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From the Editors

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY: INTEGRATING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Over the last decades, we have witnessed a rapid development of technology in the arena of education in general, and more particularly in the area of second/foreign language (SL/FL) teaching, which is the major concern of the present volume. Although it might be logical to state that technology has influenced education and SL/FL teaching practices, perhaps we are just at the very beginning of the integration of new technologies in the context of language education. The interest in technology and its implementation in the SL/FL classroom is not new. Indeed, several researchers, and especially in recent years, have drawn their attention to the potential of technology in the language teaching and learning context (e.g. Beltrán-Palanques 2013, 2014, Chapelle 2013, Taguchi and Sykes 2013, González-Lloret and Ortega 2014, Carrió-Pastor 2016, Martín-Monje et al. 2016). A range of technologies are available for SL/FL teaching, the use of which will be somehow determined by language teachers' readiness, interest and knowledge. However, it is also true that, on some occasions, access to technology is somehow constrained by external factors that impede teachers' use of technology in the FL/SL classroom.

To the best of our knowledge, it is an undeniable fact that technology may play a role in the language classroom, but we should not lose sight of the fact that our major concern as SL/FL teachers is to develop learners' communicative competence (Celce-Murcia 2007). Therefore, the idea is not just to add technology in the classroom, but to use technology to support language teaching instruction. Taking those aspects into account, the main idea of the present edited volume is to shed some light on how technology can be integrated in the language classroom from various perspectives. This edited volume

will be of interest to researchers and language teachers who are interested in the field of SL/FL teaching and new technologies, bearing in mind that selected experiences encompassing the use of technologies in the teaching of language skills have been

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carefully selected and included. The volume is divided into two sections. The first section includes seven articles and the second presents two reviews that enrich the perspective provided on technologies and their use in the language classroom.

In the first article of this volume, Calvo-Benzies explores the possibilities of implementing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in teaching pronunciation. Her article, *Contribution of New Technologies to the teaching of English pronunciation,* provides both an overview of materials available and an empirical study on how English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students used technologies to improve their pronunciation skills, showing a high level of satisfaction.

In the second article presented in this volume, *Learners' identities at stake: Digital identity texts in the EFL classroom,* García-Pastor focuses on the study of identity in digital texts written by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, presenting an analysis of how students' identity is discursively constructed through diverse resources to create a digital communication narrative style.

Talaván and Costal present a project where they assess the potential of intralingual dubbing in English as a resource to improve oral production skills at a higher education level. *iDub – The Potential of Intralingual Dubbing in Foreign Language Learning: How to Assess the Task* introduces a study including dubbing tests, questionnaires and observation as data to present conclusions that will help other teachers to implement dubbing activities in the B2 language class.

In the fourth article included in this volume, *Teaching apps for the learning of languages through sports: technology and sports in the English and Spanish as an L2/FL classroom,* Botella and Galindo present a selection of apps for teaching and learning English through sports. These apps are analysed to present a range of activities that can be included in the language classroom within the framework of task-based language teaching with technology.

The fifth article presents a study framed within Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), where an original mobile app is used by students to enhance their participation and motivation in the language class. *Up2B2: playing English grammar games at the B2 level* depicts the implementation of an app that consists of multiple

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choice questions on varied aspects at B2 grammar and vocabulary level and presents gamification components (response time, competition, score ranking, etc.) that enable Arguelles, Martínez, García and da Silva to present quantitative and qualitative indicators to reach positive conclusions on motivation and competence levels achieved with the use of the app.

In the article *English teaching and beyond: a multimodal and integrated approach*, explores how medical English teaching materials can be improved by incorporating multimodal activities to develop communicative skills in non-native English speaking doctors in their relation with patients. A practical proposal is put forward by Franceschi to show how medical English teaching materials could be improved to strengthen doctors' ability to offer patient-centred effective and affective communication.

In the last article of this section, Miura aims to investigate the feasibility of assessing learners' sociopragmatic competence by analysing a spoken corpus of requests produced by Japanese students of English. Pragmalinguistic features of requests in shopping role-plays were extracted from the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology Japanese Learner English (NICT JLE) Corpus and rated in terms of politeness. The process and results are shown in this article, *Assessing Politeness of Requestive Speech Acts Produced by Japanese Learners of English in a Spoken Corpus.*

The volume ends with two reviews. The first one is a review of *A Practical Guide to Integrating Technology into Task-Based Language Teaching*, written by Montaner-Villalba, who carefully examines the strengths of the book as a helpful resource that offers teachers of foreign languages a straightforward plan to successfully integrate technologies into TBLT in the classroom as well as to develop technologically-mediated materials. The second review, written by Fernández-Nogueira, reflects on the book *Second language acquisition: a theoretical introduction to real world applications* and

its applicability as a resource to introduce students and trainees to the topic of SLA in a clear way. Among its strengths, the author highlights the inclusion of activities and the presence of references for further research on the topic.

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Contributions of new technologies to the teaching of English pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

One of the most significant changes in language classrooms over recent decades has been the introduction of ICTs. Despite a broad range of previous research in the field, little work has been done to date on assessing the benefits of teaching pronunciation through ICTs, something surprising in view of the large number of existing programs and other materials specifically designed to improve learners' pronunciation. This paper is intended to contribute to the field in that it will provide an overview of the materials currently available for teaching pronunciation through the use of ICTs, as well as an empirical preliminary study on ESP students' first contact with using ICTs for learning pronunciation. Results indicate that these students enjoyed using these technological tools and would like to use them again to practise their pronunciation.

Keywords*: Pronunciation, ESP student's opinions, apps, software, blogs, websites*

I. INTRODUCTION

Previous research in the teaching and learning of English has shown that more attention is usually paid to written skills than to spoken ones in EFL settings (Alonso 2014, Hornero et al. 2013, Calvo 2016a). Furthermore, within spoken skills, pronunciation has traditionally been neglected, to the point where it has been referred to as the *poor relation of the English teaching world* (Hughes 2002), *the orphan* (Gilbert 2010) or even *the Cinderella* (Underhill 2013) in language lessons.

Fortunately, this situation of neglecting the spoken skills is thought to be changing in the Spanish educational system, especially at the primary and secondary education stages, thanks to the introduction of new bilingual and multilingual programmes like CLIL, the hiring of native language assistants who are responsible for the oral component of the EFL subject, the implementation of the so-called skill-integration method thanks to the indications by the CEFR or the reduction on some occasions of the number of pupils per group so as to give students more opportunities to speak in the foreign language inside the classroom. Broadly speaking, following Grant (2014: 6),

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two different groups of approaches to the teaching of pronunciation can be distinguished. On the one hand, we find *traditional approaches*, in which the main focus was on individual sounds (therefore, only segmental pronunciation was considered); pronunciation tasks consisted in decontextualized drills and pronunciation was taught in stand-alone courses, hence, isolated from the rest of the curriculum. On the other hand, in the so-called *current approaches*, emphasis is expected to be placed on both segmentals and suprasegmentals and tasks should include aural-oral drills as well as (semi-) communicative practice formats. Moreover, at present, we can still find courses which specifically revolve around pronunciation although others, in which pronunciation is integrated into different content or skills areas (often speaking and listening), are gradually gaining importance.

As could be expected, the approaches currently used to teach pronunciation should resemble the main features of the modern approaches. Nevertheless, despite the changes mentioned above, recent research has shown that the role of pronunciation in EFL textbooks has not changed that much in the last decades, since: a) it continues to appear in clearly isolated sections, on most occasions in separate tables (Calvo 2016b); b) the pronunciation activities present in modern ELF course books used in many European countries, including Finland, Poland, France and Spain, continue to follow traditional approaches, i.e. drills and sound discriminations;[i] c) there continues to be a strong emphasis on perceptual oral skills in textbooks addressed to Spanish speakers (Calvo 2016b); and, d) textbooks fail to include both segmental and suprasegmental issues in a homogeneous way. For example, Derwing et al. (2012) found far more sections on suprasegmental issues than on segmental ones.

To provide some empirical data to support these facts, in one of my previous studies (2016), I analysed the role of pronunciation in 30 EFL textbooks addressed to Spanish EFL learners in different educational stages (both the students' books and the corresponding workbooks). Two groups were distinguished: a) Group 1: high school textbooks, used in (Post-) Obligatory Secondary Education; and, b) Group 2: textbooks used at university level and in some language schools. Some of the findings included:

a) a general tendency for pronunciation to be present in fully-isolated sections in the majority of the course books within Group 1 and in some of those in Group 2;

b) more attention is paid to suprasegmental issues than to segmental ones in both groups of textbooks. To exemplify, in Group 2, there were more than 100 sections on word and sentence stress, 70 on intonation but only 28 on the /ɪ/ sound and 21 on schwa. This latter result is surprising, especially if we take into consideration the fact that Spanish students of all ages and proficiency levels have problems with several English sounds, especially vowels like schwa, /əʊ/ and the distinction between some short vowels and their corresponding long counterparts, /æ, a:/, /ɪ, i:/ and /ɒ, ɔ:/ (Calvo 2011);

c) the format of most of the tasks is clearly repetitive. More specifically, most of them require some type of listening (*listen and repeat*, *listen and check*, *listen and discriminate*, *listen and read*, *listen and write*) or discrimination (*suprasegmental discriminations*, *segmental discriminations*). In broad terms, in both groups of textbooks, most of the activities follow traditional patterns for practising pronunciation, there is a clear predominance of tasks to emphasise perceptive oral skills over productive ones (*listen and discriminate*, *listen and check*, *segmental and suprasegmental discriminations*, etc.) and the few productive types of tasks mainly entail simply listening to and repeating random words and/or sentences, that is, tasks with no or very little communicative function.

Hence, all in all, there is a need for a new approach to the teaching of pronunciation, one based mostly on communication and integration within the rest of the skills. Moreover, this approach should also be more motivating, creative and engaging for students. In my view, one way of filling this gap would be to introduce the use of ITCs in the classroom, since: a) they "have become central to language practice" (Motteram 2013: 5); b) they are considered to add variety to the language classroom (Kern 2013); c) they represent authentic (Kern 2013, Pim 2013) and very updated materials, unlike most tasks present in textbooks, which have been consciously recorded and edited; and, d) they can be used with students of all ages (Pim 2013). Moreover, Spanish students are more than accustomed to using technological devices such as mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis; therefore, using these devices to teach the foreign language is very likely to motivate them.

Little by little, specific technological materials for learning and teaching pronunciation are being devised and, consequently, some studies have started to be conducted on the

use of ICTs to teach English pronunciation. Most of them can be divided into two thematic groups: a) studies which describe certain technological materials that can be used to learn and teach pronunciation by considering these materials as "recent developments in English pronunciation teaching and learning" (Setter 2008: 447); and, b) studies that analyse the effects of using ICTs for teaching and learning English pronunciation.

Within the first group, we can find studies like Setter (2008), Fouz (2012) and Walker (2014). Setter (2008) distinguishes between *printed materials* and *web-based resources* for teaching pronunciation. Within the second group, she focuses on a few software applications and websites like *Streaming Speech* or *The Sounds of Spoken English*. Fouz (2012) reviews some of the most important mobile apps available for learning pronunciation (some of which will also be described in this paper). In a similar vein, Walker (2014) also describes a few technological apps and software applications by classifying them into three main categories: a) *tools for tuition*; b) *tools for listening*; and, c) *tools for recording*.

Examples of recent studies aimed at analysing the effects of using CALL or CAPT approaches are Jolley (2014), Kim (2012), Luo (2016) and Mompean and Fouz (2016). Both Jolley (2014) and Kim (2012) investigated whether using a CALL approach is an effective way of helping students to improve their pronunciation; the participants in Kim's (2012) study were two adult ESL learners, whereas Jolley's (2014) were ESL missionaries. Kim's participants used the TEAM training programme (Technology Enhanced Accent Modification); the results indicated that these students appreciated the visual feedback received and this visual method did help them improve their pronunciation. Jolley (2014) conducted her MA dissertation on the effects of using a CALL approach to help students improve both their productive and perceptive skills regarding prosodic features. In the end, the participants who followed this programme improved both their perceptive and productive suprasegmental skills, although the improvement was better at a perceptive level. Mompean and Fouz (2016) designed a study in which they asked Spanish students at language schools to listen to and repeat some target words (commonly mispronounced English words) in Twitter messages. Along similar lines, Luo (2016) analysed the benefits of using recordings outside the classroom to improve students' English pronunciation. The participants also improved

in comparison to the control group, who had only received an in-class approach to English pronunciation.

Although all the previous studies can be regarded as of extreme interest for both teachers and researchers, as mentioned above, they either describe some resources available for teaching pronunciation or are concerned with students' progress in certain segmental and/or suprasegmental features by using one particular technique or programme. There is hence a lack of studies that combine both things and go beyond. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, little research has been conducted on students' actual views on using specific software, apps or websites to learn English pronunciation.

This paper, therefore, intends to be a first approach to filling this gap, as it will include a description of some useful resources as well as a preliminary study on ESP learners' opinions regarding the design and usefulness of these materials as a means for them to practise English pronunciation outside the classroom. The most important research questions this article will thus attempt to answer are:

a) What technological-based materials currently exist to learn and/or teach English pronunciation? How can they be classified?

b) What are the advantages and disadvantages of these technological resources? How can they be used inside and/or outside the classroom?

c) What are students' opinions on some of these materials? Do they like them? Would they use them on a daily basis to learn English pronunciation?

In order to fulfil these aims, this paper will be divided into three main parts. Firstly, some of the most important technological resources available for teaching pronunciation will be described. These materials will be divided into three main groups: a) *software and other programs*; b) *apps*; and, c) *websites, blogs, tutorials and the use of social networks*. Secondly, a small experiment will be conducted with ESP students studying a four-year university degree in Tourism and Hospitality. This experiment will analyse students' first impressions after being asked to try out some of these technological tools outside the classroom. Finally, in the last part, some conclusions and teaching implications will be outlined together with some suggestions for possible activities

which could be performed either inside or outside the classroom to teach pronunciation in an engaging and integrating way with the help of new technologies.

II. TECHNOLOGY-BASED MATERIALS TO LEARN AND TEACH ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

II.1. Software and other programs

Generally speaking, we can divide the tools currently available into three main groups, following Walker (2014):

a) Programs with activities to help students improve their pronunciation at a segmental and/or suprasegmental level; in other words, pronunciation training programs like *Pronunciation Power*, *Streaming Speech*, *Connected Speech*, *Learn to Speak Clearly in English*, *Berlitz English Pronunciation Programme*, *Teach Yourself English Pronunciation*, *TP*, *FluSpeak*, *Clear Speech*, *Integral Inglés*, or *Tell me More Kids*;

b) Programs and websites which convert a text into phonetic transcription like *Photransedit*, *the Phonemic Chart Keyboard*, *Lingorado*, *IPA Online Keyboard*; and, thirdly,

c) Recording programs that allow students to record themselves speaking, some of which transcribe the spoken message into written form. Examples of these include *Recorder Pro*, *Dragon Dictate*, *Audacity* or *Wave Pad*.

Due to space limitations, not all of these programs can be described in detail in this paper; thus, a selection has been made taking into account criteria like their availability or their relevance for teaching pronunciation to Spanish learners of English. Moreover, out of the three types of software distinguished above, emphasis will be mainly placed on the training programs, as they specifically serve to help students improve their pronunciation and can be used with students of all levels of proficiency.

II.1.1. Programs with activities to help students improve their pronunciation at a segmental and/or suprasegmental level

As illustrated above, there are quite a few pronunciation training programs available nowadays which aim to help students improve their pronunciation of English. Among these, *Talk to Me English*, *Integral Inglés*, *Teach Yourself English Pronunciation* and *TP (Perceptual Training / Perceptual Tests)* are highly interesting.

Talk to Me English and *Integral Inglés* are quite homogenous in content and format, except for the fact that the instructions and activities in *Talk to Me English* appear in English whereas in *Integral Inglés* this information is in Spanish. The first is based on two CDs (one for Beginner/Intermediate students and the other for Intermediate/Advanced learners), whereas the second contains four, one for each level from Beginner to Advanced and a fourth one on Business English; moreover, both programs include headphones so that the user can listen to the audio files. Both of these programs are able to recognise voices and compare them with those of native speaker models. Furthermore, they identify pronunciation errors in those words that were not pronounced similarly enough to the native speaker's version. These materials also create intonation curves so that the learners can once again compare their own pronunciation of certain words and/or sentences to the model of intonation provided by a native speaker.

In general terms, the type of tasks that can be found in these two programs also coincide quite frequently. To exemplify, they both include *dialogues*, *picture-word associations*, *crosswords*, *ordering sentences*, *matchings*, *dictations* or *phonetics exercises*. It is worth mentioning that, although it may not seem so at the beginning, most of the task-types found in both programs continuously and constantly emphasise spoken language. For instance, a priori we would probably think of *crosswords* as written exercises in which we are given written clues to help us guess the answers. In these programs, however, students are first of all expected to listen to the words and then write them in the corresponding space within the crossword, i.e. there are no written clues. Similarly, to complete the *ordering-sentences* tasks, learners first have to pronounce the sentences aloud in the correct order so that the program can record them and then compare their answers to the native speaker model; only after students have said the sentences in the right order can they write the sentences down.

Hence, broadly speaking, these programs allow students to practise both their productive and perceptive oral skills and they emphasise both segmental and suprasegmental issues.

Some examples of the types of activities included in these programs in each unit can be found below in Figures 1 to 4. Figure 1 represents an example of the steps followed in a *sentence pronunciation task* (= pronunciación de frases). In the image on the left, we can see a list of sentences that students can choose from (these sentences appear after the students have chosen a specific sound they want to practise) and then, as can be seen in the image on the right, the native speaker model says the sentence aloud and shows the intonation pattern. The learners then have to press the record button and record themselves by saying the same sentence. Afterwards, the program shows the intonation pattern of the learners' version so that they can compare it to that of the model and the learner is assessed on their performance with a number of points. The process to be completed in the *word pronunciation tasks* (= pronunciación de palabras) is very similar, as can be seen in the two images in Figure 2 below.

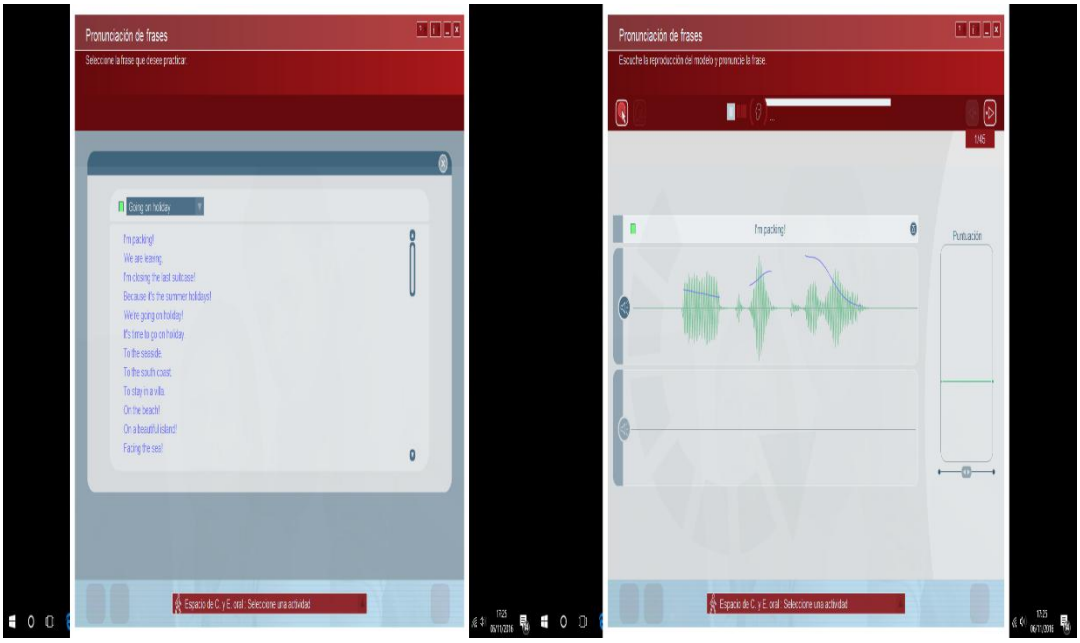


Figure 1. Example of a s*entence pronunciation* task, extracted from the program *Integral Inglés*.

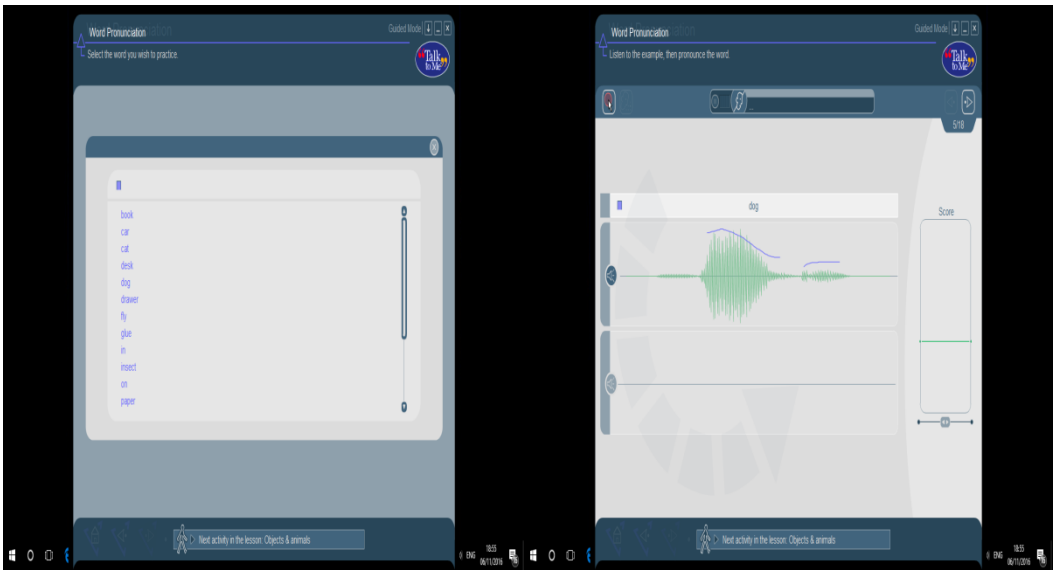
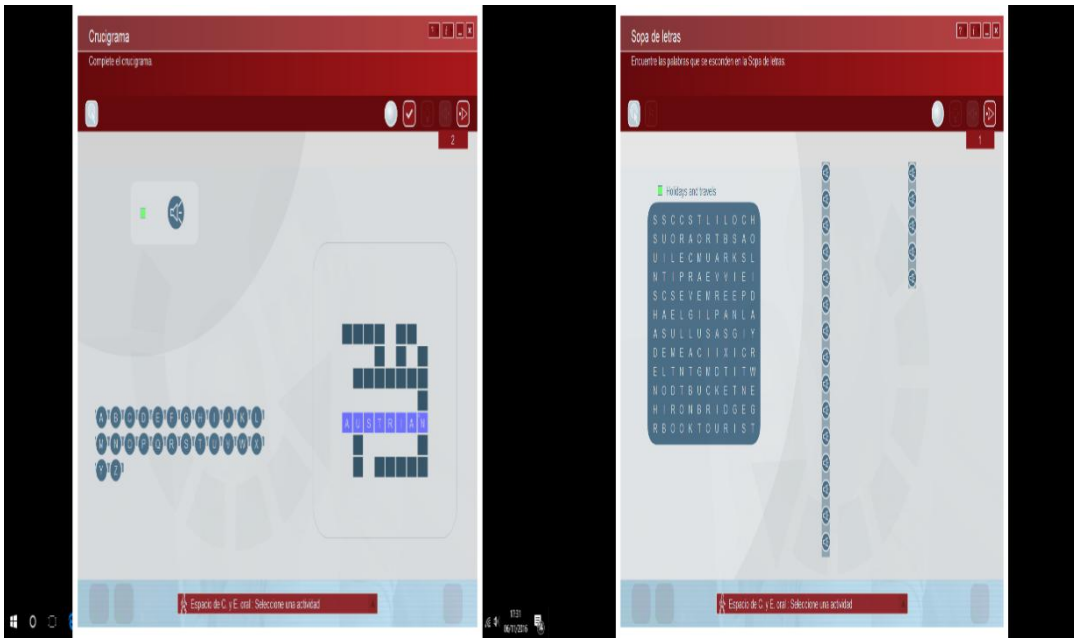


Figure 2. Example of a *word pronunciation* task, taken from the program *Talk to Me English*.

As mentioned above, no written hints are included in the *crosswords*, as can be seen in the image on the left in Figure 3. Similarly, students cannot see the written version of the words they have to find in the *word-search* games but instead have to listen and then look for them (cf. the image on the left in Figure 3).



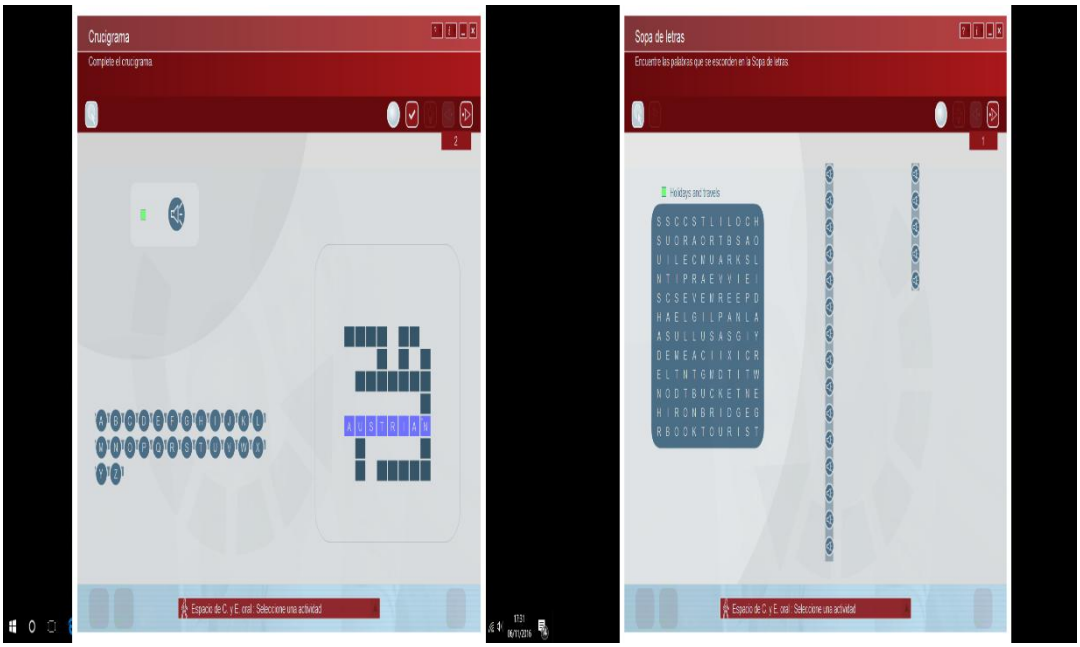


Figure 3. Example of a *crossword* and a *word search* activity, extracted from *Integral Inglés*.

Another advantage of these programs is that they include *phonetics exercises* (= ejercicios de fonética) in which the students choose a sound they would like to focus on, the native speaker model then says a word containing that sound and, once again, as in the *word* and *sentence pronunciation* activities, the learner has to record him- or herself and the program recreates the intonation patterns of both versions and gives them points. In addition, in this type of task students can see both images and short videos regarding how the selected sound is pronounced as well as a description of its manner and place of articulation so as to learn how to pronounce it correctly (cf. Figure 4 below). Once again, this information is given in Spanish in *Integral Inglés* and in English in *Talk to Me English*.

