most, once again voice-over was the least preferred modality, as figure 9 illustrates. Besides, the third phase (free revoicing) allowed them to choose between voice-over and dubbing, and while only two learners opted for the former, the rest selected free or creative dubbing.

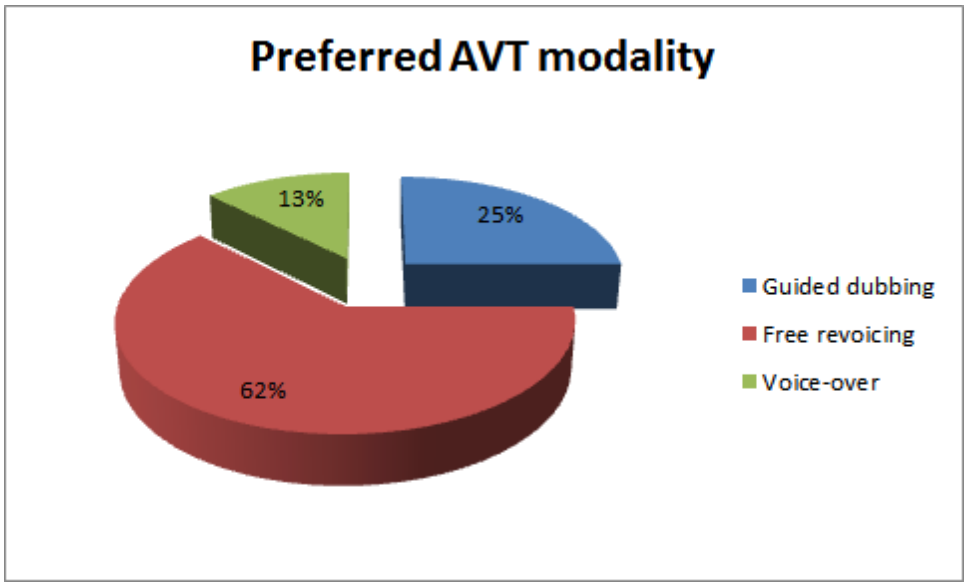

Figure 9. Comparison of AVT modalities in terms of the participants' preferences.

Obviously, the first phase, voice-over, was technically the most challenging because the original soundtrack had to be left in the background (although only 3 students commented on having had any technical difficulties at some point). It was also probably the least interesting of the three, because both guided dubbing and free revoicing included an added element of creativity. This is probably the main reason behind this difference in appreciation. However, it must be admitted that now that the assessment of the potential benefits of voice-over, both on the part of the students and as regards the more objective data analysed in the previous section, has been put

forward, a new project based exclusively on voice-over as a didactic task would most likely provide more accurate, definite and positive results.

Finally, as far as the post-questionnaire is concerned, all participants except one would like to repeat the experience, even if most of them found the tasks of voice-over and dubbing difficult enough (three 'a little', one 'a lot' and the other four 'depending on the clip'). When asked which modality they would choose, 50% would rather work on free/creative revoicing, while the preferences of the remaining half were divided between dubbing and voice-over (25% each). Interestingly enough, even if four out of eight participants found stage 1—voice-over—the most challenging, there were three students who considered free revoicing the most difficult stage (while only one found guided dubbing more challenging than the rest).

When analysing the general observations that the students wanted to add in the post-questionnaire about the project, they were very thankful for the opportunity of being part of this type of innovative teaching experience, with very positive comments such "It was great", "I think this kind of exercises are very good for learning a language. Thanks!", or even going as far as stating: "I am really thankful of having taken part in this project. I have worked a lot on my oral skills, improving specially my listening and speaking skills and widening my vocabulary. I have used different programmes and spaces which I had never used before […] This project has been truly funny and motivating; it has demanded hard work, but it has been very, very useful. I am willing to participate in any other similar project. So, I would like to be informed when starting a new project. I hope your expectations about our work on the project have been reached. Thank you very much! It has been fantastic to be involved in this project." Even when not everything went according to their expected plan, their comments were not negative about the work they had done, but about other circumstances: "I have had a good time doing this work, although technical failures with the computer have prevented me from completing it", or "Completing this project was a challenge at so many levels; too many things on the plate". The other three students did not leave any final observations so it seems clear that most of the participants enjoyed the project and, what is more interesting for the purpose of the research, found it useful for improving their oral production skills in English.

Finally, all the different steps of the assessment carried out in the playlists (by the students of their own work, by their peers, and by the researchers) provided very similar results to those previously highlighted in this discussion section: voice-over seem to be the hardest stage of the creation of new soundtracks; students found the work motivating; and the results showed a relevant level of improvement in their oral production skills, just as the analysis of the language assessment tests also indicated.

6. Conclusions

Through the VICTOR project, voice-over has proven a highly engaging activity when combined with guided dubbing and free revoicing. The research question regarding the potential

benefits of such AVT modality used as an active didactic resource has been positively answered through this pilot study, although further (more systematic) research, counting on a wider number of participants (and probably through a longer time spam) should be undertaken to confirm the data presented herein. Following the results and the discussion presented above, voice-over should be re-explored on its own, now that its educational potential has been tackled and positively assessed; probably, the technical challenge involved in the task should be clearly addressed through a step by step tutorial that would make students feel at ease with this part of the task.

Participant selection needs to be reconsidered given the important dropout suffered in this project; although this is a common trend in online environments, this time the number of participants leaving the project was too big (eight finished all the tasks and only eleven created playlists, out of the thirty learners registering at the beginning of the project). One possible reason to explain this is the fact that students were not involved in a formal training course, but in an independent language course where no special qualification is previously required. Be that as it may, probably the inclusion of some sort of reward after accomplishing the project, or even a gamification element, would help keep the numbers more stable. Besides, although the experience has had a positive response from the participants who remained, the workload might also be an issue to take into account for future research as it could be another reason for the high dropout rate.

In conclusion, those students who finished the tasks not only found it rewarding but showed a clear improvement in their skills as the assessment of their language tests and their revoicing progress, as well as their own opinions gathered from the post-questionnaire, clearly show. Additionally, the improvement in the quality of the performance and the naturalness and realism of the recordings from the pre-test to the last recordings should be taken into consideration since voice-over was thought to be more practical for the neutrality of the voices and the experience has proven that not to be the case, although probably the reason behind this fact is the combination with other AVT modalities: guided dubbing and free revoicing. Therefore, apart from studying the potential didactic benefits of voice-over further, the other two options also deserve more systematic study in the future, especially free or creative revoicing, probably combined with narration, a related AVT modality that has not been explored yet.

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