

## CHAPTER NUMBER

# AUDIO DESCRIPTION AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE LEXICAL AND PHRASEOLOGICAL COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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### 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Audio description is a culture-based translating activity of inter-semiotic nature that consists in turning the visual content of an event into language, while sometimes offering additional information on cultural references for audiences who do not share the background of the source text (Orero and Warton 2007, Braga Riera 2008). In cinema, television, theatre, opera and museums, AD aims to present the world of images to blind and visually impaired audiences. Using the time span between dialogues, the *audiodescriptor* discretely provides the relevant and necessary information to compensate for the lack of visual capture on the part of the recipient. This enables the visually impaired recipient to perceive the message as a harmonic whole, and thus follow the plot.

Over the last few decades cinema has become an interesting educational instrument: it has been shown to have a positive influence on the learners' motivation and therefore on their development of communicative strategies, especially with regard to listening (Weyers 1999). More recently, various studies have proven that the different modalities of audiovisual translation (AVT) offer an excellent opportunity

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to promote foreign language (FL) learning, especially intra and interlingual subtitling (Vanderplanck 1988, d'Ydewalle 2002, King 2002, Vermeulen 2003, Danan 2004, Talaván Zanón 2006, 2010, Díaz Cintas and Fernández Cruz 2008, Pavesi and Perego 2008), and—to a lesser extent—dubbing (Chiu 2012). In this work we explore the possibilities of another type of AVT as a didactic resource in the teaching of a FL: audio description (AD).

Within translation studies there is a growing interest in AD (Benecke 2004, Jiménez Hurtado 2007a, 2007b, 2008, Vermeulen 2008b, Basic Peralta *et. al* 2009, Remael, Orero and Carroll 2012). These studies highlight the audiodescriptor's competences as a translator. In this sense, Basic Peralta *et. al* (2009) suggest that translators have to develop a number of specific competences in order to carry out the task of audio describing: they have to be good observers, capable of formulating what they see in a concise and accurate way, using specific and precise language and register that complies with the context and framework in which the action takes place. Cambeiro and Quereda (2008) consider AD as a tool to foster the learning of the process of translation in itself. However, the didactic application of AD to the FL classroom, and more specifically, to Spanish as a FL, has not been explored. One of the very few works that deal with this type of AVT in the FL classroom is Clouet (2005), who proposes the use of AD as a didactic tool to promote writing skills in English as a FL. In the same vein, we aim to shed some light on the possibilities of integrating AD within the classroom of Spanish as a FL. Accurate language and idiomatic formulations are essential for the recipients of AD to understand the plot. This makes this kind of AVT a very useful didactic tool to work with at higher language levels.

The main research question here is whether applying AD in the FL classroom, in this case to the teaching of Spanish as a FL, will be adequate to foster competence in Spanish among Dutch speaking Belgian students. Our focus will be on whether AD is a good resource to increase lexical and phraseological competences. Additionally, a secondary question relating to the type of materials used is also formulated: does the content of the audiovisual (AV) material selected for practicing AD exert an influence on the learners' outcomes?

In order to answer these questions we will analyse the results obtained from the ARDELE project<sup>2</sup> that was carried out in 2012, in the Faculty of

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<sup>2</sup>ARDELE stands for “Audiodescripción como Recurso Didáctico en la Enseñanza del Español como Lengua Extranjera” (*Audio description as a Didactic Tool in the Teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language*).

Applied Linguistics of the University College at Ghent (Belgium), with third-year Dutch-speaking students of Spanish (level B2). Following the task-based approach, we designed a didactic unit based on the AD of scenes from the Spanish movie *Sin Ti* (Masllorens 2006). This didactic unit provided motivating and useful activities to practice the four language skills. Focusing on the learning of lexical and phraseological units, this chapter shows a series of didactic techniques that were used in the classroom, as well as the results obtained from their implementation.

## 2. Context: audiodescription

AD is a type of translation that overcomes physical and cognitive barriers to ensure that any AV product is accessible, be it in the cinema, television, Internet, live performances (i.e. opera, theater), audio guides (in museums), etc. It is an example of intersemiotic translation (in Jacobson's 1959 words), since images are translated into words. There are many definitions of AD. One of them is given by Hyks (2005, 6):

Audio description is a precise and succinct aural translation of the visual aspects of the live or filmed performance, exhibition or sporting event for the benefits of visually impaired and blind people. The description is interwoven into the silent intervals between dialogue, sound effect or commentary.<sup>3</sup>

The audiodescriptor meticulously describes what he sees, selecting, retrieving, structuring and reformulating the relevant information from the visual content, without explaining. He describes the scenery (place and time), the physical attributes (age, ethnical group, appearance, outfit, facial expressions, body language...) and sometimes the emotional state of characters, as well as their actions (perception and movements).