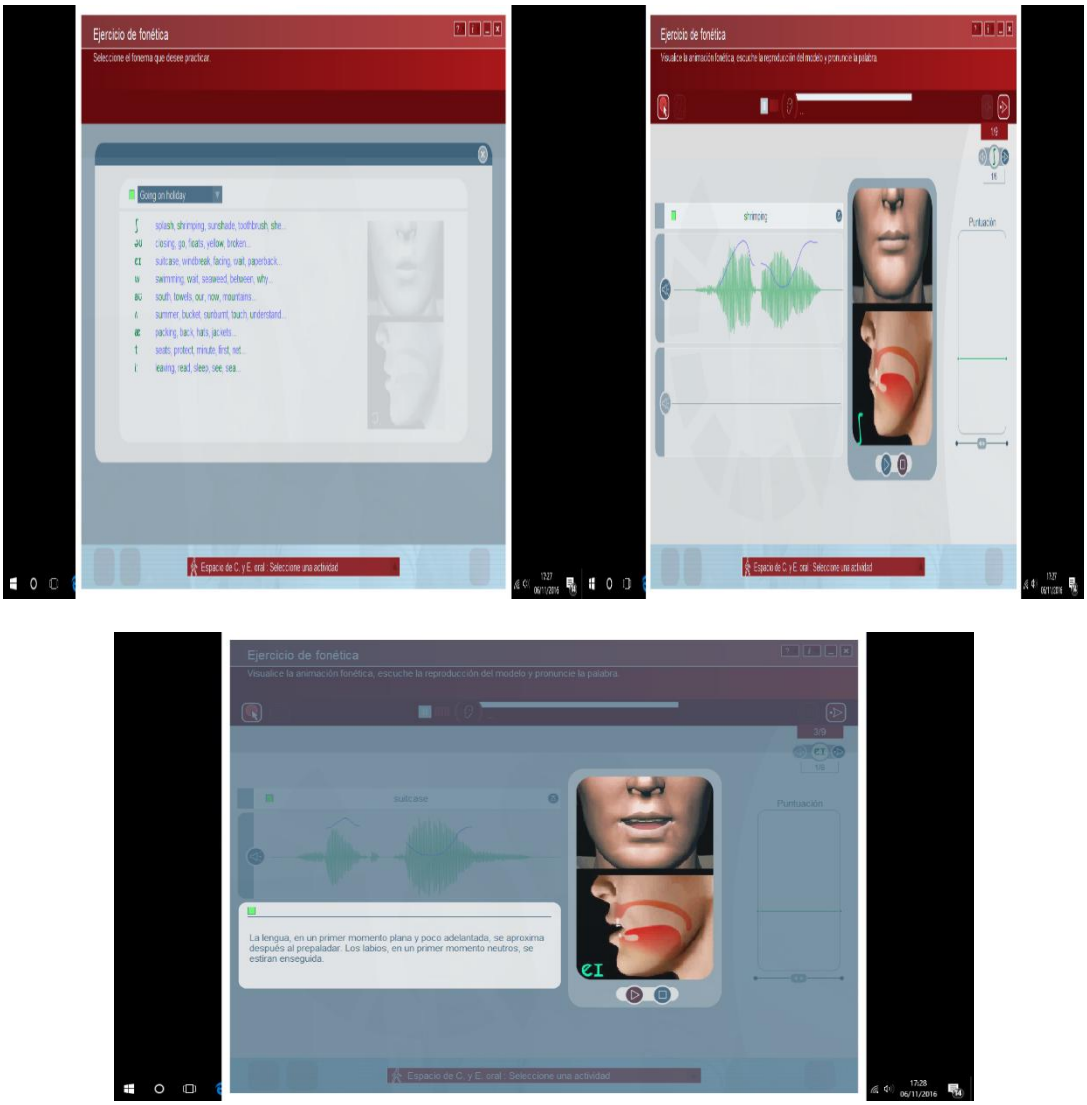


Figure 4. Example of a *phonetics task*, extracted from *Integral Inglés*.

Teach Yourself English Pronunciation (TYEP from now onwards), designed by Eva Estebas (2012), and *TP* (*Perceptual Tests / Perceptual Training*), created by Anabela Rato et al. (2012), are programs which revolve around minimal pairs. Hence, the types of activities that can be found in these materials are *listen to the words and choose the right option*, *listen to a few words containing sound X*, *repeat and imitate the speaker's pronunciation* or *listen to the pronunciation and decide whether the following words are pronounced with X or Z*.

TYEP is already pre-designed and is addressed specifically to Spanish students. Thus, the activities have been created taking into consideration the English sounds that

Spanish learners of English tend to confuse or have problems with when learning English pronunciation, like /æ, a:, ʌ/ or /ʃ, ʒ/. Apart from different tasks, descriptions and explanations are also provided for each minimal pair under study. More particularly, each section is divided into the following subsections: a) *common mistakes and expected pronunciation*. In this part students can first of all hear common mistakes made with certain minimal pairs and afterwards the correct or expected pronunciation of these words. For instance, *ban, barn, bun* are used to begin explaining the difference between the sounds /æ, a:, ʌ/; b) *tip description*. In this section, each of the two or three sounds to be practised is thoroughly described regarding aspects like manner and place of articulation and they are afterwards compared to each other; c) *common spellings*, where lists of the different spellings a particular sound can be represented by appear, as well as an example of a word containing this particular sound with this specific spelling; d) *ear training*, sections full of tasks to further practise the sounds under comparison; and, e) *other accents*, where, as its name indicates, in these parts students can find relevant information regarding how certain sounds and/or words are pronounced in other varieties of English, mainly General American. Figure 5 shows an example of what the design of the program looks like.

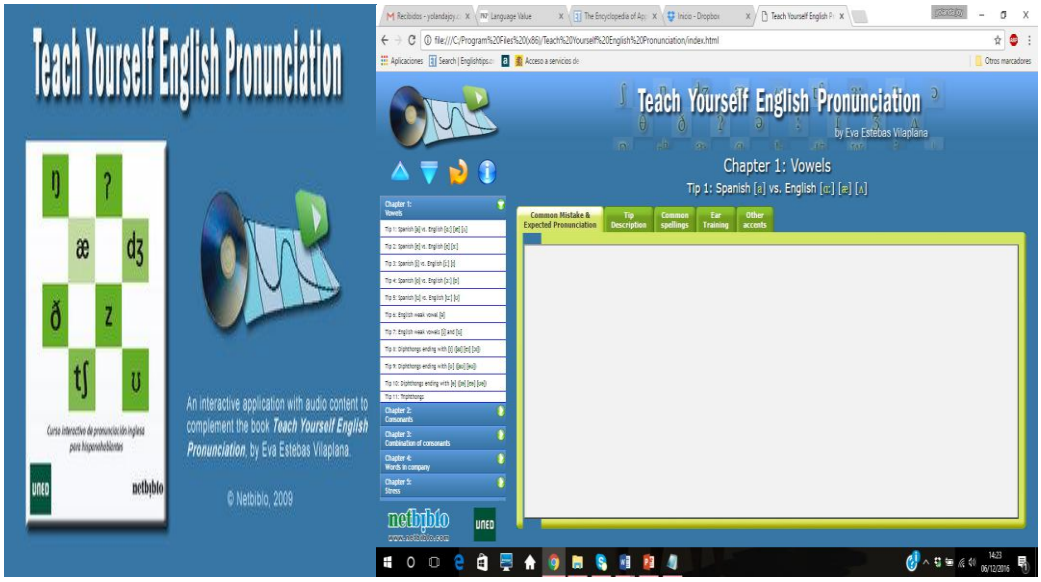


Figure 5. TEYP program design.

TP, on the other hand, is a program that allows teachers to create perceptual tests with visual, audio or audiovisual stimuli (see Figures 6-8 for some examples). Hence, teachers who work with Spanish EFL learners can create tests which focus on specific problematic sounds for Spanish speakers whereas EFL teachers in Germany, for instance, can create different tests adapted to German EFL speakers' problems. A huge advantage of TP is that students are given feedback at the end of the test depending on their performance.

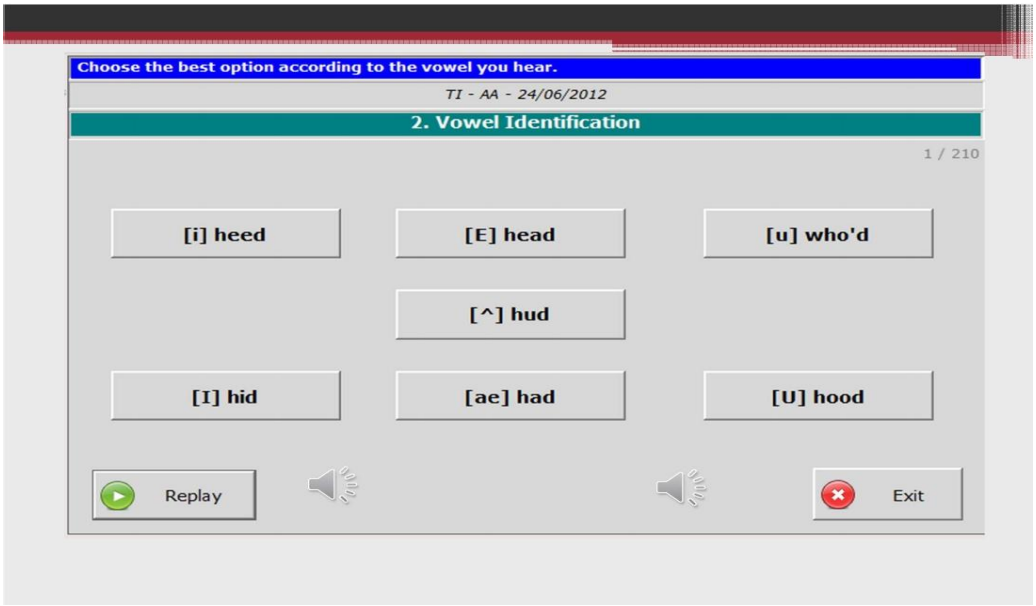


Figure 6. Example of an identification test taken from TP.

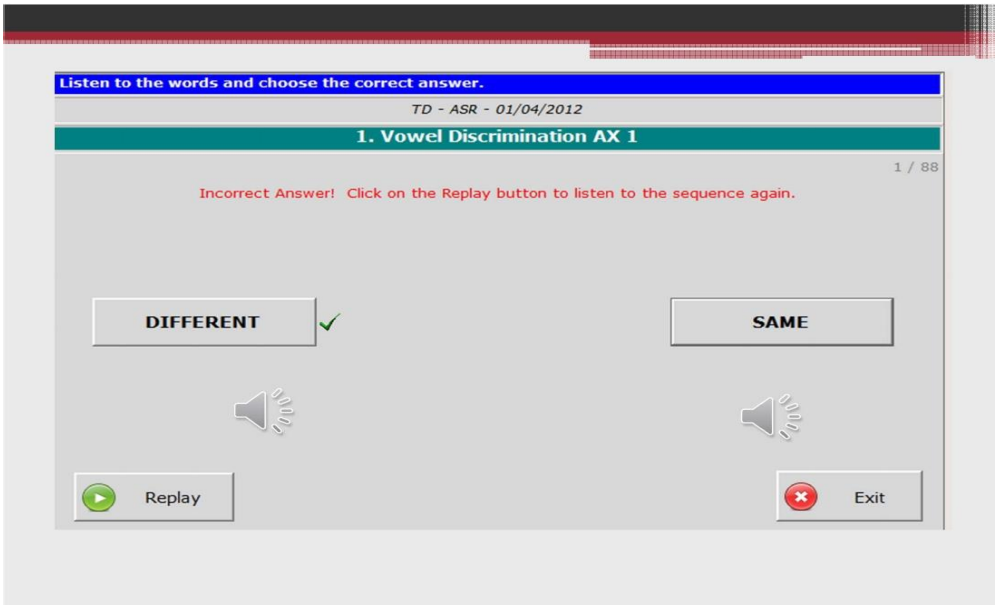


Figure 7. Example of a discrimination test taken from TP.

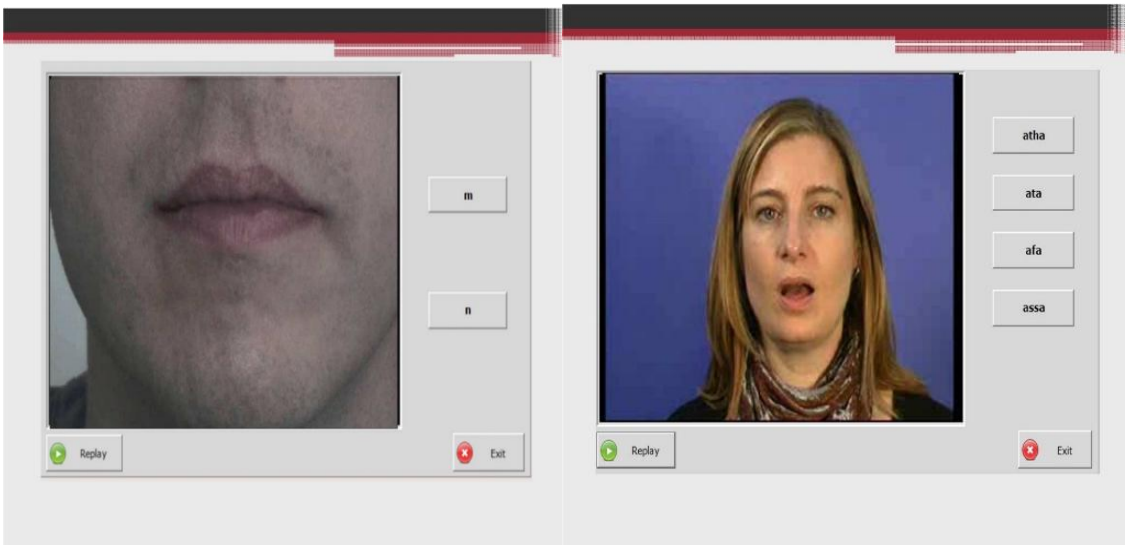


Figure 8. Examples of identification tests with different types of stimuli – visual versus audiovisual.

These two programs are aimed at training students' perceptive skills regarding aspects of segmental pronunciation. Therefore, their main drawback is that they do not allow learners to practise their intonation, rhythm or sentence stress patterns, whereas the two programs described above, *Talk to Me* and *Integral Inglés*, do. Finally, regarding availability, TYEP comes with a book which contains the exercises included in the program, whereas TP can be freely downloaded after one has registered on the corresponding website.[ii]

II.1.2. Programs and websites which convert a text into phonetic transcription

As explained above, other tools that students can use to improve their pronunciation are those which convert a text into phonetic transcription and vice versa. Some of these programs are *Photransedit*, *the Phonemic Chart Keyboard*, *Lingorado* and *IPA Online Keyboard*.

Photransedit is based on a group of applications. First, *text to phonetics*, which allows users to convert small texts into broad transcription using IPA symbols. As its name indicates, the *Phonetic Keyboard / Type IPA Phonetic Symbols* application can be used to type phonetic transcriptions. It is thus very useful for researchers, since it avoids

them having to insert symbols one by one in other programs such as Word, thereby also saving them a lot of time. Moreover, these transcriptions can be easily copied into other document formats such as Word files. Finally, the *transcription library* is a collection of texts that have already been transcribed, once again, allowing us to save time.[iii]

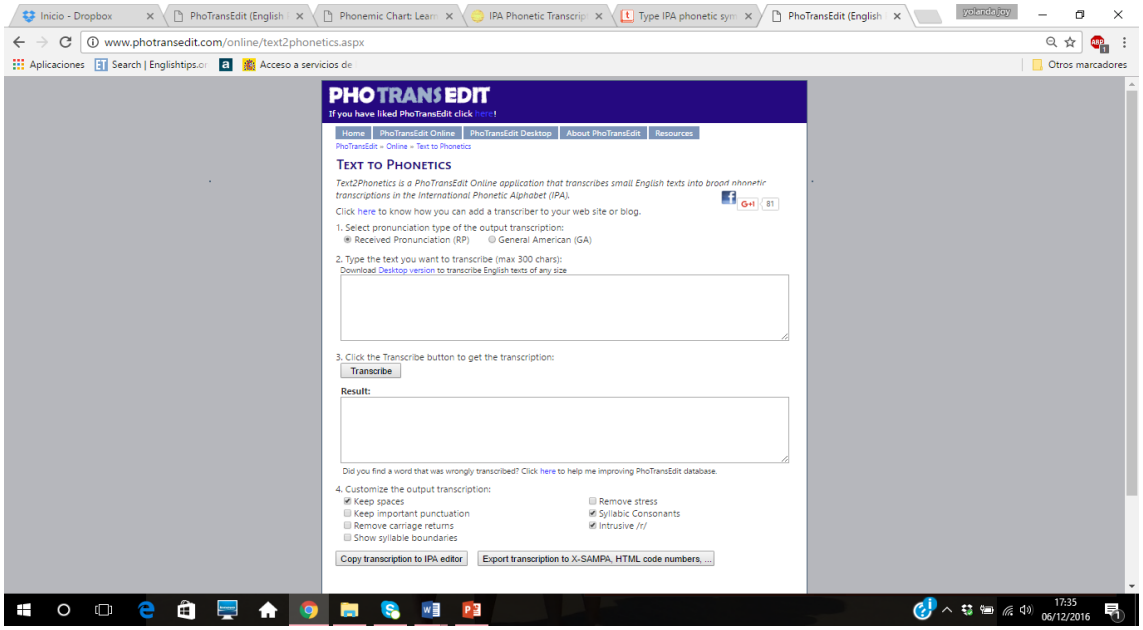


Figure 9. The *Text to Phonetics* app, which can be found on *Photransedit*.

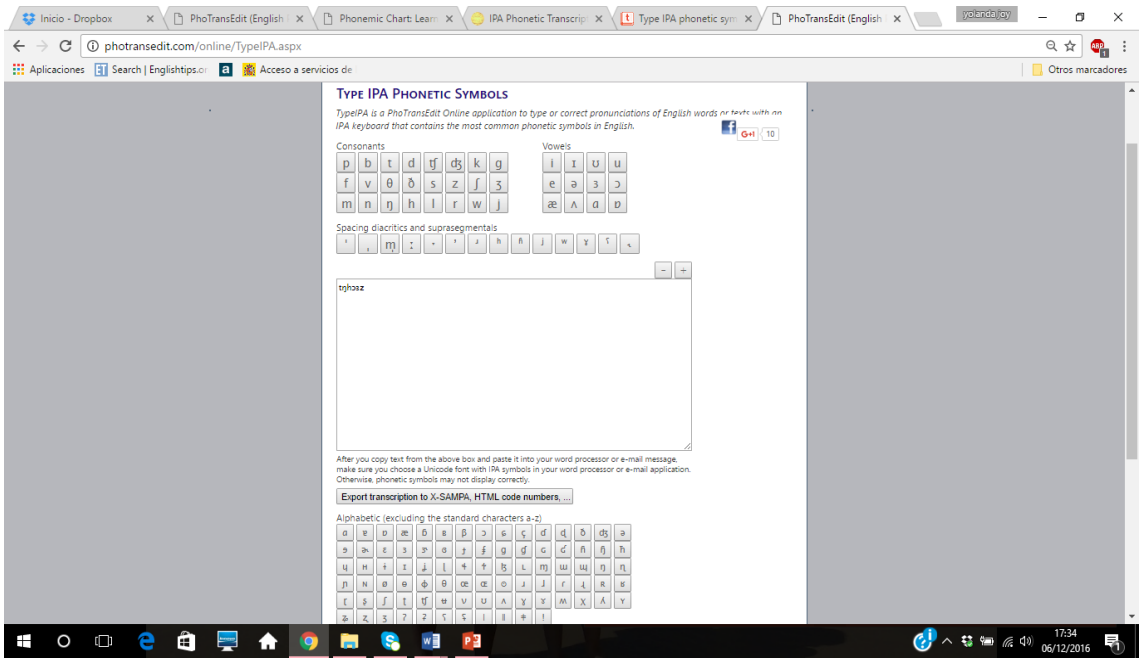


Figure 10. The *Phonetic Keyboard*, which can be found on the *Photransedit* website.

This program also offers the possibility of downloading a free desktop version of the *text to phonetics* program, which works without the need for an Internet connection. This desktop version basically offers the same functions as the online model, although it also gives us the opportunity to show or hide intrusive r's and/or syllabic consonants in the transcriptions or to remove stresses and length marks.

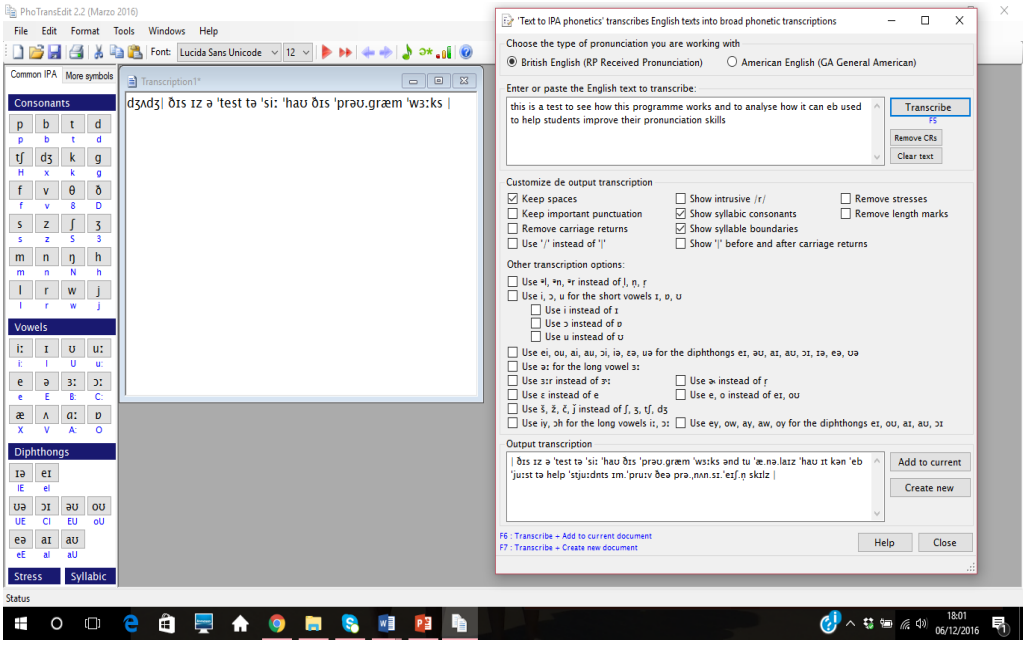


Figure 11. Desktop version of *Photransedit*.

Similarly to *Photransedit*, *Lingorado* also includes an online version as well as an app which can be downloaded from Google Play. An innovative feature of this program is that one can choose between three different ways of organising the information: a) by only showing the phonetic transcription; b) *side by side English text*, in which the transcription appears on the right and the orthographical text on the left; or, c) *line by line English text*, where the transcription appears above the orthographical text. Another interesting and unique function of this program is that it has integrated native speakers' voices that read out whatever written text one inserts. Moreover, it is possible to select whether we would like the transcriptions to show weak forms or not.

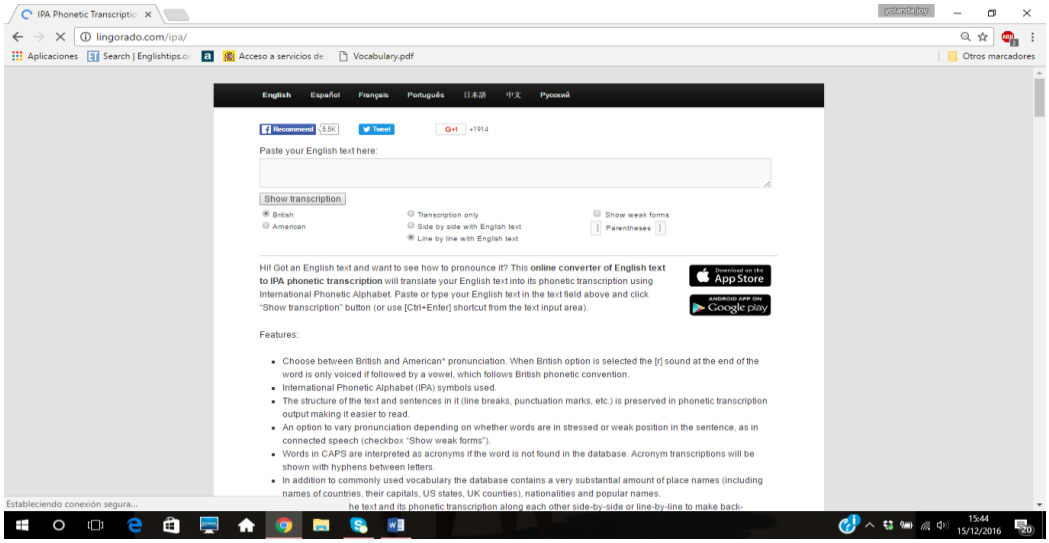


Figure 12. The main page of *Lingorado*.

The *Phonemic Chart Keyboard* and *Typeit* are two other programs which can be used to save time writing phonetic transcriptions.[iv]

The *Phonemic Chart Keyboard* allows users to show or hide hint words for each of the sounds so as to make it easier for them to identify each sound (for instance, *ship* for /ɪ/ and *sheep* for /i:/), as shown in Figure 13 below. An interesting feature is that both a British English and an American English variant can be selected.

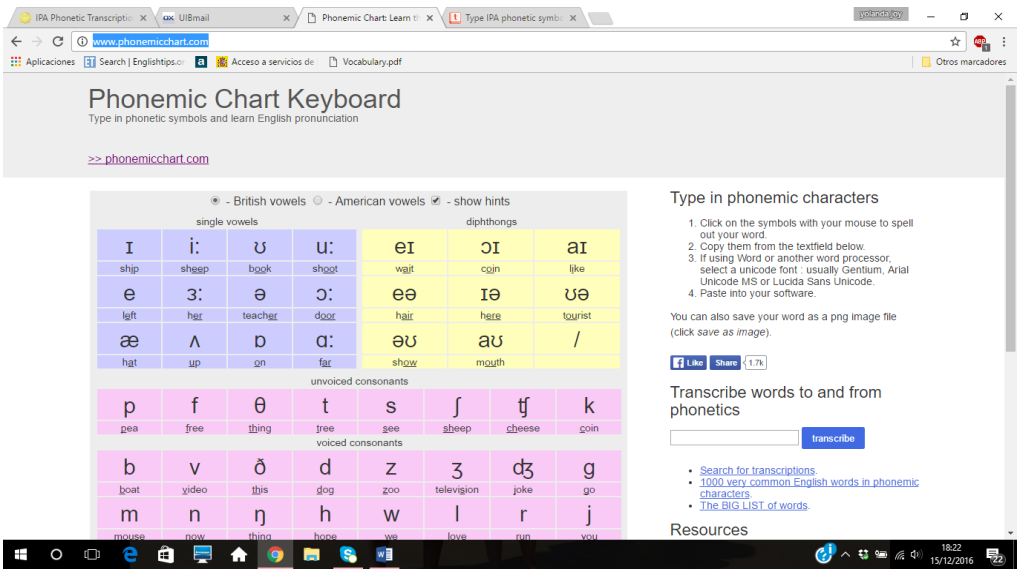


Figure 13. The main page of the *Phonemic Chart Keyboard*.

Typeit, on the other hand, works with IPA phonetic symbols and, if desired, users can download an upgraded version which can be viewed on any PC; this costs $12.50.

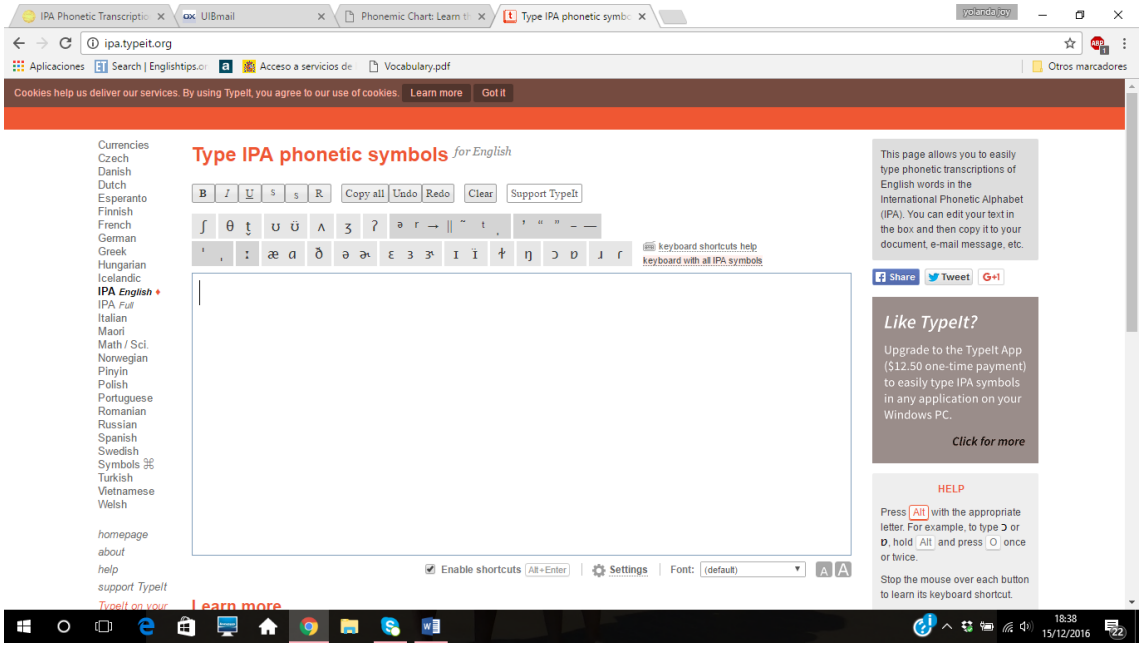


Figure 14. The main page of *Typeit*.

II.1.3. Recording programs

The last group of software that we can distinguish is, as mentioned above and following Walker's (2014) distinction, *recording programs*. According to Walker (2014), these programs can be divided into two main categories: a) programs that allow us to record ourselves and then edit the files, like *Audacity*, *WavePad* or *Recorder Pro*; and, b) speech recognition programs like *Dragon Dictation* or *Swype*.

Audacity, *WavePad* and *Recorder Pro* offer many possibilities with sound files, such as importing and exporting files, merging files, selecting only certain seconds or minutes of an audio file and discarding the rest, and so on. In broad terms, we can use these programs to edit our files by shortening or extending them or combining several files in one.[v] Although many things can be done with these programs, teachers should ask themselves whether their students will benefit from using programs like these. Perhaps they would be more useful for students studying phonetics at university level and not so helpful for primary or secondary students, for example.

Finally, speech recognition programs like *Dragon Dictation* and *Swype* could also be regarded as interesting and innovative technological tools for practising pronunciation although, as Walker (2014: 31) explains, there are also some disadvantages in using them:

> users need to be online to get this particular app to work, so that doesn't entirely satisfy 'the place' criterion. Nor are there any instructions (…). Another limiting factor is that the speech recognition software behind the app has problems dealing with connected speech and different speakers' accents (…)".[vi]

An innovative feature of *Swype* is that two languages can be used at once, that is, users can speak in two different languages and the program converts both into text.

