

Audiovisual Translation and Language Teaching: A Proposal on How to Use Respeaking to Improve Oral Skills

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Abstract

Audiovisual Translation (AVT) and foreign language (FL) learning have converged in recent decades to be an effective combination to improve language skills. Respeaking is one of the few modalities that involves oral practice, since it combines shadowing – a technique involving the immediate and simultaneous repetition of spoken language by a language learner, typically with a brief delay behind the speaker – and the subtitling practice. The present paper aims to offer a proposal on the use of respeaking in FL acquisition emphasising its advantages for FL speaking skills. First, the article will explore the current landscape of language learning and Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT). It will then define the concept of respeaking and examine the challenges associated with this AVT method. Subsequently, the discussion will focus on the technique of shadowing, its link to respeaking, and its potential benefits for improving oral skills. Finally, the concept of didactic respeaking will be introduced. A proposal will be provided to determine what didactic materials should be used as such, and some reflections on how respeaking can be assessed in FL teaching will be made. The final conclusions reflect on the feasibility of introducing respeaking as a didactic tool in FL teaching, which could be a potential new trend in DAT.

Key words: translation, audiovisual translation, accessibility, respeaking, shadowing, foreign language education, FL didactics, oral skills, speaking.

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Introduction

Nowadays, Foreign Language (FL) learners have countless sources of Foreign Language Learning (FLL) within reach. In fact, teaching methodologies are ever changing (Ávila-Cabrera, 2022) and numerous scholars have tested different methodologies to apply Audiovisual Translation (AVT) modalities to teach languages in the FL classroom (Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban, 2021; Díaz Cintas, 2012; Fernández-Costales, 2017; Sokoli et al., 2011; Talaván, 2013; Vanderplank, 1998), evolving to a new field called Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT). Media Accessibility (MA), which refers to the practices and technologies used to ensure that media content is accessible to all individuals, is also part of these AVT modalities. These practices are mainly focused on subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) and audio description (AD) (Calduch & Talaván, 2018; Navarrete, 2018; Talaván, 2019; Vanderplank, 2016). In live SDH, respeaking is one of the used techniques to make subtitles, i.e., a transcription method where an individual listens to spoken content and repeats it verbatim into an Automatic Speech Recognition Software (ASR), adding punctuation and formatting.

When it comes to FL communication skills, many researchers have investigated the challenges that students encounter to improve oral communication abilities at different educational levels (Alam, 2013; Polishchuk, 2018; Tsang, 2017; Yanagi & Baker, 2016). Several studies have focused on improving oral skills using DAT (Ávila-Cabrera, 2022; Bolaños-García-Escribano & Díaz Cintas, 2019; Ibáñez Moreno & Vermeulen, 2015; Navarrete, 2021; Zhang, 2016). Nevertheless, no study has empirical data about the use of respeaking in the FL classroom. Hence, more literature on the subject is necessary (Belenguer Cortés, 2024).

This paper aims to present a proposal on how to use respeaking to improve oral skills in FL learners. The main goal will be for students to respeak in the FL to practice their oral skills, which combines shadowing but also the use of an ASR software. This proposal is based on the paper by Belenguer Cortés (2024), which established the basis to consider respeaking as a new DAT modality, and it is structured as follows: first, the article discusses (1) applications of DAT in FLL, focusing on speaking skills and respeaking. It then introduces (2) shadowing as a technique and explores its impact on oral proficiency. Following this, (3) respeaking is presented as a didactic tool, along with a proposed framework and (4) potential assessment criteria. Lastly, (5) concluding remarks offer insights into the use of respeaking in FL contexts, outlining plans for future long-term projects.

1. Language Learning and Didactic Audiovisual Translation

DAT works with texts that include verbal and nonverbal information while communicating concurrently through two separate channels: visual and audio. In other words, it means the nature of the products used in AVT is multimodal (Chaume, 2004) since it involves decoding a message sent through both acoustic and visual channels at the same time. In the words of Lertola (2015):

Learners are thus not only translating the source text (ST) into the target text (TT) but they are also watching, and listening to, L2 audiovisual input. The simultaneous involvement of acoustic and visual channels is considered to enhance language learning and helps memory retention (p. 251).