A basic element in AD is the AD script (ADS): the text that will be included as an oral commentary within the silent intervals of the AV document. This oral comment has to describe what appears on screen with a ratio of 180 words per minute. Given that the audiodescriptor has very little time—the intervals between dialogues—and that he cannot interrupt the plot or contaminate the acoustic elements of the AV document (sounds that visually impaired people can perfectly distinguish, such as a telephone, a piano, typewriting), the descriptions must be precise, using

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<sup>3</sup> Hyks, Verónica. 2005. "Audio Description and Translation. Two related but different skills." *Translating Today* 4: 6-8.

very specific and accurate single words and multiword units to evoke the space, the time, objects, characters and actions.

### 3. Theoretical framework

With the implementation of AD in the classroom we expected the students to increase their lexical competences and to foster idiomaticity (Sinclair 1995) as well as to increase their insight into their own language learning process. In FL learning it is essential for students to understand the importance of chunks (Lewis 1993) or phraseological units (Sinclair 1995) in order for them to produce a fluent and idiomatic FL. Thus, lexis is essential as a component that, unlike the traditional “vocabulary”, gives priority to multi-word prefabricated chunks and fits with contextual models of language (Sinclair’s contextual approach, as in Herbst 2011). Such models give phraseology a more central role in language.

In order to accomplish our objectives we designed specific tasks that were aimed at enabling students to reach a C1 level, as defined by the CEFRL *Independent user* (2001, 24-28). These tasks treated issues such as the use and learning of lexically accurate terms, collocations, expressions, idioms, and valences that sound natural to native speakers. We also aimed to enhance their awareness about the FL via metalinguistic reflection.

The concept of *task* adopted here is in line with the task-based learning paradigm (Long 1985, Willis 1996, Ellis 2003, Littlewood 2004), in which this study is framed. A task is normally defined as a communicative activity whose goal is to achieve a specific learning objective. A communicative task aims at fostering competence in the FL by means of communication. Another important feature of a task is the inclusion of processes or activities that take place in the real world, such as filling in a form, having a job interview, and so on. They must also have a clearly defined communicative result.

Littlewood (2004) redefines the closed and dual concept of activities in the classroom—exercises versus tasks. Both roles—form and content respectively—are complementary and necessary to achieve successful learning results. Lai Kun (2010) and others ascertain that function and form are inseparable, and they allow for the development of different aspects of the FL. In accordance with this view, we introduced activities based on reality. These reflect Ellis’s (2003) concept of *tasks*, in the sense that they depart from *authentic* material and are based on *authentic* situations, with a part of formal learning (*pedagogically-based learning*, Long 1985). Additionally, our tasks were not everyday life activities, but specialized ones: activities that are performed by professional translators.

Therefore, we can state that we applied task-based learning to the teaching and learning of Spanish as a FL, where Spanish was used both as a means of communication and as a working tool in a specialized field: AVT, and more specifically, AD.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Sample**

In total 52 adult students, both male and female, were involved in the process. The participants were aged between 20 and 22 at the time of this research. All of the participants were Belgian students, native speakers of Dutch<sup>4</sup>, and they were studying Spanish as one of their specialization languages in the Bachelor Degree in Applied Language Studies of the University College of Ghent. The students had already been learning Spanish in an intensive way (eight hours per week) for two years and a half. They already possessed a B2 level of Spanish in terms of the CEFRL (2001, 24). At this level a user already handles the four linguistic skills:

Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and independent disadvantages of various options.

Based on this definition, lexical and phraseological competences are necessary in order to achieve a higher level, by means of learning and practicing the correct collocations, phrases, idioms, and words that native speakers would use.

The lectures were given in three parallel session groups, arranged according to the students' language combination. For practical reasons, we respected this formal setting. The first group was composed of 14 students who studied English and Spanish. The second group was composed of 29 students who studied French and Spanish. The third group was composed of a mix of students, 9 in total, who studied English or German and Spanish.

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<sup>4</sup> The three official languages of Belgium are Dutch, French and German. In the Flemish region the predominant language is Dutch, whereas in the Wallonian region it is French.