II.2. Apps

Nowadays there are many apps for teaching pronunciation, most of which can be downloaded free of charge on our smartphones via Play Store. Some of these are *Clear Speech*, *Cool Speech*, *Sounds*, *English Pronunciation Trainer*, *Say It Out*, *New English File*, *Pronunciation Checker*, *Practice English Pronunciation* or *Learn English Pronunciation*.

Clear Speech was designed by Judy Gilbert for Cambridge University Press. Unfortunately, users have to pay to download this app, although it is not very expensive. It is addressed to intermediate students and it includes a series of games for them to practise both segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation. Another version of this app is also available for pre-intermediate level students. It is called *Clear Speech From the Start*.[vii]

Figure 15. Main page of the *Clear Speech* app.

Cool Speech was created by Richard Caudwell. The main skill emphasised in this app is listening, although there is also a section on pronunciation in which students can practise English vowels and consonants (see Figure 16 below).

Figure 16. Main page of the *Cool Speech* app.

As can be seen in Figure 16 above, this app includes a wide range of activities, from *dictations* to *hotspots*, the latter being sentences that are pronounced quite quickly, making them more difficult to understand. An advantage of the latter type of task is that

it allows learners to divide sentences into chunks and listen to particular words or even syllables or letters. Learners begin by doing some prototypical oral comprehension activities with multiple choice questions. However, if they click on the *Explore* button, they can then select complete sentences or small sections which they can afterwards hear in isolation, thus allowing them to focus also on connected speech processes (see Figure 17 below).

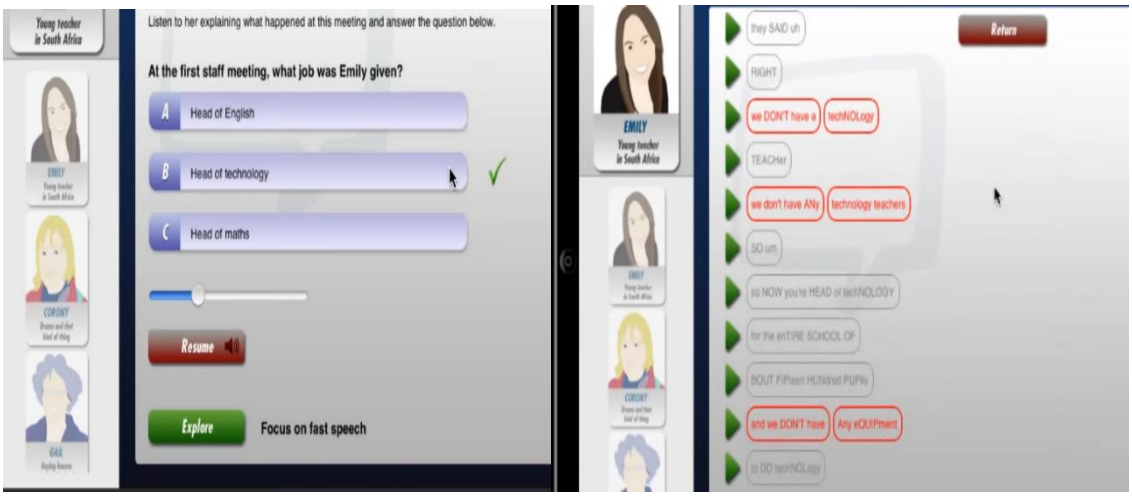


Figure 17. Hotspots activities within the *Cool Speech* app.

In the *consonants* and *vowels* sections, learners choose a particular sound and can then practise some sentences which contain this sound. Three speed options can be chosen: a) *original*; b) *careful* (that is, slower than the original); and, c) *fluent* (faster than the original). Students can also record themselves and later compare their version to the original one (see Figure 18).

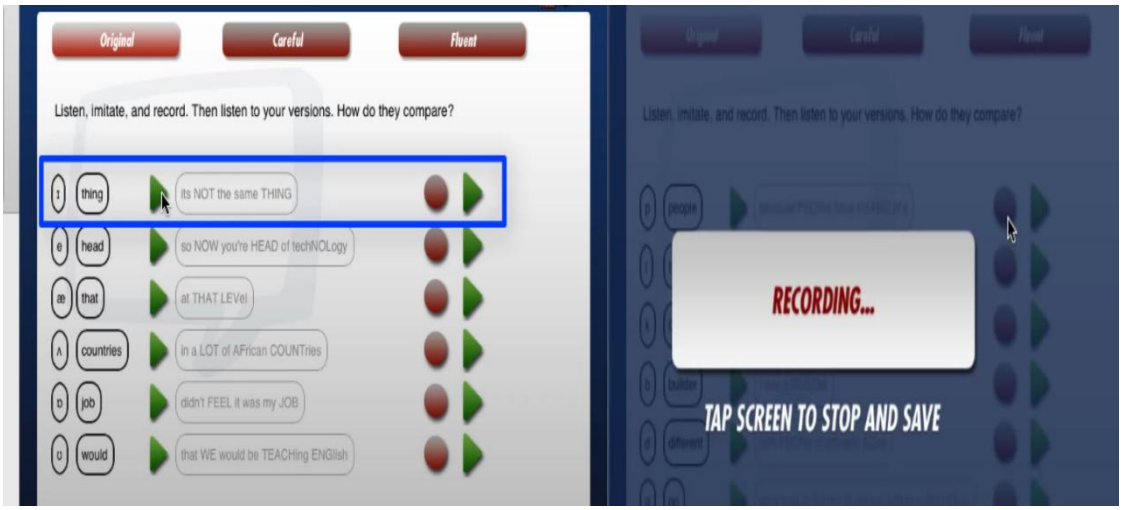


Figure 18. Recording process – Cool Speech app.

Another interesting app is *Sounds*, designed by Adrian Underhill for Macmillan. It revolves around the phonemic chart designed by Adrian Underhill himself.

Figure 19. Main page of the *Sounds* app.

Among other possibilities, it contains a list of words that are phonetically transcribed and, as with online dictionaries, students can listen to how a particular word is pronounced in both American and British English (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Word list in the *Sounds* app.

This app also contains many activities for students to practise their reading, writing and listening skills concerning phonetic symbols and transcriptions. For instance, Figure 21 shows examples of tasks in which students have to transcribe words or to provide the orthographical form.

Figure 21. Some examples of activities in the *Sounds* app.

II.3. Blogs, tutorials and social networks

Nowadays many pronunciation experts (both teachers and/or researchers) have their own blog where they publish pronunciation tasks, give their opinions and review new materials published to teach pronunciation, offer theoretical explanations as to how to pronounce certain sounds and so on. Some professionals whose blogs are worth visiting are: John Wells, Adrian Underhill, Jane Setter, Mark Hancock and Anne MacDonald, Richard Caudwell, Alex Rotair, Marina Cantarrutti, Sidney Woods, John Maiden, Jack Windor Lewis or Thelma Marques.

Out of these, I would personally recommend Mark Hancock and Annie MacDonald's blog[viii] since it is full of engaging, creative and innovative material to teach EFL, including pronunciation. Particularly useful are their activities labelled as w*rong lyrics* in which they substitute the original lyrics of a song for other words that both native and non-native speakers may understand instead, due to processes like homophones, speed, connected speech processes or simply because the singers pronounce it differently because of their accent.

Another highly recommendable resource is Adrian Underhill's series of tutorials on Youtube in which he explains in a simple way different aspects of English pronunciation, from vowels and consonants to learning how to use the phonemic chart. Although these videos, which are part of the Macmillan ELT series, are mainly addressed to teachers to help them learn how to teach pronunciation, some of them may also be of interest to students in their learning of English sounds.

III.PILOT STUDY ON STUDENTS' FIRST CONTACT WITH USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR LEARNING PRONUNCIATION. AN OPINION-BASED STUDYV. CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned in the introduction, to my knowledge, there are very few studies which review the technological resources currently available for teaching pronunciation and at the same time provide empirical data on students' opinions about using these materials to help them improve this important component of their spoken English. This preliminary study hence intends to fill this gap as it analyses the first impressions of ESP students studying a university degree in Tourism and Hospitality at the University of the

Balearic Islands regarding the usefulness and attractiveness of some of the resources for learning pronunciation described above. The research questions could thus be formulated as follows:

1. Do students think these tools are easy to use autonomously?
2. Do they like them? Do they find them motivating and engaging? Have they ever used them before?
3. Would they use them again outside the classroom?
4. Do they prefer using these tools to practise their pronunciation rather than doing the pronunciation tasks present in their classroom textbooks/teaching materials?

III.1. Methodology: participants and research instruments

Due to time restrictions and lack of availability, it was not possible to ask the students to try out the pronunciation programs mentioned above, but they were asked to look at and try out some of the apps, blogs and websites. In order to collect the data, three separate online surveys were created, one for each type of technological resource under analysis, namely: a) *apps*; b) *blogs*; and, c) *websites, tutorials and the use of social networks*.

A group of over 30 students volunteered to participate in this study although in the end not all of them filled in the questionnaires, probably due to the fact that in the last few weeks of the first term, they had to prepare several oral presentations, hand in projects and sit some exams in other subjects. For all these reasons the number of participants in the study was quite reduced (cf. Table 1 below). This means then that this survey should be considered only as preliminary and diagnostic and therefore the results obtained should be taken with care.

Table 1. Number of students who filled in each questionnaire.

Questionnaire focus	**Number of participants**
Mobile apps	13
Blogs	6
Websites,	10

tutorials and social networks	

Table 2 below shows the specific resources the participants were asked to review. In the case of mobile apps, they were given explicit instructions as to the type of tasks they could do to analyse them, whereas in the case of some of the blogs and websites they were simply asked to give their personal opinion in the surveys. Whenever possible, the ideas suggested were connected to topics they were studying in their ESP course so that they could continue to use these resources in the future if they wished to. For instance, for the *Say It Out* app, they were encouraged to pronounce some specific words as a preparation for the oral assessment activities of the course (an individual job interview role-play and a meeting simulation in groups). Thus, they were encouraged to pronounce words like *business*, *negotiate*, *job*, *candidate*, *employee*, *disagreement*, etc. and to check whether the program recognised such words according to how they verbalised them.

Table 2. Technological resources students were asked to consult.

Materials	**Specific resources students were asked to try out**
Mobile apps	*Say it out, Sounds, English File Pron Demo*
Blogs	Marina Cantarruti's Adrian Underhill's Mark Hancock and Annie MacDonald's Alex Rotari's Richard Caudwell's Michelle López and Carolyn Johnson's
Websites, tutorials and social networks	Mark Hancock's and Annie MacDonald's Wrong lyrics section Adrian Underhill's tutorials on Youtube Pronunciation builder and English pronunciation activities quizzes and games on Facebook

The vast majority of the questions included in the different surveys (which were delivered in Spanish) followed a Likert scale from 1 to 10 where 1 represented "I totally disagree" and 10 "I totally agree". Due to space limitations, I cannot include here all of the questions present in each survey. Nevertheless, Table 3 contains the items students were asked to reflect on after trying out some of the mobile apps and most of these questions were also included in the other two questionnaires.

Table 3. Items included in the survey to review mobile apps.

1. Which apps did you look at?
2. These apps are easy to use
3. I liked these apps
4. I had used apps like these before to improve my English pronunciation
5. I would use these apps again to improve my English pronunciation
6. These apps are good resources to practise English pronunciation
7. These apps are engaging tools
8. I would prefer to use these apps in class rather than doing the pronunciation activities present in textbooks
9. I am going to use these apps again

III.2. Data analysis

Since this study is only a first approach to a few ESP students' opinions on using technological materials to practise their pronunciation, statistical analyses have not been conducted.

Regarding the data analysis procedures, as mentioned above, the questions included in the survey followed a 1-10 Likert scale. Hence, although the data collected in this study are of a qualitative nature (since they analyse students' opinions), the results were treated in a more quantitative way in the sense that the main findings are expressed in percentages (see section III.3). More specifically, due to the preliminary nature of this study, students' numerical answers on the Likert scale were interpreted in the following three different ways:

- If they chose options 1-4 on the different scales, these results were regarded as negative, that is, they *disagree* with the statement.
- If they selected 5 or 6, their opinions were regarded as *neutral*; hence, they were considered to be neither in agreement nor in disagreement with the statement.
- Selecting options 7-10 on the different Likert scales was interpreted as a positive finding, i.e. students *agree* with the statement.

To exemplify, if learner X rated the item "These apps are easy to use" with a 2, it was interpreted that they disagreed with this statement, considering these resources to be difficult to use. If someone opted for a 5 or 6 on the Likert scale, they were considered as having a rather neutral position, in between agreeing and disagreeing. Finally, if a student marked a 9 on the Likert scale, it was interpreted that they agree with this statement and thus believe these applications are in fact easy to use.

III.3. General results

Table 4 shows the number of students who agreed, disagreed and those that maintained a neutral opinion on each of the questions asked in the three surveys administered. As mentioned above, percentages are also given and the most-voted options are highlighted to make interpretation easier.

Table 4. Main results displayed with total figures and percentages.

Questions asked / Surveys administered	**Apps**			**Blogs**			**Websites, tutorials and social networks**		
	1-4	**5-6**	**7-10**	**1-4**	**5-6**	**7-10**	**1-4**	**5-6**	**7-10**
They are easy to use	2 (15.3%)	1 (7.7%)	10 (76.9%)	1 (16.6%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	9 (90%)
I liked them	1 (7.7%)	4 (30.7%)	7 (53.8%)	1 (16.6%)	1 (16.6%)	4 (66.6%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
I had used similar materials before	6 (46.1%)	2 (15.3%)	4 (30.7%)	4 (66.6%)	1 (16.6%)	1 (16.6%)	7 (70%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%))
I would use similar materials again	3 (23%)	2 (15.3%)	8 (61.5%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
I would use these specific materials again	4 (30.7%)	2 (15.3%)	7 (53.8%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
They are useful for learning English pronunciation	4 (30.7%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (53.8%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.6%)	3 (50%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)
They are fun/engaging tools	3 (23%)	3 (23%)	7 (53.8%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	4 (66.6%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
I prefer them to textbook pronunciation activities	4 (30.7%)	2 (15.3%)	7 (53.8%)	-----	------	------	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)

On the whole, positive results were obtained in the sense that:

a) Most students found all three types of technological resources under analysis (apps, blogs and websites, tutorials and social networks) easy to use.

b) Between 50% and 70% of the participants in each survey stated that they liked using these tools.

c) The majority of these ESP students would use similar tools to these again to practise their English pronunciation, especially apps and websites, tutorials and social networks. Likewise, over 50% of them said they would use these specific mobile apps and websites again.

d) Approximately half of the volunteers considered these materials as both engaging and motivating/fun to use.

e) Finally, over half of them maintained they would prefer to use these tools to practise their pronunciation rather than the pronunciation tasks present in their textbooks.

Despite assessing these resources positively in many ways, according to their views, it seems that in the past they had not used these materials very much in the classroom. Likewise, they had not been encouraged to use them outside the educational setting, since most of the students disagreed with the statement "I had used similar materials before to practise my pronunciation" in all three surveys.

To sum up, then, from this preliminary study it can be gathered that these ESP students believe these materials are useful, engaging and easy to use. Furthermore, they would be keen to use them again, most likely on their own outside the classroom, due to the fact that, as was just mentioned, they stated they do not normally have the opportunity of using these pronunciation learning tools inside their language lessons.

IV. CONCLUSIONS, TEACHING IMPLICATIONS AND TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As explained at the beginning of this paper, pronunciation tends to be isolated and marginalised in language lessons. Moreover, the types of pronunciation tasks present in modern EFL textbooks, namely drills and discriminations, still resemble those of traditional approaches to the teaching of pronunciation. These tasks on some occasions fail to engage and motivate English learners and, thus, I believe a new approach to the teaching of pronunciation is needed. Such a proposal should motivate learners to improve their English pronunciation, not only inside the classroom but also give them

opportunities to autonomously continue practising both segmental and suprasegmental issues outside the classroom.

It is believed that the extensive list of programs, apps and websites reviewed in this study (as well as those that were only briefly mentioned due to space restrictions) can indeed fulfil the latter function, as most of them allow students to practise pronunciation where and when they like while having fun at the same time (according to the findings in the short empirical study).

Although the empirical study included in this paper can only be considered as preliminary due to the low number of subjects who analysed the different tools, it is believed that the results represent a fruitful first approach to students' views regarding the use of technological materials like apps and websites to help them learn pronunciation. Broadly speaking, the participants in the pilot study seemed to enjoy using these technological resources and they found them useful and engaging.

Two very interesting findings which can be extracted are: a) the fact that they stated they would prefer to use tools like these to practise pronunciation than to do the activities present in written materials, namely textbooks; and, b) they would like to use these tools or similar ones again when practising their English pronunciation. From the former, it could be inferred that overall students are not completely happy with the format of the pronunciation tasks included in their textbooks. This finding is important since it complements previous studies conducted on this issue, research which in fact verifies that many EFL Spanish students and teachers from Compulsory Secondary Education onwards believe the format of the pronunciation tasks present in written materials used in class is extremely repetitive and, consequently, they would like other types of activities to be present (Calvo 2016b). Teaching pronunciation with the use of some of the programs, apps and other technological resources described in this paper can indeed be a way of doing this.

The fact that most of these students said that they would like to continue using these tools (or similar ones) to improve their pronunciation is also an interesting finding, since it indicates that they are motivated to try out new resources and they appreciate innovation, creativity and variety in their pronunciation lessons. Nevertheless, as explained above, most of the participants surveyed claimed they had never been given

the chance to use technological resources like those outlined in this paper inside their language lessons to help them improve and practise their English pronunciation. A general idea that can therefore be extracted from this study is that it seems that students are willing to try out new ways of learning English pronunciation and, broadly speaking, ICTs seem to do the trick for them since they consider them engaging and motivating. It appears, however, that ESP teachers lack information regarding these tools since, according to the students, they have not been used in their language classes. A possible reason why teachers may not use these resources in class could be simply because they are not familiar with them. A first step in our country would therefore be to give EFL teachers training opportunities, such as courses or workshops, to learn how to teach pronunciation with new and engaging methods, including ICTs.

As can be seen in the descriptions included in this article, most of the technology-based resources currently available for teaching pronunciation are extremely easy to use. Nevertheless, it is important for teachers to choose appropriate materials according to their students' needs and, furthermore, the different tasks that students are asked to do with each resource should also be adapted to their specific needs (content, likes/dislikes, assessment). For instance, in section III.1, I mentioned that the ESP students who took part in the pilot study were asked to practise the pronunciation of words to prepare for their specific oral exams by using the *Say it Out* app.

Other activities and further research which can be done with these technology-based materials could be the following:

1) Using *Dragon Dictation*, we ask students to read out a text (either a random text or one taken from their textbook or other teaching materials). Since this type of program is supposed to transcribe in written form what one is saying, it would be interesting to see what would happen if the students:

    a) Pronounce some words incorrectly. For instance, a difficult word Spanish students tend to mispronounce is "comfortable". What would happen if they pronounce this word as /kɒmfɒr'teɪbɒl/? Would the program indicate it has not understood that word or would it provide an alternative spelling?

b) Similarly, what would happen if we invent a nonsense word like /kə'strʌnsəbɒl/?

2) Getting students to write the lyrics of a song and then follow the murdered lyrics technique[viii] by explaining the reasons why they may have misunderstood the pronunciation of some words.

3) Designing specific tests for Spanish learners with the TP program and analysing whether students perform better with visual, audio or audiovisual stimuli.

4) Ask students to choose a pronunciation app and design similar activities for their classmates to complete.

5) If our students are creative enough, we could get them to design a collective pronunciation blog in which each of them would add comments, tasks, recordings, etc.

6) Trying out some of these materials with other students; the tasks in this case could perhaps be done inside the classroom so as to favour a higher proportion of participation among the students. Moreover, it would be interesting to test whether students' pronunciation improves by using these resources and, if so, with which ones.

All in all, then, it seems that ICTs are helpful and beneficial tools to teach pronunciation since they seem very likely to motivate and engage students, and the use of these interactive resources will allow us to introduce variety and creativity in the classroom. Moreover, they can promote learners' autonomy as they can use these tools when and where they like. We should nevertheless be selective and try out these resources first so as to check whether they are suitable for the specific needs of our students. Finally, although these technological resources have many benefits, they can also be combined with traditional textbook activities, that is, we can combine both ways of teaching pronunciation so as to add variety to our classes.

Notes

[i] See Tergujeff (2010, 2013) for results in Finland, Henderson and Jarosz, (2014) for research carried out in France and Poland, and Calvo (2016b) for some findings in Spain.
[ii] http://www.worken.com.br/tp_regfree.php?l=i
[iii] All of these sub-applications can be found online, directly on the website http://www.photransedit.com/.
[iv] Both are free of charge and can be accessed on the following websites: http://www.phonemicchart.com/, http://ipa.typeit.org/
[v] *Audacity* and *WavePad* can be freely downloaded and easily installed on our PC, whereas we have to pay $1.99 before downloading *Recorder Pro* from iTunes.
[vi] *Dragon Dictation* can be purchased on http://www.nuance.es/dragon/index.htm; different models are available (professional individual, professional group, premium or home). Unfortunately, it is quite expensive and its price ranges from 99 to 400 euros. A free trial of *Swype* can be obtained on Google Play (the full version only costs a few euros).
[vii] More information regarding these two apps can be found on the Cambridge English website, http://www.cambridgemobileapps.com/ipad.html
[viii] http://hancockmcdonald.com/

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Learners' identities at stake: Digital identity texts in the EFL classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the study of identity in digital identity texts produced by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners within a specific subject of the Teacher in Primary Education (English) degree at a Spanish university. To this end, 51 digital identity texts were analysed following a "positioning perspective", which views identity in terms of "reflexive" and "interactive" positions (Davies & Harré 1990). Results show that learners constructed non-unitary identities whose subject positions were often contradictory. They also associated certain positions with silencing identities, transition identities and identities of competence within the reflexive and interactive categories (cf. Norton & Toohey 2011, Manyak 2004), while ascribing others to their viewers interactively. In general, students discursively presented themselves as competent actors through diverse semiotic and linguistic resources they deployed in an affective narrative style characteristic of some forms of digital communication (Jones & Hafner 2012, Page 2012).

Keywords: *EFL teaching and learning, identity, position, identity texts, digital discourses*

I. INTRODUCTION

In spite of its centrality to language education (De Costa & Norton 2016), the notion of identity and its relation to academic success has been largely ignored in mainstream pedagogical practices and curricular policies (Cummins et al. 2005a, 2005b, Cummins & Early 2011, Cummins et al. 2015). The use of digital identity texts (DITs) with English language learners (ELL) has proved highly efficient in this regard, since such texts address identity affirmation, on the one hand, and literacy engagement, on the other, which has resulted in the development of students' multimodal and multilingual cognitive and academic language proficiency skills (CALPS) (see, e.g. Bernhard et al. 2006, Cummins 2006, Cummins et al. 2005a, 2005b, Cummins et al. 2015, Giampapa 2010, etc.). Identity texts are individually or collectively created texts that adopt multiple forms (e.g. a poem, a digital story, etc.) and may be established in more than one language.

Although such texts have commonly been employed with ELL from marginalised social groups (e.g. immigrants), they may also benefit other learner populations like

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mainstream college EFL students (García-Pastor, in press). Therefore, we have used DITs in the FL classroom to offer university students the possibility of presenting and building their identities in such a way that allows them to a) link them to "identities of competence" (Manyak 2004) which may further fuel their literacy engagement; or b) reject negative identities that prevent them from expressing themselves freely in the target language. In the DITs under study, students were encouraged to reflect on who they are and/or have become as EFL learners by considering how they have been learning the language, what kinds of learners they think they are (Ellis 1994), and which learning strategies they think they use in their learning (O'Malley & Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990). All in all, this paper aims to highlight the relevance of the notion of identity in language education, and the usefulness of identity texts in the EFL classroom by scrutinising learners' identities and their construction in DITs. We believe that such analysis may shed light on which identities are likely to allow students to have a "voice" in the second/foreign language (L2/FL) and help them improve; which can make them feel oppressed and impede their progress (Norton 1995, Norton 2010, Norton & Toohey 2011); and which learners associate with unequal power relations in educational contexts.

II. IDENTITY TEXTS

II.1. Identity texts

Identity texts are to be understood within a theoretical framework that belongs to the critical paradigm in social research, in which power is regarded as ubiquitous; it is conceived as emerging in and through language, and it is defined as a site of struggle in social contexts (Baxter & Babbie 2004, Cohen et al. 2011). More specifically, identity texts are embedded within a theoretical perspective that views societal power relations in educational structures and interactions as unequal, and one of the main sources of underachievement among ELL. In this way, identity texts emerged as part of a large project conducted in schools within the Greater Toronto Area to support the development of literacy in ELL and students from marginalised social groups both in English and in their L1 (Cummins 2006, Cummins et al. 2005a, Cummins et al. 2015). The notion of literacy underlying these texts goes beyond traditional linear text-based

reading and writing skills to refer to technologically and non-technologically mediated literacies that are part of students' everyday writing practices in a variety of languages and contexts in and outside school (see Cope & Kalantzis 2015).

Thus, identity texts are bilingual or multilingual artefacts that students produce in written, spoken, signed, visual, musical, dramatic or multimodal forms as a result of having invested their identities in them (Cummins & Early 2011). Some examples include e books, picture books, wall-charts, etc. The following is a specific example of an identity text in the shape of a dual English-Urdu book co-authored by seventh graders, who present themselves and describe their experiences in Canada as immigrants from Pakistan.

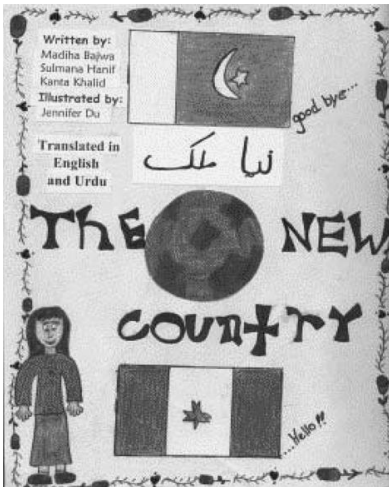


Figure 1. Dual language book from a seventh grade social studies unit (Cummins et al. 2005b).

Most importantly, identity texts "[hold] a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light" (Cummins & Early 2011: 3). The learner's positive self-image is reinforced when they share or jointly create their texts with peers, parents and teachers. This makes the relationship between the learner's daily life and school even more meaningful, and strengthens the link between educational institutions and families (Bernhard et al. 2006, Cummins 2006, Cummins et al. 2005a, 2005b, Giampapa 2010). Learners can thus feel that their cultural and linguistic capital is not excluded from curriculum and instruction, and, in consequence, they are likely to adjust better to the educational system of the foreign community.

As opposed to these general features, DITs in this study were individually created, and produced only in the target language. However, like other identity texts, they are the product of learners' creative work in the context of the classroom. In sum, identity texts help learners consolidate their identities and enhance their language learning (Bernhard et al. 2006, Cummins 2006, Cummins et al. 2005a, 2005b, Cummins & Early 2011, Cummins et al. 2015, Giampapa 2010).

II.2. Identity and positioning

In this study identity is understood as "ego", which is in a continuous dialogical tension with "alter" in and through discourse (Bakhtin in Todorov 1995, Baxter & Montgomery 1996). Ego not only needs alter to come into being, but also cannot be stripped of discourse, in such a way that identity is relational, social, and discursively produced and re-produced in and through interaction with others. Such interactions also need to be understood in the context of past and future conversations. Therefore, identity is a diverse, dynamic, often contradictory, multiple rather than unitary concept, that is jointly negotiated and socially constructed in and through discourse, and that involves a struggle by the learner to achieve identities s/he desires in a society characterised by unequal power relations (Norton 1995, 1997, 2010, Norton & Toohey 2002, 2011).

This view of identity has been advocated by post-structuralist perspectives which generally adopt a social constructivist approach to social reality (cf. Baxter 2016, Block 2013). Among these perspectives, we align ourselves with Davies and Harré's (1990) theory of positioning. This theory emerged as a counterpoint to the classical dramaturgical model in social psychology, which focuses on the static, formal and ritualistic concept of role to account for the enactment of identity. Identity in this theory is thus conceived in terms of "position" and "positioning", which refer to "the discursive production of a diversity of selves" (Davies & Harré 1990: 47), and the discursive process whereby this occurs respectively. Davies and Harré further distinguish between "interactive positioning", i.e. how a speaker's discourse positions the interlocutor(s), and "reflexive positioning", namely, how the speaker positions him/herself in and through discourse.

From this approach, discursive practices provide subject positions from which learners can speak, since they offer the resources (i.e. images, metaphors, story lines and concepts) that enable them to be positioned in the way such discursive practices prioritise. However, learners are also free to choose among the diverse and contradictory subject positions available within different discursive practices, and on some occasions, resist certain positions they are ascribed (e.g. Menard-Warwick 2007). Self-reflection is crucial in this regard, since interlocutors can thus become aware of the fact that they can accept or reject "the subject position[s] that the particular narrative and the related discursive practices might seem to dictate" (Davies & Harré 1990: 48).

