

# The "Film and Creative Engagement Project": Audiovisual Accessibility and Telecollaboration

El Proyecto "Film and Creative Engagement": accesibilidad audiovisual y telecolaboración

El Projecte "Film and Creative Engagement": accessibilitat audiovisual i telecol·laboració

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**ABSTRACT:** Globalisation and the advancement of ICTs invite the development of learners' strategies and communication skills in higher education to participate fully in digitally networked societies. This paper analyses the results of a pilot study which is part of Film and Creative Engagement (FaCE), a collaborative research project between Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), UK, and Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Campus Laguna in Torreón, Mexico. There were two main aims: (1) to create a short project that was inspiring, stimulating and enjoyable that could be transferable to other high education institutions; and (2) to provide a training that could help students shape their future, fulfill their academic potential and develop strong, social, international and professional relationships. Secondary goals included bringing Mexican and British university learners into contact via telecommunication to create contexts for interactivity and task-based collaboration. In the context of foreign language learning, the tasks were intended to develop participants' skills on film analysis (such as cultural and intercultural awareness), and also, audiovisual accessibility (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing and audio description). This is a mixed study with 44 participants and the data was collected through pre- and post-questionnaires, student self-reflection reports and task evaluations. Particularly, the FaCE project helped students, regardless of their career path or specialisation, to enhance their language competence, collaborative work, critical thinking, innovation and creativity, management of information and communication technologies, and international collaboration in virtual environments.

**KEYWORDS:** audiovisual accessibility; competency-based learning; film analysis; interdisciplinary curriculum; project-based language learning; telecollaboration

**RESUMEN:** La globalización y el progreso de las TIC favorecen el desarrollo de estrategias y destrezas de comunicación de los estudiantes universitarios para participar en sociedades conectadas digitalmente. Este artículo analiza los resultados de un estudio piloto que forma parte de Film and Creative Engagement (FaCE), un proyecto colaborativo de investigación entre Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), Reino Unido, y el Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), México. Los dos objetivos principales fueron: (1) crear un modelo de proyecto motivador transferible a otras universidades; y (2) proporcionar formación que contribuya al desarrollo de su futuro profesional, potencial académico y sólidas relaciones profesionales de carácter internacional. Los objetivos secundarios incluían poner en contacto a estudiantes universitarios mexicanos

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y británicos de forma virtual con el fin de crear contextos para la comunicación interactiva y la colaboración basada en tareas. En el contexto de las lenguas extranjeras, las tareas propuestas pretendían desarrollar las destrezas de los estudiantes sobre análisis filmico (como el conocimiento cultural e intercultural), y la accesibilidad audiovisual (subtítulos para sordos y para personas con problemas auditivos (SDH) y audiodescripción (AD)). Se trata de un estudio mixto con 44 participantes y los datos se recogieron por medio de pre- y post-cuestionarios, reflexiones de los estudiantes y la evaluación de sus tareas. Concretamente, el proyecto FaCE, independientemente de la carrera que el alumno cursase, le ayudó a mejorar sus conocimientos lingüísticos, el trabajo colaborativo, el análisis crítico, la innovación y la creatividad, el manejo de la información y las tecnologías de la comunicación, y promovió la colaboración internacional en entornos virtuales.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** accesibilidad audiovisual; análisis filmico; aprendizaje basado en las competencias; aprendizaje de lenguas basado en proyectos; currículo interdisciplinar; telecolaboración

**RESUM:** La globalització i el progrés de les TIC afavoreixen el desenvolupament d'estratègies i destreses de comunicació dels estudiants universitaris per a participar en societats connectades digitalment. Aquest article analitza els resultats d'un estudi pilot que forma part de Film and Creative Engagement (FaCE), un projecte col·laboratiu d'investigació entre Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), Regne Unit, i l'Institut Tecnològic d'Estudis Superiors de Monterrey (ITESM), Mèxic. Els dos objectius principals van ser: (1) crear un model de projecte motivador transferible a altres universitats; i (2) proporcionar formació que contribuïska al desenvolupament del seu futur professional, potencial acadèmic i sòlides relacions professionals de caràcter internacional. Els objectius secundaris inclouen posar en contacte a estudiants universitaris mexicans i britànics de manera virtual amb la finalitat de crear contextos per a la comunicació interactiva i la col·laboració basada en tasques. En el context de les llengües estrangeres, les tasques proposades pretenien desenvolupar les destreses dels estudiants sobre anàlisi filmica (com el coneixement cultural i intercultural), i l'accessibilitat audiovisual (subtítols per a sords i per a persones amb problemes auditius (SDH) i audiodescripció (AD)). Es tracta d'un estudi mixt amb 44 participants i les dades es van recollir per mitjà de pre- i post-qüestionaris, reflexions dels estudiants i l'avaluació de les seues tasques. Concretament, el projecte FaCE, independentment de la carrera que l'alumne cursara, el va ajudar a millorar els seus coneixements lingüístics, el treball col·laboratiu, l'anàlisi crítica, la innovació i la creativitat, el maneig de la informació i les tecnologies de la comunicació, i va promoure la col·laboració internacional en entorns virtuals.