## 4.2. Design

Each student was required to audio describe a clip from the Spanish film *Sin Ti* (Masllorens 2006). The plot is simple: Lucía is a happily married mother of two, and a successful painter. After slipping in the shower she loses her sight. Once blind, she goes through a crisis as she realizes that her life had been based on fake light. As she learns how to live without seeing the external world, she also learns how to see herself and her inner world. This plot necessarily implies that the visual part is very important. Also, it is an ideal film for a first contact with AD, as there is not a lot of dialogue. The three clips chosen for the project had a duration of less than four minutes: clip 1 shows Lucía in hospital just after the accident (3 minutes and 13 seconds); in clip 2 Lucía, already blind, first tries to put on some make-up and later, helps her husband to prepare a meal in the kitchen (3 minutes and 40 seconds); finally, in clip 3 Casimiro—a friend Lucía met in the residence school for blind people—commits suicide by throwing himself in front of a bus (3 minutes and 54 seconds).

We manipulated one independent variable (IV): the clips used in class. We looked at its effect on one dependent variable (DV): lexical and phraseological competence. The treatment, therefore, involved manipulating this IV to see its effects on the DV. It was carried out by means of the material used: each group had to audio describe a different clip: group 1 did clip 1, group 2 worked with clip 2, and group 3 audio described clip 3. The aim was to see whether the narrative contents of the AV document have an impact on the results of the learners' outcomes. That is, to examine the effects of different types of clips on learning lexical and phraseological units and on motivating the students.

## 4.3. Instruments

The tools used to compile the data of this study were: 1) controlled observation, 2) two assignments per student, and 3) a final questionnaire created with *Google documents* application, which they had to fill in online at the end of the project.

As for the two assignments, the data were compiled during and after the lessons. Each student prepared two ADs from the same clip: one during the first lesson, and a second one at the end of the didactic unit, after the third lesson. Therefore, they had the opportunity to make a second version of their AD once they had analysed, corrected and discussed their own texts and their classmates' texts, and compared them

with the ADS on the DVD. By then, they had learned the basics of AD techniques.

The final questionnaire included different types of questions, which provided data collection of various kinds and formats. Its paper version (which was later on published electronically via *Google documents*) is provided in the Appendix. There were 26 closed questions, which students assigned a score of 1 to 5 (from 1: *I am not satisfied/Nothing* to 5: *I totally agree/I have learned a lot*). These 26 questions were divided into different categories, outlined below:

1. I have applied my Spanish skills
2. How would you rate your improvement on the different areas of linguistic knowledge that you have worked with?
3. Are you happy with the project as regards your learning about AD?
4. Are you happy with the project as regards collaborative learning?
5. In general, has the project met your expectations?

Fig. 1. Sections within the final questionnaire.

All of the sections included different subsections regarding grammar, lexis (both single words and multi-word units), written or oral skills, reception or production skills, sociocultural competence, etc. Our focus in this chapter will be on the results obtained from those questions that enable us to assess whether AD is a successful tool to improve or promote lexical and phraseological competence. These questions were 2.b (*My vocabulary has increased*), 3.a (*Thanks to AD I have learned useful vocabulary and practical expressions in Spanish*), and 3.f. (*AD made me realize how important and complex it is to use accurate and exact language*).

Additionally, the questionnaire included ten open questions, which were introduced with the heading *Linguistic contents and inter-semiotic translation*. These ten sentences were selected based on the most recurrent mistakes found in the students' ADs. Students had to follow a series of instructions: 1) correcting the errors in the sentences given (taken from their own texts), 2) highlighting the mistake/s, and 3) proposing a correct version of the sentence.

#### 4.4. Procedures

In this section we describe the different steps we followed to compile the necessary data for our study. It was carried out over the course of one month, in which students worked on the AD of their respective clips.

#### 4.4.1. Preparation phase

This phase had an overall duration of one hour. It took place during the first lesson (referred to as *sessions* from now on) on AD. In that hour, we introduced the students to the tasks they were going to do and provided them with the synopsis of the film *Sin ti*. Afterward, we taught them the basics of AD. Some key indications were given:

- a. Use only present tenses.
- b. Describe only sounds that visually impaired people cannot understand.
- c. Do not use expressions such as “we see...”
- d. Describe what you see, not what you think you see.
- e. Be concise.

Fig. 2. Indications given to students to make their AD.