II.3. Identity and technology

In DITs technology "acts as an amplifier to enhance the process of identity text production and dissemination" (Cummins & Early 2011: 3). However, we would argue that technology also contributes to increase students' investment in their language learning, since learners find new opportunities beyond language for the creation of their autobiographical narratives (Darvin & Norton 2014). Learners can thus find a space to claim greater authorial agency (Fong et al. 2016, Darvin & Norton 2014), gain a sense of self-efficacy, and further affirm and legitimise their cultural identities when sharing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Darvin 2016, Darvin & Norton 2014, Lam 2000, Thorne & Black 2011, Yi 2007). Therefore, the use of technology for the production of their texts contributes to learners' construction of competent identities, since they feel they can use the FL in new and attractive ways that promote their self-perception as multicompetent actors (Fong et al. 2016, Chen 2013, Lam 2000, Thorne & Black 2011, Yi 2007).

Additionally, DITs incorporate digital storytelling, which learners can use both for creative writing and for thinking critically about social issues (e.g. Bernhard et al. 2006, Gregori-Signes 2008, 2014, Gregori-Signes & Pennock-Speck 2012, Oskoz & Elola 2016). Thus, DITs help learners reject self- and other-related stereotypes, whilst promoting a positive perception of L2 writing as a familiar, pleasant and creative process, away from the traditional conception of school literacy (Darvin & Carlton, 2014), which may be alienating for some ELL (Cummins 2006, Lam 2000, Yi 2007). In

sum, DITs help learners link the different subject positions they identify with to real or imagined identities of competence they desire, and hence progress in their academic language development (Bernhard et al. 2006, Cummins 2006, Cummins et al. 2005b, Cummins et al. 2015, Darvin & Norton 2014, Giampapa 2010, Gregori-Signes & Pennock-Speck 2012, Oskoz & Elola 2016, Reyes-Torres et al. 2012).

III. METHODS

III.1. Research questions

In light of the above, the following research questions were established:

- How do college EFL learners build their identities in their DITs, i.e. which subject positions do they identify with and which semiotic and linguistic resources sustain them?
- Which subject positions do they associate with identities of competence, transition identities and silencing identities, and how do they view these in terms of the unequal power relations that characterise social and educational institutions?

III.2. Corpus and data collection procedures

In order to answer these questions, 51 DITs were collected from university EFL students. These texts were produced in the context of a specific course within the Teacher in Primary Education studies at a Spanish university. Learners received specific instructions for the creation of their texts. With regard to content, they were required to offer a description of themselves as EFL learners, and include at least a "dramatic question" in their stories, i.e. a question that fully or partly guides the story and is answered by the end (cf. Gregori-Signes 2008, 2014, Robin 2006). Concerning format, students were allowed to use any video or photo editing program they felt comfortable with to create their texts, and their stories should not exceed seven minutes.

III.3. Participants

The participants in this study were 51 university EFL students, who were pursuing a degree in English Teaching in Primary Education at the time of the study. They include

7 males and 44 females between the ages of 22 and 25 years. They are mostly bilingual Spanish-Catalan speakers with an average B2 level of competence in English.

The teacher is also the researcher in this study, with twenty years of experience in TEFL and twelve years in second language teacher education.

IV.4. Analysis

Data analysis followed the "positioning" perspective outlined by Davies and Harré (1990), which was also informed by three types of narrative analysis related to identity and its negotiation in discourse (Block 2010): "thematic analysis", which focuses on the content of what is said, "structural analysis", which interrogates 'how' such content is produced, and "dialogic/performative analysis", which refers to 'who' an utterance is addressed to, 'when' and for what purposes. Thus, we paid attention to what learners communicated with regard to their EFL learner identities; how, i.e. which semiotic and linguistic resources they used to index such identities; who the addressee/s of their stories was/were at specific points in their discourses; and what for (Block 2010, Davies & Harré 1990, Thorne & Black 2011).

We also considered some of Ivanič's (1998) categories for the study of identity in written discourse, namely, the "autobiographical self" or the writer's self in terms of their roots and previous life experiences, the "discoursal self" or the self the writer constructs based on their semiotic and linguistic choices, and the "self as author", which is an aspect of the discoursal self that foregrounds the writer's authorial agency.

A general analysis of learners' DITs was first conducted to develop an understanding of their content and their structure. A more focused analysis followed consisting in descriptive comments on the content of students' texts; semiotic/linguistic comments on their use of symbolic resources for meaning-making; and conceptual comments related to concepts emerging in their stories that are relevant in the literature. The third step in data analysis aimed to identify identity-related themes and categories, considering already-established macro stereotypical positions, e.g. "learner", "native speaker" (Darvin & Norton 2015), "student" (Fong et al. 2016), and so forth. Specific subject positions within such categories were then identified, and the resulting identities and positions were further related to identities of competence (Manyak 2004), transition

identities (Norton & Toohey 2011) and silencing identities (Norton 1995, Norton 2010, Norton & Toohey 2011). Part of the data was also analysed by another researcher who was familiar with the method of analysis described above, but was not involved in the study. To ensure reliability, comparisons of our independent analyses, and refinements to the identity categories emerging from these were performed.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

V.1. Learners' construction of autobiographical selves: identity texts as personal narratives

Students built their language learner identities mainly in the form of autobiographical selves that were discursively constructed in and through the selection of certain episodes in their lives. These episodes included the learner's first experiences with language within the family and at school, their experiences with languages other than their L1 throughout secondary education and university, especially English, and their experiences related to these languages abroad. The selection of such episodes from the past and their narration in the first person singular to inform the viewer accounts for the shape of learners' DITs as "memoirs", that is, a specific kind of autobiographical genre which "focuses on some aspect of a person's life" (Brisk 2015: 103). However, learners' texts not only had the informational or explanatory purpose of memoirs, students also intended to tell their stories to an audience, so that their texts shaded into personal recounts. Personal recounts or narratives are a story genre in which the author deals with a temporal succession of events from a personal perspective, documents the sequence of events, deals with problematic events, evaluates the significance of events in the story, and provides a resolution (Brisk 2015, Johns 2003, Rothery & Stenglin 2005).

Therefore, learners' texts included not only a sequence of events, but also an evaluation of their relevance, one or more problems constituting the complication stage of the story, a crisis in a few cases, and a resolution. The problems students established in their texts referred to disappointing episodes throughout their learning process commonly framed as anxiety-increasing and motivation-decreasing periods, and issues such as the best age to start learning L2/FL, and the best way and/or method to acquire

it. These problems conveyed "some disruption of usuality" in their stories (Rothery & Stenglin 2005: 233), and were occasionally introduced through dramatic questions posited to the viewer, for instance, "were we motivated in the high school's lessons?". These questions acted as rhetorical devices that aimed to boost dramatic tension and increase the viewer's interest (Gregori-Signes 2008, 2014, Robin 2006). In spite of the problems learners narrated, their DITs were generally cast in a positive light, and were celebratory of their identities as EFL learners (Fong et al. 2016).

These findings also account for the fact that only 13 texts (25%) contained crisis points. These crises consisted mainly of situations in which learners' anxiety had reached the highest level, their motivation was at a minimum, and they were experiencing other frustrations in their learning, like monotonous grammar-oriented lessons and dreadful teachers. The resolutions to these crises were contingent upon learners themselves, who had to start some course of action and change their situation, e.g. a learner isolated herself from the negative learning context she was experiencing at high school, and nourished her intrinsic motivation by attending a language school. Occasionally, resolutions came from external sources like a teacher who crossed the learner's path, a friend who encouraged the learner to enrol in a specific language school or the student's mother, father or both, who changed the learner's educational centre, registered him/her at a language school, or sent him/her abroad.

V.2. Students' identities as EFL learners

Although students' autobiographical selves were ubiquitous in their texts, learners adopted certain subject positions in specific ways that illustrate how they built their identities. There were two macro stereotypical positions students invoked: "language learner" and "native speaker", which emerged as the two poles of a dialectical pair (cf. Baxter & Montgomery 1996). However, a third macro stereotypical position, i.e. "intercultural speaker", also surfaced as a counterpoint to these, thereby supporting the idea that in our global and digitally mediated world, "the asymmetric distribution of power no longer rests on the simple dichotomy of native speaker and language learner" (Darvin & Norton 2015: 41). The positions of "language learner" and "native speaker" appeared as mutually exclusive subject categories which, by contrast, could not be

defined without the other. Learners positioned themselves as "language learners" vis-à-vis "native speakers", which they associated with the positions of "teacher" and "member of a foreign community".

Students discursively indexed these positions mainly by means of semiotic resources like personal pictures or videos in which they appeared with other classmates and their teachers (Figure 2), and stereotypical images of themselves or pupils with their teacher in the classroom (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Personal video extract of learner with classmates and teacher

Figure 3.Stereotypical image of learners with teacher.

Students also deployed photographs of themselves with L1 English speakers (Figure 4) and, less frequently, stereotypical pictures of native speakers as members of a foreign culture (Figure 5). The common use of images containing both teachers and learners as well as learners and native speakers as opposed to separate images for each of these categories underscores their understanding of the "language learner", and "native speaker", "native speaker-teacher", "native speaker-member of a foreign community" and "teacher" positions as interdependent (cf. Thorne & Black 2011).

Figure 4. Personal image of learner with native speakers.

Figure 5. Stereotypical image of native speakers as members of the foreign culture.

Learners' non-standard use of English indexed their identities as language learners (Menard-Warwick 2007) coupled with the absence of specific features they ascribed to the position of "native speaker", the most salient one being the ability to communicate in the target language. Students equated this ability with speaking, which they identified as the best way of learning the L2/FL, thus engaging in the discussion of issues traditionally debated in second language acquisition (SLA) (Ellis 1994, Gass & Selinker 2008, Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991). In so doing, they reflexively positioned themselves as "SLA learners" or learners of the foreign language teaching course they wrote their texts for (FLT learners), whilst interactively positioning their audience as individuals who share such knowledge, namely, their teacher and classmates, or any other SLA/FLT teacher and students. In this way, learners developed a sense of community (Darvin & Norton 2014, Davies & Harré 1990, Lam 2000, Thorne & Black 2011), which personal recounts have proved suitable for (Brisk 2015). The following example illustrates these findings:

Example (1)

I started learning my second language when I was three years-old in the German school of Valencia.

I have grown up hearing German during a big and important part of the day

five days a week; and since all of the teachers were native speakers

there was no other option for us children to try and speak German if we wanted to communicate.

In this example, the student equates communication in German with speaking, and ascribes this ability to her native speaker (NS) teachers. She also argues that extended exposure to German and reception of input in this language were the most suitable conditions to learn it in her school days (Krashen 1982, Swain 1993). However, she had conform to the position of "German speaker" as part of her identity ("there was no other option for us children to try and speak German if we wanted to communicate"), and had to struggle to increase her cultural and linguistic capital in this language. Her initial resistance to embrace this position, her final adoption of it, and her struggle to learn German illustrate her awareness of the unequal power relations that permeate language learning and education, her contribution to their reproduction (Davies & Harré 1990, Norton 1995), and her attempts at levelling the power imbalance deriving from these (Darvin & Norton 2014, 2015, Norton, 1995, 2010, Norton & Toohey, 2002, 2011, Menard-Warwick 2007). Although she temporarily rejected being positioned as a "German speaker", she claims this position for herself, unveiling a self-image of someone who has become bilingual as a result (Cummins et al. 2015).

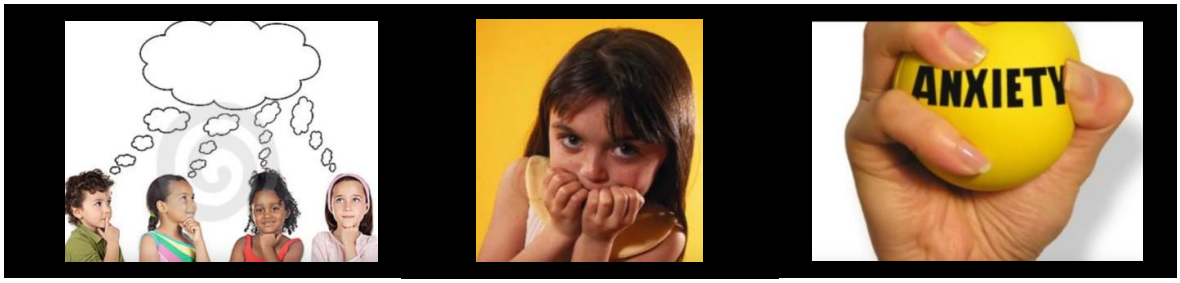
Learners' equation of communication in L2/FL with oral proficiency, and an advantageous, distinctive and special ability, which amounts to being "native" and evokes the most appropriate and natural way of learning a language, unveils a) a view of face-to-face ordinary conversation as the primary type of discourse in any language (cf. e.g. Lakoff 1989), b) an understanding of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), namely, "conversational fluency in a language" (Cummins 2008: 2), as the elementary abilities any language learner should master (Cummins 1983), and c) a standardised conceptualisation of L2/FL learning, whereby the "native speaker" is the "norm" to follow, linguistic accuracy is accentuated over meaning-making, and formal versus functional aspects of the language are foregrounded (cf. Cummins 2006, Cummins 2005a, 2005b). These considerations evince students' beliefs about, and prejudices against, different types of communication with regard to EFL learning. Teachers may rely on this information for the design and implementation of pedagogical practices that raise students' awareness of the capacity of other forms of communication (e.g. writing, digital communication) for developing their digital, multilingual, and multiliterate abilities in the target language.

Students associated oral proficiency in L2/FL with academic success and literacy development (Manyak 2004), and hence identities of competence they related to the positions of "English learner in an immersion context", "English learner with native-like oral proficiency", "family bilingual", "intercultural speaker", "English teacher in Primary Education", "active learner" and "motivated learner" besides "native speaker". Nevertheless, they not always considered the position of "native speaker" an identity of competence when combined with that of "teacher". Apart from oral proficiency, a dynamic and communicative type of language instruction was required for an NS teacher to qualify as competent.

In spite of mainly depicting face-to-face interaction in L2/FL positively, students occasionally related this form of communication to frustration and anxiety by discursively constructing and identifying with the position of "anxious learner". They attributed this position with test anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al. 1986), and built it as a silencing identity that did not allow them to express themselves freely or have a "voice" in English. Learners' use of images of individuals conveying frustration and/or requesting help, conceptual images emphasising the word "anxious" or "anxiety" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and other images denoting negative meanings (e.g. a hand with the thumb down) indexed this position along with linguistic elements such as: negative emotion verbs ("disconnect", "dislike") (cf. Oskoz & Elola 2016); thought verbs related to cognitive processes of others about self ("think", "judge") (see Brisk 2015); negative noun-phrases on self-perception of own worth ("low self-esteem", "low self-confidence"); intensifiers ("higher") (cf. Darvin 2016, Jones & Hafner 2012, Page 2012); and negative qualifiers applied to self ("stupid").

The learner in Extract (2) draws on some of these semiotic and linguistic resources to refer to speaking in front of the class as an anxiety-provoking situation, which she compares with the anxiety-free context of small group interaction.

Example (2)



That is very important because with a little group of people I can speak without problem,

but when I have to speak to the whole class, I am feeling a bit anxious, because I think everybody is judging me, and I am aware that

I have to reduce that anxiety if I want to improve my skills.

Students linked the subject position of "anxious learner" to that of "unmotivated learner", and categorised both primarily within the position of "English learner in Secondary school", which also included the position of "passive learner". These school-based positions described types of learners unable to learn and use the target language efficiently mostly in ordinary conversation, hence silencing identities (cf. Norton 2010, Norton & Toohey 2011).

Students also associated these identities and positions with a "transmission pedagogy" (Cummins 2006: 57), namely, a pedagogy that, inter alia, denies the language learner a) access to real language use by emphasising a formal versus a functional approach (Lam 2000), b) the possibility of making sense of their learning process, and c) the opportunity to get to know other languages and cultures. Learners mainly referred to this type of pedagogy in their Secondary school episodes with this educational stage emerging as a coercive institutional context that reproduces linguistic and social inequalities (Bordieu & Passeron 1990). Students discursively built such silencing identities and positions by means of stereotypical pictures of English textbooks, grammar exercises, disinterested and stressed pupils, and prisoners in jail. The most frequent linguistic resources underlying all these school-based positions were grammatical terms and expressions (e.g. "fill in the gaps exercises", "drills", "textbook"), core vocabulary related to a summative type of evaluation (e.g. "exams", "tests"), negative emotion verbs and nouns ("dislike"), and negative qualifiers ("boring", "tedious") (see Cummins 2006, Cummins 2005a, 2005b, Lam 2000). In this

way, learners also indicated their detachment from, and rejection of, these identities and positions. Example (3) illustrates these findings:

Example (3)

In addition, all lessons including the English one were boring, repetitive and decontextualised. So I feel very lost when I tried to memorised lots of concepts and ideas that

made no sense for me. Furthermore, as I am a dependent-field and intuitive learner, this problem affected my grades as my level of motivation continued to decrease quickly. Suddenly,

I realised I didn't want to study with the only specific goal of passing a test. This situation contributed to increase my level of anxiety because I want to succeed, but at the same time, I was having a very strong feeling of

dislike about the way high school subjects were structured. It was in this period that my motivation reached a minimum as I decided to leave English lessons out of having failed the FCE exam.

The student here depicts his position of English learner in Secondary Education as a silencing identity that derives from discouraging instructional practices, and an educational context organised around exams and grades. Such a context forced him to conform to this identity at the time, leading to poor learning outcomes (cf. Davies & Harré 1990, Norton 1995, Norton & Toohey 2011). In order to offer his description, the learner employs some of the aforementioned semiotic and linguistic resources, e.g. a stereotypical image of a stressed student, Wile E. Coyote asking for help, and a prisoner in jail coupled with summative evaluation terms ("exam", "test"), negative emotion verbs and nouns ("felt lost", "dislike") and negative qualifiers ("boring", "repetitive").

Transition identities are based on the idea that learners invest in their language learning to increase their linguistic and material resources in L2/FL (Norton 1995, 2010, Norton & Toohey, 2002, 2011). Therefore, they are a bridge to real or imagined identities of competence. In this study, these identities were observed to include subject positions that mainly referred to types of English learners in the school setting (English learner in Primary school, English learner in extracurricular activities); English learners in instructional contexts outside school (English learner in private lessons, English learner at a language school); autonomous learners who attempt to learn from audiovisual materials in the FL (music, films and TV series) (consumer of audiovisual materials in English), that is, from sources of input different from the teacher. In sum, transition identities and positions were not restricted to the school context as opposed to silencing identities, and further underscored learners' identities as "choosing subjects" (Davies & Harré 1990).

The semiotic resources underlying these identities range from real pictures of students' school centres, language schools, teachers and classmates, to images or video and music excerpts of their favourite singers, bands, TV series and films. Learners' use of these real images signals their personal involvement in the narrative construction of such identities (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006), frequently so as to render them positively. Similarly, the linguistic elements and structures students employed to enact them in and through discourse, e.g. positive state and action verbs ("understand", "improved", "encouraged"), modal verbs indicating ability ("could"), marked use of terms related to the process of learning and the learner's engagement in such a process ("learning", "interest", "engaged"), and upgraders ("a lot", "quite well", "really") (Darvin 2016, Jones & Hafner 2012, Page 2012), highlight their positive attitude and, in some cases, even their pride in these ways of being a learner:

Example (4)

On the other hand around that time I listened to English music very often, since my sister played it constantly at home. My favourite song made me enthusiastic about its meaning and about learning the language. This song

is “Wind of change” (song starts playing).

At the beginning I couldn’t understand the lyrics, but later I started to understand some words. Through music I realised that learning English was useful, so I developed an interest to learn it.

In this example, the student discursively builds and takes the position of “consumer of audiovisual materials in English”, in particular, “consumer of English music”, through certain semiotic and linguistic resources that enable her to depict herself as an autonomous learner she is proud of, since she was able to understand the lyrics of her favourite English song.

The competence, silencing and transition identities and positions discussed above along with the semiotic and linguistic resources that instantiate them illustrate both the learners’ reflexive and interactive positioning in their DITs. Learners rejected and claimed some of these positions and identities for themselves in order to empower themselves as EFL learners. Concerning silencing categories, students subverted the powerlessness ascribed to these (Darvin & Norton 2014) by a) discursively showing and narrating the struggle they experienced to increase their linguistic and cultural capital in the target language (see Example 1 above) (Menard-Warwick 2007), and b) exhibiting mastery of specific theoretical concepts and issues mostly through the use of specialised jargon (this applied especially to the position of “SLA/FL learner”). In both cases, students saw themselves as “capable of higher order thinking and intellectual accomplishment” (Cummins et al. 2015: 577), and were commonly proud of their learning efforts and knowledge (Fong et al. 2016, Chen 2013).

However, it was mainly through identities of competence and their positions that students bid for power in their texts. More specifically, as the macro stereotypical position of “native speaker”, albeit desirable, was conceived as unreachable, learners

invoked the position of "intercultural speaker", which they commonly specified in the positions of "Erasmus student", "exchange student" and "international student", and defined as a mediator between languages and cultures, and a citizen of the world. This subject position is in line with criticism raised against the figure of the NS as the model for appropriate language use in and outside the field of language education (e.g. Prodromou 1992, House 2008). By endorsing the position of "intercultural speaker", learners thus partly rejected this model, accepting instead a diverse English-speaking world (Crystal 2003) populated by millions of English language users with different linguistic and socio-cultural norms, all of them equally valid as a baseline for comparison with their learner language (Ellis 1994, García-Pastor 2010).

Lastly, students also empowered themselves in their DITs by foregrounding their position as authors/writers, which emphasises the self as the author aspect of their discoursal selves (Ivanič 1998). In so doing, they were interactively positioning the viewer as a reader/receiver, thus casting the latter as a powerless agent (Darvin & Norton 2014). Learners claimed greater authorial agency mostly through the use of their own voices to narrate their stories and other resources such as visually ascribing a print-based format to their personal recounts (e.g. "Chapter 1: Age", "High school", etc.) and metalinguistic comments that further stressed their position as "experts", and that of viewers as "novices" (e.g. "I know who I am, what I like, and what I'm good at"). In this way, learners not only stressed their authorial identity, but also revealed an understanding of print-based literacy as authoritative in comparison with other forms of literacy. These ideologies should be deconstructed and discussed in L2/FL teacher education courses and EFL classrooms to raise students' awareness of their presence, and promote views of literacy in the target language more attuned with our digitally mediated world, in which written and spoken modes of communication merge (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006) and literacy practices go beyond the written word (Darvin 2016).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored university students' identity construction as EFL learners in DITs produced in the context of a specific subject within the English Teacher in Primary Education degree. This paper contends that an understanding of how learners

build their identities in and through digitally mediated literacy practices and genres like identity texts can provide insightful information for educators to design materials and implement pedagogical practices that embrace students' multiple reflexive positionings, promote identity positions which offer the greatest opportunity for social participation and interaction in L2/FL, and combat positions that silence their voices.

Upon analysis, learners mainly crafted their identities as autobiographical selves, which contributed to shape their texts partly as memoirs, and mostly as personal recounts or narratives. However, they also discursively built their identities through certain subject positions that evinced the multiple, fragmented, non-unitary, fluid and contradictory nature of their identities. Students not only positioned themselves in and through their texts (reflexive positioning), but also positioned their viewers (interactive positioning) primarily to generate a sense of community. Learners depicted the macro stereotypical positions of "learner" and "native-speaker" as opposites in a dialectical dyad, and that of "intercultural speaker" as a counterpoint to these two. They ascribed the position of the "native speaker" and "intercultural speaker" the ability to use the target language efficiently in oral communication and a natural way of learning, whilst defining the position of "learner" mainly by the absence of these features. Therefore, they associated the former with identities of competence, and some subject positions defining the latter with silencing identities and transition identities leading to imagined or real identities they desire.

In order to build these identities and positions in their DITs, students resorted to a series of semiotic and linguistic resources, which contributed to the construction of their identities as a site of struggle, helped them undermine powerless ways of being a learner, and empowered them as EFL learners. The position of "intercultural speaker" was relevant in this regard, since students appropriated this position as a way to subvert the lack of power typically ascribed to being a learner and to overcome the unreality of always qualifying as a native speaker. These findings further attest to the potential of identity texts for identity affirmation. In sum, this study has attempted to highlight the multiplicity and complexity of learners' subject positions and identities as language learners, and acknowledge the ways in which language, identity, agency and power are inextricably intertwined in digitally mediated literacy practices.

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iDub – The potential of intralingual dubbing in foreign language learning: How to assess the task

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ABSTRACT

Research on the use of active dubbing activities in foreign language learning is gaining an increasing amount of attention. The most obvious skill to be enhanced in this context is oral production and a few authors have already mentioned the potential benefits of asking students to record their voices in a 'semi-professional' manner. The present project attempts to assess the potential of intralingual dubbing (English-English) to develop general oral production skills in adult university students of English B2 level in an online learning environment, and to provide general guidelines of dubbing task assessment for practitioners. To this end, a group of undergraduate pre-intermediate students worked on ten sequenced activities using short videos taken from an American sitcom over a period of two months. The research study included language assessment tests, questionnaires and observation as the basic data gathering tools to make the results as reliable and thorough as possible for this type of educational setting. The conclusions provide a good starting point for the establishment of basic guidelines that may help teachers implement dubbing tasks in the language class.

Keywords*: Audiovisual translation, dubbing, language learning, oral skills, online tasks, assessment rubric*

I. INTRODUCTION

The *iDub – Intralingual Dubbing to Improve Oral Skills* project arose from the need to evaluate the potential didactic efficiency of dubbing as an active task in distance foreign language (henceforth, L2) environments as well as from the lack of assessment materials in this learning context. Such a point of departure led the research team involved in this teacher innovation network sponsored by the UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) to set up a two-month experience where students would have to record their voices so as to dub ten short clips.

Although some previous studies had already assessed (to a greater or lesser extent, as the theoretical framework will present) the role of dubbing as a didactic resource in L2 education, none had yet focused on distance learning students working in online environments. Besides, since the literature dealing with this area of study is still scarce,

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no author has (to date) attempted to suggest a specific assessment procedure that can accompany such a task and so motivate practitioners to carry out this activity on a more frequent basis.

When students synchronise their recorded voices to a video fragment, they can work in two different directions according to the guidelines provided by the teacher: L1-L2 or L2-L2 (since L1-L1 would not imply any L2 learning whatsoever and L2-L1 is a very unlikely combination for L2 learning). Since most existing studies have focused on the L1-L2 combination, iDub has attempted to make a contribution to assess the power of intralingual dubbing (L2-L2) as a task. Whatever the combination, the task is the same: students need to substitute the actors' voices trying to get as close as possible to a real dubbing process, adapting their words and sentences to the characters' mouth movements. This type of didactic approach to the use of authentic video forces students to work on listening comprehension first (to make out the script if the teacher does not provide them with it), then on writing production (at least in terms of spelling, since they copy the original down and do not produce new text) when they have to write the script that they will use to record their voices, and finally on oral production. Oral production is enhanced here in terms of pronunciation, naturalness of speech, speed and fluency. Hence, dubbing constitutes a very comprehensive task that can produce a series of interesting L2 learning benefits.

The main aims of this paper are to provide an introduction to the field of dubbing as an active task in L2 environments, to describe a research experience (iDub) where dubbing was used in an online distance learning context, to analyse the main conclusions derived from it and to provide general guidelines that can help practitioners in the assessment of this type of didactic task.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The field of translation studies and the increasingly specialised subject of audiovisual translation (AVT) have attempted to tackle dubbing from multiple perspectives, which range from the interdisciplinary to the sociocultural, critical and linguistic. Dubbing, taken as a modality of translation, involves the transference of meaning from one language to another and, given the particularities of this audiovisual technique, the aural

and visual channels interact with one another bringing forward additional constraints, such as synchrony between the text and the image and the need for cohesion and coherence at both the linguistic and the visual levels. In fact, one of the aims of dubbing is to make viewers believe that what they are actually being shown is not only realistic, but also familiar to them (Díaz Cintas and Orero 2010).