According to Lertola (2015), “teachers can involve students in a variety of activities that enhance their learning experience by using updated multimedia devices thanks to the diffusion of internet and user-friendly software in the field of education” (p. 245). It is therefore unsurprising that AVT has been used in the FL classroom over the years and has established DAT as a pedagogical tool with multiple possibilities in FL teaching (Talaván et al., 2024). In fact, several projects such as LeViS (Romero et al., 2011), ADLAB (2014), ClipFlair (Sokoli, 2018), PluriTAV (Martínez-Sierra, 2018), or TRADILEX (Talaván & Lertola, 2022) are examples of successful implementations of DAT in the FL classroom.

DAT plays a crucial role in enhancing oral skills within the realm of FLL (Gottlieb, 1992; Díaz Cintas, 1995; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007; Talaván & Costal, 2017). By incorporating DAT into educational contexts, learners are exposed to authentic spoken language in audiovisual materials such as films, documentaries, and educational videos (Araújo, 2008; Arslanyilmaz & Pedersen, 2010; Borrás & Lafayette, 1994). This exposure allows learners to engage with natural language use, intonation, and cultural nuances in context (He & Wasuntarasophit, 2015). DAT facilitates repeated exposure to spoken language through subtitles or voice-over, aiding the development of listening comprehension (Ghia & Pavesi, 2016) and pronunciation (Kumai, 1996; Chiu, 2012). Moreover, DAT can provide linguistic scaffolding by offering visual and textual support, which assists learners in understanding and practicing oral communication. Through these mechanisms, DAT not only enriches the linguistic input available to learners but also promotes active engagement and practical application of language skills in communicative settings (Navarrete, 2013). Thus, DAT represents a valuable pedagogical tool in fostering the enhancement of oral proficiency among language learners (Danan, 2010; Jüngst, 2013; Talaván et al., 2014, 2015). Students can be exposed to different types of input, which helps them improve the different competencies found in the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001; Runnels, 2021). In addition to this, similar positive results can be perceived in MA modalities such as SDH, with scholars such as Talaván (2019), Ávila-Cabrera & Corral Esteban (2021), and Bolaños-García-Escribano & Ogea Pozo (2023), among many others. AD has also garnered attention from many scholars, such as Walczak (2016) or Navarrete (2018), since AD “was first considered to be an aid to the blind or visually challenged, to help them obtain the information they needed” (Vermeulen & Ibáñez Moreno, 2017, p. 54). Since no literature on respeaking in the FL classroom can be found apart from Belenguer Cortés (2024), who made the first attempt to introduce respeaking in DAT and consider its uses in the FL classroom, and Moores (2022), who mentions the use of respeaking by non-native speakers to improve their English from the perspective of reception and leisure, respeaking will be proposed as a didactic AVT tool in FL education.

2. Respeaking

Live subtitling, also known as “real-time subtitles”, is a means of instantly delivering media material through the real-time conversion of voice to text (Romero-Fresco & Eugeni, 2020), which can be intralingual or interlingual and can be mainly produced using velotype, stenography, or respeaking (Romero-Fresco, 2012). Respeaking is a live subtitling technique in which the professional listens to the source text and repeats it or paraphrases it. In the professional industry, respeakers speak the audio out loud – in the original language if intralingual or in another language if interlingual – and feed it back into ASR software, which converts spoken words into real-time captions (Eugeni, 2008). It also includes “punctuation marks and some specific features for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing audience” (Romero-Fresco & Eugeni, 2020, p. 164). The purpose of respeaking is to generate real-time subtitles or captions for live broadcasts, events, and recorded media, enhancing accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing and improving efficiency in subtitle production.

When respeaking, it is key that the ASR software recognises the message, which requires software-adapted pronunciation, punctuated speech and a thorough lexical and thematic knowledge (Belenguer Cortés, 2024). The availability of ASR software spans a range of cost structures. Some ASR software is accessible at no cost, providing basic functionalities with certain limitations. Conversely, more advanced or professional ASR tools, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, typically require a purchase or subscription, since they offer enhanced capabilities and features, justifying their associated costs. Examples of ASR software are Isis (developed by Starfish), Dragon Individual Professional by Nuance, CMU Sphinx, HTK, Julius, Kaldi, Fingertext, or IBM ViaVoice.