The use of present tenses (a) is an obvious rule in AD. It implies that AD as a didactic tool in the FL classroom has limitations, such as the fact that past tenses cannot to be practiced, at least not as a primary exercise. As for the rules given in (b), (c) and (d), their aim was to ensure that students were aware of their role as speakers and of the possible power and influence people have when communicating. These rules make explicit the fact that the recipient is visually but not cognitively impaired. We do not need to describe what we—and also the visually-impaired viewer—also hear. With regards to rule (e), students were not—at this stage—given a limitation of words to use (180 words per minute), although we did draw their attention to the limited time of the dialogue intervals. A real task such as audio describing was thus modulated and adjusted to the class, due to the fact that our main goal was to elicit students’ language competence by means of producing written texts out of what the have seen, and this limitation would have hindered their production. In the second phase, however, this limitation was enforced: it was mentioned and they had to take it into account.

#### 4.4.2. Production phase

This phase lasted three hours. It was divided two stages: the first stage involved working individually in the second hour of session 1. Each student had to describe what appeared on the screen in their corresponding clip, by writing a text on a word document to be handed in by e-mail to us at the end of the session.



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A second stage consisted of two hours of group work in class and took place during session 2. Instead of getting their own texts back in the class (printed by us), students had to review another classmate's work. After highlighting the main errors in these texts, students had to comment on the different versions, compare them, and finally choose the most adequate one and justify their choice. They worked in pairs or in groups of three for this session. Particular attention was paid to the necessity of choosing precise and accurate words and phraseological units, taking into account the Spanish audience and the limited time available to accurately describe what happens on the screen.

### **4.4.3. Review and final reflection phase**

This phase lasted approximately four hours, sequenced into three stages: the first stage took place in session 3, which lasted two hours. The students spent two hours analysing their own linguistic errors. They received their own ADs with the corrections made both by a classmate and by us. We had extracted the most common mistakes and put them in an extra handout. After looking at their linguistic errors and correcting them together, another group discussion followed in which the main goal was to analyse the main differences between the students' ADs and the official ADS made by a native speaker. There was a specific focus on two aspects: a) the way of formulating sentences, and b) the way of interpreting the world. The lexical and phraseological units were broadly analysed and discussed.

In the second stage, with an average duration of one to two hours, the students were asked to do the same AD again and send it back to us. Finally, in the last stage they had to fill out a final questionnaire from home, for which they spent around one hour to do this.

## **5. Results and analysis**

On the basis of the data obtained from the controlled observation of the tasks that were implemented, we can state that the students positively improved on their writing production skills. They interchanged their roles (from being audiodescriptors to being reviewers) through tasks aimed at improving their awareness of their own learning process. The tasks carried out in class required all students to participate in oral comprehension and production. In the final phase, lexical and phraseological competences were promoted. The students' ADs revealed that although they possessed a B2 level and a large amount of Spanish

language items, their resulting texts tended to look like a rough literal translation from Dutch. This is why special attention was given to specific lexical items, collocations, valence patterns, the use of pronominal verbs, the use of the periphrasis, the Spanish preference for synonymic variation and even diatopic variation.

As for the description of images, the project showed that the way in which the utterances were formulated led to many different interpretations. One of the cases that was discussed in the final session describes how the protagonist, after becoming blind, tries to put some make-up on. On the DVD we hear the version of the ADS: *Acerca las yemas de sus dedos a los ojos; muy cerca, casi rozándose las pestañas* [She raises her fingertips to her eyes; very close, almost brushing her eyelashes]. However, the students wrote sentences such as the ones provided below:

- a. *Muy tranquilamente toca la cara para averiguar cómo hay que pintarse* [Very quietly, she touches her face in order to know how one should put on make-up].
- b. *Muy prudentemente toca la cara. Lo hace muy tristemente.* [Very prudently she touches her face. She does it very sadly].

Ex. 1. Two students' ADs of one scene of the film.

Following the instructions of good practice of AD, the ADS on the DVD does not include adverbs or expressions that show subjectivity, they just describe what the character does very succinctly. The students, however, included adverbs such as *quietly*, *prudently*, and even *sadly*. Discussing this example, as well as other scenes and different versions of the same scene, students realised how what we see and what we interpret is directly connected to what we express and communicate. The task based on the principles of AD proved to be very useful for them to observe the importance of selecting the adequate lexical or phraseological units, and also to elicit the students' awareness that lexical and phraseological competence are of prime importance.

