THE CONCEPT OF AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

Qayimova Mohinur
Student of the Faculty of English Philology and Translation Studies
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
mohinurqayimova7@gmail.com

Abstract. This article explores the growing significance of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), particularly subtitling and dubbing, in the context of global media consumption and language education. As multimedia content becomes increasingly accessible worldwide, the need for accurate and culturally sensitive translation has never been more critical. The paper examines how subtitling enhances vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and intercultural awareness, while dubbing supports oral fluency, pronunciation, and speaking confidence. It also addresses key challenges associated with AVT, including multimodal synchronization, cultural adaptation, technological constraints, and pedagogical implementation. By synthesizing current research and practical applications, the article underscores AVT's dual role as both a communication tool and an innovative educational method.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation (AVT), subtitling, dubbing, language learning, multimodality, media translation, intercultural communication, translation challenges, educational technology

Introduction. Audiovisual Translation (AVT) refers to the adaptation of media content that incorporates both sound and visuals. Unlike conventional translation, which deals primarily with written text, AVT engages with multimedia formats such as films, television shows, video games, and more—where meaning is conveyed not only through spoken language but also through visuals, sound effects, and even written elements displayed on screen. As noted by Díaz Cintas, AVT includes a wide array of media forms, ranging from feature films and sitcoms to documentaries, advertisements, and interactive games. What distinguishes AVT is its inherently multimodal nature: communication takes place across various channels—verbal, visual, and auditory—requiring translators to pay attention to more than just dialogue, including images, background music, and symbolic elements. Chiaro describes AVT as "the interlingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically," underlining the

necessity of aligning translations with both audio and visual elements. The rise of global media platforms and streaming services has dramatically increased the need for AVT in recent years. Services like Netflix regularly offer content in numerous languages, supporting subtitles in over 30 languages and dubbing in more than 35. This trend reflects a growing expectation among international viewers to experience global content in their native language.

Take Azerbaijan as an example: audiences often watch international films with Azerbaijani subtitles, and current regulations require that all theatrical releases be either subtitled or dubbed. On national television, dubbing is the standard—TV channels must air films and series with Azerbaijani audio tracks, representing a shift from earlier practices of simple voice-over to more sophisticated full dubbing. These changes highlight the critical role AVT plays in facilitating cross-cultural communication and making global entertainment accessible to diverse audiences. Among the many AVT techniques, **dubbing** and **subtitling** are the most commonly used and will serve as the primary focus of this article. Dubbing entails the replacement of the original audio with a translated version that aligns as closely as possible with the lip movements, expressions, and intonation of the original performers.

These two main AVT modalities offer immersive, multimodal input that significantly contributes to language acquisition. Pioneering research by Vanderplank first explored the pedagogical potential of intralingual subtitles, showing how subtitles could provide learners with large amounts of authentic and understandable language input. His findings laid the groundwork for considering AVT not merely as entertainment, but as a valuable educational resource.

1. Subtitling, especially, has been the focus of extensive scholarly interest. A body of research has confirmed its benefits for vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and intercultural competence. Later studies moved beyond passive viewing to more interactive subtitling activities, where learners produce subtitles themselves. This task-based approach fosters engagement and encourages active language use. According to Danan, interlingual subtitles are more appropriate for beginners who rely on their native language, whereas intralingual subtitles are better suited for advanced learners. These distinctions help tailor AVT methods to learners' proficiency levels. Further empirical research has examined how subtitling can be systematically integrated into language curricula. Ghia, for instance, demonstrated that using subtitles in secondary education increases learners' noticing of grammatical structures, while Talaván Zanón developed a theoretical and practical model to incorporate subtitling productively into classroom

activities. Lertola further emphasized the relevance of AVT within post-method approaches in language teaching, advocating for its communicative and task-based benefits.

2. Dubbing, although less widely researched, is increasingly recognized for its pedagogical potential. Studies such as those by Kumai, Danan, and Chiu have shown that dubbing enhances oral proficiency, especially in pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Because dubbing requires learners to synchronize speech with visual content, it provides a unique opportunity to practice authentic spoken interaction in a meaningful context. Chiu argues that this method allows learners to imitate native-like pronunciation within realistic situations, making it particularly effective for oral skill development. Navarrete and Sánchez-Requena expanded on this by conducting classroom-based studies with secondary school students learning Spanish as a foreign language. These studies confirmed improvements in spontaneous oral expression and fluency after consistent dubbing practice. The controlled and timed nature of dubbing activities enabled learners to self-monitor and improve their performance over time.

Recently, attention has also shifted towards the combined use of subtitling and dubbing in language education. For example, López Cirugeda and Sánchez Ruiz examined a project where university students created both subtitled and dubbed videos for children. While motivational gains were evident, challenges such as limited digital literacy and language proficiency were noted. Talaván Zanón and colleagues further explored this dual approach in higher education, concluding that AVT fosters collaborative learning and improves both oral and written production skills, though students reported stronger gains from dubbing activities.

While Audiovisual Translation (AVT) plays an increasingly important role in making global media accessible and supporting language learning, it also presents a wide array of challenges that make it significantly more complex than traditional forms of translation. These challenges stem from the multimodal nature of audiovisual texts, the technical constraints of the medium, cultural and linguistic variability, and pedagogical considerations in educational contexts.