2.1. From Shadowing to Respeaking

Respeaking is akin to simultaneous interpretation as both activities require listening and speaking simultaneously with minimal delay. This implies respeakers must practice divided attention, managing both the form and content of the source message and the target communication simultaneously (Baaring, 2006). Shadowing, a technique sometimes used in simultaneous interpreter training, serves as a preliminary exercise to develop divided attention. It involves listening to a speaker’s speech and repeating the words immediately with minimal delay. Hamada (2019) writes about the concept of shadowing and its definition:

A learner repeats what he/she is listening to, just as a shadow follows someone walking. Most importantly, learners must simultaneously replicate what they hear without written scripts. (...) learners follow the audio stimuli as simultaneously as possible in shadowing and learners repeat chunk by chunk in repetition. (p. 387)

In essence, shadowing is an auditory tracking task where the listener repeats a message in the same language, word for word, as it is presented through headphones, much like a parrot (Lambert, 1988). Hence, in respeaking, concurrent training of ear-voice management through shadowing would be highly recommended. As with shadowing and interpreting, the respeaker repeats the text that they

are listening to out loud (Veiga Díaz & García González, 2013). After receiving the dictation, the ASR software converts the shadowing into written text, which is what subtitles are. Potential text errors are examined and fixed since it is possible that the software did not capture everything that the respeaker stated or did so inaccurately. The software is then used to transmit the subtitles. Undoubtedly, this would need to be followed up with course components like segmentation exercises, time delay management exercises, memory exercises, and other activities targeted at building the specific skills required to meet institutional and technical demands (Baaring, 2006).

Nowadays there is academic research into respeaking and respeaking training in different projects, such as LTA (Live Text Access) (Oncins et al., 2019), ILSA (Intralingual Live Subtitling Access, 2017-1-ES01-KA203-037948, 2017–2020) (Szczygielska et al., 2020) or SMART (Shaping Multilingual Access through Respeaking Technology, Economic and Social Research Council UK, ES/T002530/1, 2020–2023) (Davitti & Sandrelli, 2020) and universities are running in-depth training, such as the University of Vigo and the University of Leeds (Romero-Fresco, 2019; Eugeni et al., 2021). Data related to its application as a pedagogical tool are scarcer, and studies related to the potential of respeaking and its use in the FL classroom are non-existent, apart from Belenguer Cortés (2024). Nevertheless, the prominent studies related to DAT and its aforementioned application show the ever-growing possibilities of using didactic materials that combine different modalities to meet various learning outcomes. In the realm of FLL, respeaking holds substantial potential. It can serve as a practical tool for developing listening and speaking skills, as learners must focus on accurately repeating or paraphrasing spoken content in real-time. This practice can enhance language comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency. Furthermore, incorporating respeaking exercises in language curricula can help students develop the ability to process and produce language simultaneously, a skill that is valuable for interpreting and advanced language use in professional settings. Thus, respeaking bridges the gap between professional applications and educational methodologies, fostering language proficiency in a dynamic and interactive manner.

When beginning to communicate in a FL, learners must base their speech on form-focused instruction, and speaking from basic statements and phrases committed to memory is a good place to start (Brown & Nation, 1997). As the main word shows, “respeaking” comes from the word “speaking” in the sense of “speaking or uttering again”. Hence, students are not expected to become professional respeakers, but rather be able to use this tool to practice their oral skills through shadowing. There was not much research on how shadowing can help with English speaking proficiency (Murphey, 2001; Trofimovich & Gatbonton, 2006), but in recent years scholars such as Kadota (2012), Hamada, (2016), or Najimatdinovna and Bayronovna (2024) have explored its use in the FL classroom. Furthermore, in addition to helping students focus on language input, shadowing also increases the opportunity to practice, helps students follow fast speech and eliminate distractions, and inspires learners (Reggie, 2008). If the FL and the native language come from separate language families, learners’ pronunciation might not be recognised. This also impacts working memory, which impedes language learning. On the other hand, shadowing can improve pronunciation, since simultaneous replication of the speech one hears enhances phoneme perception, which eventually increases the amount of information received and retained, and

improves listening skills (Hamada, 2016). Considering this, we could define *didactic respeaking* as the FL practice of focusing on shadowing, with text (subtitles) produced that might be either individual words or longer passages, depending on the level of the learner. Hence, since we consider shadowing to be a part of respeaking, we will complete the proposal for the use of respeaking in FL teaching with advocating the use of shadowing in FLL and what should be considered to obtain optimal results.