## 5.1. Results obtained from the open questions

In the following section numerical data are presented, obtained from the students' responses to the open questions of the questionnaire (the test that focused on lexical and phraseological choices). All of the percentages shown below have to be considered as absolute—52, the total number of

students, being the absolute or reference quantity. Thus, every label in each table is independent from one another, since the occurrences are recorded not per student but per correction provided. If we sum up all the numbers in table 1 for example, we see that the students proposed a total of 69 corrections. If we take into account that 52 students participated in the project, it is clear that each student provided an average of one or two corrections per sentence, because some sentences have more than one mistake, although here we focus only on those related to lexical and phraseological items.

For the purposes of this research, we only comment here on questions iii, iv, and ix, due to their content, which is related to lexical items and phraseological units. As regards sentence iii, shown in the figure below, the main objective was to see if students could see that the periphrasis—given in italics—could be substituted by a specific word: *interfono*, *telefonillo*, or *portero automático* [entricom]:

Se dirige a la puerta para pedir asistencia a través de *un aparato que está al lado de la puerta* [She approaches the door to ask for help through *a device that is next to the door*]

Fig. 3. Open question iii of the final questionnaire.

In the ADS on the DVD the part in italics is omitted. Driven by this, 15 students suggested that this part of the sentence is not relevant, providing a correction that has to do with AD techniques. Out of these 15, five students omitted the last part of the sentence and suggested leaving just *Se dirige a pedir ayuda* [She goes to ask for help], thus solving the problem of having to correct what interests us here, the periphrastic form. As regards to this, 15 students changed this periphrasis into a specific word or phrase in Spanish: *interfono* (12 students) and *portero automático* (3 students). Additionally, 13 students changed the word *asistencia* [assistance], a correct word, but not frequently collocated with the verb *pedir* [to ask for] (zero occurrences in CREA, *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*—Reference Corpus of Modern Spanish—), by near synonyms: *ayuda* (132 occurrences in CREA) or *socorro* (12 occurrences). Prepositions are a source of problems, due to interferences by their mother tongue (Ibáñez Moreno and De Wilde 2009). In this case, the prepositional construction *a través de* was corrected by eight students: one student used *por*, another one used *con*, four used *mediante*, and three used *por medio de*. Besides this, five students suggested changing *a* to *hacia*. Since *a* and *hacia* are equally correct this is a case of

hypercorrection. A summary of the corrections made by the students can be seen in table I:

RESPONSES:	N° OF STUDENTS
Uses an AD technique (omission)	15 (29%)
Provides an inaccurate or incomplete solution	14 (27%)
Provides an accurate solution for the word <i>asistencia</i>	13 (25%)
Provides an accurate change of the preposition	13 (25%)
Substitutes the periphrasis by a specific word	14 (27%)

Table 1. Percentage of students' answers to question iii.

These percentages reveal a rather low success rate in the corrections. This is probably due to the fact that when there are several errors to pay attention to, students tend to focus on just one, or at the most on two of them.

In sentence iv, the main objective was the lexical error *encuadres* [frames], which should have been modified into *fotos* or *fotografías* [pictures]:

En la habitación hay dos *encuadres*. En una foto salen los hijos de Lucía y en otra posan Lucía y Toni [In the room there are two *frames*. In one picture you see Lucia's children and in the other Lucia and Toni are posing]

Fig. 4. Open question iv of the final questionnaire.

This sentence proved to be easier for students, since there was only one mistake in it to correct, the word *encuadres* [frames], which does not mean *fotografías* [pictures] in Spanish. In Spanish the same word is used for pictures that are put in a frame as well as for those that are not. In this case, 34 students (65%) suggested changing *encuadres* for *fotos* or *fotografías*. Besides this, 11 students suggested omitting or shortening the sentence, thus applying an AD technique. Additionally, 13 students remarked that the sentence was ordered wrongly, or that the verbs *posar* or *salir* were not correct. However, these two are not mistakes, so they are included in the table below under the label "Provides an inaccurate or incomplete solution". Finally, 10 students provided accurate solutions to improve the overall expression of the sentence, although they did not mention the mistake of the word *encuadres*. Thus, their answers are located under the label "Provides a solution but not related to *encuadres*". All these results are summarized below:

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RESPONSES:	N° OF STUDENTS
Uses an AD technique (omission)	11 (21%)
Provides an inaccurate or incomplete solution	13 (25%)
Provides an accurate solution	34 (65%)
Provides a solution but not related to the problem	10 (19%)

Table 2. Percentage of students' answers to question iv.