Leaving aside classical references which inquired into the cinematographic qualities of revoicing techniques and those in which aesthetics and philosophical disquisitions are the main focus of attention, eight separate categories of classification could be drawn from the diverse pool of resources available: (a) dubbing as a subdiscipline within AVT; (b) compendia of particular examples or corpus-based descriptive studies; (c) the nature of dubbese, understood as the language of dubbing, separate from both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL); (d) considerations on voice and vocal qualities applied to dubbing either as a theoretical or as a practical endeavour; (e) dubbing as a cultural phenomenon from a contemporary perspective; (f) orality and its relationship with dubbese; (g) dubbing as a tool to build bridges between the humanities and the exact sciences and, finally, central to this paper; (h) the potential pedagogical applications of dubbing in language learning. All of these categories have been influential when it comes to designing an assessment rubric that could respond to the needs of diverse students in as wide a variety of learning contexts and environments as possible.

a) Dubbing and AVT

Contemporary commentators tend to believe that the feud between the proponents of dubbing and subtitling as ideal solutions to the AVT conundrum is fruitless and should instead be confronted from the point of view of compatibility rather than competitiveness and pre-eminence (Díaz Cintas 1999). In their seminal research synthesis, Koolstra et al. (2002) conclude that, in the light of the experimental data gathered via longitudinal studies in several European countries, it would be adventurous to state that either of the modalities under study – subtitling and dubbing – could be favoured or disfavoured according to their potential benefits or drawbacks. This would help explain why, in spite of local shifts and minor changes in the European audiovisual panorama, subtitling, dubbing and voice-over continue to coexist, to shape a global

communications and entertainment industry, as well as to open new pathways for academic debate, and to generate new resources for translators and translator trainers (Bartrina and Espasa 2005, Chaume 2013, Siegel et al. 2013).

b) Descriptive studies

Humour, taboo, censorship, the behaviour of speech communities and national accounts of dubbing practices from the origins of cinema up to the present age abound in those countries where audiovisual and multimedia translation have recently become the focus of academic attention, but also in mainstream publications where AVT and dubbing have managed to find a niche audience. Perhaps at the cost of originality and the development of a more solidly consolidated theoretical framework, compendia of examples and corpus-based audiovisual research have emerged and continue to emerge from dissertations, theses and doctoral digests of unpublished works, as well as from specialised journals and publications (see Audissino 2012, De Bonis 2014, García Luque 2005, González Iglesias and Toda 2011, Jiménez Carra 2009, Llamas Gutiérrez 2010, Martí Ferriol 2007, Matamala 2010, Zabalbeascoa 2012, and Zanotti 2016 for relevant samples).

c) The nature of dubbese

Dolç and Santamaria's (1998) research could be seen as a pioneering study in which the effects of linguistic policy and final user expectations are identified as principal contributors to the consolidation and fossilisation of a syntax, a lexicon and a grammar that is neither here nor there – neither TL nor SL proper – in Catalan dubbing. Later authors have followed their lead with different language combinations and pay heed to additional constraints such as viewer preferences (Romero Fresco 2006, 2012), cultural specificities (Bonsignori 2015, Naranjo Sánchez 2015, Pavesi 2009, Ranzato 2012) or televisual traditions (Baños 2013). In terms of assessment and evaluation, given that the nature of dubbese is still difficult to pinpoint and reception studies remain scarce, perhaps a more encompassing view of the matter at hand would make it possible to dissolve a few of its incongruities. One such case would be the question of the so-called artificiality of dubbese, which seems to go unnoticed once audiences are exposed to recognisable audiovisual genres and formats. Even if we should expect an exclusively linguistic approach to dubbese to offer an incomplete view of both production and

reception of dubbed products, as far as characterisation and credibility (suspension of disbelief) are concerned, dubbese as an in-between or perhaps even an L3 (Zabalbeascoa 2012) should receive due consideration.

d) Voice and vocal qualities

Together with computing, accessibility and ergonomics, as will be discussed below, the phonetic-phonological, psychological and anatomical features related to the dubbing process have attracted some scholarly attention. Brumme (2012) calls the relation that is established between characters, bodies and voice 'fictitious voice' and 'feigned orality'. These three separate but complementary dimensions are mentioned by various authors, such as Mera (1999) and Whittaker (2012), in their personal evaluations of dubbing as a sensory experience that may transcend the sum of its procedural parts. By leaving an indelible mark on the spectator, these bodies with no voice of their own and these extradiegetic voices, which are made to fit a stranger's body, ultimately support the intended effect of ensuring viewer immersion into the fictional product that is shown under a given set of conditions.

e) Dubbing and culture

As stated earlier, dubbing, understood as an AVT modality, lends itself well to interdisciplinary approaches by means of which critical methodologies outside the field of linguistics are capable of finding new inroads, thus favouring ideological and terminological reconsiderations. Recent exponents of this trend would be Lashley's (2012) reading of lip-dubbing in social networks and virtual video broadcasting platforms taken as highly complex cultural reappropriation phenomena whereby 'produsers' (i.e. producers who also act as users, such as YouTube channel managers) intermix language, traditions, customs and worldviews to create derivative works and interact with other peers. Regardless of the instability of Lashley's proposals, which are heavily reliant on discursive practices and a cultural materialist view of social exchanges, fan phenomena should be incorporated into the evaluation and assessment phases of a didactic project based on dubbing. The shift from amateurship to professionalism in self-learning environments bears relevant similarities to self-regulated task-based learning supplemented with the instructor's guidance.

f) Orality and dubbese

Over the course of this bibliographical review we have come across appreciations of dubbing as 'natural' or 'unnatural', 'aesthetic' or 'anti-aesthetic', 'real' or 'fictional'. Indeed, the issue of orality in dubbed productions has created significant controversy, with observations which, although seemingly in the tradition of splitting hairs, contribute to the relocation of essential terminological elements. In this regard, Bandia (2011: online) points out that:

> […] The quest for a global reach has given rise to multiple ways of enscribing oral narratives and performances into written form through pseudotranslation or translation-related practices such as transcription, entextualisation, transformation, transcreation, intercultural writing and translation proper.

Therefore, scriptwriting and the illusion of orality, prefabricated as it may be, is yet another contributing factor in the didactic approach to dubbing: intralingual (SL-SL), interlingual (SL-TL) and creative (SL-SL* and SL-TL*) versions of the definitive audio track, on whose paralinguistic elements – such as music and sound effects – practitioners may also intervene by taking on an editorial role, provide abundant opportunities to compare, contrast and eventually perfect either individual or group productions.

g) Building bridges

The application of optimisation principles to language studies has found a productive outlet in computational and corpus linguistics, but this interest has also reached the dubbing process and the possibility of achieving a far more streamlined system of production. Brisaboa et al. (2015) have created an algorithm to determine the optimal distribution of resources (actors, directors, recording studio rooms and sound technicians) to complete as much dubbing work as possible in Galician studios by investing the least amount of money. Although still in the pilot phase, the results of a preliminary implementation of the model have increased efficiency under a given set of conditions. Matousek and Vit (2012) have designed a computer program capable of readjusting automatic dubbing, based on text-to-speech technologies, using subtitle positions as a cue. This software would help make audiovisual products more accessible

to blind or partially-sighted audiences. Despite their complexity, these computer-based models can attest that it would be feasible to train learners' competences in an integrated manner (linguistic, technological, cultural, learning to learn, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, among others) focusing on an AVT modality as apparently simple as dubbing.

h) Pedagogical applications

Several studies have considered the potential pedagogical applications of dubbing in language learning, carrying out short-term experiments with a relatively low number of subjects and different conditions of replicability. Barbe (1996), for instance, advocated the introduction of the dubbing modality of AVT as a useful tool for translator training despite the technical difficulties it might present. Kumai (1996: online), on the other hand, perceived that dubbing could contribute to the development of linguistic and paralinguistic skills in the L2 (especially pronunciation, intonation, awareness of rhythm, fluency, speed and the emulation of body language as utilised by native speakers) even more than tasks centred on oral interpretation, as "[…] the hard work of analysis has been done by the movie actors and the director, so the students can use them as models".

In Burston (2005), technical difficulties were overcome by encouraging an appropriate division of the task into stages: "video selection, scene cropping and muting, initial class presentation of the target video, group listening comprehension (or scenario creation) activities, individual practice, group rehearsal and, finally, soundtrack dubbing" (79). The author acknowledges that these tasks respond to the principle of being action-oriented, communicative and need not focus solely on oral production, as they involve writing and reading as well. Navarrete (2013) concurs with Burston's view of task design, methodological clarity, active student participation and engagement as fundamental elements geared towards the introduction of AVT-based class modules. Both authors highlight that the selection of very few clips adequate to the participants' level may be made compatible with set materials already in use in face-to-face educational contexts, where the communicative approach is favoured and task-based or project-based learning inform the official curriculum. In fact, Wagener (2006) reports that the existence of institutional learning agreements between the teaching staff and the

students enrolled in formal language learning courses might prove beneficial not exclusively in organisational terms, but also regarding motivational factors. The findings presented in Talaván et al. (2014, 2015) have tried to attest said advantages and will be further analysed in subsequent reviews to outline possible reformulations within the structure of language study programmes in online distance education environments.

As for the available results in didactic research and dubbing, Danan's (2010) is perhaps the experiment least possible to replicate, given that it was put in practice with military personnel enrolled in highly intensive language learning courses (up to 800 class hours in a single year) and the target languages were Dari, Pashto and Farsi. Nevertheless, the data extracted from supervisor evaluations and qualitative questionnaires revealed that dubbing may indeed be considered as an appropriate tool for active language learning with the following caveats: all students should complete all the steps set in the task (from transcript writing to voice recording), instead of dividing the task into smaller subtasks and assigning a specialised role to each participant in the group, and video selection should take into account clip length restrictions as well as student preferences from the outset.

He and Wasuntarasophit (2015) attempted a similar experiment to Danan's with 34 Chinese female student learners of English. The task consisted in dubbing a complete episode of *Friends* in 4 weeks. Students were advised to devote at least one hour a day for the duration of the project and the objective was to improve comprehensibility, fluency and accentedness while transferring audiovisual content from Chinese into English. Two different pre-tests and post-tests, similar to semi-structured interviews, were employed as a measure of the student's progress. In terms of pronunciation, the qualitative data indicate that the groups not only became aware of their production errors, but were also incentivised by the task design to continue practising on their own. The authors recognise that clip selection could have responded better to the students' individual needs and that motivation should have been considered as a variable to be more closely controlled.

Also in the Chinese primary and secondary school setting, Wakefield (2014) believes that dubbing is comparable if not superior in some respects to textual dramatisation in terms of language learning applicability. Even though task design seems to indicate that

the author has very young learners in mind, he suggests – almost as an afterthought – that creative dubbings might also be beneficial. In other words, he was proposing that students creating their own version of the script should be added to the modality as a language-learning activity which requires the activation of higher-order thinking skills (Krathwohl 2002).

In university contexts, Chiu's (2012) experiment proved inconclusive after using dubbing as a supplementary tool to teach pronunciation (intonation and effusiveness) to Chinese students. After completing a single task, which consisted in dubbing a 10-minute clip live in front of the whole class (the voices were not recorded but read out loud in front of a projecting screen with the video muted), the author observes that "[…] the nature of the focus-on-form tasks embedded in synchronous film dubbing is not entirely in accordance with the principles of communicative language teaching because learners produce utterances through internalisation" (E26). This type of experimental design, therefore, would require several adaptations prior to implementing a second iteration: the clips should last between one and two minutes, the topics should be student-selected and actual recordings ought to take place for the task to be classified as dubbing.

Finally, it is interesting to note how recent studies, such as Jüngst (2013) and Ghia and Pavesi (2016), insist on the potential of audiovisual translation and, more particularly, dubbing as a task which may be employed to train several language skills at once (production, reception, interaction and mediation), thereby inviting other scholars to concentrate their research efforts on this modality to unveil its true potential in second language acquisition.

III. THE iDUB PROJECT

The iDub project arose as a continuation of iCap, a teacher innovation network carried out a year before so as to assess the potential benefits of intralingual captioning to improve written production and vocabulary skills. Within iCap, the research team created ten ClipFlair activities[i] using ten videos taken from the American sitcom How I Met Your Mother (Bays and Thomas 2005–2014) and had students working on their intralingual subtitling for two months, with very positive feedback and learning

outcomes, especially in terms of writing skills enhancement (Talaván et al. 2016). Thus, the idea behind iDub rested upon replicating these ten activities but changing the instructions, so that students were asked to record their voices in a dubbing-like manner, as will be explained in the description of the tasks below, instead of creating subtitles. The participants differed, since they came from various courses and years, but they were all students of the same degree in English Studies at the UNED. The iDub project took place from February to June 2014 and students were involved in the learning tasks from mid-March to mid-May. The main research goals were to analyse the level of oral production skills improvement that students could achieve, as well as to assess their degree of motivation working with dubbing as an active didactic task and to analyse the potential usefulness of the creation of an ad-hoc rubric to assess the students' dubbing productions. In order to reach the corresponding conclusions, the research design made use of language assessment tests, questionnaires and observation. By triangulating data gathering tools, the research team attempted to provide reliable results that could be consistent enough to offer possibilities of replication and partial generalisation of the conclusions derived therein.

III.1. Participants

iDub was presented as an extracurricular activity for first-year undergraduates enrolled in the subject Inglés Instrumental II, which runs through the second semester of the degree in English Studies at the UNED. Students were offered the opportunity to participate in a two-month experience where they could promote their oral skills and earn an extra mark in their final course grade. 25 students volunteered for the task, out of which only 15 worked on the activities and 10 completed all the final tests and questionnaires. It must be noted that the dropout rate in distance learning education is usually high (Lassibille and Navarro Gómez 2008, MEC 2016) and that the activity was quite challenging and demanded many hours of work on the part of the participants involved (two or three hours per task on average plus forum interventions).

The subjects' ages ranged from 18 to 52 (with an average of 34) and all the students who completed the project were native speakers of Spanish. Their level of proficiency in English (according to their own perception) ranged from intermediate to advanced

with almost half of the participants considering their level as upper-intermediate, which is understandable since they were supposed to be taking a course to consolidate B2 level (CEFRL, Council of Europe 2001) at the time, and because at least 50% had also lived in an English-speaking country for half a year or longer. However, their proficiency level in terms of skills was irregular, as shown in Figure 1.

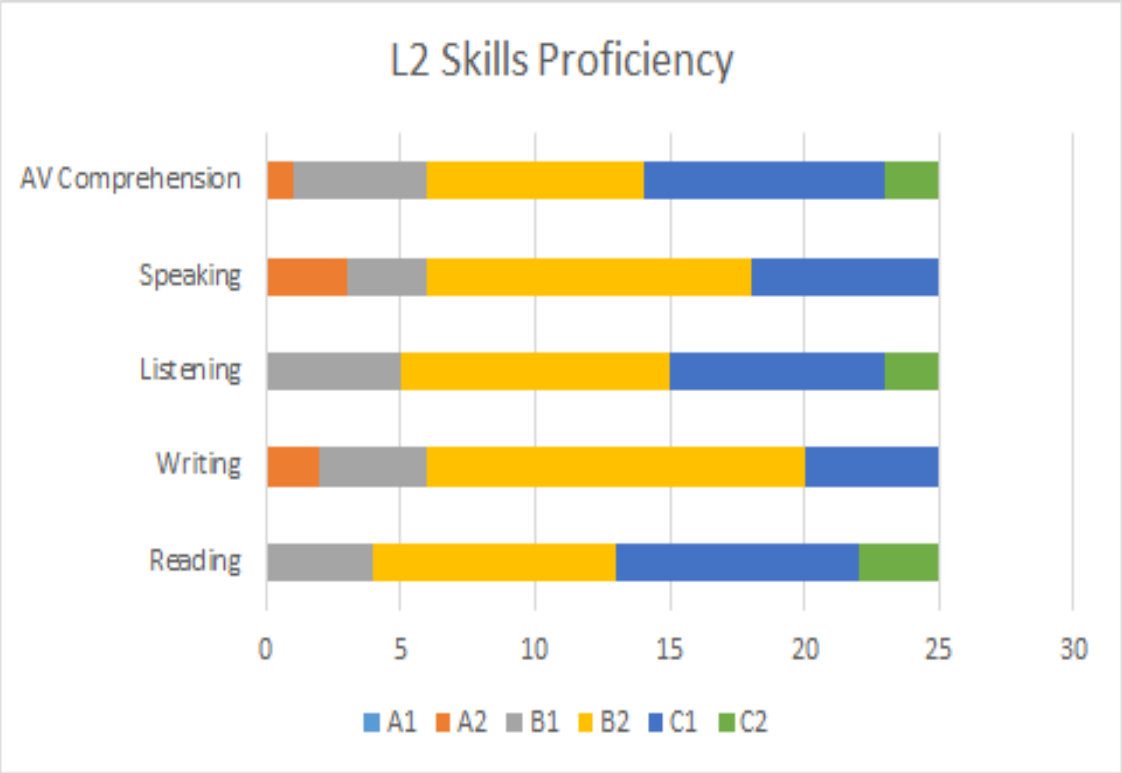

Figure 1. Participants' self-perception of their L2 level of departure.

Hence, as expected, most participants considered themselves more proficient in reception than in production skills and speaking was one of the skills at which they felt less competent.

Finally, it should be noted that all subjects were familiar with the use of audiovisual materials in the language class and almost 80% made frequent use of them (either in their original version or with subtitles) outside the class. All but one (who claimed to be a fandubber, that is to say, a person who dubs online videos voluntarily and because they are usually fans of the corresponding movie or series) had no previous experience in the active use of dubbing tasks and their expectations when they got involved in the

project were centred mainly on the improvement of oral skills: listening and, more intensively, speaking.

III.2. Resources: The clips, the tests and the questionnaires

As stated above, the clips were taken from a previous research project (iCap), where they had been pre-selected according to a series of relevant criteria (Talaván 2013): they were all extracted from the same season (season 9, the last one) of *How I Met Your Mother* and they were short (1–2 minutes long), interesting, humorous, self-contained, included a specific communicative function, and presented a maximum of three characters each (most of them only two). The idea behind this selection was to allow students to understand the clip (even if they did not know the show at all) and make the tasks as motivating as possible to facilitate the recording process, where each student had to do all the voices in every single video.

In order to test the level of proficiency in oral production with which participants started and check their improvement after two months working on the dubbing tasks, two types of speaking test were designed: one focused on pronunciation, the other on fluency. The former instructed subjects to record themselves reading a specific script, trying to sound as natural as possible emulating the original, which was taken from a humorous video (a permanent link to the video was provided to present students with a reference model). The remaining tests, which focused on assessing fluency, included detailed instructions that the students should follow to record themselves for 2–3 minutes performing a specific task with no script involved.

As far as the pre- and the post-questionnaires are concerned, the former was designed to gather information that would describe the sample and provide a clear point of departure to help analyse the results (pre-questionnaire: https://goo.gl/T5j0gz). The latter, on the other hand, was aimed at gathering relevant feedback on the potential didactic benefits of this experience, as well as to complement the data derived from the language assessment tests and observation (post-questionnaire: https://goo.gl/6JA2QK).

III.3. Procedures: The tasks

The students who volunteered for iDub were registered as members of an online community based on the UNED virtual campus (called aLF). The virtual space devoted to the project contained all the instructions participants were to follow, the tasks themselves, and forums where they could receive the teachers' assistance at any time.

The dubbing tasks, which were uploaded to the ClipFlair platform (http://www.clipflair.net/), all contained similar instructions and had the first two interventions recorded as a sample to help students understand the activity better. Table 1 provides the list of activities, their corresponding links and a reproduction of the general instructions provided.

Table 1. ClipFlair dubbing activities and instructions.

ClipFlair activities	**General instructions for dubbing**
1- Check-in: https://goo.gl/dRM2wO 2- Advice: https://goo.gl/lH3kp8 3- Phone call - job offer: https://goo.gl/8hZFVb 4- Narrating 1: https://goo.gl/VnQVUm 5- Announcements: https://goo.gl/DZTfaY 6- Complaining: https://goo.gl/pxXgio 7- Requests 1: https://goo.gl/AK7nHH 8- Narrating 2: https://goo.gl/dYJqv4 9- Justifying: https://goo.gl/9iYVRB 10- Requests 2: https://goo.gl/ZntLqH	Dub this scene as naturally as possible (do the voices for the different characters if you can). To dub: – Create 'captions' to record the voices, one caption per intervention (just as you can see in the first four examples). You can write the script for the captions in the 'script box'. Check this video (from minute 1.46) to see how you can create 'captions': http://vimeo.com/70557366 – Once you have the 'caption' created, you can click on the red button and record your voice for every part (you can erase the first two sample recordings by clicking on the [rec] button). – When you finish, you can save all the audio segments as a single audio file (to merge it with the video elsewhere) by clicking on the [folder] button at the top right of the 'revoicing' box. NOTES: – When you dub, try to use a natural pronunciation in English (mimicking works very well). – Try to be as fluent as possible in your interventions. – Exaggerate difficult English sounds so that they 'sound' like English (it's fun!). _____ For Your Information • Do not forget to save your work by clicking the [save] button at the bottom of the activity window. • Feel free to play around, move components by dragging their title bar, close components, etc. If you get lost, refresh your browser (F5) or close and open it again. • For more information, have a look at our website http://clipflair.net • Need help? Go to our forum at http://social.clipflair.net and ask.

As can be derived from the table, all tasks were similar in structure (with different videos and language content) and the main goal was for students to record their voices as naturally as possible trying to respect synchrony as far as they could. Participants were asked to complete the ten activities in the course of the two-month period they devoted to the project and to share their activities with their fellow students in the forums right after completing each of them. In this way, they were able to start a peer-to-peer review process in which their teachers also intervened to provide the necessary feedback.

Once the two-month period was over, a final video conference was held, where students provided feedback on the project and exchanged views on the experience as a whole. Moreover, in a final stage, the students' dubbing tasks were assessed following the specific rubric designed for this project.

III.4. The assessment of the dubbing tasks: A proposal

From the previous overview of dubbing as an AVT modality, as an accessibility technique and as a tool for active language learning, it may be advanced that the potential didactic applications of its integration in formal learning has undoubtedly been hinted at, but by no means fully revealed yet. Sample populations are limited (always below 40 participants), task objectives are loosely delineated, the variables to be controlled are difficult to compute, the evaluation process is influenced by whether or not the task is a course requirement or a voluntary endeavour, content and topic heterogeneous, the length of the projects is frequently short and the data gathered from questionnaires, pre-tests and post-tests (when data triangulation is advisable) are frequently not available in full.

Hence, the following assessment rubric was designed keeping in mind the fundamental purpose of quantifying task results. A total of five fields were established: (a) accuracy, (b) synchrony; (c) pronunciation; (d) intonation, and (e) performance/dramatisation. These are elements which should feature in the final product of an AVT dubbing assignment and, therefore, the rubric may be used to judge the quality of a student's production when working on dubbing tasks. The rubric does not assess any of the stages prior to the final result, as would be the case of group discussions and class debates,

script or transcript writing, revision, translation or, for that matter, technical expertise in manipulating sound and image using computer software. Those considerations should remain separate since they are dissimilar linguistic skills or entirely different competences, which, perhaps, the task was not designed to enhance and, in consequence, measure conveniently. Rather, these aspects should be part of the continuous assessment, during which feedback may be provided by the instructor or other students, depending on the approach taken to evaluate the way participants accomplish a series of goals. Table 2 reproduces this assessment proposal.

Table 2. Proposal for a dubbing assessment rubric.

Assessment	0 – 2.0
1. Accuracy	
2. Synchrony	
3. Pronunciation	
4. Intonation	
5. Performance/dramatisation	
Final mark	

1 – No evidence	0.0–2.5 points
2 – Some evidence	2.6–5.0 points
3 – Good	5.1–7.5 points
4 – Excellent	7.6–10 points

1. Accuracy: The voice recordings are grammatically correct.
2. Synchrony: There is synchrony between the duration of each voice recording and the duration of the original actor's corresponding utterances.
3. Pronunciation: The voice recordings are pronounced correctly.
4. Intonation: Intonation is natural.
5. Performance and dramatisation of the dialogues: Performance resembles the original utterances.

The polyvalent character of this rubric lies in the fact that the five fields of assessment do not distinguish between language combinations, direction of the translation (intralingual, interlingual, direct or reverse), whether the assignment involves mimicking the original version or creating a new one, or the participant's defining characteristics, thus offering a blueprint for the achievement of a clearer, more encompassing instrument of evaluation. Each of these fields, however, will require further validation through piloting and, to that end, a variety of different implementations which do offer the possibility of being replicated are urgently called

for. Those instances of live dubbing where the final product is ephemeral because of its predominantly performative qualities (as in He and Wasuntarasophit 2015) do not allow for intersubjective or inter-experimental comparisons. Ideally, participants' synchronised voices should be recorded, added to the visual track, edited, assessed and classified in accordance with some type of measurable result. In addition, at least one hour on average should be set aside for every minute of video to be dubbed as part of a project, which does not include the transcript and editing phases, also essential to the procedure although assessed differently. In consequence, Danan's (2010) and Chiu's (2012) use of complete episodes of television series is discouraged, both on didactic and copyright grounds, if dubbing tasks are also to be introduced successfully at other study levels, such as primary and secondary education.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this project were analysed from a triple perspective, using three different data gathering tools: language assessment tests, questionnaires and observation.

As far as oral proficiency enhancement is concerned, Table 3 shows the average marks and the standard deviation obtained after assessing the oral pre- and post-tests submitted by the students who completed the project.

Table 3. Language assessment tests data summary.

	Oral pre-test 1	**Oral post-test 1**	**Oral pre-test 2**	**Oral post-test 2**
Average mark	7.375	7.775	7.060	8.250
Standard deviation	0.866	1.387	1.630	1.724

It must be remembered that the first pre-test only asked subjects to record their voices reading a script, aiming at evaluating pronunciation, while the second one looked at fluency through a speaking task where they were asked to improvise following some

pre-established guidelines. The four tests were assessed by two observers following a specific oral production rubric. Table 3 shows how the standard deviation is quite low in all four cases, as expected, provided the group was supposed to have a rather similar level of departure. It is slightly higher in the two post-tests, and this can be interpreted as the sample becoming less homogenous after the variable of dubbing as a didactic task is applied, given that learners typically benefit from each resource differently, according to their level of commitment and, being online distance students, depending on the time they have available to do the tasks. As regards oral skills improvement, a slight change seems to occur in terms of pronunciation when the marks in pre-test and post-test 1 are compared. How relevant this fact may be in terms of the real enhancement derived from the dubbing tasks is to be contrasted with information obtained through the two remaining data gathering tools: questionnaires and observation. However, considering the activity was carried out over just two months, dubbing could potentially be identified as an aid in the students' pronunciation advancement. The difference between pre-test and post-test 2 shows how the amelioration in terms of fluency seems to be more noticeable. We could derive that this enhancement is brought about by the type of work involved in the dubbing tasks, where different skills (especially listening, writing and speaking) interact, and where students can learn about fluency through mimicking native speakers' speech characteristics. However, bearing in mind the small size of the sample and the subjectivity involved in measuring oral skills improvement through a rubric (even if two observers are involved), these data are contrasted and complemented below.

Observation was performed by various researchers involved in iDub and took place during the whole project, specifically through the students' participation in the forums, the assessment of the dubbing tasks using the rubric described in the previous section, and the feedback obtained from the final videoconference.

Apart from the messages of the general forum and an additional one created to address technical issues, students had one virtual space dedicated to each dubbing task. There, they were expected to share the links to their dubbed activities once finished and to provide peer-to-peer feedback. In relation to this, Table 4 compares two subjects' views on the didactic use of dubbing in L2 taken from the forums devoted to the first and the tenth activity to analyse their evolution.

Table 4. Students' forum interactions on their L2 improvement.

Forum task 1	Forum task 10
S2: I'm satisfied but I think I could **improve my pronunciation** a little bit more. Nevertheless, it's a bit difficult when you try to adapt the sentences to the timing. About **S4**'s clip, you've done a good work [sic], but for the next one, try to be more natural. **Imagine that you are in that situation. It's much more funny!** And try **to pay attention to some consonants** that I'm sure you can do better, for example "r" and "sh". Good work and cheer up!	**S2**: **S1** as usual has an **awesome accent**, she sounds **like a native**, on the other hand some of the dubs are cut at the end. **S4** is **so natural**. Besides, your dub is probably one of the **most accurate relating to the time**. And finally, **S3**, it is **breathtaking the way you improve your dub from the first one to the last task**, even with quick chunks that are very difficult to achieve.
S3: I think you have done a **good work** [sic]. I find that **S1**'s **pronunciation** is very "English", but on the other hand, **S2**'s intonation is more natural (it sounds more like original actors do). Maybe you both can try to **improve these aspects** for the next clip.	**S3**: Hi **S4**! As always, **your intonation is good**, and **you've made an effort in order to improve your pronunciation**. I think you have succeed [sic]! Even though this is your last clip, **keep in your mind** [sic] **all the tips you received and try to improve a little bit every time**. I'll do my best in order to do that too. It's been a real pleasure to watch and comment your work.

As the previous examples show, most students were especially concerned with improving their pronunciation. Hence, the slightly less evident pronunciation enhancement that was shown in Table 3 is counterbalanced by the students' reflections. The encouragement students provided one another with from the outset should also be noted, as well as how motivated all of them felt both in the individual dubbing work and in the collaborative peer-to-peer assessment stage.

Moving on now to the assessment of the students' dubbing tasks, the average total score obtained in all activities was good, considering it was the first time learners faced dubbing activities of this sort: they obtained an average of 6.7 (out of 10), using the rubric described before. The best results were recorded in the field of pronunciation (with an average score of 1.6 out of 2) and especially intonation (1.9 out of 2). This can be interpreted in terms of the students' eagerness for imitation, trying to sound as natural as possible, just as was suggested in the task instructions. The worst results were seen in terms of synchrony (1.1 out of 2) and performance/dramatisation (1.2 out of 2). This fact was somehow expected given the novelty of the task, the challenge involved in synchronisation (adjusting the voices to the characters' mouths) and the fact that subjects were not supposed to have any drama skills. Hence, a clear advance in terms of

pronunciation and intonation (that also intervene when it comes to improving fluency) is also confirmed at this stage of observation, on the basis of the assessment rubric.

The final videoconference researchers organised once the project had come to an end provided relevant feedback to complement previously discussed data. One subject's opinions are presented here as a sample of the type of commentary that was provided: (S5) "[dubbing] is extremely useful, very interesting, very stressful also because of the timing […] But it was very good and I am looking forward to repeating it. [...] it was extremely fun. I think it was perfectly organised, perfectly scheduled". As regards suggestions for improvement, the videoconference provided an important hint that may be considered for further research in the field: the possible reduction in the number of activities was put forward by several participants, since ten dubbing tasks in the space of two months, on top of everything else, had implied too many hours' work and might have been one of the reasons behind the dropout rate.

Turning now to the analysis of the answers gathered from the post-questionnaire, it should be noted that the students' perception of their own improvement in the main L2 communicative skills thanks to the dubbing tasks is significant, as shown in Figure 2.