Research has demonstrated how shadowing can be used to improve pronunciation in language classrooms (e.g., Martinsen et al., 2017) and has documented the various positive effects on pronunciation, such as comprehensibility and fluency development (Foote & McDonough, 2017). According to Hamada (2016), shadowing has drawn criticism for being akin to audio-lingual repetitious practice that only focuses on bottom-up listening abilities and the mistaken belief that it is a speaking exercise. Nevertheless, shadowing is also a means of developing listening skills from the bottom up. Communicative language teaching methodologies are preferred in classroom environments and shadowing has not generally been used due to it being repetitious and psychologically demanding (Hamada, 2021, p. 32). However, research shows that shadowing sharpens speech perception skills (Dakota, 2019; Hamada, 2016, 2021; Najimatdinovna & Bayronovna, 2024) and that it is, therefore, an effective FLL teaching tool.

Considering the use of other AVT modalities in DAT, since shadowing is a part of the respeaking process, respeaking could be implemented in FL classroom taking the appropriate considerations into account. Najimatdinovna and Bayronovna (2024, p. 347) recommended the following when using shadowing in FL teaching:

- **Select an Appropriate Text:** a brief audio passage or conversation in the target language should be selected accounting for students' level of ability. An appropriate video for shadowing practice should be clear, engaging, and moderate in length.
- **Play the Audio tape and Model the Shadowing Technique:** the tape should be played, and instructors should walk students through how to listen and repeat in real-time before starting shadowing activities. It should be stressed how crucial it is to imitate the pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation of the native speaker.
- **Offer Guided Practice:** the class should be split up into pairs or small groups and shadowing the audio clip should be practiced. Students are expected to pay close attention, repeat what they hear in real time, and concentrate on pronouncing and intoning the words correctly.
- **Individual Practice:** Students should be allowed to observe the instructor after guided practice and be encouraged to listen and repeat after the video. This will lead to an improvement in their speaking confidence and fluency progressively.
- **Peer Feedback:** Students should be encouraged to give each other comments on how they performed throughout their shadowing experience. Students who get feedback from their peers may pinpoint and enhance their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm.

- **Watch and Help:** As students practise shadowing, instructors should monitor their development and offer assistance and direction as required. Constructive criticism and encouragement are expected to help them become better public speakers.
- **Reflect and Review:** After the shadowing exercise, a class discussion on the advantages and difficulties of the method is recommended. Students should be encouraged to consider how they could integrate shadowing practice into their language learning routine and to report on their experiences.
- **Repetition and Reinforcement:** Shadowing exercises should be included regularly in language classes to help students become more fluent speakers. To keep students interested and motivated during shadowing practice, a range of audio resources should be offered.

Shadowing, as an integral part of the respeaking process, provides students with the opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills simultaneously. By engaging in this practice, learners can develop a more nuanced understanding of the target language's pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation, ultimately enhancing their overall fluency and confidence.

3. Respeaking for Speaking?

In the present proposal of didactic respeaking, respeaking the whole speech is not expected, as with professional-in-training respeakers, but rather repeating words or segments of speech that are particularly interesting from the didactic FL perspective. In addition, students would first benefit from an introductory course (Belenguer Cortés, 2024) to take advantage of respeaking to the fullest. Not all students may find respeaking a natural fit, and some may excel more than others depending on their inherent abilities and willingness to practice. In the present proposal, the main outcome is practicing production skills (speaking) by introducing respeaking in the FL classroom, in which the students (as respeakers) listen to the original speech with headphones and speak a word, repeat the entire text, or fill in any words that may be missing, depending on their level of comprehension.

Training the ASR software beforehand, as mentioned, will be expected. To this end, each student should be provided with headphones, a microphone and have access to the ASR software (ideally, one meant for doing respeaking, as mentioned in Section 2, like Dragon or Fingertext, for instance).