Finally, in sentence ix the mistaken word was *parquet*, whose meaning refers to a wooden floor in interior spaces, which was used instead of *acera*, *via peatonal* or *bordillo* (pavement) by many students:

Casimiro sigue andando. Sus pies llegan al final del *parquet* [Casimiro keeps on walking. His feet reach the end of the *parquet flooring*.]

Fig. 5. Open question ix of the final questionnaire.

Out of the 31 students who recognized this error, 26 students selected the word *acera*, three pointed at the word *bordillo*, one chose the general word *calle* [street] and one chose the nominal phrase *via peatonal*. Apart from this, 21 students commented that there was a mistake in the use of the possessive form *sus* pies, stating that *los pies* should have been used instead. This is a further case of hypercorrection, because in this case the use of the possessive form here is not incorrect. As a result of interference of their native language, Dutch, in which the possessive is always used when referring to parts of a person's body, students tend to overuse the possessives in combination with body parts (Vermeulen 2008a). In the class of ELE they are frequently warned against this overuse, which tends to lead them to hypercorrection. Additionally, under the label *The student does not provide the correct answer*, eight students provided solutions that were not necessary, thereby not solving the problem, such as suggesting *caminando* instead of *andando*, and five students did not answer the question. Finally, two students proposed correct solutions related to AD strategies, such as the lack of need to mention Casimiro, since according to them the audience is aware that he is the person walking. All these data are summarized in the table below:

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RESPONSES:	N° OF STUDENTS
Uses an AD technique (omission)	2 (6%)
Provides an inaccurate or incomplete solution	12 (23%)
Provides an accurate solution	31 (60%)
Provides a solution but not related to the problem	22 (43%)

Table 3. Percentage of students' answers to question ix.

In general, we can say that a majority of students identified the main lexical and phraseological errors, particularly with simple sentences that included one error. Sentence iii proved to be more difficult for them, since it included more than one error. This could be due to the fact that what they had to correct was not an individual word, but a periphrasis, which is grammatically correct, even if it sounds unnatural due to its lack of lexical accuracy.

### 5.2. Results obtained from the closed questions

Here we go over the results obtained from the answers to the closed questions concerning this study. In answer to question (2.b) *My vocabulary has increased*, in total 19 students (37%) answered with a 3 (*Enough, I am satisfied*), 23 students (44%) chose option 4 (*I am happy with what I have learned*), and four students (8%) selected 5 (*A lot*), the maximum rank. One student chose 1, which indicated *Very little or nothing*. This is 2% of the total. Also, three students selected answer 2, which was *A bit, but not enough*. This is 6% of students. Thus, if we consider answers 1 and 2 as negative, we have four students out of 52 that were not satisfied with their learning outcomes, which amounts to 8% of the subjects. Considering answers 3, 4 and 5 as positive, we have 48 students out of 52 (92%) that were happy with the results. This can be considered a success due to the fact that 27 (52%) students chose 4 or 5 as their answers, which means that they were very satisfied with their outcome.

As for question (3.a), *Thanks to AD I have learned useful vocabulary and practical expressions*, if we compare these results to the ones of question 2.b., we observe a slight increase in the number of students that were not quite satisfied (eight students, 15%). 15% is a small percentage, but it does show that there may be aspects of AD that need improving if we are to apply it to the FL classroom. The positive results, however, show that in general AD is well accepted by students as a didactic tool: 42 students (76%) chose 3 (*Enough, I am satisfied*), 4 (*I am happy with what*

*I have learned*), or 5 (*A lot*), out of which 22 (42%)—almost half of them—were very satisfied.

Finally, the positive results obtained from question 3.f. *AD has served me to realize how important and complex it is to use accurate and exact language* clearly show that AD is very helpful to raise learners' insight into their own learning process. There were no negative answers. Thus, 100% of the students thought that AD had helped them become aware of the importance of lexical competence as part of communicative competence, and even more, 75% of them were very positive about this project.

To sum up the results, there were a majority of answers 4 (67 hits) on a rank of 1 to 5, where 4 (with 67 hits) and 5 (with 21 hits) can be considered positive, and 1 (with two hits) and 2 (with 10 hits) negative. The average score is thus 4.2.

