

The Enhancement of Oral Mediation Competence via Revoicing Practice: Learners Lending their Voice and Eyes to Diverse Audiences for Dubbing and Audio Description Tasks

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Abstract

Oral production plays a vital role in summative and formative foreign language (FL) examinations. Assessment rubrics to gauge oral skills are constantly developing to facilitate their understanding and evaluation. Nonetheless, there is a gap between research findings and teaching resources available (Levis, 2016). The present paper seeks to contribute to this disparity by comparing two action research studies that evidenced the benefits of using revoicing as a tool to improve speaking in spontaneous conversations. Over a hundred learners of Spanish as a FL actively dubbed or audio described videoclips as a classroom activity for several weeks. Results were triangulated and included both qualitative and quantitative data, evincing that oral productive skills are enhanced when these revoicing modes are incorporated into the teaching material. Both studies bring forward a comparison between the similarities and differences in the results, and they thoroughly review their limitations and provide relevant future lines of research.

Keywords: Oral production skills, revoicing, dubbing, audio description, oral fluency, speed, pronunciation, intonation, foreign language education.

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Introduction

Over the last decade, oral production skills have been increasingly acquiring a well-recognised status in the areas of didactics and assessment. Descriptors are more thorough and precise regarding what being a fluent speaker implies. Experts agree that fluency is complex and consists of numerous interrelated subconstructs. These series of features can affect the learner's production either positively (i.e. an accurate reformulation) or negatively (i.e. unnecessary repetitions) (Koponen & Rikkenbach, 2000). This paper analyses speaking as an outcome, leaving aside cognitive elements involved in the process, and discussing theoretical and practical views as well as key definitions.

In an attempt to overcome the disparity between theory and practice, didactic audiovisual translation (DAT) is seen as an optimal resource to work both inside and outside the foreign language (FL) classroom, in online and face-to-face settings. Research on the didactic use of revoicing, i.e. involving learners actively adding their voice to a video, has been recently calling the attention of language practitioners (Lertola, 2019). This exercise includes two different audiovisual translation (AVT) modes: (1) intralingual dubbing (ID) implies students partially or fully replace the dialogue in the original audio track with their voice in the target language; and (2) audio description (AD) allowing the oral description of visual information targeted to the blind and visually impaired audience. Both modes are used for the same purpose: enhancing the speaking skills of FL students of Spanish. The theoretical section of this paper delves into the benefits of these resources and summarises a key state of the art in the field.

DAT is therefore viewed as a mediation practice, since the learner becomes a social agent that mediates between the clip and their audience, using an aural discourse to imitate (ID) or interpret (AD) what can be seen or heard, which might involve semiotic signs and images (Navarrete, 2020). Various data collection instruments were used for both experiments, including pre- and post-questionnaires, rubrics, pre- and post-tests involving recorded spontaneous conversations, and observation notes taken by the researchers. In addition, both projects included teachers-observers different from the researchers and four external evaluators per project that assessed the potential improvement of oral productive skills in the learners' pre-tests and post-tests. The employment of this range of tools was crucial to enable data triangulation, ensuring greater reliability and consistency of the obtained results. The qualitative data made it possible to assess the learners' positive attitude towards ID and AD practice whilst quantitative data evidenced that oral productive skills are enhanced by the use of these revoicing modes.

This paper focuses on comparing the conclusions of two doctoral theses, one with ID and the other with AD as the AVT typology used actively by students. This comparison evidences two efficient revoicing tools that help improve speaking in spontaneous conversations. The main hypothesis assumes that both didactic ID and AD can enhance speaking production skills in spontaneous conversations. Such comparison adds value to the existing literature in two main ways: first, by providing the considerable amount of data collected that allowed our research findings; and second, by coming up with coherent methodological designs for both studies and the didactically valuable

lesson plans, such as the tasks suggested along the way and recommendations provided which could grant replication in future studies.

1. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this section is to provide key definitions and delimit the context in which the two action research studies take place. First, it is essential to delve into the different parameters and concepts considered to assess speaking production skills. Second, revoicing (ID and AD in particular) is proposed as an optimal resource to help students develop speaking, with the present authors revising the state of the art and summarising the key benefits that previous research has drawn on.