**PARAULES CLAU:** accessibilitat audiovisual; anàlisi filmica; aprenentatge basat en les competències; aprenentatge de llengües basat en projectes; currículum interdisciplinari; telecolaboració

## Practitioner Notes

### What is already known about the topic

- Embedding the development of skills, attitudes and attributes relevant to a more inclusive society is part of the higher education (HE) agenda. Furthermore, HE teaching should prepare students for the challenges of an increasingly networked world by giving them opportunities to enhance their employability skills (i.e. collaborative work, language learning and cross-disciplinary teaching). In the field of foreign language teaching and learning, existing research has focused on the value of multimodal texts (for example films) to engage students in synesthetic learning.
- Telecollaboration exchanges provide opportunities for a productive collaboration that can encourage students to develop a wide range of competences -including cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness - and reflect on their own experiences in virtual collaboration.

### What this paper adds

- This paper provides evidence on the value and versatility of short telecollaboration projects between HE institutions and the possibility to adapt it to other HE contexts.
- It explores a novel area considering the benefits of a task-based project that combines film analysis and audiovisual accessibility (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing and audio description) to develop linguistic skills.
- This paper shows the value of micro-learning based on interdisciplinary activities.

- In addition, the results of the students' post-questionnaire and reflective task demonstrate the impact and significance of a learning experience based on the topic of audiovisual accessibility, in particular for increasing intercultural awareness.
- This paper gives new evidence of the value of Open Educational Resources (OERs) for supporting professional development projects and enhancing education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

### Implications of this research and/or practice

- While telecollaboration projects are seen as long-term engagement projects, the FaCE Project provides evidence of the successful application of a short-term telecollaboration project that complements standard HE curricula.
- This project demonstrates the value of offering interdisciplinary experiences, in this case the combination of film analysis and the modalities of accessibility - SDH and AD.
- Bearing in mind that globally, but especially in the context of Europe, it is becoming mandatory to make products and services accessible, a basic knowledge of the area will be vital for future professionals. This can increase students' motivation to engage with accessibility in personal and professional communication.
- Additionally, the research presented also has implications for increasing awareness of OERs among in-service and pre-service language teachers and higher education tutors and their potential to support richer educational experiences.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

World renowned organisations (i.e. the European Commission and UNESCO) are calling on higher education (HE) institutions to embed in their teaching the development of skills, attitudes and attributes relevant to living and working in a more sustainable and inclusive society (Council-of-Europe, 2018; European-Commission, 2017; Wells, 2017). Thus, HE teaching should guide learners to acquire appropriate competences in order to enhance students' professional growth and reduce the gap between predominantly theoretical teaching and the practical requirements of working life. One way to address this concern is through engaged learning and teaching that combines "academic rigour and disciplinary knowledge with opportunities for students to learn with and from external partners, 'real world' challenges and experiences outside the University" (Stone, 2015, p. 6). Indubitably, with the effect of globalisation and the advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs), graduates require another set of strategies and communication skills to participate fully in an increasingly networked world. Hence, it comes as no surprise that, to enhance the employability of HE graduates, foreign languages (FL) are being taught in cross-disciplinary variants (e.g. languages plus business, computer science, or engineering). The acquisition of a foreign language, in conjunction with cultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and digital literacies, plays a vital role in HE given the rapid expansion of mobile and virtual work practices (CoMoViWo, 2017). Other skills required to work effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and cultural agility, which can be defined as being able to quickly and successfully engage and work with people from various cultural backgrounds and experiences in cross-cultural and international environments (Caligiuri, 2012). Moreover, as intercultural learning experiences are of particular importance to prepare students for global citizenship (ACTFL, 2014; Council-of-Europe, 2018), HE institutions are keen to implement different internationalisation strategies (i.e. the integration of the global dimension in curricula as well as the teaching and learning processes) to support the large majority of learners who are not internationally mobile (European-Commission, 2013). It seems therefore necessary to create new, flexible and short projects that can match current curricula. The main aims of this project were: (1) to create a short project that was transferable to other high education

institutions, applying the theoretical basis of multiliteracies and new media practices while giving awareness of AV accessibility; and (2) to provide training that could help students shape their future, fulfil their academic potential and develop strong, social, international and professional relationships. To this end, Mexican and British university learners were put in contact via telecommunication to create contexts for mediation and intercultural competences and task-based collaboration.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Multiliteracies and new media practices

For over two decades, the concept of literacy has changed to accommodate an expanding variety of new literacy practices that are mediated by technology and social practices (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Fairclough, & Gee, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1996; Kalantzis, Cope, Chan, & Dalley-Trim, 2016; Kress, 2003; Street, 1995). As noted by Lankshear and Knobel (2007), new literacies –which involved both new “technical stuff” and new “ethos stuff”– are more participatory, collaborative, distributed and less author-centric.

Jenkins (2006) argued that the new participatory cultures that emerge from the expansion of new media technologies are perfect learning environments. They facilitate informal peer-to-peer teaching, the development of knowledge and skills that are essential for the ever-changing modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship. Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, and Weigel (2009) explicitly addressed the activities and skills students build in out of school online communities: play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, and negotiation.