## 6. Discussion and final conclusions

The answer to our main research question on whether the application of AD in the FL classroom is an adequate tool to foster lexical and phraseological competences is definitively affirmative. The students felt that they had applied their Spanish skills. Consequently, they gave high scores to their improvement of those different areas of linguistic knowledge they worked with. In general, the project met their expectations.

The results from the open questions (the test) show that AD is a good resource to increase lexical and phraseological competences, a major difficulty at advanced levels (Nesselhauf 2005). In two out of the three sentences (iv and ix), more than 60% of the students were able to correct the errors from the clip they worked with. When they were confronted with a sentence from another clip, they tended not to find the accurate solution. In one of the sentences (iii) the result was disappointing. This is perhaps due to the fact that there were several mistakes to identify and students only looked for one or two.

Overall, these results show that the selection of the AV material has an impact on the students' learning outcomes as regards lexical competence. This is supported by the fact that in all three sentences there was a percentage of 25 to 27% of students who did not know the answer. In most cases, students provided incorrect answers when the sentence they had to correct did not belong to the clip they had audio described. This shows that the teaching of lexicon is context-specific and that the type of AV material to be used in the FL classroom for AD purposes has

to be selected in terms of language specificity, difficulty, and the objectives that we want our learners to achieve.

As for the results obtained from the answers to the closed questions, they show that students perceived AD as a useful tool that requires competency in all areas of language use. From the results of the questionnaire we can conclude that AD is a good tool to foster lexical and phraseological competence and to make students aware of the importance of this competence as an essential part of communicative competence.

Tasks based on AD allow students to observe the importance of selecting the most accurate lexical items and colloquial expressions, since in AD it is of primary importance to select precise words to describe specific scenes so that the recipients can receive the message in the most accurate and natural way possible. In conclusion we can say in response to our main research question that AD is an adequate didactic tool in the FL classroom because it contributes to the development of lexical and phraseological competence, which enhances idiomaticity (Sinclair 1995, 833).

There are many other elements that deserve further research, particularly regarding the potential of AD as a tool to promote intercultural and sociocultural competences. Students' ADs manifested the fact that we tend to identify what we see with what we interpret. This project helped to raise awareness of how powerful communication is. Language users are not objective. Our expressions and the way in which we communicate directly reflect our perceptions of reality, not reality itself. This is fascinating to see the influence that communication can have. Another aspect that we will leave for future research is the correlation between AD applied in the FL classroom and an increase in student motivation. The use of AD-based tasks seems to be highly motivating for students because of its social value: AD is useful not only to communicate something but also to present the world of images to blind and visually impaired audiences, and thus facilitating and promoting accessibility to AV products.

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## Appendix: final questionnaire (paper format)

### **CUESTIONARIO FINAL- PROYECTO ARDELE**

NOMBRE Y APELLIDOS:

Clip(s) que has audiodescrito:

*Por favor, selecciona la respuesta que mejor defina tu opinión acerca del proyecto ARDELE:*

(1. Muy poco o nada; 2: un poco, pero no lo suficiente; 3: bastante, estoy satisfecho/a; 4: estoy contento/a con lo que he practicado/aprendido; 5: mucho, ha sido una buena manera de practicar/aprender/mejorar el español)

1. He trabajado mis destrezas en español:

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Comprensión oral en lengua española					
b. Comprensión escrita en lengua española					
c. Expresión escrita en lengua española					
d. Expresión oral en lengua española					
e. Competencia intercultural (formas diferentes según la cultura de origen de comunicarnos)					

2. ¿Cómo describirías las siguientes áreas de tu aprendizaje lingüístico una vez realizadas las tareas propuestas durante este proyecto?:

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Mi gramática ha mejorado					
b. Mi vocabulario ha aumentado					
c. Mi nivel de expresión escrita ha mejorado					
d. Mi nivel de expresión oral ha mejorado					
e. Mi seguridad en el uso de la lengua española ha mejorado					

3. ¿Estás satisfecho/a con los siguientes aspectos del proyecto en cuanto al proceso de aprendizaje en el mismo en relación a la audiodescripción?:

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Gracias a la audiodescripción he aprendido vocabulario en español útil y expresiones					