1.1. Speaking Skills in FL Education

In the 21st century, educators have continued to recognise the importance of defining and distinguishing aspects involved in oral communication to facilitate understanding and assessment. Looking at current official examinations, both in compulsory and non-compulsory education, speaking seems to be an essential part of the evaluation with a high percentage in the final grade. Nonetheless, research findings have struggled to inform material development of specific elements of speaking, resulting in a clear gap between research and teaching (Levis, 2016). Recent research has had a particular impact on resources in English as a FL, while resources in other languages remain scarce. In Spanish, there is a need to provide more tools to work on aspects such as pronunciation and intonation (Hidalgo Navarro, 2015). Thankfully, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) underwent revisions in 2020, influenced by input from researchers and practitioners. In the previous version (2001), phonological competence was given minimal attention, but the new version includes a set of descriptors emphasising the importance of phonological features for oral performance¹.

The acquisition of a FL and the mental processes that occur before producing speech can vary depending on a person (Luoma, 2004). Considering the general meaning of oral fluency as the ability to produce verbal outcomes, Segalowitz (2010) proposes a threefold division of fluency: cognitive, utterance, and perceived. Cognitive fluency relates to the processes influencing speech production, driven by the speaker's knowledge and linguistic ability. Utterance fluency is the competence to maintain a conversation in a FL with speed, comprehensive pronunciation, and minimal repetition. Perceived fluency refers to how the listener perceives the speaker's speech. The two studies compared in this paper analyse students' utterance fluency through the perceived fluency of external evaluators, students' self-reflection and the observers' notes. The evaluators of the present

¹ Council of Europe (2020), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

experiments listened to the recorded pre- and post-tests to assess the enhancement achieved after the intervention, considering the listener's level of understanding as a measure of intelligibility. It is here accepted that perceived fluency is subjective, but that including well-defined criteria, rating test performances for one task at a time, and ensuring anonymity are crucial for the evaluators' agreement and statistical correlations (Luoma, 2004).

Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) propose subconstructs of fluency, including breakdown fluency, speed fluency, and repair fluency, measured by different metrics. Additional attributes considered are syntactic and lexical complexity, cohesion, coherence, pragmatic ability, and non-verbal language. These elements are strategies of speech used by native speakers to maintain discourse flow. Many researchers have sought to quantify fluency using markers such as speech rate, pause frequency, and the ability to maintain a conversation and take turns. Some of these features have been incorporated into our rubrics² to assess the potential enhancement of oral production skills before and after intervention. Pronunciation and intonation are equally complex. Hidalgo Navarro (2015) views intonation as a component of pronunciation, which, in his view, encompasses various elements, including segmental elements (sounds), suprasegmental elements (prosodic language elements like stress, rhythm, intonation or pauses), and paralinguistic elements (vowel-related features with limited linguistic codification). Prosody occurs in many definitions of intonation, and vice versa.

In addition, research on fluency often focuses on the dichotomy between fluency and dysfluency in spontaneous communication and the distinction between fluency and accuracy in language teaching (Riggenbach, 2000). The former involves natural conversation, while the latter pertains to controlled tasks promoting error-free discourse. Fluency is a multifaceted concept encompassing various aspects of speech, and research is increasingly exploring its complexities and interconnections. Experts seem to have provided different, but valid classifications and definitions for the same purpose. In the context of this study, the following statements have been considered a common ground for the two theses here compared:

1. Fluency as a general concept is considered to be the learner's ability to produce rapid and comprehensive speech in a FL, as analysed from a perceived point of view. It is worth noticing that automaticity and speed of speech production may not always guarantee comprehensibility.
2. Amongst the subconstructs or parameters that affect a speaker's fluency, pronunciation and intonation are here considered key elements. Pronunciation is a considerable factor in how fluent a speaker is. The term has its own complexity, and it has traditionally been studied by two disciplines: phonetics and phonology. Although some authors argue that intonation should be considered part of pronunciation (Hidalgo Navarro, 2015), our studies have aimed at separating them for assessing purposes, so that more precise and reliable results can be obtained. Luoma (2004) raises concerns about assessing intonation and pronunciation, primarily because learners' speech is often evaluated based on its similarity to native

² The rubrics can be found in Table 3 in this article.

speakers, and also due to regional language variations. She notes that while many advanced learners achieve efficient and intelligible speech, only a few reach native-level pronunciation. She suggests focusing on effective communication and learner achievement as a better standard for assessment, which could apply to intonation as well.

- a. Pronunciation is “the acoustic result of producing phonemes as well as the auditory impression obtained from the interpretation of these acoustic waves” (Sánchez-Requena, 2016, p. 11). The present studies used as a reference the sounds usually considered to be “standard or neutral” (two concepts that invoke their own debates): received pronunciation in the case of English (Wells, 1982); and Castilian in the case of Spanish (Herrero de Haro & Andión, 2012).
 - b. Intonation is “the combination of frequencies and melodic variations in the speech that results from opening and closing the vocal cords” (Sánchez-Requena, 2017, p. 88). The assessment of intonation in our main studies contained attributes like “naturalness” when speaking (intonation) and “easy to follow speech”, which, in a broader sense, evaluate various language features, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and stress, all contributing to linguistic intelligibility and accentedness.
 - c. Inevitably, other elements, such as accent, rhythm, hesitations, pauses, and melody influence students’ acoustic results when producing speech.
3. Our studies emphasise the importance of lexical and grammatical knowledge for fluency. Learners with a wide range of acquired language skills are more fluent, while those struggling with vocabulary and expression are less so.
 4. Holding all the previous points in mind, comprehensive rubrics were developed to assess perceived fluency improvements before and after interventions. The three key elements considered are speed fluency, intonation, and pronunciation. The rubrics also measure grammatical and lexical accuracy, continuity, pauses, hesitations, intelligibility (easy to follow), and self-corrections. Two observers revised each rubric used, and four external evaluators ensured reliability in each study.

The previous paragraphs provide key definitions, a justification and a clear context for these studies while there is a need to develop more resources to explicitly work with speaking elements in FL lessons, both inside and outside the classroom. The next section explains how revoicing activities are considered to be an efficient learning resource through key findings of relevant research.

1.2. Revoicing as a Tool to Develop Speaking in FL

Revoicing in the context of DAT implies the active use of the learners’ voice added to a video as opposed to writing captions. Revoicing is gaining attention in scholarly circles, with recent interest in didactic dubbing and AD in language teaching. While scattered examples emerged over the last three decades, newer efforts aim to integrate these techniques into FL classrooms.

Dubbing is a DAT mode consisting of replacing the voice of the original actors with the students' voice, in which synchrony plays a key role. In the current studies, students worked intralingually: the original videos and the dubbed versions were both in Spanish as a FL. Didactic AD involves the language learner actively adding visual information to the original soundtrack of a clip, transforming images into verbal descriptions. This voice can be added to a clip with no sound, with music and special effects sounds in the background, or during silences in between dialogues.

1.2.1. State of the Art: Intralingual Dubbing and Audio Description

In the past decade, numerous experimental studies on DAT have emerged, exploring its impact on various language skills. The use of didactic ID is intrinsically connected with the development of speaking skills. Therefore, the most relevant studies are included below in Table 1. Conversely, didactic AD relates to a wider variety of skills. These investigations delve into lexical competence (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2013), integrated skills including intercultural competence (Vermeulen & Ibáñez Moreno, 2017), writing (Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Talaván et al., 2022), morphology (Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2020), media literacy (Herrero & Escobar, 2018), learners' perceptions (Bausells-Espín, 2022), and usage of Spanish pronominal verbs (Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2023; Bausells-Espín, 2024). Methodological frameworks for DAT aligned with the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) have also been presented (Navarrete 2020; Navarrete & Bolaños García-Escribano, 2022).

The following table includes some of the key studies (excluding the two compared in this paper) that work only with either ID or AD aiming at the improvement of speaking skills in their FL.

Table 1

Main ID and AD Studies on Oral Production skills

Authors	Date	Subjects	Mode	Language	Level
Chiu	2012	83	ID	En	B1
He & Wasuntarasophit	2015	34	ID	En	B1
Talaván & Costal	2017	25	ID	En	B2
Baeyens	2023	71	ID	En	A2+/B1
Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen	2016	12	AD	En	B1
Talaván & Lertola	2016	30	AD	En	B1
Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen	2021	28	AD	En	B2

The previous table presents key ID and AD studies on oral production skills, most of which were carried out with undergraduate students at intermediate level (B1–B2) studying English as a FL. In Chiu's study (2012), both quantitative and qualitative results concluded that the experimental group carrying out dubbing tasks seemed to outperform the second one in terms of pronunciation and

intonation awareness. However, the author observed that data did not clearly reveal significant developments in fluency and speech delivery. He & Wasuntarasophit's study (2015) showed that students' comprehensibility, fluency, and stress improved whilst participants provided valuable reflections on the tasks given. Talaván and Costal (2017) reported satisfactory results in terms of improving intonation and pronunciation through tasks in which participants attempted to sound as natural as possible by imitating original actors. In his doctoral thesis, Baeyens (2023) focused on problematic consonants in Spanish students who learn EFL. Results were insightful, given that the experimental group showed significant improvement in the great majority of the consonant sounds, while the control group did not show any significant improvement. In addition, students perceived ID as highly motivating and an innovative resource.

Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen's study in 2016 targeted speaking skills development using an application named Videos for Speaking. Although participant numbers were limited, qualitative analysis revealed valuable insights into students' positive perceptions of the impact of didactic AD on oral accuracy and fluency. Likewise, in the 2021 study, they compared two different usages of the above application. Their findings indicate that VISP demonstrates equal effectiveness whether used as a classroom support tool or as a standalone application for independent use outside the classroom. Talaván and Lertola's quasi-experimental study in 2016 involved 30 participants, demonstrating enhanced oral production skills through a triangulation of data sources and methods. Despite context-specific findings, the study's robust design increased its potential for replication and broader applicability.

The following table presents some key benefits research has evidenced to develop with these practices.

Table 2

Benefits of DAT, ID and AD in FL Learning

Benefits obtained by DAT practices	DAT	ID	AD
Encouraging autonomous learning and learner independence.	✓	✓	✓
Increasing self-awareness and the awareness of others.	✓	✓	✓
Boosting self-esteem and confidence.	✓	✓	✓
Promoting student-centred activities.	✓	✓	✓
Using the language to interact in more authentic contexts.	✓	✓	✓
Merging verbal and non-verbal communicative elements.	✓	✓	✓
Encouraging the development of multi-skills.	✓	✓	✓
Providing flexibility and adaptation to the learners' needs.	✓	✓	✓
Working on drama techniques, allowing students to perform in a less intimidating way.	✓	✓	✓

Benefits obtained by DAT practices	DAT	ID	AD
Improving oral production skills.	✓	✓	✓
Providing opportunities for attentive listening.	✓	✓	
Facilitating vocabulary acquisition through multiple rehearsals.	✓	✓	
Encouraging a more native-like speed of speech delivery (while working on synchrony).	✓	✓	
Reading semiotic signs and non-verbal language.	✓		✓
Acquiring vocabulary and grammatical accuracy through reformulation techniques for condensation purposes.	✓		✓
Developing lexical and grammatical accuracy and precision.	✓		✓
Enhancing writing skills.	✓		✓
Stimulating originality and creativity.	✓		✓

Source: Adapted from Danan (2010); Sánchez-Requena (2017); Talaván (2013).

As shown in this table, there are self-explanatory and valuable benefits provided by the usage of DAT and especially revoicing (with a focus on ID and AD). It is important to highlight that learner mediation with clips provides real-life-based contexts for language learning. The learner becomes a social agent that mediates between the clip and the audience, using aural or written discourse to interpret what can be seen or heard, which might involve semiotic signs and images (Navarrete, 2020). In the case of ID, the learner mediates with the clip by mirroring what the original characters say. Likewise, when performing AD practice, learners are supporting visually impaired audiences to improve their understanding of the film since they are describing what they might not be able to see.

2. Methodology

The studies reviewed in this article are both based on primary, empirical, and mixed methods research, following the principles of an action research approach with an observational-descriptive-reflexive design (Dörnyei, 2007). Action research is a methodology particularly relevant to the field of education, which allows us to analyse, reflect, adapt, and improve the implementation of the ID and AD techniques respectively.

2.1. Procedure

This methodology was implemented along three cycles or stages each, to enhance the learners' speaking production skills in spontaneous conversations. The ID project worked along Cycle 1 and 2 to improve the material used, perfect the lesson structure, and create an assessment rubric; making Cycle 2 the most representative sample. Cycle 3 was used to test the assessment rubric and undertake the activities in a different academic setting (university students). The AD project was

undertaken at the university level: Cycles 1 and 2 were used mainly to test the activities, design the methodology, and validate the instruments to collect data, with Cycle 3 being the most representative sample.

In the ID project, the participants worked in class supervised by the teacher-researcher and a teacher-observer. The students replaced the original voice in selected videos working in pairs (the videos consisted of dialogues). The clips selected lasted 1–2 minutes, and the videos were closely aligned with the academic content covered in the lessons. The key element was the repetition of the same lesson structure so that students could improve their performance weekly: (1) students first looked at the vocabulary and context of the clip; (2) they rehearsed the dialogue out loud while paying attention to the actors (lip movement, intonation, pronunciation, and speed); (3) questions about the pronunciation of specific sounds were addressed. The students had the text both on paper and on the screen (through subtitles especially created for this activity, including all the words in the speech – as opposed to standard subtitles). In the end, (4) they recorded their voice using Movie Maker (which allowed them to see the video while recording the voice). Every week there was a new video providing opportunities for practice and feedback. The project lasted a total of 12 weeks (with weeks 1 and 12 used to gather spontaneous speech from students and answer pre- and post-questionnaires). There were nine videos in total with the first video used in week 2 and week 11 to evaluate their improvement.

In the AD project, the participants worked partly in class, but mainly in their own time and they had three different types of tasks. In type I tasks, students had to adapt a given AD into Spanish; in type II tasks, they had to create their ADs; and the final task (type III) consisted of creating a short film that included its AD created by the students. For 10 weeks, students were given seven short clips (1–4 minutes each) with no dialogues (to make the task easier) which they needed to audio describe in small groups. Tasks were completed at home, but feedback was provided during the lessons. The genres were of different nature (animation, tales, documentaries, etc.). Students were allowed to use any software they preferred, technical issues were not covered in class as they had to research technology in collaboration, but this aspect was not evaluated.

Therefore, some significant differences between both projects included: (1) the purpose of each cycle in the action research, (2) the running of the sessions, or (3) the academic setting.

2.2. Context and Participants

In both cases, participants were students of Spanish as a FL in England, and none of them had ever used AVT skills actively before. The proficiency level varied according to the stage of the action research, but the average participant had a B1+ (either A-level or post A-level³). For the ID project, a

³ A-level include two years of study prior to university and post A-level refers to the first year at university. Both are non-compulsory education in the British education system.

total of 94 ($N=94$) students completed all the tasks (17 students for cycle 1, 47 students for cycle 2, and 30 students for cycle 3). For the AD research project, there were a total of 63 ($N=63$) that completed all the tasks (6 students for cycle 1, 11 for cycle 2 and 37 for cycle 3). Due to the number of participants involved, the most representative cycles for ID and AD studies were cycle 2 and cycle 3 respectively. The main aim was to examine the effect of either ID or AD practice to enhance oral production in spontaneous conversations (mainly speed, intonation, and pronunciation). Other features considered to have an impact on the perceived fluency were pauses, hesitations, self-correction, vocabulary, grammar, or intelligibility.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

Various data collection instruments were used for both experiments, including pre- and post-questionnaires, rubrics, pre- and post-tests involving recorded spontaneous conversations, as well as observation notes. Data was triangulated and analysed from four perspectives: the students reflecting on their progress, four external evaluators assessing the most representative cycle, teachers-observers, and the teacher-researchers (authors of this article).

Based on the previous literature and drawing on the researchers' teaching experience, in both secondary education and university settings at all levels of proficiency, a comprehensive list of potential oral production attributes was meticulously compiled, rooted in common errors made by learners of Spanish. Furthermore, rubrics from the previous cycles of experiments and other rubrics used in DAT research were analysed. The aim was to create rubrics that evaluators could easily complete. In this instance, both quantitative and qualitative data were sought, adding the inclusion of variables for numerical assessment. An open-ended question was also incorporated to record any additional information not explicitly covered. The rubrics, designed for evaluating students' compulsory tasks and pre- and post-tests, underwent review by the same observers who scrutinised the questionnaires used in the experiment. The following table provides a summary of the rubrics used for these assessments:

Table 3

Summary of Rubrics Used for Tasks, Pre- and Post-Tests

Fluency	Dysfluency	Intonation & naturalness	Pronunciation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued speech – Intelligibility (easy to follow) – Lexical knowledge – Grammatical knowledge – Self-correction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hesitations and wavering – Prolonged pauses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of speech naturalness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How certain sounds are pronounced

5 Excellent	4 Too many	5 Excellent	Vowels (e/o/u)
4 Very good	3 Many	4 Very good	Diphthongs ae/ao/au/eo/eu ia/ie/io/iu/etc.
3 Good	2 Some	3 Good	Consonants h/p/g/j/r/ñ b/v s/c t/d
2 Average	1 Almost none	2 Average	Mispronunciation caused by orthographic confusion (que/qui, gue/gui)
1 Low		1 Low	

Source: Navarrete (2024).

Our rubrics evaluated fluency, intonation, and pronunciation as the three large themes with a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (excellent). Fluency was assessed based on the participant's speed and their ability to produce continued speech, inevitably considering intelligibility, lexical knowledge, grammatical knowledge, and ability to self-correct. Vocabulary and grammar were chosen in assessing fluency, acknowledging that lack of accuracy in these areas can affect speech flow and dysfluency. Intonation was gauged in terms of the naturalness of speech. Pronunciation was given a general assessment with specific consideration of phonemes. The evaluation also considered hesitations and wavering, as well as prolonged pauses, indicative of dysfluency. As seen in Table 3 above, pronunciation assessment focused on vowels, groups of vowels, and diphthongs, where learners commonly face challenges. The difference in the number and combination of vowel sounds in English (16) and Spanish (7) leads to mispronunciations in both language learners. Consonants were assessed individually, with special attention to those sounds which tend to be especially problematic (e.g. those that only exist in Spanish). The rubrics were applied to both ID and AD tasks, and pre- and post-tests, given the shared objective of assessing oral production skills.

3. Comparing ID and AD Results and Further Discussion

This section draws a comparison between some key aspects of the two most representative stages in the action research projects, Cycle 2 for ID and Cycle 3 for AD respectively. For a detailed explanation of the analysis and the results, please access the full theses on ID (Sánchez-Requena, 2017) and AD. In both theses data analysis confirmed the enhancement of oral production skills in

spontaneous conversations resulting from learners' didactic revoicing practice. The specific research questions here are:

1. Do ID and AD improve general FL oral production in spontaneous conversations equally?
2. Is the effect more noticeable in the speed, intonation, or pronunciation?
3. Are there other coincidences worth mentioning to be corroborated in future studies?

To answer question 1, plotting a Gaussian distribution demonstrated that the average was representative in both cases. Tables 4 and 5 comprise figures about the average rate of increase in the features assessed for ID and AD respectively.

Table 4

Average Rate of Increase in the Features Assessed Across Evaluators (ID)

Feature	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Evaluator 4	Average
Speed	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.98
Pronunciation	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.70
Intonation	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.90
Intelligibility	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.85
Vocabulary	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.70
Grammar	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.65
Hesitations	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.78
Pauses	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.78

Table 5

Average Rate of Increase in the Features Assessed Across Evaluators (AD)

Feature	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Evaluator 4	Average
Speed	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.43
Pronunciation	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.32
Intonation	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.45
Intelligibility	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.30
Vocabulary	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.34
Grammar	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.33
Hesitations	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.34
Pauses	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.16

When comparing the two tables, the rate of increase shown across the features is larger in “speed” and “intonation” (for ID) and “intonation” and “speed” (for AD). One could infer that this would be related to the fact that dubbing works with synchrony where speed is more present (from a quantitative point of view, this was corroborated and there was consistency in the improvement of words per minute – 22 in cycle 1, 17 in cycle 2, and 19 in cycle 3); and AD works with the interpretation of the elements seen and heard, and therefore intonation is the key part. Regarding “pronunciation”, external examiners considered that the change was less notable (even highlighting other secondary features with the highest level of improvement in both instances). Other relevant findings are related to the “pronunciation” of specific sounds. Both studies found that consonants improved more than the vowel sounds and groups of vowels previously considered. However, there were differences in the particular sounds depending on the first language or geographical area of the participants involved. Interesting enough, while in both studies pronunciation does not have a high rate of improvement in comparison to the other key elements considered, other sources of information did not agree with this finding. In the ID project, both the students and the teachers-observers (main teachers of these students) felt that “pronunciation” and awareness of how to pronounce the challenging sounds improved more than “intonation” and “speed”. In the AD project, the teacher-researcher observations considered that the greatest improvement of the three core elements happened in this order: intonation, pronunciation and speed. It seems important to ask students and their teachers what they feel they improved the most as this can differ from an external analysis. Pronunciation of specific sounds was a feature that ID and AD helped students to be more aware of, but perhaps it takes a longer time to show an actual improvement for an external listener.

On the other hand, “pauses” were significantly more noticeable with the ID than with the AD intervention. The ID project saw a relationship between hesitations or wavering and pauses in complete silence: The less the student hesitated or wavered, the fewer the pauses in complete silence occurred. These findings regarding silences and wavering could be explained by the difference in levels of the two groups of participants, as Post A-level students (AD project) were more fluent than the A-level students (ID project).

Finally, after comparing both results, the authors consider that some other aspects that could potentially explain the results may be related to the fact that:

1. Lessons were more guided and supervised for Sixth Form students (ID experiment) than for undergraduates (AD experiment), and more weekly hours were allocated to the first group of students.
2. The starting level was inferior in the case of ID students compared to the AD ones. This context of language competence usually allows more room for improvement in a shorter period of time.

The use of DAT in general and active revoicing, in particular, meant an indubitable added value in the FL classroom because of the range of opportunities created in the students’ learning process. In this regard, both findings acknowledged that vocabulary was another greatly developed learning area according to the students and the teacher-observers. In line with the aforementioned studies, the

analysis of the data showed that students valued the final product they created (a video they could watch and listen to) and its contribution to their awareness of their own learning process. Approximately 70% of the participants confirmed that they would like to use either ID or AD in the future. Although most results were highly favourable, there was also a minority of students whose motivation was affected by the fact that some tasks did not have an impact on their final mark, and they accounted for some technical glitches along the way). Interestingly, with the AD project, students improved their perception of recording and listening to their own voices (an aspect that may cause some reservations for some teachers or students) and 50% of the participants also changed their minds in a positive way about group work.

All in all, and despite minor differences, both studies evidenced the enhancement of oral production skills with learners' active revoicing practice. Future studies could aim at corroborating our findings with further work undertaken on understanding the rationale of our results.

4. Conclusion

As discussed, previous key studies in didactic ID and AD have been carried out with undergraduate students of intermediate level (B1–B2) studying English as an FL. They provided both quantitative and qualitative results reporting satisfactory results in terms of oral production skills and learners' perceptions. Despite context-specific findings, the robust design of some of these projects bears potential for replication and broader applicability. The research works compared in this article were based on revoicing modes to develop FL speaking skills. After analysing the results, it is believed that alternating these two DAT modes (ID and AD) will increase the benefits of active revoicing practice for language learning purposes. The multidisciplinary and multimodal nature of DAT provided evidence that, although our focus was on speaking skills, these projects helped students develop their listening, reading, and writing skills. While AD enabled additional writing practice, dubbing focused on further listening activities. For example, dubbing allowed more practice with "listening skills", as students had to listen to original dialogues first; "reading", through the constant repetition of the dialogues (students rehearsed with the dialogue written in front of them); "intonation", through imitation of the original actors' dialogue; or "speed", as the recording of the voices requires synchrony. On the other hand, AD allowed more practice on "writing", as students had to create their dialogues; "vocabulary", finding the most accurate words to describe the scene; "creativity" is always present in more or less depth depending on the task given; or "intonation/stress" when performing. Both provide opportunities for students to pay attention to the pronunciation of specific sounds, for instance. Combining ID and AD would increase the range of possibilities. The variation of levels and academic settings used in the different cycles of both projects suggest that revoicing activities are suitable for a great variety of students. Over the different cycles, a total of 120 students were exposed to ID activities and a total of 107 students were exposed to AD practice. After implementing changes along 3 cycles, each project provided access to a useful teaching and learning toolkit for implementing and evaluating ID and AD activities in Spanish as a FL to work on speaking. This included a tested rubric for each case. A total of 28 teachers received face-to-face training on the dubbing

toolkit in different teacher training workshops and 5 of them implemented it immediately after exposing 26 students to these activities.

From a theoretical point of view, factoring in the large number of participants and the results obtained in both theses, one could question the need to separate the analysis of different features regarding fluency in future research. Both researchers made remarkable efforts to define and classify the different elements needed to consider a “fluent” speaker in a FL context. Should not oral skills be considered as an integrated whole and not as single features? This is a thought-provoking debate given the fact that the differences between the three core elements considered (speed, intonation, and pronunciation) were minimal.

It is also relevant to mention the CEFR’s discussion (2020) on the emphasis given to native-like pronunciation in research, as it often neglects communicative effectiveness. Instead, they advocate a larger focus on enhancing intelligibility and comprehensibility, aligning with the intelligibility principle. Furthermore, the CEFR (2020) underscores the interconnectedness of articulation, prosody, intelligibility, and accentedness. Inaccurate articulation and prosody can compromise intelligibility and lead to accentedness. The assessment of intonation in our main studies contained attributes like “naturalness” when speaking (intonation) and “easy to follow speech”, which, in a broader sense, evaluate various language features, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and stress, all contributing to linguistic intelligibility and accentedness.

Regarding research limitations, by comparing these works, it is key to highlight the need to improve the definitions of the components for each rubric used to assess ID and AD projects respectively. It is crucial to consider the inter-rater reliability factor and provide more details that could result in a rubric performance that includes a graded list of values for evaluation. This was evidenced by the differences between external evaluators when assessing the students’ performances. This variation can be attributed to hypotheses addressing deficiencies in the evaluation process, emphasising the significance of considering inter-rater reliability, which refers to the consistency between independent raters when evaluating the same data set. It is plausible that our assessment rubrics lacked sufficient information regarding performance criteria, possibly because the researchers overstated the professional expertise of the evaluators. Dawson (2015) emphasised the importance of incorporating additional items. The variation in interpreting the rubric’s criteria and their initial reference points significantly influenced the diverse assessment outcomes, underscoring the need to address inter-rater reliability when evaluating performance.

Reflecting on the context outlined earlier and examining the results obtained, it is reasonable to assert that the practice of the ID and AD revoicing modes enhances oral proficiency in spontaneous speech. Speaking is an essential part of assessment and has a high impact on the final mark of any formal examination. The proposed revoicing activities meet the need to provide students with new resources for oral expression practice in a more independent way, both inside and outside the classroom, in groups and individually. The empirical data collected from our studies indicates that integrating such practice into language learning settings produces favourable results. However, it is

imperative to recognise that, despite the promising results, additional research is needed to determine the strength and applicability of these findings across various language learning settings. For instance, considering that both projects included bi/multilingual students (this was the case for 57.8% of the students in the AD), an innovative line of research would be whether students with multiple languages (i.e., heritage language, growing in bilingual countries, etc.) could use this interactive resource to balance the skills in the FL (as these subjects usually present an imbalance between different learning areas).

Finally, it is important to remember that prior to these projects, none of the participants had actively used DAT in their regular lessons. Therefore, this work introduces new resources to students with the advantage of developing multiple skills, enabling individual and group work, in-class and at-home activities, and face-to-face or online options.

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