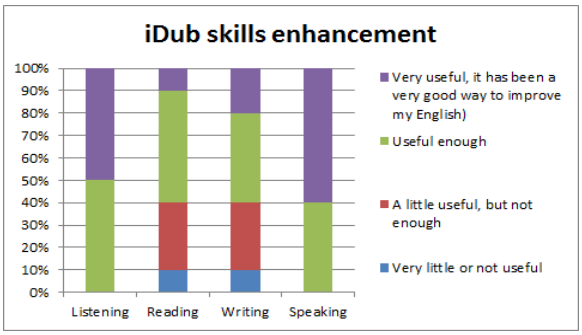

Figure 2. Students' perceptions of L2 improvement.

Subjects felt oral skills to have been promoted the most, coinciding with the results obtained in their oral post-tests. The marked feeling of advancement in terms of listening skills may have been an important aid in the development of fluency, since by constantly being faced with authentic oral language, learners can understand and so produce more fluent utterances. It is noticeable how participants also considered the other skills at work when performing the dubbing task, although to a lesser degree.

After all, they had to write the script in order to record their voices and they also read hundreds of comments in the forums during the course of the project. If we put this together with their positive perceptions in terms of vocabulary enhancement and the development of communication strategies, the dubbing tasks could be said to present didactic potential as L2 activities that contribute to develop communicative skills in an integrated manner. Participants also considered the project had aided them to gain self-confidence in the use of English, to reflect on their own language learning and to develop both their creative and their ICT skills. Most learners judged the selected clips to be enjoyable and motivating and they perceived the ClipFlair platform to be a bit hard in technical terms. The researchers had to admit that the recording component of ClipFlair was not working as perfectly as expected at the time and agreed on the possibility of trying other alternatives in the future. However, one comment by S3 in the videoconference somehow minimises this perception: "[ClipFlair] is a great platform. I know many language teachers and I have recommended it to them all".

In the same line as the opinions gathered from observation, the questionnaire revealed that 77.8% of the subjects would like to dub again, even if half of the students considered it a rather difficult task. Within their suggestions for future tasks, 100% would opt for TV series again, 71.4% for movies or documentaries, 57.1% for news programmes, and 28.6% for commercials. When asked about the possibility of trying other types of dubbing, 55.6% would like to try interlingual reversed (L1 to L2), while a lower proportion (33.3%) would rather stay in the intralingual (L2-L2) combination.

The data presented in this section have helped to reveal intralingual dubbing in L2 as a motivating, challenging, and highly engaging task, albeit a very demanding one, but also clearly rewarding. In terms of oral skills improvement, the three different data gathering tools have clearly pointed towards a relevant enhancement in terms of both pronunciation and fluency, although the small size of the sample demands further and more systematic related studies.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has endeavoured to make the needs of research in AVT modalities more explicit by putting forward some of the issues that affect the available corpus of experimental approaches to dubbing tasks as an active tool for language learning.

The lessons to be gathered from the iDub project, in which the ClipFlair platform and other key technological resources, such as the digital infrastructure of an online distance university, favoured the successful accomplishment of an innovative didactic initiative, are indeed relevant. The presentation of AVT-related tasks as voluntary and extracurricular activities does affect sample population behaviour in a variety of ways: student commitment tends to shift between two undesirable extremes: completion of all tasks in an extremely short time span, which has an impact on the quality of the final products and impedes continuous assessment from taking place, or premature abandonment of the project (dropout). The inclusion of AVT tasks in the official curriculum, even in the case of pilot experiences, would allow for longitudinal studies to be carried out and for an increased level of reliability in the results obtained from experimental and control groups. To this end, perhaps the establishment of modular programmes in secondary and primary school levels might help researchers to find coherent counterarguments for the statements that, quite often, are weighed against the didactic potential of dubbing (and other AVT modalities) in educational environments. To boot, in spite of the popularity of the field and the attention that is being paid to it by academia, no hard evidence and convincing long-term, statistically-relevant findings have yet been shared with the scientific community.

To overcome these misgivings, a more tactical standpoint should be tried. Although it would be relevant to highlight that other AVT modalities, such as voice-over, may be tried to offer practitioners new ideas to be put to the test; perhaps it would be even more convenient to agree on the most feasible way to produce a common framework of reference to advance in the application of AVT in a classroom where, so far, the audiovisual continues to be regarded as a complement (and therefore facultative) which rarely, if ever, features in standardised testing at any level. Replication of similar experiments under very similar conditions does not detract from the overall value of a piece of research; on the contrary, it may fundamentally contribute to the confirmation

of relevant findings or the refutation of unsubstantiated claims. This, however, is hardly possible when the language combinations selected, the modality under study, the time devoted to observation and data gathering, as well as the characteristics of the participants cannot be paralleled with what little has been published.

NOTES

[i]. **ClipFlair** is an online platform specially designed to use audiovisual translation modalities as a didactic resource in L2 education (Baños and Sokoli 2015).

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Teaching apps for the learning of languages through sports: Technology and sports in the English and Spanish as a L2/FL classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a selection of teaching apps for the teaching and learning of both English and Spanish through sports. In the frame of a funded research project on Applied Linguistics to the teaching of modern languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016a), one of our aims is to apply ICT to this teaching approach (Botella Tejera et al., 2016; Sellés et al., 2016). Thus, 17 apps related to the teaching of languages through sports are explored. Specifically, we have selected different kinds of apps: language-based apps, language learning apps, three specific English through sports apps, and sport journals and TV channels apps. After presenting and analyzing them, we provide a wide range of activities to include them in the language classroom, in line with recent developments in task-based language teaching with technology.

Keywords*: English, Spanish, sports, technology, apps, ICT*

I. INTRODUCTION. TECHNOLOGY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Language teaching is, at present, inextricably linked to technology [i]. According to the Instituto Cervantes (2012), among the eight key competences of second and foreign language teachers, there is the *digital competence*, which includes skills such as information processing, content creation, communication, problem solving, and safety, as described by the European Comission[ii]. Language education, therefore, cannot be conceived without the help of technology anymore.

This means that instructors must develop the ability to use digital resources effectively if they want to follow the strategic lines established by their institutions (e.g. to promote students' learning, and for their own professional development). Thus, they need to reflect about the different technological resources at their disposal and how to get the most out of them by doing an appropriate use. Moreover, they need to integrate them in their teaching methods in order to promote language use, and to encourage cooperative

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learning. They also need to guide students to use these tools independently (Instituto Cervantes, 2012: 27).

For the last fifty years, technology has somehow been present in language teaching pedagogy, with the use of recordings, labs, listenings... However, the last decade has turned into a *tech revolution* in the language classroom. The huge current amount of publications on education, language teaching and technology proves the existence of this trend in the language teaching field (Akbar, 2015; Carrió Pastor, 2016; Chun, 2008; Gargiulo et al., 2016; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Herrera, 2015; Martín-Monje et al., 2016; Sánchez Quero & Botella Tejera, 2010; Sánchez Quero et al., 2012). Social media applied to the teaching of Spanish as a second language deserve a special mention, since this field has experienced a boom in recent years (Arellano, 2013; Cuadros & Villatoro, 2014; Erdocia, 2012; Fernández Ulloa, 2012; Galindo Merino, 2015, 2016b, 2016c; Herrera & Castrillejo, 2013; Varo & Cuadros, 2013).

Today, no one can question the usefulness of technologies in the classroom. There are many resources available for foreign language teachers, as those compiled by María Méndez Santos in her excellent guide for language teachers (2016: 51 and ss.): videos, MOOCs, gaming tools, different uses of the mobile phone, blogs, podcasts, Pinterest boards, word clouds, mind maps, webquests, wikis, prezis, timelines, flashcards, digital books, subtitling editors, video generators and animations, comics, online games, and, obviously, social media and apps.

The advantages of their use for educational purposes are well-known. Among them, we can highlight: "…adaptability to personal profiles, use of multiple input modes to reach levels of concentration, and self-paced tutoring (…). The Internet is not just a medium for transmission of materials, but also for interaction with teachers and fellow students" (Smedt et al., 1999: 54-55). And, as F. Herrera (2015: 139) points out, the presence of the mobile phone in the language classroom has meant a total revolution.

Therefore, our research project on teaching foreign languages through sports was clear about the inclusion of technology as part of the learning methodology. In this article, we explore the potential of different apps for our teaching approach. In the same way native speakers are informed about sports through their mobile phones, language learners can

take advantage of these resources to increase their language exposure. Smarphones and portable devices become, thus, an essential learning tool for languages through sports, as we will see in the next pages.

II. TEACHING ENGLISH AND SPANISH THROUGH SPORTS

Sport is an integral part of our society, an important force in our lives and a serious piece of our culture, as Spickard Prettyman & Lampman (2006) state. Its bond to the representation of foreign cultures is evident in the case of both Spanish (tennis, basketball, and especially, soccer) and British culture (cricket, rugby, soccer, horse racing). In fact, many students choose to learn Spanish specifically because they truly admire a certain team or player. *The Telegraph* recently talked about the "Messi effect"[iii] to account for the increase in the number of students of Spanish in England, to the detriment of French, which had historically dominated the teaching of foreign languages in the UK. As we explained in Galindo (2016a), sports are one of the economic engines of modern societies in terms of companies connected to sports, national and international tourism and mass media.

Based on our own experience in the teaching of both English and Spanish as a foreign language, connecting sports with languages generates a very useful approach between two industries that walk together nowadays. At the same time, sport is a sort of universal language which can promote several values such as peace, equality, tolerance and education. All of them can obviously help create closer ties within our students, and to overcome cultural differences inside the classroom.

General studies about language have shown a recent interest in sports and their influence in language. Institutions such as *Fundéu*, that seek to preserve the good use of the language in the media, dedicate a noteworthy amount of resources to the language of sport, offering many special issues on sport events and a weekly section called "Liga del español urgente"[iv]. Likewise, the University of Salamanca has its own place on the Spanish League ("la Liga USAL"[v]), under the agreement "Fútbol en español" signed by this institution and the Spanish League[vi]. Furthermore, the European Comission recently

devoted their bulletin *Punto y coma*, specialized in Spanish translation within the European institutions, to the topic of Sport, Language and Translation (2016).

In English, there are many studies on language and soccer, such as the one by Adrian Beard (*The language of sport*, 1998) or the one by Lavric *et al*. (*The Linguistics of football*, 2008). Even some specific research groups, such as the one from the University of Innsbruck, have compiled an online linguistic bibliography on football[vii]. In Spanish, there are many experts such as Jesús Castañón, who has written several articles and launched the web idiomaydeporte.com; Antonio Teruel Sáez and his work on the vocabulary of soccer (2007) or Professor J. L. Rojas Torrijos, from the University of Seville, with his award-winning blog[viii] and his contributions to the study of language, sports and journalism (2011). Together with them, there are other initiatives such as the Athletic Club de Bilbao's[ix] "Encuentros de literatura y fútbol".

Nevertheless, in the Spanish as a foreign language field there are not many materials connecting the teaching of Spanish with sports. This discipline does not even appear in the language for specific purposes literature (Romero Gualda, 1987; Carabela, 1998; Gómez de Enterría, 2001; Hernández & Sierra, 2002; Aguirre Beltrán, 2012; Robles Ávila & Sánchez Lobato, 2012). There are, however, some leveled readings such as *Messi. La grandeza de un pequeño* (Rodríguez, 2011) and *Rafael Nadal dentro y fuera de la pista* (Monge, 2012) both for A2 levels and published by Difusión in the frame of their *Colección perfiles pop*, as well as *El FC Barcelona* (Pujol Vila, 2010), B1 levels and *El Real Madrid CF* (Segovia Yuste, 2013), A2+ levels, in the SGEL *Colección saber.es*.

Apart from Spanish publishing houses, we can find the book by Kristina Pilmark and Lene Håkansson *El deporte* (2011), published in the "Tema" collection by the Danish publishing house Gyldendal. This book contains texts about sports and exercises to present the Hispanic culture and its connection to sport for students of Spanish as a foreign language. Teachers such as Blanco López (2014) highlight the need to train Spanish language teachers to teach Spanish for sport purposes.

In contrast, the area of ELT (English language teaching) has started to explore this possibility, as in the textbook *Career Paths: Sports* (Evans, Dooley, & Graham, 2013),

and its twins *Career Paths: World Cup* (Evans, Dooley, & Wheeler, 2014) and *Career Paths: Olympics* (Evans, Dooley, & Wheeler, 2016), all of them for A1, A2 and B1 levels. There are also two books specifically about soccer: *English for football* (Redmond & Warren, 2012) and *Football English: Soccer Vocabulary for Learners of English* (Challenger, 2012). Finally, there is also the study by Ji-Eun and Ho (2014) on Sports English Education as English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Indeed, sport has a significant presence in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001). Actually, the fourth chapter of the CEFR, devoted to "Language use and the language user/learner", contains the following subsections including sports:

- 4.2. *Communication themes*: *"Free time and entertainment"*, includes sports as follows (CEFR, p. 52):

In each of these thematic areas, subcategories are established. For example, area 4, 'free time and entertainment', is subcategorised in the following way:

4.1 leisure
4.2 hobbies and interests
4.3 radio and TV
4.4 cinema, theatre, concert, etc.
4.5 exhibitions, museums, etc.
4.6 intellectual and artistic pursuits
4.7 sports
4.8 press

For each sub-theme, 'specific notions' are identified. In this respect, the categories represented in Table 5, covering the locations, institutions etc. to be treated, are particularly relevant. For instance, under 4.7. 'sports', *Threshold Level 1990* specifies:

1. locations: field, ground, stadium
2. institutions and organisations: sport, team, club
3. persons: player
4. objects: cards, ball
5. events: race, game
6. actions: to watch, to play (+name of sport), to race, to win, to lose, to draw

Figure 1. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001)

- 4.4. *Communicative language activities and strategies*: includes sport commentaries as oral production (speaking) activities (p. 58).
- 4.6. *Texts*: sports commentaries (football, cricket, boxing, horse-racing, etc.) as spoken texts (p. 95).

In the same way, the *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes* (the PCIC, 2006) includes sports in many sections. Precisely, the *inventario de referentes culturales* talks about sports in the media (*prensa escrita deportiva*, section 1.8.) and sport events throughout history (personalities from the culture, science, and sports with an international projection; *acontecimientos deportivos en la historia*, section 2.2). Also, among the *saberes y comportamientos socioculturales*, sport is mentioned within the leisure activities, habits and hobbies, and the whole section 1.7.4. is devoted to this topic. It contains information about the sports most frequently practiced by Spaniards, terms for all the places to practice sports, main shows and sport events, stereotypes, extreme sports, traditional sports, public institutions and values associated to sports in our society, etc. Then, section 1.8., about the media, stresses the importance of sports-related publications in Spain. On 1.10., services and sport facilities are mentioned; on 1.12., about *Salud e higiene*, there is a reference to the practice of sports, and on 3.2., about *Tradición y cambio social*, new ways to enjoy your free time (sport) are described.

Finally, among the *Géneros discursivos y productos textuales*, in B1 and B2 levels, sport broadcasting and commentary of sports are mentioned in the oral and written genres.

In the case of the *British Council*, sport plays an important role among its resources. There are materials to learn English through sports, such as the web "Premier Skills English"[x], focused on soccer.

Image 1. Premier Skills English webpage

An interesting case involving both English and Spanish is the program *Arsenal Double Club*[xi], developed by the soccer team Arsenal F.C., which offers a combination of English and soccer for kids. This Londoner institution offers the same program in Spanish, in cooperation with the Spanish Embassy in London.

In Poland, there is a similar program for kids who want to learn English while playing soccer: *Kick in English*[xii].

Finally, the University of Salamanca is now working on a project to launch Spanish and soccer schools in China, so that students can learn both at the same time[xiii].

We should clarify that teaching languages through sport does not imply that the learning process should be based on physical activities, in the line of *Happy Sport*[xiv], a company specialized in the teaching of English for kids through physical and sport routines, or like the Prague Cervantes Institute *Club de corredores*[xv]. Rather, the integration of sport in the foreign language classroom can happen as in the case of any other topic, through a specific lesson plan on sports as the content of the classroom. This is the approach we took in our research project on languages and sports and we consider that it would be very successful with the help of new technologies.

III. METHODOLOGY

III. 1. Research questions and objectives

As we said before, in the frame of a funded research project on Applied Linguistics to the teaching of modern languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016a), this paper explores the possibility to include technology into a language through sport course (Botella Tejera et al., 2016; Sellés et al., 2016). After exploring the use of social media to the teaching of languages through sports (Galindo Merino, 2016b, 2016c), this article focuses on a selection of teaching apps for the teaching and learning of both English and Spanish through sports. The rationale of the project is the potential motivation of sports for the learning of foreign languages, still scarce in the literature of this subfield of Applied Linguistics (Blanco López, 2014; Challenger, 2012; Galindo Merino, 2016a; Redmond & Warren, 2012). Therefore, our research questions are:

1. Are there specific apps to learn foreign languages through sports?

2. What kind of general apps can be selected to work with them in such a language class?

3. What sort of activities can be done with the help of apps in the language classroom?

III. 2. Instruments

In order to answer these questions, 17 apps are explored in this article.

During the process of selecting the most pertinent tools to teach languages through sport, we considered that it was necessary to select those resources used by native speakers to be informed about sport, so that they reflected a natural way of using them. However, we realized that in the teaching of languages through sport we do not have at our disposal neither the tools nor some previous research materials about the use of technology in this matter (except those arising from our own research project: Sellés, Manchado & Cejuela, 2016, and Botella et al., 2016), what turns this into a very new and interesting topic.

Specifically, we select different kinds of apps in both English and Spanish:

1. Language-based apps, to deal mainly with grammar and vocabulary. We selected *Fundéu* (Spanish) and *Oxford Dictionary* (English).

2. Language learning apps designed for non-native speakers. Here we have *Spanish Challenge* and *Gramática Española* for Spanish and *British Council* for English.

3. English through Sports apps: *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*, the last two by Express Publishing. We do not have any equivalent in Spanish.

4. General sport journals apps, which are realia for the language classroom: *Marca* and *Mundo deportivo*, from Spain; *Olé*, from Argentina; and *SUN Sport* and *Mirror Sport* from the UK,

5. and TV channels (*Eurosport*, in different languages, *CBS Sports* and *BBC Sport* in English and *RTVE deporte* for Spanish).

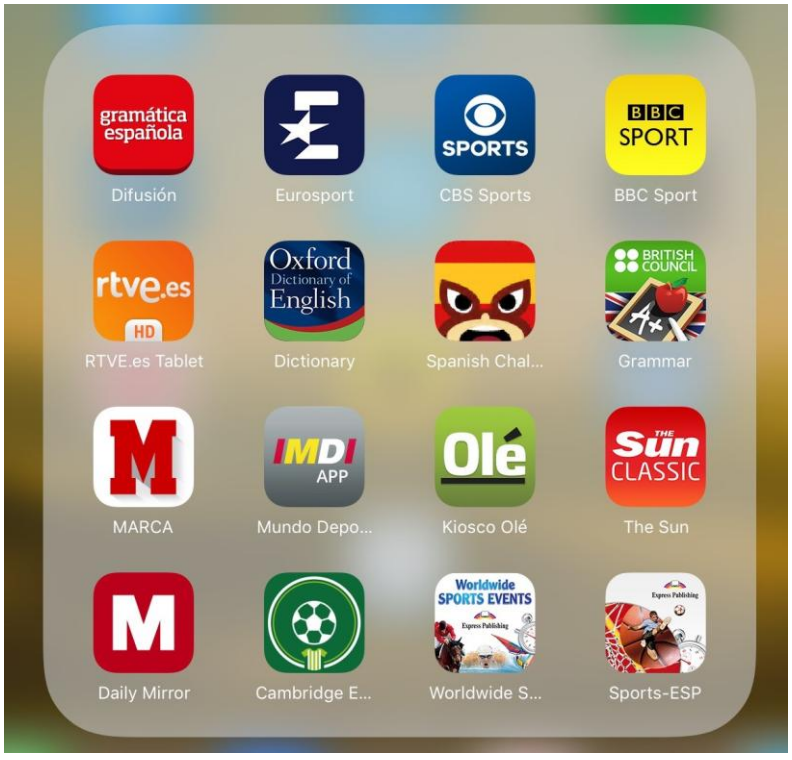

Image 2. Overview of the selected apps for the project

Following this classification, we first analyze all the apps and then, in section V, we provide a wide range of activities to include them in the language classroom considering the use of language skills, focus on content vs form, audiovisual vs written prompts, etc., in line with recent developments in task-based language teaching with technology (Akbar, 2015; Carrió, 2016; Gargiulo et al., 2016; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Herrera, 2015; Martín-Monje et al., 2016). This teaching proposal, including the list of suggested app for the language classroom, is a previous step to implement a language and sport course to learn English or Spanish, ultimate objective of our research project.

IV. TEACHING APPS FOR THE LEARNING OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

IV. 1. Language-based apps

- Fundéu

As explained in Botella Tejera et al. (2016: 1850), there is a strong relationship between *Fundación del Español Urgente* (Fundéu) and sport. In fact, BBVA has also sponsored the Spanish Football League's first division. This web, that is very popular amongst linguists and language lovers, created the *Libro de la Liga BBVA del Español Urgente*[xvi]. Its weekly content incorporates reports, "pills" or suggestions, and blackboards with linguistic plays. According to its authors, this book aims to "aunar las pasiones que generan el fútbol y el idioma, dos patrimonios culturales de gran proyección internacional". Its format allows users to download it in mobile devices.

Image 3. BBVA Español Urgente's Book

Both the web and the app are assisted by the Real Academia Española, and users can use the search engine or the Twitter account to share their questions and doubts. They can also look at the different themed articles or subscribe to the app alerts so that they can receive all the relevant information.

This way, the Fundéu app and its strong presence in social media makes it a very interesting query tool for our classes.

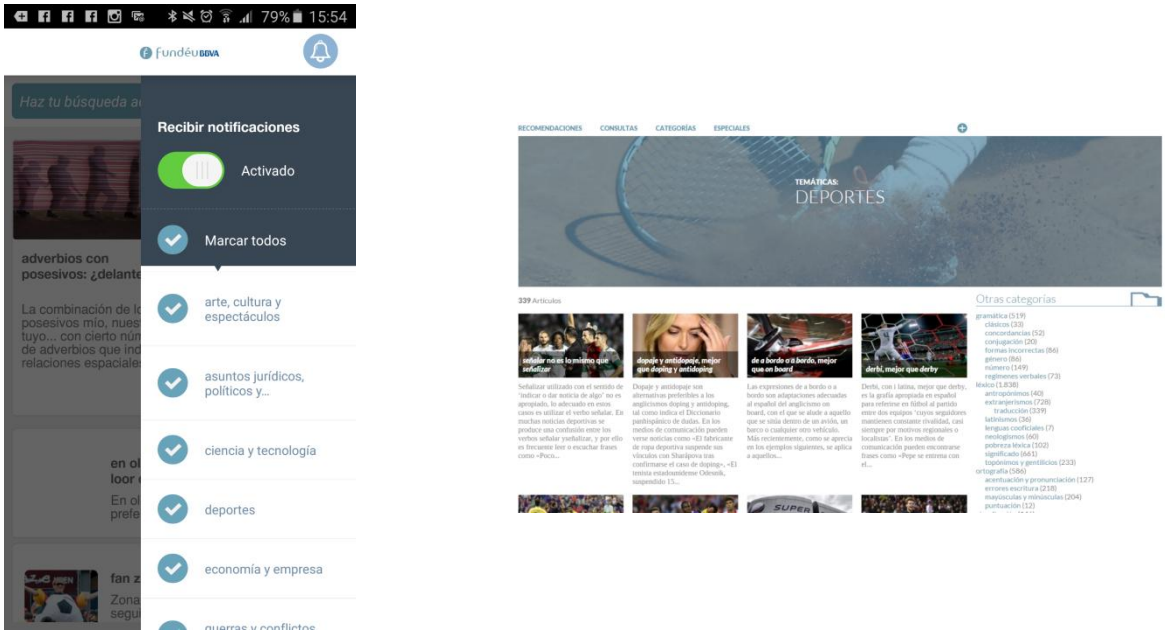

Image 4. Fundeu app

- Oxford Dictionary

Available in I-Tunes and Google Play, this app contains a mobile dictionary with content from Oxford University Press and advanced search and language tools for free. These are some of the possibilities of this app as described by the web:

Image 5. Oxford Dictionary of English app

Search tools –effortlessly find words using a clear, functional, and easy-to-use interface. The integrated search tools activate automatically when starting typing:

1. Search autocomplete helps find words quickly by displaying predictions.

2. Keyword lookup allows to search within compound words and phrases.

3. An automatic 'Fuzzy filter' to correct word spelling, as well as 'Wild card' ('*' or '?') to replace a letter or entire parts of a word.

4. Camera search looks up words in the camera viewfinder and displays results.

Learning tools –engaging features that help further enhance the vocabulary:

1. 'Favorites' feature to create custom folders with lists of words from the extensive library.

2. 'Recent' list to easily review looked-up words.

3. 'Word of the day' section to expand vocabulary every day.

Premium features include offline mode (to look up words without internet connection), audio pronunciation, priority support and no ads.

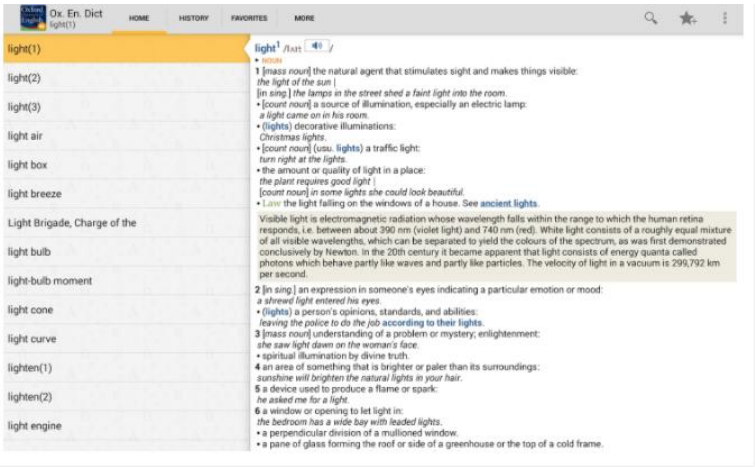

Image 6. Oxford Dictionary of English app – an example

IV. 2. Language learning apps

- Spanish Challenge

Also in Botella Tejera et al. (2016: 1852) we talked about *Spanish Challenge*, a free app for iOS and Android mobile phones and tablets, created by Big Bang Box S.L. for Edinumen publishing house. This app basically recreates a game for the practice of Spanish as a foreign language. Its design and content adaptation for mobile devices turn *Spanish Challenge* into a very fun and dynamic way of learning Spanish.

The different levels in the game are divided according to those established by the CEFR, in correspondence with different *leagues*:

Liga iniciación: A1 Levels.

Liga principiante: A2/B1 Levels.

Liga intermedia: B1/B2 Levels.

Liga avanzada: C1/C2 Levels.

Users can also practice different skills (reading and listening comprehension, written expression) and develop their visual memory, learn synonyms, select terms, learn definitions…

At the very end, when players have answered all the questions, they will be able to see their feedback and find out who the winner of the challenge is.

Teachers can create challenges for the group; they can access data and statistics, etc. Students will also be able to create their own individual challenges independently.

Image 7. Spanish Challenge app, by Edinumen

Gramática Española (Difusión)

Image 8. Gramática española app, by Difusión

This app contains 342 exercises classified into levels (107 exercises for A1 students, 114 for A2 and 121 for B1) to practice Spanish grammar.

Image 9. Gramática Española app: exercises by levels

Students can choose the area they want to work in (articles, pronouns, tenses, certain structures, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, commands…), as in the example:

Image 10. Gramática española app: A1 section

They can check their progress and access the theory of every of the grammar aspects covered in the app.

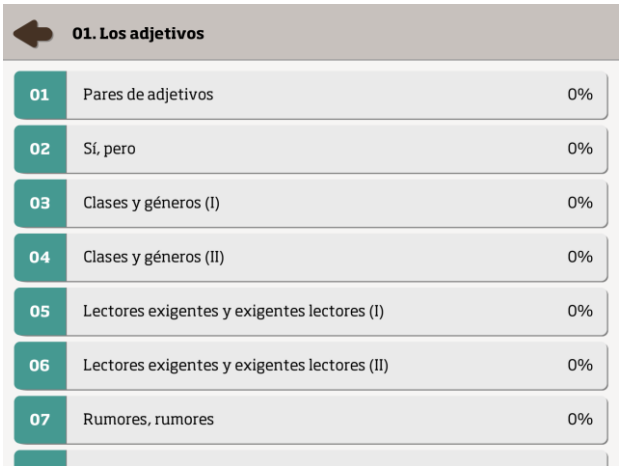

Image 11. Gramática Española app: the adjectives

It is a very good resource for students working on their own, autonomously. It is focused on grammar, not on vocabulary or any other skill.