Researchers in education have paid particular attention to multimodal literacy practices as a result of the new ICTs (Kress, 2003, 2010). The multimodal perspective argues that literacy cannot be limited to the language sphere. Communication is increasingly multimodal because it integrates multiple modes for meaning-making (i.e. linguistic codes, gestures, sounds, and visual), which are socially constructed (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Researchers in multimodal studies also emphasise that, as a result of the digital turn, “meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2015, p. 3). This calls for bringing multimodal texts more prominently into the curriculum and classroom, as the FaCE project proposes. Following this same argument, multimodal literacy pedagogy not only engages with learners’ communication experiences, but also “provides a powerful foundation for synaesthesia, or learning that emerges from mode switching, moving backwards and forwards between representations in text, image, sound, gesture, object and space” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2015, p. 3).

### 2.2. Telecollaboration and intercultural competences in professional contexts

The combined effects of the growth global business, of interaction virtually through rapid developments in technology and of flexible work practices has resulted in technology-mediated communication becoming increasingly important in the workplace. Telecollaboration or online intercultural exchange (O’Dowd, 2016, 2018) can be defined as a virtual exchange that involves the engagement of groups of learners from various cultural contexts or geographical locations during extended periods. Guth and Helm (2010) proposed the concept of “telecollaboration 2.0” that combines interactional and transactional language activities, cultural and intercultural communication, as well as the development of multimodal competence.

As a result of globalisation and cultural and linguistic diversity, intercultural competence is recognised as a fundamental skill for building global understanding and

expanding concepts of citizenship. There are numerous examples of policy-making that call for the promotion of intercultural dialogue in order to facilitate the representation of national, cultural and linguistic minorities or immigrant groups via the media and educational policies. Furthermore, intercultural competence is recognised as a fundamental soft skill in the literature relevant to the employment prospects of HE graduates (British-Academy, 2016; Jones, 2013).

Learning a foreign language develops cultural knowledge and promotes related skills that enrich the process of interlingual and intercultural communication (Byram, 1997; Council-of-Europe, 2001, 2018; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). As it has been argued in previous studies, films have been successful in facilitating the development of critical thinking skills and intercultural competence through film-related activities (Herrero, 2008, 2019; Herrero & Escobar, 2018; Pegrum, 2008; Seeger, 2019; Tomlinson, 2019). Films are useful texts “for self-reflection and for openness to explore other places as well as conflicts and tensions related to diversity, either in the past or in the present”; and they can help to facilitate discussion about diversity and, through varied activities, “raise learners’ awareness of multiple perspectives and develop their critical thinking” (Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard, and Philippou, 2014, p. 44).

### 2.3. Audiovisual accessibility

Acknowledging the increase of governmental regulations defending the creation of services accessible to everyone (Accessibility-Community, 2019), HE institutions should provide their students with more knowledge on accessibility to prepare them better to work in a more sustainable and inclusive society (European-Commission, 2017; EU-Science-Hub, 2017). This is even more so relevant in a transatlantic educational intervention which would become heavily reliant on bilingual communicative exchanges through online platforms. Thus, with modalities such as subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) and audio description (AD) for the blind and visually impaired, transversal contents could be introduced, not only from the perspective of each participant’s specialism, but also interdisciplinarily. Both modalities would pave the way for the presentation of AV accessibility as a tool to familiarise participants with the specific needs of their potential interlocutors.

Subtitling alone is much more than producing a faithful and therefore literal transcript of aural content. Far from it, adaptation and synthesis are necessary. Time and space constraints, user preferences and normative exigencies need to be applied and adequately revised. SDH includes the use of colour to identify different speakers, the incorporation of sound and noise descriptions, as well as other forms of tagging –such as mood indicators, references to diegesis or vocal properties– are inescapable if the textual track is addressed to deaf and hard of hearing audiences. AD is subject to constraints comparable to those of SDH even though the communicative channels differ significantly: SDH conveys aural content textually, while AD provides visual information orally. Sensitivity towards the audience is also key in both modalities. The FaCE project is designed to allow students to increase their awareness of the difficulties faced by those with hearing or visual impairment in the community, increasingly essential in the professional context, regardless the field of expertise.

## 3. THE FACE PROJECT

### 3.1. Objectives of this project

The primary focus of the FaCE project was developing and testing a telecollaboration approach based on authentic task-based interactions, but with time-limit constraints (only one week). This constraint provided an opportunity to prove the viability of a

short-term telecollaboration project and the possibility to transfer it to other Higher Education (HE) contexts. The pedagogical approach adopted by the FaCE team for the design of the activities is inspired by the task-based learning theory that proposes the acquisition of a foreign language (FL) by means of tasks (Nunan, 1989), with the emphasis on transferable skills and learning by doing. The case study presented in this paper also relies on the use of project-based learning (PBL), which includes authentic content and cooperative learning in order to prepare participants for professional practice (Thomas, 2000). In this context the activities and learning resources designed for this project can be labelled as an example of microlearning, a process that focuses on bite-size learning and micro teaching executed during a short period of time, supported by video tutorials (Hugh, 2005).