3.1. Material Selection

When it comes to the preparation of materials, the level of language proficiency should be considered when choosing a suitable video, with view to the learners' knowledge and the expected outcomes from the respeaking activity, as explained by Belenguer Cortés (2024). Hence, choosing audiovisual materials with one speaker delivering a speech is recommended, such as those found in the Speech repository platform from the Directorate-General for Interpretation, or even recorded videos of the teacher reading a speech out loud or recreating a dialogue with another speaker. Ideally, videos with

native speakers should be sought not only to practice listening skills, but also to expose students to different types of accents, flows, and language authenticity. The speaker(s) in the video should be analysed and selected in terms of vocabulary, speech speed, accent, and/or the domain, since these aspects can have a significant impact on student performance (Belenguer Cortés, 2024). Furthermore, the activity should be designed for learners to get familiarised with respeaking without feeling frustrated. The reason for this is that students will be listening and speaking at the same time while using the ASR software. Thus, activities such as filling the gaps or providing short answers are recommended, as we can see in Figures 1 and 4.

Figure 1

Gap-fill Activity Based on “Let’s Learn English Lesson 23: What Do You Want?”



Anna: Washington, D. C. has great food from all over the world. Today I'm having lunch with my boss. Ms. Weaver says we're going on a _____ around the world. But she knows I only have an hour for lunch! Silly woman. Hi Jonathan! Hey, we are meeting Ms. Weaver for lunch at _____, aren't we?

Caty: We're _____ eating at a restaurant. We are eating at _____!

Jonathan: Okay, _____ in 15 minutes. Excuse me, I'll have the _____. Oh, you're _____ shrimp. Okay, I'll have the beef then. Okay, here is your change. The dish is \$7. So, here is 1, 2, 3 dollars _____ from your 10.

Anna: I'm eating it. The Peruvian chicken is _____! Try some!

Source: VOA Learning English.

When respeaking, FL learners must understand what respeaking is, how it is done, and in what way it can improve their oral skills. This also implies that students must know how to use the ASR software, its particularities, and how intonation can help with voice recognition. A warm-up activity (Talaván & Lertola, 2022) related to the domain and/or the vocabulary present in the video would also be beneficial for students to get familiarized with the topic. For the ASR software to adapt to students' voices and intonation in the particular language taught in the FL classroom, they will also have to

finish the “quick training and enrolment” component, which comprises reading a number of words and phrases in the FL into the software (Belenguer Cortés, 2024). This will help students to concentrate on pronunciation even before starting the speaking activities. After respeaking, activities that follow should complement and reinforce the knowledge practiced. To do so, students must always play an active role (Talaván & Lertola, 2022). They are expected to engage in production-related tasks when developing their speaking skills. This is why respeaking can be an appropriate pedagogical tool. For the ASR software, speech intelligibility is key and, in terms of language speaking, prosodic control, including stress, rhythm, and intonation, belongs to the abilities expected to improve (Mishima & Cheng, 2017). In fact, student’s ability and familiarity with the speaker’s accent, the student’s own accent and skill in the target language, and transmission channel for the language interaction (such as the room’s acoustics or electronics) will be key in obtaining successful results. Hence, in the FL classroom, a proposal for using respeaking will be beneficial in terms of training learners’ accents for their role as respeakers, improving listening ability to identify the word to respeak it, and training on the ASR software. In this proposal, the topic of living abroad will be presented in the lesson materials. Hence, this paper will present a 60-minute lesson plan aimed at B2-level students learning Spanish. To do this, we will follow the structure proposed by Talaván and Lertola (2022) explained in Belenguer Cortés (2024), in which we will distinguish among the warm-up phase, the didactic respeaking, and post-didactic respeaking steps (see Table 1). The main benefits are the following:

- To practice listening and oral skills and improve speaking.
- To boost motivation.
- To introduce respeaking as an educational tool.
- To encourage teamwork in an L2 learning environment.
- To raise awareness of accessibility and enhance audiovisual communication, which are crucial in a digital society where technology is ubiquitous.

In every phase of the proposal, the main outcome for students will be to work on their speaking skills throughout every single phase of the lesson using respeaking as the linker, and to become familiar with the text that they will work with throughout the lesson. Hence, as will be explained shortly, activities will be focused on introducing the topic in question, working with that topic, receiving feedback on the respeaking part, and putting the abilities and vocabulary acquired in respeaking into practice.