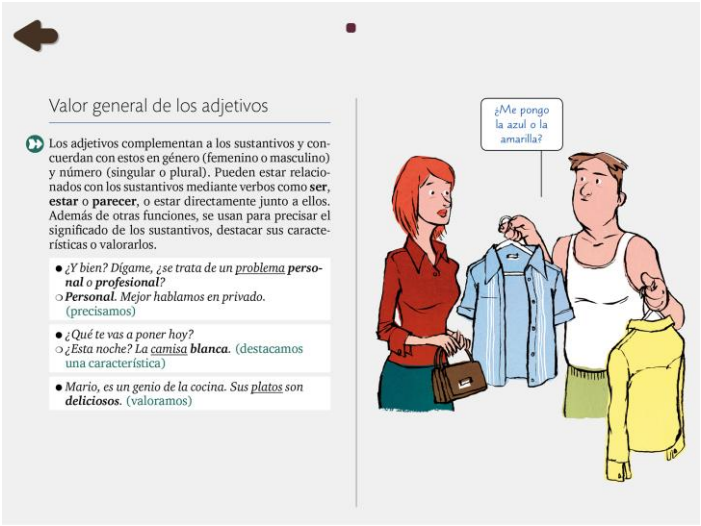

Image 12. Gramática española app: text on adjectives

- British Council

This app is designed to practice sample questions at beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Each set of sample questions covers 12 grammar topics, with over 20 activities per topic. Then, users can purchase and download more questions as their grammar accuracy improves.

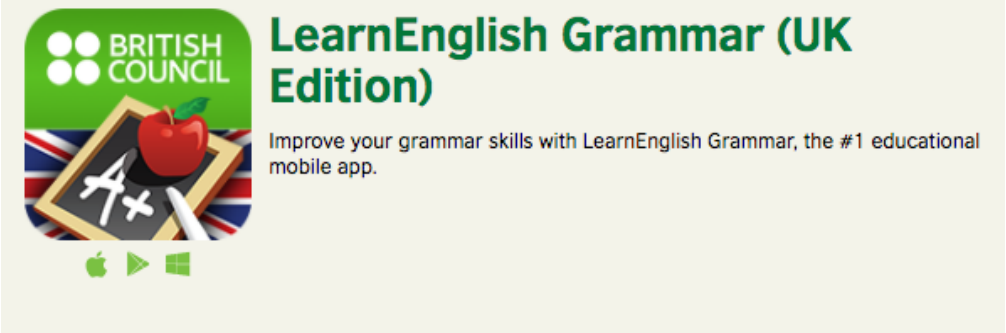

Image 13. British Council app

Very relevant to our project is their specific section for sports: *Learn English Sport Words*. Users can find objects related to the events, players and the technical sports moves and techniques. The definitions include translations and can be grouped together by sport, so they can review the words easily. This is based on a hidden object and word game and it seems fun and easy to play.

Image 14. Learn English Sport Words, by British Council

Some examples include expressions such as *en garde* in fencing, what a receiver is in hockey, or how to play Boccia.

Image 15. Example from the British Council app

IV. 3. Specific English through Sports apps

- Cambridge English F. C.

Cambridge English F.C. is a free learning app from Cambridge English that makes learning English fun through football. It is available for I-Phone and Android.

The web tells us that the user becomes the star player and captain of Cambridge F.C. and has to answer quiz questions to help the team pass the ball, get to the goal, shoot and score.

There are multiple choice questions to test English skills in a range of categories. If the user gives two wrong answers in a match he/she will be substituted and the game will be over. If questions are right, the user takes the cup home! Questions in this game are mapped to levels B1, B2 and C1 on the CEFR. Both vocabulary and grammar are practiced.

Image 16. Cambridge English F. C. app

- Worldwide Sports Events

According to the official information[xvii], this app is an educational resource for sport-event support staff who want to improve their English communication in a work environment. Incorporating career-specific vocabulary and contexts, each unit offers step-by-step instruction that immerses students in the four key language components: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Besides, it addresses topics including sports events, security, first aid, concessions, and communications. However, it seems that a code is needed to access. It is included in the book *Career Paths* to access the content.

Image 17. Worldwide Sports Events app

- Career Paths: Sports

Again, according to the official information[xviii], this is an educational resource for sport professionals and enthusiasts who want to improve their English communication in a work environment. Incorporating career-specific vocabulary and contexts, each unit offers step-by-step instruction that immerses students in the four key language components: reading, listening, speaking and writing. It addresses topics including the field of play, rules of play, equipment, players and leagues for the world's most popular sports.

Image 19. Career Paths Sports app

The series is organized into three levels of difficulty and offers a minimum of 400 vocabulary terms and phrases. Every unit includes a test of reading comprehension, vocabulary and listening skills and leads students through written and oral production.

IV. 4. General Sport journals apps

- Mundo Deportivo

Mundo Deportivo is a sports app by the journal *El Mundo Deportivo, S.A.* It provides ongoing information about different sports, with a remarkable presence of F. C. Barcelona. It allows the user to customize the menu with their favorite sections, to access quickly breaking news, live transmissions, results of the main leagues and to set an alert system of specific teams (scores, results). Moreover, it includes specific information about all the teams competing at the Liga BBVA, articles by different journalists, radio connections and social media. It is really complete.

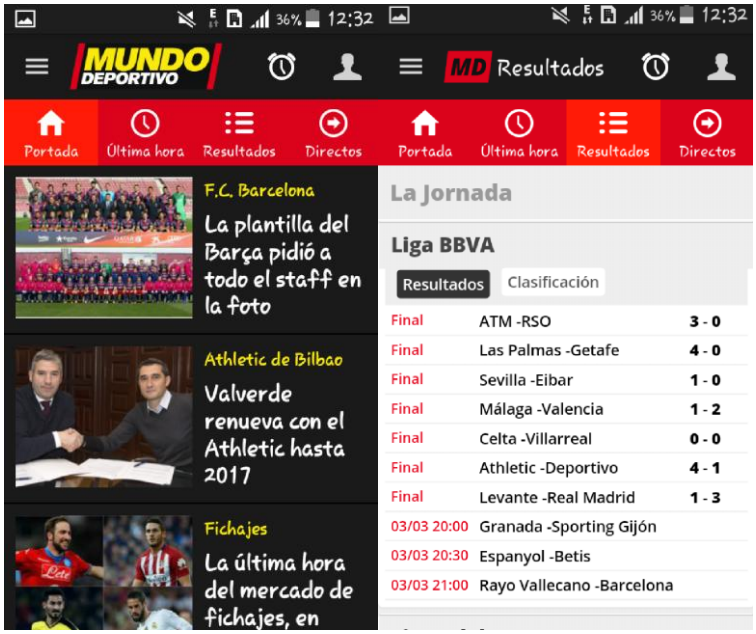

Image 20. Mundo Deportivo app

- Olé

Olé is an app by goal.com for the Argentinian sport journal *Olé*, which also offers live results, personalized alerts and notifications on more than 750 leagues across the world. According to its developers, it is the fastest app of its kind. It keeps information about scores, shoots, penalties, faults, corners, saves, changes… in real time. Therefore, it is a valuable way to be informed about sports.

Moreover, it offers live scoreboards, audiovisuals, classifications, teams, scores and results, with the possibility of saving your favorite information.

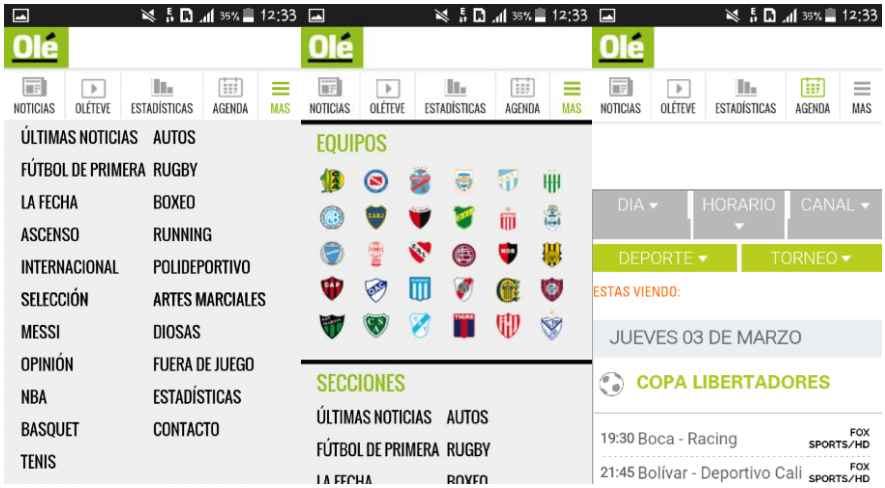

Image 21. Olé app

- Diario Marca

Most sport journals offer their own apps, but Marca is the most read newspaper in Spain and out of Spain. Its new app is the typical tool sport-lovers use to be updated. With a friendly design, it allows the user to follow live sports, with complete information about competitions and a wide range of audiovisual resources.

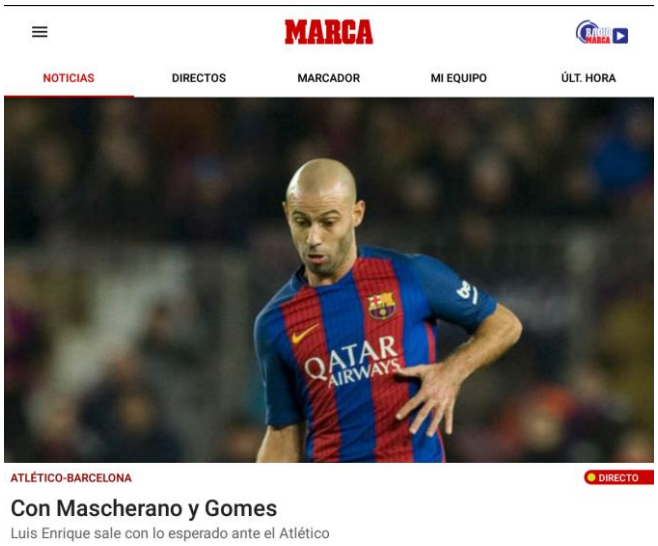

Image 22. Diario Marca app

Navigation is really easy. The front page includes the most important news, but users can also access live transmissions and stats, and are allowed to add their own comments. Furthermore, users can customize the app with the colors of their team and get selected information about it (clips, calendars, info about games…).

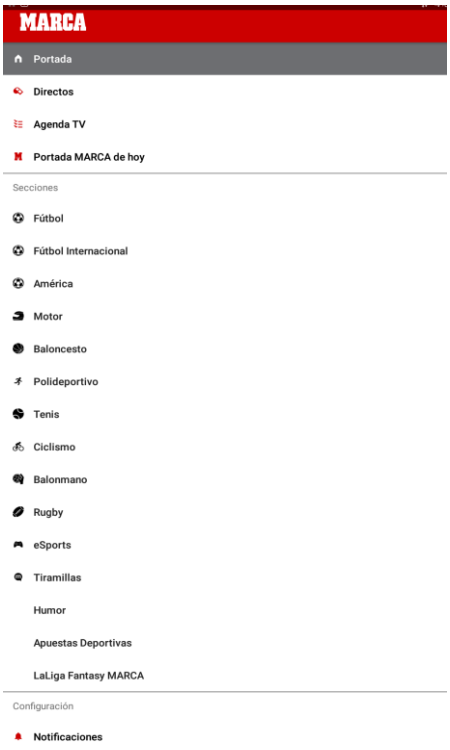

Image 23. Diario Marca app – sections

Marca covers both national (Spanish) and international competitions and results. Users can access blogs and articles from the newspaper and ask questions in digital encounters with sportmen and women, and journalists. Interaction is definitely a very useful feature when thinking about its potential for language learning.

- The Sun Mobile: The Sun Sport

According to their own description[xix], The Sun Mobile app brings breaking news, sports, show business and celebrity gossip from around the world to the user fingertips and it is available for download on both I-Phone and Android. Although this is a general newspaper, it contains a sport section that can be very useful for us.

Image 24. The Sun Mobile app

As its key features, The Sun Mobile web page[xx] tells us that this app has popular journalists to answer different questions, write reviews, and share stories behind the showbiz scenes. Then, users can watch great videos, read take on the breaking headlines of the day, take the daily quiz, browse top telly pictures, get the insiders look at soaps, be the first to hear all the showbiz celeb rumors and gossip and enjoy a round-up of the best pictures of the day.

Image 25. The Sun Mobile app

Only the news and services related to sports would be of interest for our research.

- Mirror Football: Mirror Sport

Football news, opinion and live action both for I-Phone and Android with an army of journalists and bloggers covering every league and cup competition. The app comes packed with breaking news and transfers, videos, galleries and in-depth analysis.

Image 26. Mirror Football app

Features according to the web page[xxi]:

1. FREE to download.
2. 24/7 breaking news.
3. Users can personalise their homepage.
4. Insights from their award-winning columnists.
5. Image galleries within articles.
6. More football videos in articles showcasing players, goals and skills.

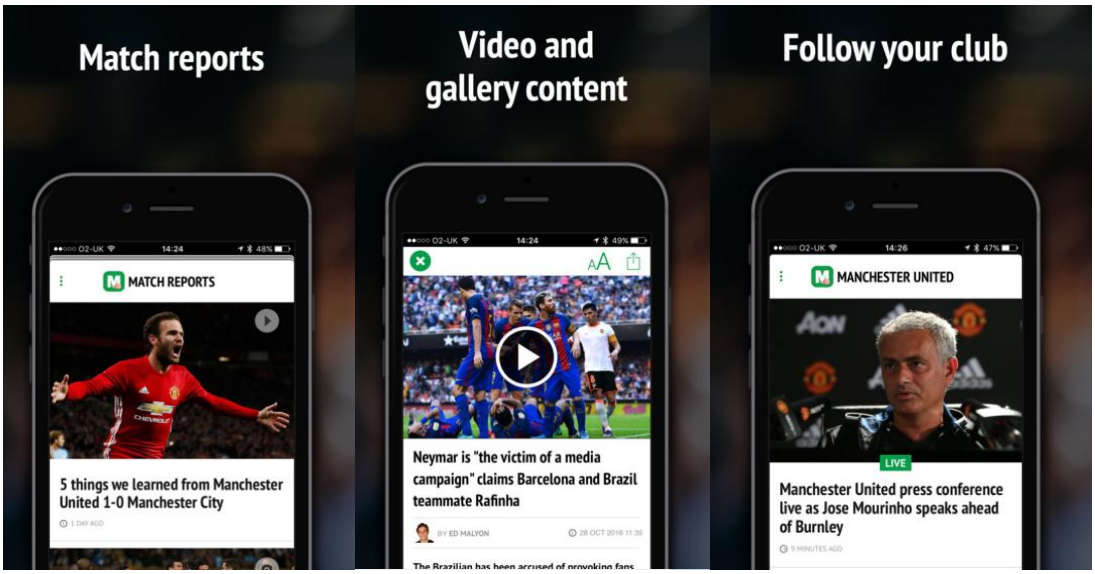

Image 27. Mirror football app: some examples

IV. 5. TV channels

- Eurosport

This is a very visual app, available in French, English, Spanish, Russian, German, Italian, Turkish, Polish and Chinese. Depending on the country, the app selects different information. Users can see live scoreboards covering a wide range of sports.

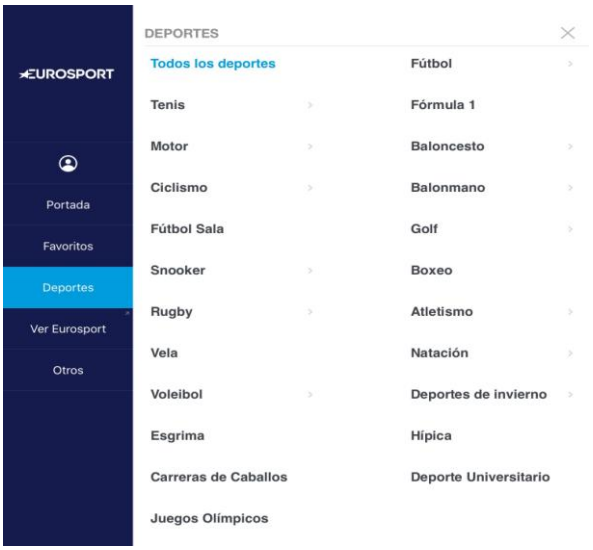

Image 28. Eurosport app

Obviously, the video coverage is really good and complete, perfect to offer audiovisual resources to users. It also offers a pay-per-view option to see live games and matches.

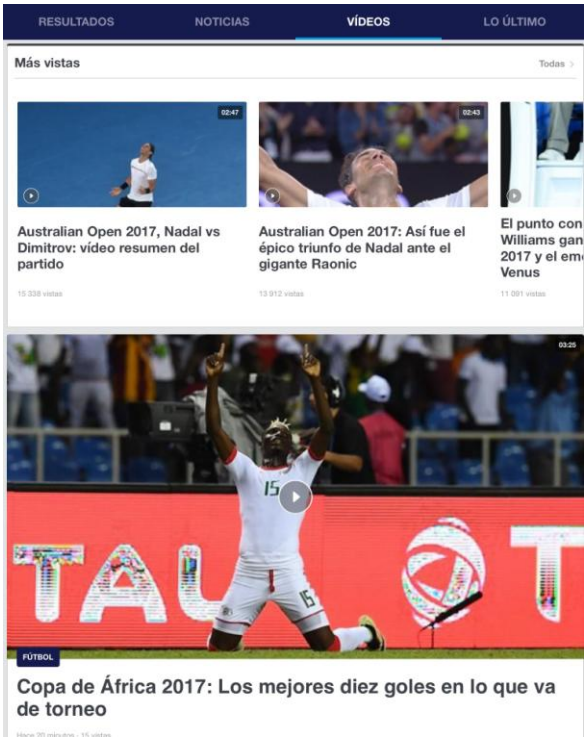

Image 29. Eurosport app

Users can access sports and competitions, including university tournaments and winter and summer olympics. It is an excellent international resource.

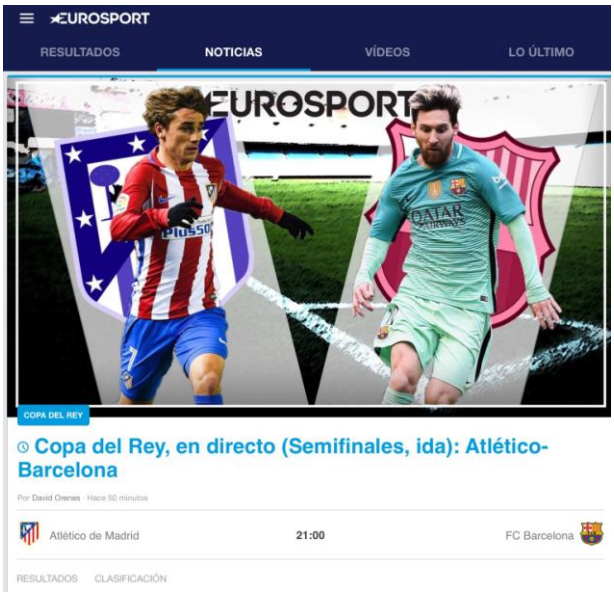

Image 30. Eurosport app

- CBS Sports

This is an American-based sports app (baseball, football, golf, basketball…). It offers live results and calendars for competitions such as the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, MLS, Nascar and high school football. It is, mainly, a scoreboard.

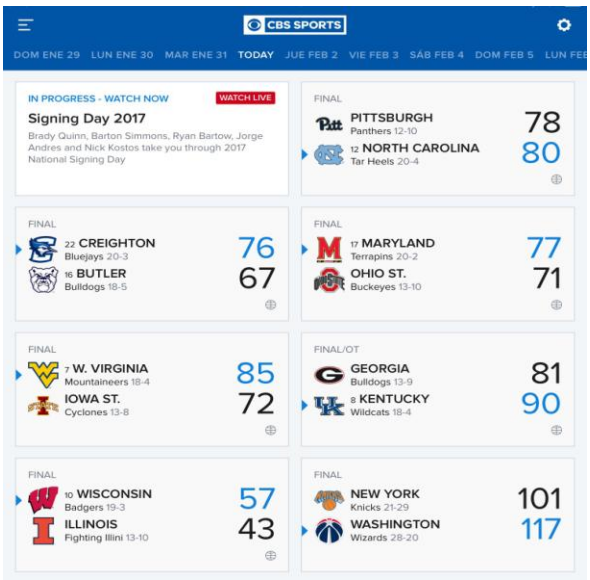

Image 31. CBS Sports app

It also includes European soccer competitions such as the Premier League, la Liga, Bundesliga, Champions League. In contrast to Eurosport, this is not really multimedia.

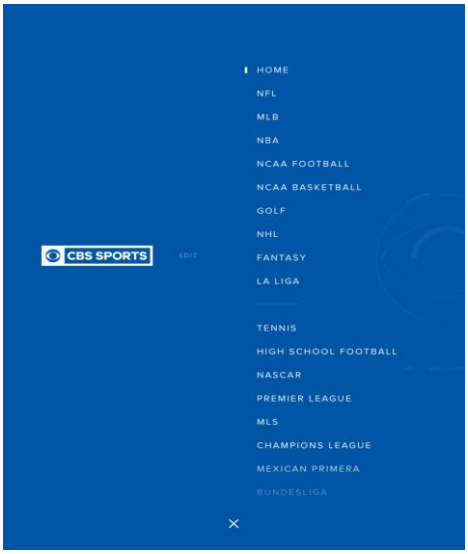

Image 32. CBS Sports app

- BBC Sport

This British app, only available in English, allows you to customize the info according to your teams and preferences to get alerts and information.

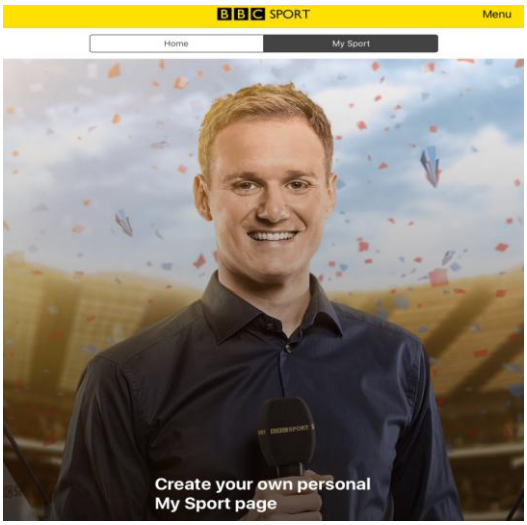

Image 33. BBC Sports app

As the others, it contains live scoreboards, news and videos, in a very visual format.

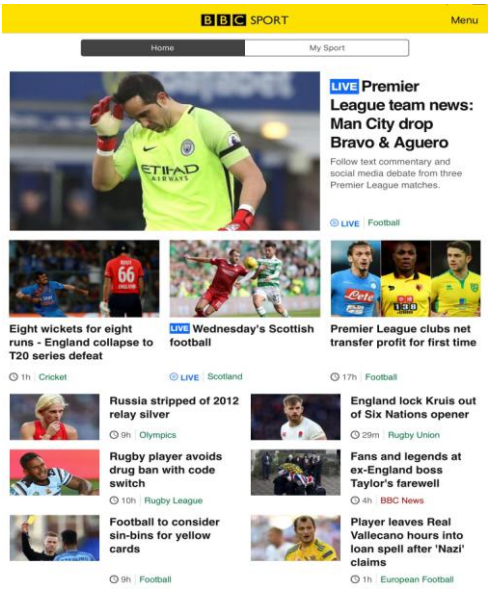

Image 34. BBC Sports app

It has a large news section, with live scoreboards and results, comprising a huge amount of sports -even disability sports-.

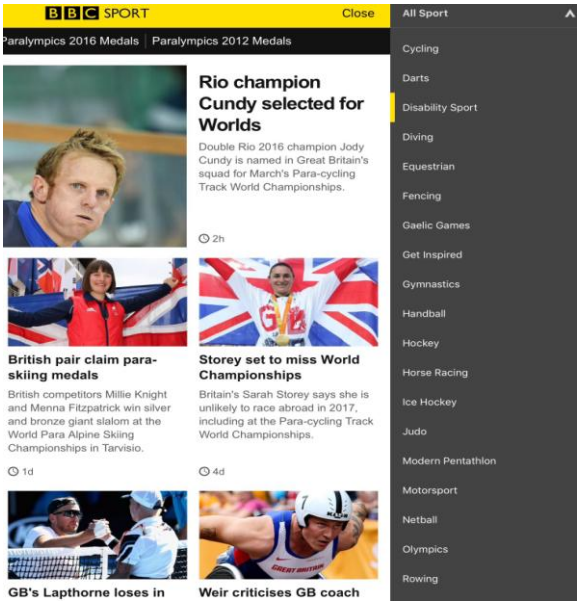

Image 35. BBC Sports app

- RTVE Deporte

The sport section of the national broadcasting media in Spain is very simple. There is a series of news and videos without different categories. Users can access different clips but they are not organized by sports.

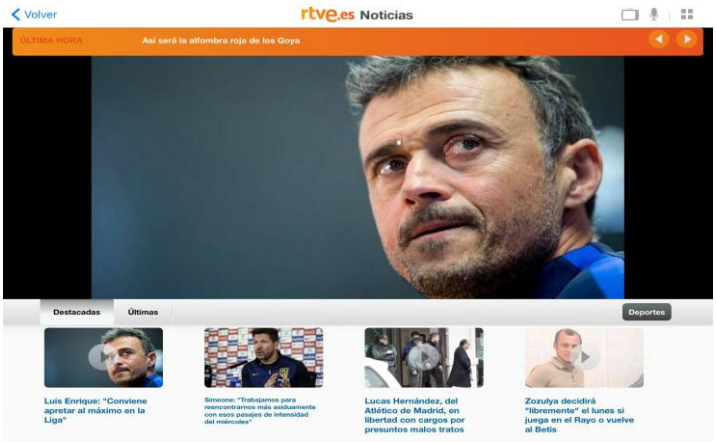

Image 36. RTVE app

The sport area is one section of the general RTVE app, but it is not as developed as the other apps presented here.

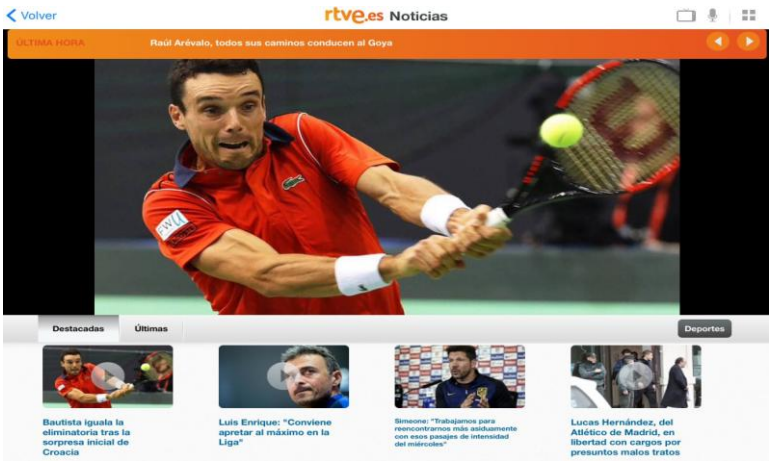

Image 37. Sports section on RTVE app

V. TEACHING APPS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM THROUGH SPORTS

All of the apps presented in the previous sections allow different activities to be carried out inside or outside the language through sports classroom. Obviously, *Career Paths: Sports* and *Worldwide Sports events*, conceived as a support material for the corresponding textbooks, are perfectly valid for this kind of teaching approach. Similarly, *Cambridge English F.C.* allows the learner to improve his/her English by engaging with sports. However, the rest of the apps, not specifically about language learning through sports, can be used in several ways in the language classroom.

Fundéu and *Oxford Dictionary* are essentially useful to clarify questions about spelling, meaning and vocabulary. They can be categorized as *consultative apps*. Teachers can ask students to check different meanings and suggestions and to improve their writing skills. Together with them, *Spanish Challenge*, *Gramática Española* and *British Council* will help students to focus on form while learning English or Spanish. The three of them include, somehow, some features resembling sports, such as gamification in leagues, competition, or sport content. But their use is mainly *metalinguistic*. Since some of these apps are designed to be played, they seem to be more appealing for students, and teachers can benefit tremendously from this. However, we believe that the most useful apps for this kind of language program are those based on authentic sports: journals and multimedia platforms. There, learners can access real materials with audiovisual content, suitable to practice the language while they are engaged with the content. The possibility to customize the information, to follow a wide array of sports and to watch videos, read the news and interact with other users can stimulate the learners to improve their language skills. This can be especially interesting in immersion contexts, since students can better get immersed in the target culture.

In the language classroom, teachers can propose the reading of a certain piece of news, follow a given competition or team, comment the most striking information about certain players, etc. Since these sport-related apps require receptive skills, language teachers should encourage productive tasks in class: having a debate, writing a summary, expressing an opinion, comparing two sources of information or presenting a

popular athlete. Students could even participate in some sort of competition or contest to better relate to the world of sports.

In addition, the multimedia content allows for the exposure to different language varieties and registers, contexts and, even, different topics around sports: economy, climate, fashion, health, geography, communication, politics, childhood, equality, technology, human body, medicine, justice, among others.

Finally, the fact that the learners can access a huge amount of input in the target language from their mobile phone is a definitive argument in favor of the use of apps for language learning. Thus, teachers have to include their use as part of the program and requirements, not only as supplementary material, but as a fundamental part to understand the relevance of sports in the target society and as a rich source of real language for the students. This way, students will act in the same way as native speakers, by using sports and incorporating technologies into their daily lives.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Year 2004 was declared the European year for education through sports by the European Union. This article has pointed out that there is still plenty of work to do in terms of research and studies in the field. However, we have also discovered that, according to different documents on language learning, sport is a great asset that can allow teachers to articulate a Spanish or an English language course. This means that it is necessary to study students' needs, as well as the importance of individual and affective factors; also, we need to know which are the most effective didactic approaches for realia according to learners' age, and whether teachers need any kind of special training or not.