The intention was to expand students' learning experiences, their awareness of hearing and visually impaired communities and their professional competences. The fact that participants were enrolled in very diverse university degrees with various choices of specialisation –from journalism to mechanical engineering and from language teaching to creative writing– meant that the aims of the project should preferably act upon common core contents and competences from a transcurricular/interdisciplinary perspective. To this end, introducing participants to the principles of film analysis and AV accessibility was a useful tool to respond to the needs of the project.

### 3.2. Participants

This is a cross-sectional study. The FaCE project took place from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU, United Kingdom) and Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM, Mexico). From those that completed the study (N=44), there were 30 participants from Mexico and 14 participants from MMU. Therefore, there were two students in Mexico allocated per student in MMU. There were similar numbers of male (47.9%) and female participants (52.1%) in both institutions. The vast majority of the students (95.9%) were between 18 and 24 years old. The students' circumstances were different in both institutions.

Participants from ITES M (72.9%) were undergraduate students between their second and final year of education who were studying degrees as diverse as Bio-Engineering, Medical Studies, Law, Business Administration, Finance, and Mechatronics. They worked with English as a FL and their level was between A2 and C1 (Council-of-Europe, 2001). The FaCE project was part of the students' i-week, which stands for innovation week, that took place in week 8 of the academic semester. Each year, every undergraduate student has to enrol for activities alongside their academic programme (40 hours in one week). The objective was to engage students in learning experiences that contribute to their personal growth. Students worked eight hours each day in a classroom they were allocated for this specific project.

Participants from MMU (27.1%) were students in the final year of their degree in Languages and their level was between C1 and C2 Level (Council-of-Europe, 2001). All of them worked with Spanish as a FL. This project was optional for them and the week of the project was the first week of their academic year, hence the difficulty of attracting a high number of participants. Students had regular lessons and undertook the activities proposed by FaCE outside class hours (in the late afternoon). Three hours per day were allocated for students at MMU to work inside university. During this time, students could not only ask questions directly to the tutors, but also communicate with students in Mexico (due to time difference, these times of day worked well). They were expected to complete the remaining hours of the project at home.

### 3.3. Task design

While centred on film analysis, given that most of the tasks to complete throughout the project involved working with trailers, transforming them and enriching their

conveyance of information to the viewer, SDH and AD added a technical facet to the scripting and reflection stages inherent to the conversion of a commercial release into a more inclusive final product (Herrero, Sánchez-Requena, & Escobar, 2017; Herrero & Valbuena, 2010). Trailers were chosen for three main reasons: (1) they are short film texts of a duration that does not exceed three minutes, which benefits time management since students had to complete three tasks, one per day, so they could then receive feedback from an instructor; (2) differently to other audiovisual translation (AVT) projects, teachers did not need to manipulate the videos during the material selection process; (3) trailers are promotional productions which are easily accessible.

The selection consisted of four trailers in English (from British films) and three trailers in Spanish (two Mexican films and one Argentinian). The selection was also made in terms of narrative, pace of dialogue, context, and origin giving learners enough elements to analyse the film. The trailers chosen for the film analysis session were *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006), and *Medianeras* (Gustavo Tareto, 2011); for the SDH session, *The Theory of Everything* (James Marsh, 2014), and *La delgada línea amarilla* (Celso García, 2015); and for the AD session *Medianeras* (Gustavo Tareto, 2011) and *Suffragette* (Sarah Gavron, 2015). For the final task, *About Time* (Richard Curtis, 2013) was chosen for ITESM learners and *Güeros* (Alonso Ruizpalacios, 2014) for MMU learners. All students had to carry out a film analysis for the trailer selected, and then choose either SDH or AD. The final videos were uploaded to FaCE YouTube channel (FaCE, 2017).

As for the instructional technologies and materials for the course, the FaCE team designed multimedia materials, including video files (tutorials) available on the FaCE YouTube channel, and task-based activities containing specific assessment criteria in a learning management system (Blackboard). The instructors offered five 8-hour sessions (40 hours in total over the course of one week) on film analysis, SDH and AD. The sessions involved an introduction to cultural and intercultural awareness, and advice on collaborative work with their peers. Instructors in the participating universities, a total of four people, were introduced via Skype and gave a short presentation about their involvement in the project. After this, learners were asked to watch the tutorials designed for the specific tasks. All materials were made in the corresponding FL (English or Spanish) and provided learners with theoretical and detailed technical instruction to familiarise them with basic practical skills and allow them to effectively complete the tasks. During the materials design phase, instructors also focused on software tools, digital and media literacy. A total of 14 instructional materials were designed, 8 of which were video tutorials, and 6 rubrics for each host university in both working languages.

The practical sessions came immediately after the theoretical sessions and featured the support of instructors via e-mail or Skype for the first three days, and one non-guided final task to enhance learners' critical thinking skills. By the end of each session, participants submitted their productions via the platform and waited for the instructors' feedback. Also, some productions were presented to their peers in the classroom and received feedback from them too. The aim of the final activity was to bring together the acquired knowledge in one production which should give evidence of their new skills: all students had to do film analysis and choose between SDH or AD. At all stages, learners were encouraged to collaborate and ask for feedback from their international peers on both content and FL production. The collaborative experience included informal interaction in both languages to provide linguistic and cultural issues that may have arisen during the activities.

### 3.4. Data collection

This is a mixed study, with quantitative data coming from closed-ended questions and qualitative data coming from open questions. The data collection in this project con-

sisted of three main sources: questionnaires<sup>1</sup>, students' self-reflections and evaluation of tasks. Participants completed a questionnaire before the project started to provide information about themselves (this information was presented in subsection 3.2.) and a questionnaire after the project (whose answers will be presented in the results section). The post-questionnaire included a total of 20 closed questions with a scale of 1 to 4 (from completely agree to completely disagree) and statements related to FL aspects that could have been improved through the FaCE project. There were also 8 open questions that allowed participants to express their experiences more freely. They were analysed using NVivo, a software that supports qualitative and mixed-methods research. This software facilitates the researcher's task by creating connections (or nodes) across the ideas provided in different answers, measures the frequency of words in the text, and allows for more organised summaries of the information, amongst other benefits.

At the closing stage, after learners had submitted the final tasks and answered the post-questionnaire, they were asked to write a self-reflection report. This included a description of facts, opinions, beliefs, and self-awareness of the skills they developed by doing the tasks and the collaborative activities proposed.

Regarding the evaluation of tasks, students received formative feedback during the activities proposed in the first three days. For the final tasks, they received formal feedback that included two rubrics in each FL: one for film analysis (comprising linguistic elements, structure, content and personal reflection), and one for SDH and AD (including synchrony, content, pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary), the latest adapted from Costal (2015).

## 4. RESULTS

The results discussed in this section were obtained through the data collection instruments presented in the previous section: a post-questionnaire, a self-reflection report and the evaluation of the students' final tasks (where they worked with one trailer for which they all did film analysis and then had to choose between SDH or AD). Out of the 48 students that started the project, 44 completed all the steps. Therefore, the sample consisted of N=44.

### 4.1. Post-questionnaire

Participants were asked, before and after the project, to grade their knowledge of film analysis and accessibility (AD and SDH). Although before taking the project some of the students considered themselves to have no knowledge on the areas specified, after the project all of the students had some knowledge (Charts 1 and 2)

Before undertaking the project, 21.2% of the participants declared that they had no knowledge and 46.2% felt that they were beginners as far as film analysis was concerned. This was followed by 28.2% who considered themselves to have intermediate knowledge and 13.6% claimed advanced knowledge.

Regarding accessibility, more than half of the participants (51.0%) declared to have no knowledge of AD or SDH, while none of them considered themselves to have advanced or expert knowledge of this discipline. There was a significant number of participants that judged their knowledge as beginners (40.8%). After the project, 57.8% of participants claimed to have intermediate knowledge, 8.5% advanced and 2.1% expert.

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<sup>1</sup>The questionnaire used in this study was validated in a previous project (Herrero et al., 2017). For the survey instruments, see the following links: pre-questionnaire ([https://mmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/pre\\_professional-skills-accessibility-and-audiovisual-tra-2](https://mmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/pre_professional-skills-accessibility-and-audiovisual-tra-2)) and post-questionnaire (<https://mmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/post-professional-skills-accessibility-and-audiovisual-2>).



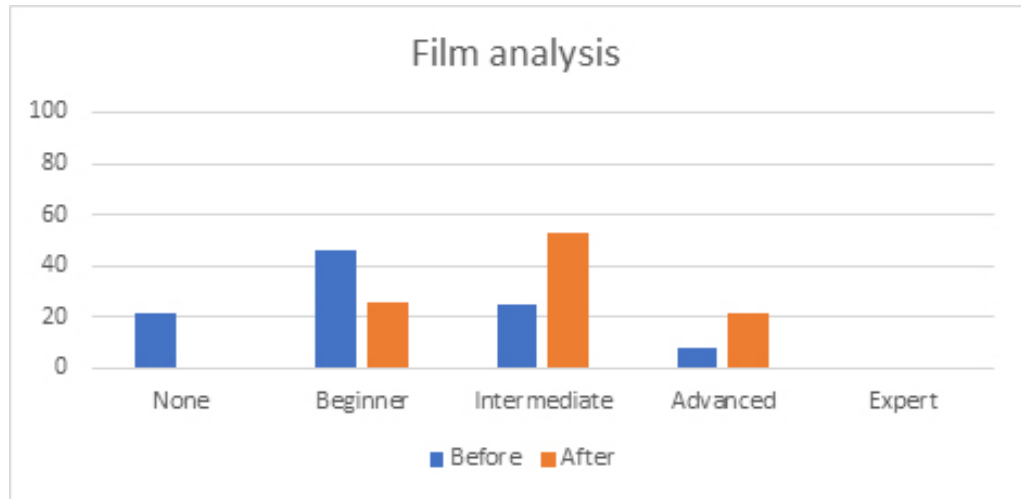


Chart 1: Knowledge of film analysis (before and after FaCE project).