Table 1

Lesson Plan Using Respeaking to Practice Oral Skills

Warm-up activity	Respeaking task	Review	Post-respeaking task
Brainstorming (10-15 minutes) Students speculate about the identity of the person in the picture, discuss the possible topic, and predict the content of their speech.	Respeaking (20 minutes) Students are asked to listen to the speech and respeak the missing segments from the text.	Correction (15–20 minutes) Teacher and students correct any mistakes made during respeaking.	Speaking (5–10 minutes) Students engage in a speaking activity related to the topic, using what they learned.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The objectives of the lesson plan are to practice receiving information (listening) and producing information (speaking), present respeaking as a teaching strategy, encourage cooperation among L2 learners, and cultivate audiovisual communication and accessibility awareness, both of which are essential in a digital culture where technology is the norm. As explained in the author's previous paper (2024, p. 153), respeaking is a tool that could enhance participation among students, since it demands an active role as respeakers. This implies learners taking an active role and being responsible for their results, receiving immediate feedback through the ASR software, which uniquely fosters autonomy and offers an engaging, motivating learning method for both teachers and students.

To introduce the respeaking activity in this context, our students are first shown a picture of the video they will be asked to respeak during the lesson (see Figure 2). In this case, an oral brainstorming activity could be started, in which students speculate about who the person in the picture potentially is, what she might be talking about, and what we can expect from her speech. After this, we provide students with the transcription of the speech so that they can verify if they were correct or incorrect (as seen in Figure 3 below). Therefore, in this part, students practice their previous speaking abilities by producing spontaneous language and formulating hypotheses.

Figure 2

Video 'Vivir en otro país'



Source: Speech Repository.

Figure 3

Transcription for the Video 'Vivir en otro país'

Hace algo más de medio año decidí mudarme a Bruselas para **hacer unas prácticas**. Al estar aquí trabajando en la Comisión Europea he conocido a gente de muchas partes de Europa y la verdad es que está siendo una experiencia muy **enriquecedora**. Estoy aprendiendo palabras nuevas. Estoy probando **comida típica** de otros países. Incluso estoy celebrando **tradiciones** que ni siquiera conocía personalmente. Creo que, si se tiene la oportunidad, todo el mundo debería pasar una temporada **en el extranjero**. Así que en este discurso me gustaría mencionar las tres principales ventajas de vivir en un país que no es el tuyo. La ventaja más evidente es que te permite conocer un lugar nuevo. Parece que con la **globalización** todos somos iguales y puedes encontrar de todo en todas partes. Pero la verdad es que yo creo que esto no es verdad. Conocer un país verdaderamente bien va más allá de visitar los sitios típicos y comer la comida tradicional. También se trata de descubrir qué **barrios** de tu nueva ciudad te gustan más. ¿Qué productos venden en el supermercado que no puedes encontrar en tu **país de origen**? ¿O qué hace la gente un sábado por la tarde? Creo que tomas el tiempo de conocer bien un país **distinto** al tuyo. Otra cultura es algo inestimable y que nos cambia para siempre. Así que os animo a que, si os vais a vivir al extranjero, por mucho de menos que echéis a vuestra familia a vuestra ciudad, os esforcéis por salir de vuestra **zona de confort** y os toméis el tiempo de conocer vuestra nueva ciudad. Creedme que **vale la pena** y al final no hay nada mejor que tener muchos **hogares** en muchas partes del mundo. La segunda ventaja es que no hay mejor forma de mejorar nuestras **competencias lingüísticas** que vivir en el extranjero. No os voy a mentir, no es algo fácil. Puede llegar a cansar mucho tener que hablar en un idioma que no es el tuyo durante todo el día, especialmente cuando tenemos que hacer **gestiones**, como ir al médico, ir al banco, al Ayuntamiento, pero poco a poco te vas **acostumbrando**. Os invito a que, si queréis realmente aprender una lengua, os vayáis a **pasar una temporada** en un país en el que se hable este idioma.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The text will then be read out loud by different students and the vocabulary in bold will be the words and expressions that students need to learn. Hence, students are expected to get familiar with the text, with the unknown words, and with the vocabulary that they are expected to acquire and identify

in the respeaking task. This, together with the previous brainstorming activity, is expected to take 15–20 minutes. Subsequently, the didactic respeaking phase starts. Here students do not have the transcription, but get a similar text with gaps, as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Gap-Fill Activity Based on the Transcription for the Video ‘Vivir en otro país’