1. Multimodality and synchronization constraints: One of the primary challenges in AVT lies in its inherently multimodal nature. Unlike written translation, AVT must account for verbal, visual, and auditory channels simultaneously. As Chiaro (2009) explains, AVT involves "interlingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically," which requires that the translation not only be linguistically accurate but also harmonized with visuals, background music, sound

effects, and timing. This is particularly relevant in dubbing, where synchronizing translated dialogue with the lip movements, intonation, and emotional tone of on-screen actors is essential. Achieving natural-sounding, synchronized dubbing while preserving the original meaning and cultural nuances is a demanding task. Similarly, subtitling must operate within strict spatial and temporal constraints. The limited number of characters per line and the short duration each subtitle appears on screen force translators to condense and reformulate dialogue without losing essential meaning.

2. Linguistic and cultural challenges: AVT often involves complex cultural transference, as audiovisual products are embedded with idiomatic expressions, humor, slang, and cultural references that may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Translators must find ways to convey the same effect or meaning in a culturally appropriate manner. This is especially problematic in genres such as comedy, where wordplay or culturally bound humor can be nearly untranslatable. Moreover, linguistic variation across dialects and sociolects adds another layer of complexity. For instance, representing regional accents or informal speech in subtitles or dubbing may influence how characters are perceived by the target audience. Any misrepresentation could alter character dynamics or narrative tone, thereby affecting viewers' interpretation.

3. Technical and software limitations: Another significant obstacle in AVT is the technological aspect. The use of specialized software for subtitling and dubbing requires technical training that not all language professionals possess. As observed in the study by *López Cirugeda* and *Sánchez Ruiz*, lack of digital literacy and familiarity with AVT tools can limit learners' and even professionals' ability to effectively engage with these tasks. Similarly, *Talaván Zanón* noted that students often found AVT time-consuming and faced technical difficulties, especially when trying to achieve professional quality results within educational settings.

4. Pedagogical limitations in educational contexts: Although AVT has shown great promise as a pedagogical tool, incorporating it into the language learning curriculum is not without challenges. While studies have shown the benefits of using subtitling and dubbing to improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening comprehension, educators often struggle with implementation due to lack of time, insufficient training, and the need for curricular alignment. In some contexts, traditional teaching methods still dominate, making it difficult to justify the inclusion of AVT despite its proven benefits. Furthermore, learner proficiency levels must be carefully considered. *Danan* notes that interlingual subtitles are more beneficial for beginners, whereas intralingual subtitles are

suited for advanced learners. Failure to adapt AVT activities to students' linguistic capabilities can lead to cognitive overload or disengagement.

5. Time, cost, and resource demands: From a professional standpoint, AVT is resource-intensive. High-quality dubbing requires voice actors, sound engineers, translators, and post-production work, which can be costly and time-consuming. Subtitling, while generally cheaper, still demands skilled professionals who can deliver accurate translations under technical constraints. In educational contexts, even basic AVT activities can consume significant classroom time and require access to proper equipment and software.

Conclusion: Audiovisual Translation (AVT) plays a crucial role in making multimedia content accessible across languages and cultures. Its most common forms—subtitling and dubbing—not only enable international media consumption but also serve as effective tools in language education. Subtitling supports vocabulary growth, listening skills, and grammatical awareness, while dubbing enhances oral fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking competence. Together, they offer rich, multimodal input that aligns well with task-based and communicative learning approaches. Despite its pedagogical potential, AVT poses significant challenges, including technical complexity, time constraints, and cultural nuances that are difficult to translate. Effective implementation in educational settings also depends on teacher training, student language levels, and institutional support. Nonetheless, with the growing demand for multilingual media, AVT continues to gain importance in both professional and academic contexts. With further research and practical integration into curricula, AVT can significantly enrich language learning and global communication.

REFERENCES:

1. Chiaro, D. (2009). Issues in audiovisual translation. In J. Munday (Ed.), The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies (pp. 141–165). Routledge.

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

3. Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2007). Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling. Routledge.

4. Ghia, E. (2012). Subtitling matters: Effects on language awareness and skills acquisition. Peter Lang.

5.   Lertola, J. (2018). Audiovisual translation in the foreign language classroom: Applications in the post-method era. Palgrave Macmillan.

6.   López Cirugeda, I., & Sánchez Ruiz, R. A. (2013). Audiovisual translation in education: Subtitling and dubbing in children's language learning. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 93, 77–81.

7.   Sánchez-Requena, A. (2017). Exploring the potential of dubbing as a learning tool in secondary education. Journal of Audiovisual Translation, 1(1), 123–139.

8.   Talaván Zanón, N. (2013). Audiovisual Translation in the Foreign Language Classroom: Applications in the Teaching of English. Publicacions de la Universitat de València.

9.   Vanderplank, R. (1988). The value of teletext sub-titles in language learning. ELT Journal, 42(4), 272–281.

10. Давронова, М. И., & Холова, М. А. (2014). РОЛЬ И ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ ДЕТАЛИ В ПОЭЗИИ. СОВРЕМЕННАЯ ФИЛОЛОГИЯ: ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА, 59.