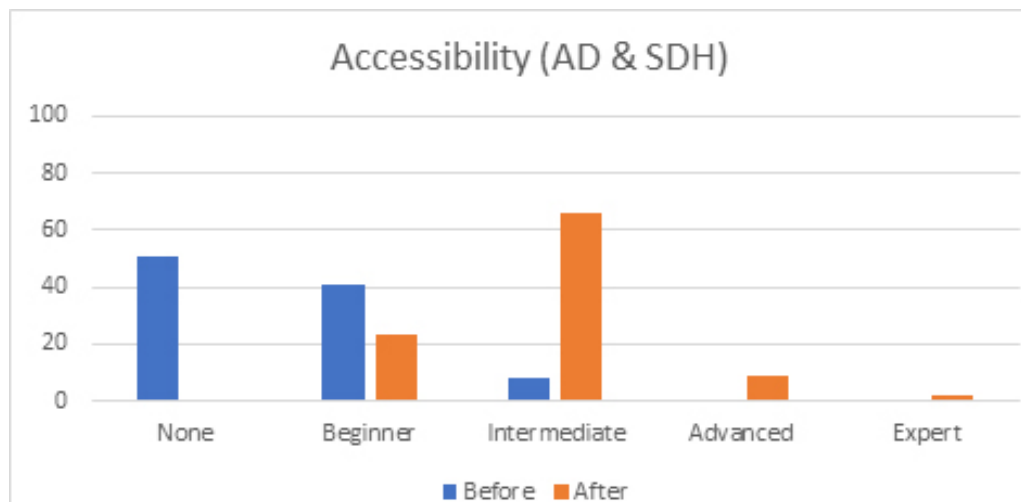


Chart 2: Knowledge of accessibility (before and after FaCE project).

With regard to the training sessions, the vast majority of students agreed that these had been easy to understand and useful to do the practical task: 95.5% in the case of film analysis, 97.7% in AD and 100% in SDH. Additionally, 97.7% agreed that the practical tasks were easy to understand and it was useful to complete the final project.

Furthermore, the post-questionnaire contained the following sections with closed questions to rate from 1 to 4 (from completely disagree to completely agree):

As seen in Table 1 more than half of the students completely agreed with all the previous statements and there seems to be a very low percentage of students that completely disagree. The most positive outcome is that students felt these tools could be used for their own critical analysis in educational contexts.

In the post-questionnaire, students had eight open questions whose answers were analysed using NVivo. Regarding the areas of language learning that students felt they had worked more in the workshops, they highlighted speaking (especially pronunciation) and writing (especially grammar), with 25% of students mentioning each one of the previous areas, followed by listening (18.2%). In the next question, participants were asked to identify the language, technical and professional skills gained through SDH and AD. More than half of the participants (54.5%) mentioned skills related to the software used (YouTube, iMovie or Windows Movie Maker). While 34% highlighted adding subtitles to a clip, 20.5% referred to the recording of their voice and

**Table 1.** Responses to close questions (N=44)

|   | Completely disagree | Not enough | Agree | Completely agree |
|---|---------------------|------------|-------|------------------|
| The software used was adequate (AD & SDH)   | 2.3%                | 6.8%       | 34.1% | 56.8%            |
| I feel I have acquired useful tools for film analysis   | 0.0%                | 4.5%       | 34.1% | 61.4%            |
| I would like to learn more about film analysis  | 0.0%                | 2.3%       | 39.5% | 58.1%            |
| I would like to know more about accessibility (AD & SDH)  | 0.0%                | 9.1%       | 25.0% | 65.9%            |
| The tools for film analysis are useful to learn a FL  | 4.5%                | 2.3%       | 29.5% | 63.6%            |
| The tools for film analysis are useful to understand other cultures better  | 2.3%                | 9.1%       | 31.8% | 59.1%            |
| I have improved my visual literacy competence   | 0.0%                | 9.1%       | 31.8% | 59.1%            |
| I feel I can use these tools on my own to critically analyse other tasks or units, either as part of my studies or outside the university | 0.0%                | 4.5%       | 18.2% | 77.3%            |

its synchrony with images. Over one third of the students (34%) mentioned that they improved their language skills in general (either English or Spanish); and 29.5% talked about AD, particularly the skills of describing and summarising. In addition, 18.2% of the participants mentioned that they developed speaking and listening comprehension abilities while working with AD and SDH. Finally, 4.5% of the participants mentioned being more aware of the difficulties and needs of those with either visual or hearing impairments. The same percentage underlined the fact that they gained the skill of working as a team.

In addition, students talked about advantages and disadvantages of learning a language or culture through film-based activities. The main advantages refer to these activities as learning in a fun way, according to the students' own words. Participants also indicated that they expanded their knowledge or opened their minds and acquired new vocabulary, especially colloquial expressions that are not in books. In addition, some of them underline the fact that films offer authentic and diverse contexts, and the double channel (visual and aural) helps with comprehension. While 100% of the participants discuss advantages, only 34% talk about disadvantages. The main disadvantage is related to the subjectivity that can be found in films since they show only one perspective of a culture, implying more training is needed to critically analyse films (which explains the partially negative percentages obtained in table 1).

The next three questions were related to collaborative work. Students had to consider if they acquired specific knowledge of language and culture via the peer-assessed feedback and provided some examples. The majority of the participants (70.5%) answered yes, 20.5% no, and 9% non-applicable. The most popular examples were related to getting to know their peer's culture as well as likes and dislikes and vocabulary acquisition. A smaller percentage referred to subtitles, intonation and pronunciation. In addition to this, students were asked if the process of working with a student in another country had been valuable for their learning experience and to provide examples. While 77.2% answered yes, 22.8% answered no. Most of the examples related to learning more about the target language culture and being able to exchange

ideas and feedback. Furthermore, participants were asked if they developed their intercultural awareness and competence with the materials and activities proposed: 81.2% answered yes and 18.2% answered no. From those who answered yes, only 50% gave further explanations, the main ones being related to empathy and learning about other cultures.

In the next question, students were asked if they thought these skills would help them in their life after university and if so in which ways: 84.1% answered yes, 9.1% answered no and 6.8% answered maybe. From those answering yes, 16.2% mentioned communicating with people from other cultures and 8.1% mentioned social skills in general. In addition, 16.2% specified that it would help them at work with other colleagues (either if they work in their own country or abroad). An interesting answer is the fact that after the project, 13.5% of the students said they would wish to study or work in the field of AVT.

Furthermore, students were asked if the workshops had met their expectations: 18.2% said no, 4.5% said more or less, 59.1% said yes, 18.2% said more than expected. An aspect that was not mentioned before, and was probably the most repeated answer in this question, referred to the teaching side of the project. Having teachers from other countries, and the preparation and organisation of both the instructors and the materials was perceived as positive.

The final question was related to suggestions for improvement. Students mentioned having greater contact with the students from the other country (20.5%), including putting aside time within the sessions for this purpose. This might be difficult due to student number imbalances between institutions. The same percentage of participants mentioned a better link, agreement between the number of activities and the time provided. While students from Mexico wanted more activities, students in MMU asked for more time to complete each activity. Some of them (13.6%) asked for instructions to be more specific, especially those related to the deadline for each activity.

#### 4.2. Student self-reflection reports

A total of 33 entries were collected from the students, 27 from ITESM and 6 from MMU. The self-reflection reports were also examined using NVivo. After the data was organised, it was coded into categories: learner satisfaction with the visual literacy training, knowledge acquisition, interactive communications and project-based collaboration, motivation and lifelong learning, language learning, internationalisation, digital and media skills, and AV literacy.

These categories fall into the five issues or exploratory dimensions (Stake, 2010), and were included in the students' reflections as follows:

1. Student learning experience: Student learning experience perceptions are given under the theme of satisfaction with the course, tasks related to accessibility and media literacy, and cultural awareness. Learners stated that they liked what they learnt, the tasks they completed, and the materials they produced. Category: learner satisfaction with AV literacy training.
2. Innovative teaching practices: Teaching practices in the course were generally perceived as different or new and were also seen as tasks that promoted learning to learn strategies. Category: knowledge acquisition, digital and media skills, and visual literacy.
3. Improvement of academic achievement linked to professional skills and language learning: learners expressed in their reflections that they would use the knowledge they had acquired and apply their new skills in other areas and contexts, including language production. Category: language learning.

4. The quality of the resources: Learners referred to the pedagogical quality of the instructional technologies and materials for the course (i.e. video tutorials, their transcriptions and task-based activities) as OER materials. They also demonstrated initiative to learn, and successfully completed their tasks. Category: motivation and lifelong learning.
5. Establishing stronger bonds and collaboration between MMU and ITESM: Learner self-reflection reports showed participants' interest in how their transatlantic peers behaved both in their academic and social lives; they considered interaction and collaboration with them a key factor as well. Category: interactive communications, project-based collaboration and internationalisation.

Students' self-reflection reports complement the information provided in the post-questionnaire Table 2.

**Table 2.** Evidence of exploratory dimensions (self-reflection reports)

| Exploratory dimensions   | Excerpt evidence  |
|--|---|
| 1) Students learning experience  | <p>a) "I think that this experience has maybe actually taught me more than I expected, and I can say for sure that I learned things that I didn't even think I would get close to. From the very beginning, the workshop had surprises in store, as I really didn't expect to learn about film analysis, or audio description. However, these are things that have either added a new dimension to viewing films, and has increased my sensibilities towards disabilities".</p> <p>b) "Me gusta que con la audio descripción casi me siento como una parte de la película, como una narradora. Yo creo que en el futuro trataré de hacer la audio descripción otra vez".</p>  |
| 2) Innovative teaching practice  | <p>a) "Personally, I think this was a great opportunity to get out of my comfort zone, because I had the opportunity to work with tools I'm not usually in contact with".</p> <p>b) "La parte interactiva de FaCE me fascinó".</p>  |
| 3) Improvement of academic achievement linked to professional skills and language learning | <p>a) "This interaction was so interesting because in my life I have never been talking a complete week with a person in other place of the world completely in English. It helped me to practice my intonation, pronunciation and fluency of my speaking".</p> <p>b) "Para mis estudios en el futuro la capacidad de escribir un análisis fílmico será imprescindible y me ha encantado la oportunidad de practicar la lengua española y aprender nuevo vocabulario técnico".</p>  |
| 4) The quality of resource   | <p>a) "The instructions and video tutorials were very clear, so it was easy to understand how to do it, helping me learn something new for me".</p> <p>b) "Los vídeos en You Tube fueron muy útiles y fáciles de entender y los profesores respondían los correos electrónicos rápidamente y con mucha información".</p>  |
| 5) Establishing stronger relationship and collaboration between MMU and ITESM              | <p>a) "I think it was fun to be in contact with a student in another part of the world (Manchester) because it help us to start looking the way the world moves now days that is in globalize way and in the future every country will need to help each other and the easiest way to do it is with the help of technology and with these course we learn a way to do it".</p> <p>b) "Este proyecto entre las universidades fue una gran experiencia porque fue una buena manera de ponerse en contacto con otra cultura, en otra parte del mundo con un horario diferente. Tuve la oportunidad de contactar con estudiantes mexicanos, trabajar con ellos y conocer cómo es la vida estudiantil en México. Creo que el curso ha sido muy útil y me gustaría hacer otros cursos de este tipo en el futuro".</p> |

### 4.3. Task evaluation

The final tasks were assessed using rubrics and open comments from evaluators.

Regarding film analysis, 90% of students selected to do it in the final task. Most of them framed concepts introduced in the tutorial. They interpreted at least three types of texts among various different options (written, visual, spatial, gestural, oral or audio) and mentioned both micro and macro elements of film language. Even when participants did not carry out an in-depth analysis, they effectively interpreted the symbolic and literal meaning conveyed in the trailer they analysed.

Regarding SDH, 52.3% of the students opted for subtitling. Time and space constraints were the main focus of the initial practical period, during which students received online tuition on specific aspects of semantic condensation, presentation of the textual track on screen, and the addition of a layer of meaning that takes the needs of a diverse audience into consideration.

Concerning AD, 47.7% of the students' audio described one of the final trailers. Generally, students did particularly well in synchrony and intonation. Nonetheless, there are some aspects of pronunciation that they were advised to improve. The weakest area was content since, at times, the information participants provided was not specific enough or too obvious, which is precisely one of the most challenging aspects in AD.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The FaCE project showed how to use digital media for teaching and learning at university level, connecting two institutions internationally and providing learning instruments both inside and outside the classroom. The results in this pilot study were positive and encouraging. Learners greatly increased their knowledge of film analysis, SDH and AD not only for the tasks proposed, but also as an enhancement of their individual professional skills as their own self-reflection tasks imply. The FaCE project therefore proved that it is possible to embed short-term telecollaboration projects to complement the current curriculums in HE.

In addition, focusing on the development of intercultural awareness, project-based learning and AV accessibility may be conducive to richer educational experiences, which help establish stronger institutional bonds and interdisciplinary connections. By linking teaching and learning in and out of the purely formative, structured, curricular environment, as well as developing Open Educational Resources –video tutorials and instructional material–, new pathways are presented to encourage participation, collaboration and significant learning experiences that bring together professional, technical, academic and social aspects of the participants' future careers.

In contrast with other telecollaboration projects, FaCE relies on micro-teaching principles to exploit the affordances new media can provide. If the spirit of project-based approaches is to achieve the completion of gradually more difficult steps which lead to a final materialisation, interculturality and accessibility lend themselves well to deep self-reflection processes that, in turn, foster the advancement of creative solutions to open-ended problems. The understanding of what multimodality and transmedia practices stand for is at the basis of FaCE, which advocates that instrumental uses of separate layers of information, content and meaning-making devices, facilitate the emergence of integrated competences as diverse as critical thinking, problem solving and cooperation.

### 5.1. Limitations

Among the limitations of this study, it is important to highlight the difficulty to achieve homogeneity between two groups with different characteristics. The work for the

Mexican group was compulsory (8 hours in the classroom per day). However, for MMU, participation in this project was optional during their first week of the academic year (25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September), with 3 hours inside the classroom and individual time outside the classroom. As a consequence, students in Mexico submitted the tasks on 29<sup>th</sup> September and students at MMU had an extra week to complete all the tasks. In addition, students in Mexico came from different academic backgrounds while students in MMU were all language students. Although this was partly enriching, it is believed that students with a similar study area may benefit more from the task and have more points in common to discuss.

Self-reflection reports and post-questionnaires at the piloting stage were slightly contradictory in providing suggestions for improvement. This might have been mainly due to the set of expectations each participant institution brought to the project. For example, as a result of the title provided in Mexico that included the word dubbing, participants pointed out that the number of linguistic accessibility modalities should be expanded to include intra- and interlingual dubbing, in which aural content is replaced by a different track in another language. In addition, previous knowledge of the foreign language –English or Spanish, as the case may be– was as heterogeneous as the career path participants wished to pursue. Consequently, it is essential, especially in short-term telecollaboration projects, to provide a clear and very specific description of the content of the project from the very beginning, a key element to improve in future projects.

### Film Projects

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