Hace algo más de medio año decidí mudarme a Bruselas para _____. Al estar aquí trabajando en la Comisión Europea he conocido a gente de muchas partes de Europa y la verdad es que está siendo una experiencia muy _____. Estoy aprendiendo palabras nuevas. Estoy probando _____ de otros países. Incluso estoy celebrando _____ que ni siquiera conocía personalmente. Creo que, si se tiene la oportunidad, todo el mundo debería pasar una temporada _____. Así que en este discurso me gustaría mencionar las tres principales ventajas de vivir en un país que no es el tuyo. La ventaja más evidente es que te permite conocer un lugar nuevo. Parece que con la _____ todos somos iguales y puedes encontrar de todo en todas partes. Pero la verdad es que yo creo que esto no es verdad. Conocer un país verdaderamente bien va más allá de visitar los sitios típicos y comer la comida tradicional. También se trata de descubrir qué _____ de tu nueva ciudad te gustan más. ¿Qué productos venden en el supermercado que no puedes encontrar en tu _____? ¿O qué hace la gente un sábado por la tarde? Creo que tomas el tiempo de conocer bien un país _____ al tuyo. Otra cultura es algo inestimable y que nos cambia para siempre. Así que os animo a que, si os vais a vivir al extranjero, por mucho de menos que echéis a vuestra familia a vuestra ciudad, os esforcéis por salir de vuestra _____ y os toméis el tiempo de conocer vuestra nueva ciudad. Creedme que _____ y al final no hay nada mejor que tener muchos _____ en muchas partes del mundo. La segunda ventaja es que no hay mejor forma de mejorar nuestras _____ que vivir en el extranjero. No os voy a mentir, no es algo fácil. Puede llegar a cansar mucho tener que hablar en un idioma que no es el tuyo durante todo el día, especialmente cuando tenemos que hacer _____, como ir al médico, ir al banco, al Ayuntamiento, pero poco a poco te vas _____. Os invito a que, si queréis realmente aprender una lengua, os vayáis a _____ en un país en el que se hable este idioma.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Students will be provided with the activity portrayed in Figure 4 and asked to listen to the speech and respeak the missing segments from the text. To do so, they must have headphones, microphones, and prior “quick training and enrolment”, either in the same session or beforehand, so that they are familiar with the SR software and so that the software is able to recognise their accents and voices. In this part, students will respeak the missing parts of the text while listening to it. This procedure can be repeated as many times as needed if they do not hear a word or a segment clearly. Students who finish first will be asked to reread the respoken words recognised by the SR software to check whether the spelling is correct, whether they respoke the right word and not a homophone, and whether the word makes sense considering the context. This procedure will take a maximum of 20

minutes. Consequently, the text will be reviewed and corrected by all students together, so that they can verify whether they respoke correctly and learn the correct pronunciation for all the missing words and segments. This phase should take around 15–20 minutes. Finally, the last part of the lesson – the post-respeaking task – will be dedicated to speaking in pairs to talk about the benefits and downsides of living in a foreign country. The lesson plan is designed to last an hour (see Table 1), where respeaking is expected to be used to observe the efficacy and the results in the FL classroom. Having said this, long-term plans for using respeaking in different lessons can be applied and divided according to the domain, vocabulary, level, and outcome. To practice respeaking long-term, more respeaking lesson plans could be used following the above didactic sequence structure and making a final assignment with respeaking as the task to be fulfilled. Students who would be able to talk while listening and use the ASR software, could have the opportunity to improve their phonetics, pronunciation, and fluency – all of which would help them be understood and improve the oral “middle text” and speech flow.

4. Assessment Criteria

Fillmore (1979) identifies four fluency abilities: being able to speak at length with a few pauses, being able to express coherently and semantically correct sentences, having appropriate expressions in many different contexts, and demonstrating creativity and imagination in the use of language. Since every student plays the role of a respeaker, assessment must focus on the results in terms of speaking. From Belenguer Cortés (2024) the main goals will be:

- Knowing how to train the software for optimum performance.
- Acquiring the ability to speak while listening.
- Overcoming the stress caused by a live situation.
- Expressing thoughts in a lively and concise manner.
- Dictating short tranches of text at a higher-than-average speed.
- Dictating with a flat and clear pronunciation.