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prácticas					
b. El uso de materiales audiovisuales auténticos relacionados con la audiodescripción me ha resultado beneficioso para desarrollar mis habilidades de traducción					
c. El uso de materiales audiovisuales auténticos relacionados con la audiodescripción me ha resultado beneficioso para desarrollar mi competencia del español					
d. La audiodescripción me ha servido para reflexionar sobre mi propio aprendizaje					
e. La audiodescripción me ha ayudado a reflexionar sobre cómo nuestra manera de ver el mundo influye en cómo nos comunicamos					
f. La audiodescripción me ha servido para observar la importancia y dificultad de emplear el lenguaje justo y adecuado					
g. La audiodescripción me ha servido para observar la importancia que tiene la labor de hacer todo tipo de material accesible para personas con discapacidad visual empleando el lenguaje de forma que se tenga en cuenta al receptor					
h. He tenido que ser creativo/a y eso me ha sido útil en mi proceso de aprendizaje					

4. ¿Estás satisfecho/a con los siguientes aspectos del proyecto en cuanto al trabajo colaborativo del mismo?:

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Revisar y dar críticas constructivas sobre el trabajo de mis compañeros me ha ayudado a mejorar en mi propio aprendizaje					
b. Recibir críticas y comentarios constructivos sobre mi trabajo por parte de mis compañeros me ha ayudado a mejorar en mi aprendizaje					
c. El trabajo colaborativo me ha hecho reflexionar sobre mi propio aprendizaje					
d. Pienso que este tipo de trabajo colaborativo es motivador, ya que contribuye a que todos trabajemos juntos por mejorar					

### **Contenidos lingüísticos y de traducción intersemiótica (AD):**

Por favor, identifica el tipo de error de las siguientes expresiones, y propón una alternativa correcta. Ejemplo: "Se ve alrededor de sí": "Mira a su alrededor. [Explicación lingüística: MIRAR en lugar de VER, uso incorrecto del reflexivo SE y uso incorrecto de los posesivos al combinarlos con una preposición, alrededor"; Nota adicional respecto a la AD y sus técnicas: dado que Lucía se ha quedado ciega, es un tanto inapropiado señalar que "mira" a su alrededor. Se podría haber usado el verbo: "palpa", o "tantea", etc. ].

- i. Vemos a Lucía que ha bajado la escalera y que se orienta con sus brazos tendidas y anda hacia la cocina
- ii. Lucía está en la ducha y lava su cabellera.
- iii. Se dirige a la puerta para pedir asistencia a través de un aparato que está al lado de la puerta
- iv. En la habitación hay dos encuadres. En una foto salen los hijos de Lucía y en otra posan Lucía y Toni
- v. Toca de nuevo la cara con los dos manos para restregar el maquillaje
- vi. Ella también da un susto y tira una bota con verduras al suelo.
- vii. Su marido la sigue, se vuelve al muro y se asienta contra el muro.
- viii. Vemos una autopista y un autobús rojo que se acerca.
- ix. Casimiro sigue andando. Sus pies llegan al final del parquet.
- x. Pasa por el espejo y se dirige hacia la cocina donde coge un vaso en el tablero.

### **Observaciones generales finales**

Por favor, selecciona la respuesta que mejor defina tu opinión acerca del proyecto ARDELE:

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(1. Muy poco o nada; 2: un poco, pero no lo suficiente; 3: bastante, estoy satisfecho/a; 4: estoy contento/a con el resultado; 5: mucho, este proyecto me ha servido de gran ayuda)

5. ¿En general, se han cumplido tus expectativas?

	1	2	3	4	5
a. Con el trabajo de audiodescribir					
b. Con mis destrezas lingüísticas					
c. Con mis destrezas de traducción					
d. Con la forma en que el proyecto se ha desarrollado					

6. Sugerencias para un futuro proyecto:

a. ¿Habrías preferido trabajar con otra película?

Si ..... No .....

Si tu respuesta ha sido SI, elige la mejor opción de las que te sugerimos:

<i>Volver</i> , de Pedro Almodóvar (tragicomedia)	
<i>Air Bag</i> , de Juanma Bajo Ulloa (comedia)	
<i>Torrente</i> , de Santiago Segura (comedia)	
<i>Mar adentro</i> , de Alejandro Amenábar (drama)	
<i>Alatriste</i> , de Agustín Díaz Yanes (acción)	
<i>Otra</i> . Por favor señala cuál:	

b. ¿Crees que audiodescribir es una tarea complicada?

c. Observaciones general adicionales: por favor, escribe lo que consideres oportuno (si es en relación a alguno de los puntos mencionados, haz referencia al mismo). Tu opinión es muy valiosa para nosotras: