The digital turn in the late 1990’s and the rapid spread of fast Internet connections have left a permanent mark on contemporary society. One important effect of technological advancement is evident in the dramatic increase in the production and worldwide circulation of audiovisual materials, which has promoted the wide scale access and consumption of telecinematic products for entertainment, leisure, information gathering, and, more recently, language learning. Audiovisual translation too has benefitted from the introduction of digital technologies and, at the same time, has contributed substantially to this societal change by fostering the dissemination of foreign languages and cultures through subtitled and dubbed products.

Under the impulse of the Council of Europe and its educational policies aimed at promoting multilingualism among European citizens, some scholars inaugurated a new field of study to explore and uncover the potentials of audiovisual translation for language teaching and learning, a fruitful and promising area of research which has led to numerous studies developed by single European universities and to two important projects funded by the European Commission and involving a network of academic institutions: LeViS (2006-2008)\(^1\) and ClipFlair (2011-2014)\(^2\).

The main assumptions underlying research in this emerging field include the rich contextualised language input offered by original and translated audiovisual material and the motivating context fostered by multimodal texts, capable of entertaining and engaging learners in classroom activities, thus lowering their affective filter (Krashen, 1985) and facilitating second language acquisition. This

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1. Learning via Subtitling: software and processes for developing language learning material based on film subtitling; [http://levis.cti.gr](http://levis.cti.gr)
2. Foreign language learning through interactive revoicing and captioning of clips: [www.clipflair.net](http://www.clipflair.net)
has led over the years to the implementation of learner-centred tasks based on interactive audiovisual translation activities to be carried out both individually and in groups, under the guidance of the teacher or independently to promote autonomous and cooperative language learning.

The main objective of the present volume is to systematically review the empirically-based experimental studies conducted in the last 20 years that have foregrounded the positive links between audiovisual translation tasks and foreign language learning, in order to offer a detailed and comprehensive picture of the state of the art. The book is organised in three main sections – Captioning, Revoicing, and Combined captioning and revoicing – followed by a concluding critical discussion of the main issues and some suggestions on promising strands for future research.

The first section is devoted to captioning, a general term used to indicate a wide range of writing activities on the screen, including “interlingual subtitles, […] captions for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, intertitles, annotations or speech bubbles” (Sokoli, 2018, p. 80). Experimental studies focusing on a variety of linguistic aspects have been carried out involving procedures of standard interlingual subtitling (from L2 to L1), the most developed line of research to date, but also reverse interlingual subtitles (from L1 to L2), and intralingual subtitles (from L2 to L2). Positive outcomes of learners’ improvements are reported on incidental vocabulary acquisition, idiomatic expression retention, development of pragmatic awareness, listening comprehension skills, and writing and translation skills.

Then, the attention shifts to another major audiovisual translation mode, namely revoicing, and in particular to experimental research on reverse interlingual dubbing (oral translation of L1 spoken dialogue into L2), intralingual dubbing (voice repetition of original L1 spoken dialogue), the emerging narrative technique of audio description (a recount of what is shown on screen for the blind and visually impaired), and voice-over (asynchronous oral translation into L2 added a few seconds after the onset of L1 original dialogue). The findings show that revoicing tasks prove effective in improving learners’ speaking skills,
in particular pronunciation, intonation, awareness of prosodic features, and fluency. In addition, some of the studies on audio description tasks demonstrate that revoicing can stimulate metalinguistic reflection and contribute to the development of lexical and phraseological competence.

The following section presents a more recent strand of experimental research combining captioning and revoicing tasks, and pays attention to studies on combined reverse interlingual dubbing and subtitling (from L1 to L2) and, to a lesser extent, on combined intralingual captioning and revoicing (from L2 to L2). The number of studies discussed in this last part is necessarily more limited, but the findings confirm the positive results already reported in previous research, especially on learners’ improvement of L2 written and oral production skills, general translation skills, and pragmatic awareness.

With its systematic, comprehensive and up-to-date review of more than 40 experimental studies, Lertola’s volume constitutes a valuable reference book both for researchers who approach this area of study for the first time and for scholars who have already worked on audiovisual translation as an instrument for language learning. It illustrates a range of quantitative and qualitative methods and procedures used in data collection and analysis, including pre- and post-tests administered to experimental and control groups of learners, evaluation rubrics, participant observation, questionnaires and interviews, and discussion forums which capture not only the positive effects of audiovisual translation tasks on language learning, but also the opinions and impressions of teachers and students involved in the activities. The triangulation of data and methodologies testify to the rigorousness of the studies and the reliability of results, despite the often limited number of participants in the experiments.

The present book is also a useful point of reference for teachers who are willing to introduce innovative teaching practices in education, as it accurately describes a variety of tasks successfully implemented in different learning settings, including face-to-face, online, and blended contexts. It offers pedagogical models, guidelines, and suggestions, while at the same time it does not conceal the limitations and drawbacks inherent in audiovisual translation tasks that
teachers should be aware of, such as the lack of ready-made activities (now partly overcome by the freely-accessible material designed in the ClipFlair project), the time-consuming selection of appropriate videos to meet students’ interests and proficiency levels, the technological skills needed to use specific dubbing and subtitling software programmes, and the need for computers and an internet connection in the classroom.

All in all, Jennifer Lertola shows us how a pervasive component of our daily lives like telecinematic products can be successfully employed to develop audiovisual translation tasks to be integrated with traditional foreign language teaching activities. As the author reminds us in her final discussion, however, more research is needed, encompassing still under-investigated translation modes (for instance reverse interlingual subtitling and dubbing, intralingual subtitling, and combined intralingual captioning and revoicing) and, above all, a larger number of language combinations (so far English, Spanish, and Italian are the most represented languages with very few exceptions); but the path has been traced and the principal actors involved in this process of change have already welcomed the new educational perspectives.

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