Hence, if a gap-fill exercise were to be assessed, for instance, elements such as accuracy, synchrony, pronunciation, and intonation should be checked. In this context, synchrony will be considered a multi-tasking skill (Arumí & Romero-Fresco, 2008), which, although not related to speaking, will still be assessed, as the ASR software is being used for didactic reasons. Audio recordings are used for teachers to assess student performance. These recordings are made to assign grades based on students’ oral production. An assessment can then be made applying the following criteria, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Assessment Rubric for the FL Respeaker

Assessment	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	On Target (2)	Above Target (2.5)
Accuracy: The voice recordings are grammatically correct.				
Synchrony: There is synchrony between the delivered speech and the respeaking.				
Pronunciation: Words are pronounced correctly.				
Intonation: pitch, stress and rhythm in the voice are appropriate.				
Total points (out of 10)				

Source: Found in Belenguer Cortés (2024) and retrieved and adapted from Castañeda & Rodríguez González (2011), Talaván & Costal (2017).

Undoubtedly, this rubric could be adapted to different speaking aspects that need to be assessed. Nevertheless, additional validation via piloting will be necessary before it can be considered replicable. According to Cerezo Herrero (2019, pp. 149–150), the five needs for FL teachers are (1) analysis of target and learner needs, (2) vocabulary teaching, (3) materials design and development, (4) course design and development, and (5) disciplinary context awareness. Undoubtedly, were respeaking to be considered part of the teaching programme, these five needs should be taken into account. In respeaking, speaking is expected to improve in terms of accuracy, intonation, and pronunciation, and specific vocabulary is introduced in the warm-up phase. Furthermore, materials should be suitable in terms of language, speaker, domain, level, and use (Belenguer Cortés, 2024, pp. 151–152). All in all, context is key to implementing respeaking in the FL classroom and this aspect, as mentioned before, could determine the type of materials, the goals, and the assessment criteria. As seen in Table 2, the present proposal focuses on accuracy, synchrony, pronunciation, and intonation. However, as mentioned earlier, this could be adapted to the assessment needs found in the language curricula.

5. Conclusions

There is no denying that speaking is one of the critical abilities for communication, requiring a great deal of practice. Effective communication is the aim of speaking skills instruction, in which learners ought to be able to communicate clearly while making the most of their current level. Thus, respeaking can help FL students be exposed to authentic language while helping them improve their speaking abilities. Bearing this in mind, this proposal discusses the possibilities of using respeaking in FL teaching where the aim is to improve speaking skills. Since respeaking is yet to be explored in the DAT field, the present paper could be the first step in introducing respeaking to improve speaking skills, especially in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition.

The aforementioned tasks and the methodological suggestion will be tested with B1–B2 levels in an FL classroom with undergraduate students who are learning French as a Second Language (FSL) in higher education. Materials will be developed, and the current assessment will be improved as part of an experimental study, which will provide the required data to observe the use of respeaking in the FL classroom. Hence, activities with respeaking as a pedagogical tool will be piloted along with the methodological suggestion. The intention is to test the benefits of respeaking in different contexts and with different methodologies by applying it (Belenguer Cortés, 2024).

Table 3

Expected Benefits and Limitations From the Use of Respeaking in the FL Classroom

Expected benefits	Anticipated limitations
Development of Divided Attention	Potential for High Cognitive Load
Enhanced Listening Skills	Requires Divided Attention Skills
Real-time Language Use	
Improved Pronunciation	Dependence on Technology
Cultural and Contextual Exposure	Error Management
Accessibility Enhancement	Limited Research in FL Context

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The objective is to improve FL students' oral skills through training them in using accessibility techniques, which is essential in improving equality of opportunity and audiovisual communication – both of which are critical in a digital society where technologies are the norm. As a result, the tasks aim to pursue speaking skills along with promoting the knowledge and the significance of the role of respeaking in accessibility.

The FL learning proposal tasks are designed to practice production (i.e., speaking) based on shadowing and SR software. Thus, DAT could consider incorporating respeaking as a new field of

research in order to find other innovative ways of FL teaching that offer innovation using accessibility to bridge different communities by enhancing linguistic competences.

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