Concerning our three research questions, number one was "Are there specific apps to learn foreign languages through Sports?". The answer is YES, but only to teach English. We have *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*. Some other apps include sport content, but they are not specifically designed for this teaching approach. Therefore, our article shows a gap in the teaching of Spanish, since

there is not a single app related to our new language teaching methodology, combining languages and sports.

The second research question was about what kind of general apps can be selected to work with them in such a language class. Looking for some answers, this article has analyzed 17 apps connected to sports that can be very useful and appealing in the learning of a language. We have divided these apps into 5 different groups:

1. Language-based apps, to deal with grammar and vocabulary, mainly. We selected *Fundéu* and *Oxford Dictionary*. We have defined them as *consultative apps.*

2. Language learning apps, specifically designed for non-native speakers. Here we have *Spanish Challenge* and *Gramática Española* for Spanish and *British Council* for English, that have been categorized as *metalinguistic.*

3. English through Sports apps: *Cambridge English F. C.*, *Worldwide Sports Events* and *Career Paths: Sports*, the last two by Express Publishing, to serve as a complement the corresponding textbooks. We have discovered that there are no equivalents in Spanish, although their potential is clear.

4. General Sport journals apps, which are realia for the language classroom: *Marca* and *Mundo deportivo*, from Spain; *Olé*, from Argentina; and *SUN Sport* and *Mirror Sport* from the UK,

5. TV channels (*Eurosport*, *CBS Sports* and *BBC Sport* in English and *RTVE deporte* for Spanish), providing audiovisual materials which also allow some sort of interaction with the user and a high degree of customization.

Number 4 and number 5 have been proven to be the most useful apps in order to learn and practice languages through sports. The fact that they contain real materials that students can relate to the culture, make them especially relevant in the learning of a certain language, even by being exposed to different registers, varieties, contexts and accents.

Finally, our last research question inquired about the kind of activities to be performed with the help of apps in the language classroom. We have seen that with every app, but especially with the ones in these last groups, there is a wide range of activities that can

be done; most importantly, this work can continue outside of the classroom, becoming a very valuable part of students' daily lives.

Therefore, we claim that the use of apps for language learning is in line with the recommendations of the Instituto Cervantes for language teachers, highlighting the importance of the digital competence (Instituto Cervantes, 2012: 27). Social media and apps find their place in the language through sports lessons: they are perfect examples of the implementation of technology in the classroom and enhance autonomous learning. The use of realia allows students to access relevant updated information about sports of their choice, which can promote motivation and engagement in the target language. Moreover, their knowledge of local or national sports can facilitate their integration while in immersion. Being this is still a young field, there are plenty of possibilities yet to explore, both in English and Spanish through sports. Although this has been a rather theoretical approach to the subject, we would definitely want to implement this useful information to the language classroom. Articulating a language through sport course which incorporates these apps would certainly be one of our main aims. We hope this article contributes to the promotion of this approach among language educators by opening new avenues for language learning and teaching.

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Up2B2: Playing English grammar games at the B2 level

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ABSTRACT

The study presented herein is framed within the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approach and presents the results from the use of an original mobile app, developed by the research team, on the part of 73 students. The app prototype consists of multiple choice questions and answers that assess varied aspects of the grammar, vocabulary and use of English at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). The application presents motivating gamification components that aim at enhancing students' participation and regular use of the game. Some of these gamification features are response time, use of competition and training tests, and a score ranking based on nicknames. The study uses different indexes in order to describe the use of the platform and qualitative and quantitative indicators to reach positive conclusions related to students' increased motivation and improvement in their grammar and vocabulary competence levels.

Keywords*: Applications in subject areas; architectures for educational technology system; evaluation of CAL systems; post-secondary education; mobile assisted language learning*

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities and other tertiary level centres or institutions are today experiencing a global revolution for which internationalization is a priority if they are to survive. Bilingual programmes across Europe, degrees taught in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI programmes) or Erasmus+ student and teacher mobility imply the need to demonstrate an adequate level of proficiency in English which most universities across Europe have established as B2, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). A B2 level has been established as the minimum standard for engineering students at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) to obtain their degree, although placement tests carried out across the university for the last seven years place most of them at an A2/B1 level. This means, for many students, two levels below the required one. To deal with this and other similar situations, some official programmes at different European universities have incorporated subjects that

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aim to prepare the students to obtain the required B2 certification. Others have opted for an extracurricular offer with or without the participation of the language centres in the same universities when such language centres exist.

In the last few years, the UPM has offered both optional subjects in its degrees as well as free-elective European credits through extracurricular training, in order to prepare students preferably for the "Test of English for International Communication" (TOEIC), but more generally for most external certifications included in the list provided by the CRUE (Conferencia de Rectores de Universidades Españolas – Spanish Universities Rector Conference) as official certifications (CRUE Acreditación en idiomas) http://www.acreditacion.crue.org/. Furthermore, several innovation projects which address the learning of English[i] have been developed by groups under innovation university internal calls for internationalization.

Our research was developed under one of these innovation projects. A game, called Up2B2, was presented to enhance and motivate the practice of English grammar and vocabulary at a B2 level on the part of the students (Argüelles Álvarez et al. 2015). The project was framed within Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Viberg and Grönlund 2012, Chinnery 2006), which is increasingly associated with mobile gaming, as Kukulska-Hulme (2009: 159) puts it, the basic idea being that students use their mobile devices to learn languages through games. The concept of gamification (Kapp 2012, Werbach 2014) has therefore been directly associated with MALL.

More specifically, the aim of our research was to design and test a multiple-choice question and answer game to review different aspects of grammar, vocabulary and use of language at the B2 proficiency level. The game was considered a complement to other possible regular or extracurricular English courses that the students at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería y Sistemas de Telecomunicación could be attending. It was offered to 73 students who were at either higher A2 or B1 English level. All these students had been admitted and were enrolled in the groups preparing for the B2 certification exam at the UPM. Initially, the aim was twofold. On the one hand, it intended to study the degree of improvement, if any, in the proficiency level of those students who used the app regularly as compared with those students who did not. On the other hand, the aim was to reach conclusions regarding motivational aspects which

could derive from the use of the gamification features in the app to learn vocabulary and grammar.

Several studies point to the contribution of the MALL approach to learning. Viberg and Grönlund (2012) revise research carried out in the field of MALL from 2007 to 2012 and conclude that MALL enhances the learning of foreign languages. Burston (2013) presents annotated bibliography of implementation studies in MALL, many of them comparing groups in pre- and post-tests with positive results in listening skills, vocabulary learning, grammar knowledge, reading comprehension and writing skills (spelling, grammar, punctuation, editing or re-drafting) apart from other more general gains in motivation to learn, e.g. reflection on language usage or use of strategies and positive interaction. Rico et al. (2015) also highlight the benefits of MALL and game-based learning.

Motivation has been found to be vital to increase students' participation and success (Milligan et al. 2013). Individual motivation is related to the reasons to do something (Ryan and Deci 2000). An individual is intrinsically motivated to carry out an activity for the mere satisfaction inherent in the activity, whereas they will be extrinsically motivated by the impulse to complete an activity to get a desired result. Gamification combines these two types of motivation: it provides extrinsic rewards such as levels, points or badges, which improve engagement, in addition to raising feelings of mastery achievement, autonomy and sense of belonging (Muntean 2011).

Several studies have demonstrated the added value of motivation to the learning process when incorporating typical features of games (Osma Ruiz et al. 2015a, 2015b). Others have shown that students prefer to use games as a means to learn grammar or vocabulary not only because they find it more enjoyable and challenging, but also because they find the learning more fruitful and long-lasting (Lui 2014). Furthermore, benefits of learning languages through the use of apps that integrate gamification features are reported in Sauerland et al. (2015) or Figueroa (2015).

Mosavi-Miangah and Nezarat (2012) add to these conclusions and the well-known concept of "anytime/anywhere" (ubiquitous learning or u-learning in Jung 2014) other advantages and also disadvantages of mobile language learning. The pros include a better use of the students' free time, while some of the cons would be reading

difficulties on small screens, problems to complete specific tasks mostly due to an inappropriate initial design – activities that take too long to complete on the mobile devices and/or lack or cost of Internet access (Stockwell 2008) – or, most frequently, issues related to usability and accessibility (Jordano de la Torre et al. 2013 cited in Pareja et al. 2016). The study of the aspects specifically related to the use of a mobile app to learn are therefore also of great interest. This is the reason why, in our study, we added a third aim to the two already mentioned: to analyse parameters that characterize some of the user patterns, so as to reach some preliminary conclusions on ubiquitous learning.

II. CONTEXT

The app prototype, Up2B2, was developed by the Multidisciplinary Educational Innovation Group (GIEM)[ii] in the academic year 2014-2015 (Argüelles Álvarez et al. 2015). The repository of questions and answers comes from former pen and paper proficiency exams that had been carried out for the previous three academic years (six semesters) across the University and had afterwards been validated by members of the group. Validity and reliability issues were addressed in (Argüelles Álvarez 2013) and (Argüelles Álvarez and Martínez Núñez 2015), based on more than 2,000 answers to each of the questions and answers that made up the final bank of 500 questions and answers for the app.

As described in the introduction section, Up2B2 presents a gamification component which seeks to motivate students using it. Our hypothesis is that the competitiveness features of the activities will favour the regular use of the game and the students' interest in the app (Ryu 2013, Sykes and Reinhardt 2013, Osma Ruiz et al. 2015a, 2015b). As mentioned earlier, the aim of our research is threefold: firstly, different indexes have been defined for monitoring the platform and to reach conclusions regarding the extent to which a MALL methodology influences an improvement in proficiency, if any. Secondly, we aim to study the motivational factors related to the use of MALL together with the inclusion of several gamification features in the learning process. Lastly, ubiquitous learning is preliminary studied based on some patterns of

use, as these are important components in any mobile-based non-formal learning process.

Based on previous research on motivation by Stockwell (2013) or Ushioda (2013), questionnaires were purposefully designed (Appendix I) to look for students' perceptions and perspectives in relation to mobile language learning. The results of these questionnaires were analysed qualitatively by a frequency Likert scale and correlation spearman's coefficient.

These questionnaires were prepared and administered together with the post-test that 73 students completed after a period of four months' training preceded by a pre-test. The pre/post-tests, as noted above, aimed to assess improvements in students' proficiency levels, and gave rise to the quantitative results that will be presented later.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE APP

III.1. Application requirements and design

The system that realizes the Up2B2 application has been designed to meet a set of requirements. In the following we summarize these requirements together with the rationale behind them:

- The game has to be playable by using the widest possible range of mobile/non-mobile devices (client devices in what follows), including smartphones (Android, iOS or others), tablets and personal computers. Since students are going to use their own equipment to play the game, this requirement makes it easier for more students to enter the system no matter what specific device they have.

- The players are included in a ranking based on their score. The ranking is made public but each player is shown by their nickname instead of their real name. This requisite defines the Up2B2 gamification features the effects of which are evaluated in this work.

- The database of multiple-choice questions together with their associated meta-information (correct answer, category, level of difficulty) is maintained on a server. The client device should not store the questions but download them online just at the

time when they are needed to play. This enables the questions to be updated without having to update all the locally installed apps and it also saves memory space on the client devices.

- Stemming from the previous requisite, the client device needs to have an operative Internet access whenever the player wants to do a test. Any additional technical requisite on the client device should be kept at a minimum, for the same reasons set out in the first point above.

- The server also has to store the parameters that define the main characteristics of the game: the ranking of the different players, the maximum time to perform each test, whether there is a maximum time of inactivity after which the user loses points, etc. Again, this allows the game parameters to be updated without having to force all the users to update the app on their devices.

- The server should provide the administrator with the possibility of updating both the questions in the database and the configuration of the game parameters so that all the changes take place at the same time.

Given the requirements presented, we chose web technologies to develop Up2B2 and it was implemented as a multiplatform WebAPP. The client-side, which implements the user interface, has as the sole requisite a web browser capable of executing JavaScript code and applying CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) rules. The vast majority of modern devices fulfil these basic requirements. Moreover, we produced native versions of the app for Android and iOS users, although the web-based access is always available on any platform.

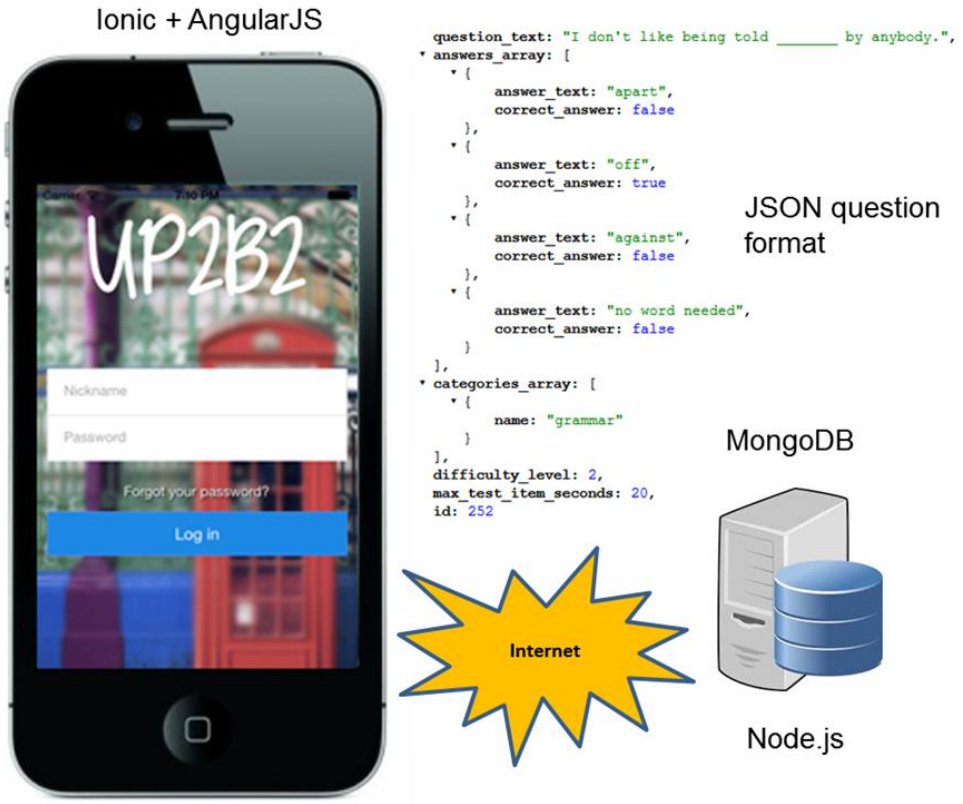

Figure 1. Main technologies used by the Up2B2 app.

The application was designed to be adaptive, suitable for different screen sizes and services. Visually attractive CSS components were used, which greatly resemble those on the most popular platforms and contribute to a distinctive look-and-feel aspect, very similar to native applications.

The server-side, i.e. the back end of the application, is deployed on a specific server accessible via the Internet and provides all the necessary management of users and application parameters and hosts the questions database. Figure 1 shows a schematic representation of the main elements involved in Up2B2 and their associated technologies. We would like to refer the reader interested in more technical details to (Argüelles Álvarez et al. 2015).

III.2. Introduction of gamification features: competition tests

As mentioned in the introduction to the study, the aim of the gamification features included is to increase the students' motivation in the use of the application, thus favouring their training in the language aspects that can be exercised through it. We designed a system by which users obtain points after having completed competition tests. These points serve to order the users on the participants' global ranking so that everyone can check their position on it.

The number of points that each user gets results from their language competence, on the one hand, and the speed when answering the competition tests, on the other. Furthermore, a hysteresis component has been introduced to consider not only the last test completed but also the previous ones, with a weight that decreases exponentially. This means that whenever the user completes a new competition test, the score obtained is weighted equally (50% each) with their previous score, in order to obtain the updated number of points of the player. Every player starts the game with 0 points. The number of points obtained in a specific competition test is calculated as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Operations made to obtain the score in a competition test.

P_test = P_competence + P_speed.
P_competence = 9 x (num. of correct answers) – 4 x (num. of mistakes).
P_speed = +10 (if the test is completed in less than half the maximum time established) or -10 (in the opposite case).

From the way the score is calculated and bearing in mind that every competition test consists of ten questions, it can be deduced that the number of points of each student is always between -50 and +100. The weighting derived from the hysteresis favours that the "new stars", who improve fast from lower scores, get more points in absolute value than those who have a longer history of excellent results. This aspect is not by chance, as there are in fact many seasonal competition sports (e.g. tennis) that establish, in a similar way, a ranking mechanism that favours those players who are situated in a lower position and improve significantly. This scoring procedure increases competitiveness and forces the participants who are situated in higher positions to maintain a sustained effort in order to defend their position in the ranking.

The platform also provides the option to subtract points if the user spends a given amount of time without doing any competition test (e.g. 48 hours) and so regularity in the use of the game is promoted through the game itself. Nevertheless, for the current academic year we have considered it more suitable not to activate this option to control a possible negative effect in the case of those users who experience loss of points in the ranking due to non-regular use.

The users were introduced into the system by their real names and email addresses. They were provided with an initial random password but they could (and were recommended to) change both their username (their nickname) and password the first time they entered the application. Therefore, the user ranking shows nicknames instead of real names, as can be seen on the right-hand side of Figure 2.

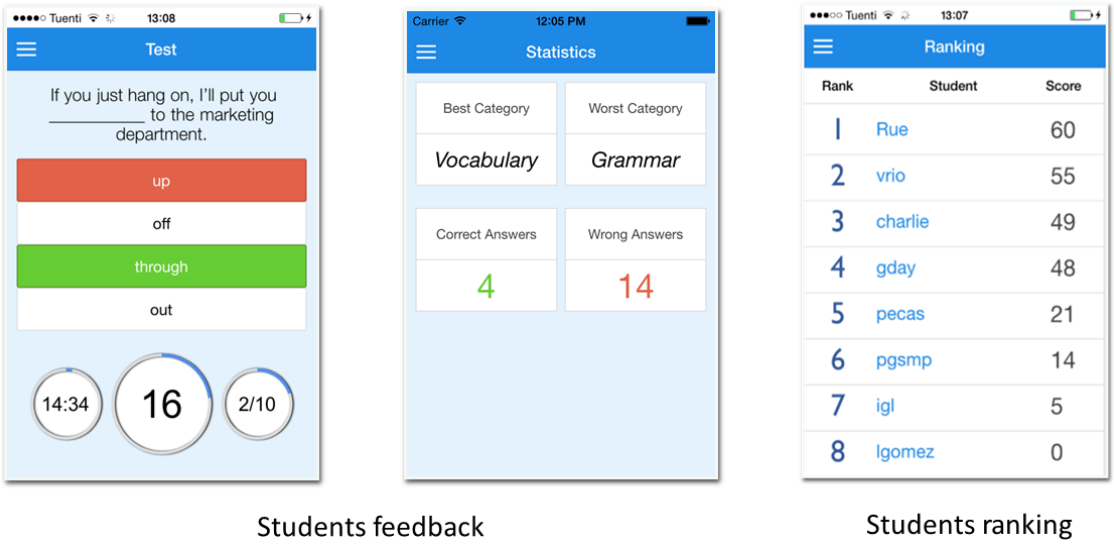

Figure 2. Feedback given to students through training tests (left and centre) and players ranking associated to competition tests (right).

III.3. Feedback and specific categories review: training tests

It should not be forgotten that the main aim of the Up2B2 application is to offer further training in the English language at a B2 level. The users can present different needs to reinforce specific aspects of the language (e.g. word order), and they could find it useful to receive feedback regarding the categories where they perform better or worse according to the historical record maintained in the server.

Pursuing this aim and in addition to the competition tests, the user can also select training tests. The goal of these tests is to prepare the students before the actual use of the competition ones. The results on training tests do not modify the score obtained by the user in competition as the objective of the training tests is only of a formative nature. This modality allows the user to select the category he/she wants to train (Grammar, Vocabulary, Word order or Verbs) or to opt for a random mixture of categories in a way similar to what they are expected to do in competition tests (Assorted category). The training tests have fewer time restrictions than the competition ones; besides, for every question answered, the results are clearly reported, and in the case of not having succeeded, the correct option is highlighted (see Figure 2, left-hand side and centre).

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

IV.I Methodology followed for the study

From the research team's experience in previous innovation projects, students usually report that they feel overloaded when asked to collaborate in innovation research. The main reason they give is that they have to deal with too many resources in their regular courses and researchers ask them to use a new one, an app in our case. Thus, they often ask for structured environments, clear instructions and a high degree of orientation when it comes to incorporating new tools into their learning.

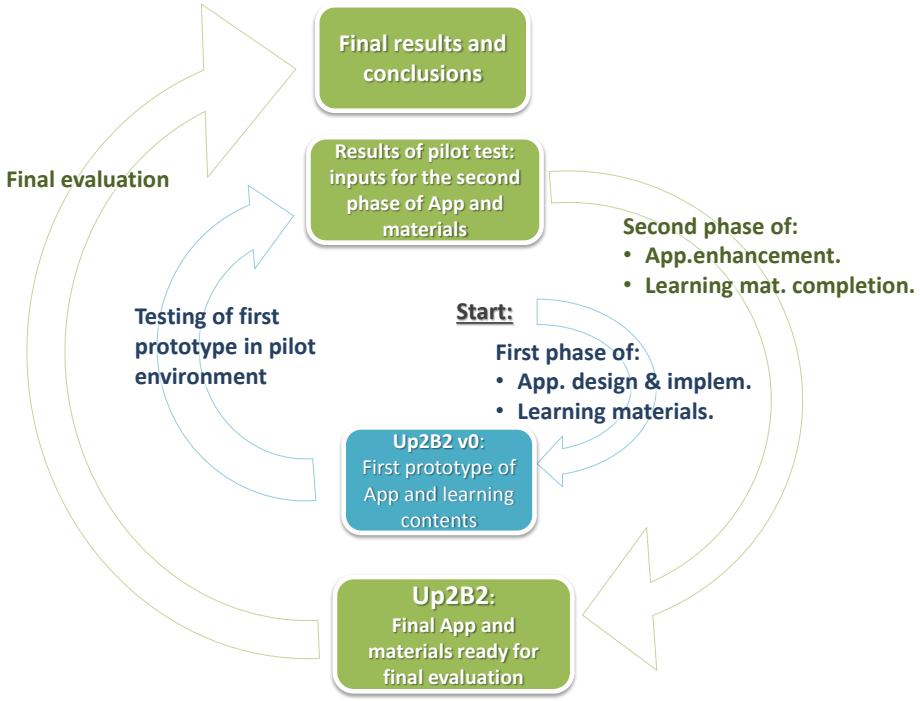

Figure 3. Methodology followed for Up2B2.

The design, development, validation and test methodology that we have followed for the Up2B2 system follows a spiral model (see Figure 3). Two phases are considered to be necessary for the design and implementation in order to better adapt the app to the needs of real users. In the first phase (Argüelles Álvarez et al. 2015) the prototype was tried out by a small group of students in a closed and controlled environment to analyse its usability, since this is one of the aspects considered important from the initial design, as highlighted in previous research (Ali et al. 2015, Jordano de la Torre et al. 2013 cited in Pareja et al. 2016).

This first phase allowed us to develop the second version of the app, as well as to improve the server database with additional questions, up to around 500, as stated earlier. It also made us aware of the importance of clearly informing the users on the specificities of the app in order to encourage its usage before the evaluation. Thus, we followed an ordered list of stages for the second phase of Up2B2, paying special attention to the information given to the students, not only before the evaluation period but also during it.

The study was carried out during the second semester (spring semester) of the academic year 2015-2016. Firstly, in-class information was given to the students at the beginning of the academic semester. Either one or two teachers from the research team gave a brief talk to the groups of students that were offered the possibility of using Up2B2. In this way, students learnt about the basics of the app and they knew beforehand that they would receive an automatic mail with the necessary information to start the process. All potential users had previously been given access to the aforementioned Moodle site, and the automatic email was sent to invite them into this platform. Once they had logged in, students could find the instructions to officially enrol in the Up2B2 activity.

Those students who decided to participate had to fill in a short questionnaire that was useful for characterizing the sample (demographical data, studies-related data and information on their previous experience in using apps to learn English). Secondly, they had to do a placement test (i.e. the pre-test) to estimate their initial level of English. We used the Oxford Quick Placement Test v2 for this purpose. Once they had finished, they received a second e-mail, this time personalized, which provided each student with their initial username and password to access the Up2B2 app.

Students could contact the Up2B2 team throughout the competition period by using a specific email address in case they had any doubts or problems. After this period had expired, participants were again asked to log into the Moodle site in order to repeat the placement test (i.e. the post-test) and to fill in a final survey. The results of this final survey would be analysed by the research team to measure their satisfaction while studying English with the app.

IV.II Characterization of the sample and statistical analysis

The number of students selected for the study was 73. The group was randomly chosen among the individuals who were enrolled in the subject Introduction to English for Professional and Academic Communication I and II, two B2 level preparatory subjects that are taught in different engineering degrees at the UPM. The sample was split into two: the experimental group (63 individuals) and the control group (10 individuals). Since most students wanted to use the app, the researchers opted for a small control group (Fidalgo-Blanco et al. 2016). Nevertheless, this control group would have enough

subjects to ensure that both the experimental and the control groups were statistically homogeneous according to the Levene statistic, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characterization of the sample.

CHARACTERIZATION OF ENGLISH LEVEL AND STUDY HABITS			
	GROUP % (nº)		TOTAL % (nº)
INITIAL LEVEL	CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL	
A2	30% (3)	26.98% (17)	28.76% (21)
B1	50% (5)	55.55% (35)	54.80% (40)
B2	20% (2)	17.46% (11)	16.44% (12)
STUDY TIME			
1 : Less than 1 hour	30% (3)	39.68% (25)	38.35% (28)
2 : Between 1 and 3 hours	50% (5)	36.50% (23)	38.35% (28)
3 : Between 3 and 5 hours	20% (7)	19.05% (12)	19.18% (14)
4 : More than 5 hours	0% (0)	4.76% (3)	4.12% (3)
TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION			
Uses smartphone apps to learn English	20% (2)	33.33% (21)	31.51% (23)
Uses web apps to learn English (not mobile devices)	20% (2)	36.51% (23)	34.25% (25)
INDIVIDUALS CHARACTERIZATION			
Male	70% (7)	73.015% (46)	72.60% (53)
Female	30% (3)	26.99% (17)	27.40% (20)
Between 20 and 26 years old	100% (10)	100% (63)	100% (73)
Studies: engineering degree	100% (10)	100% (63)	100% (73)

The statistical analysis reported in this paper was carried out using IBM's SPSS software version 21. Data follow normality, based on the Shapiro-Wilk test. From the data presented in Table 2, and the Levene statistic for variance homogeneity, in the initial analysis (Levene C = 0.389 and level p = 0.679), we could state that both groups of items are equivalent for the study, i.e. they are statistically homogeneous regarding the characterization of the sample.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

V.1. Students' marks

The study of the improvement in academic results in the course was conducted with the previously defined groups. The group that used the application had a mean score of 38.49 (SD = 7.92) in the post-test, while the control group had a mean score of 33.90 (SD = 6.707).

In this first analysis we studied the improvement in learning attained by using the app Up2B2. We carried out a 2 (group type) x 1 (examination) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The student's initial level grades were controlled by a pre-test.

We considered the exams as intra-subject variables and the group type as the variable between the subjects. A significant effect between both variables was found: for tests, $F = 103.90$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.597$, for group type (i.e. control vs. experimental), $F = 5.885$, $p < 0.018$, $\eta^2 = 0.78$, and for interaction $F = 6.256$, $p <0.015$, $\eta^2 = 0.082$.

After having used the application for the competition period, the two groups exhibited statistically significant differences in the test results, the marks obtained by the experimental group being higher than those of the control group.

The app performance was measured through the level of improvement in the learning results in the post-test. This improvement has been also corroborated by different studies on English language learning with mobile devices (Saran et al. 2012, Chen and Hsu 2008, Cavus and Ibrahim 2009), all of them based on instructional learning. Positive knowledge gains are mainly explained by more frequent practice and repetition (Saran et al. 2012, Thornton and Houser 2005). Our study, even within the same context of instructional learning, incorporates gamification features that were not present in the aforementioned articles. The incorporation of gamification features, as stated earlier, brings with it a more interactive learning experience and increased motivation.

V.2. Students' motivation

For the analysis of students' motivation and expectations, the students' responses were examined after the application use period had expired by applying a standardized evaluation instrument (Jung 2014). We used a Likert scale (1-5), the analysis being

focused on students' responses to questions concerning the following points: 1) to what extent the characteristics of mobile learning (ubiquity, innovation, ease of use, usefulness and contents) are elements that motivate learning, and 2) how much they perceive that they have learned and how high their expectations are to continue learning.

The total number of respondents was 63. From the 9 elements analysed and shown in Table 3 below, a Cronbach alpha of 0.836 was obtained. When analysing the results we must highlight that students do not consider the app as the only instrument to improve their level of English (Q7) with a mean of 2.94 (SD = 1.01). However, the use of an app for learning "is more fun" (Q5) with an average of 3.97 (SD = 0.86) and it is a challenge they welcome (Q3), with a mean of 3.73 (SD = 0.87).

Table 3. Percentages of participant responses regarding their attitudes towards motivation and expectations with Up2B2.

	Frequency (%)					Mean	SD
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)		
(Q1) Using different working modalities whenever I feel like it has helped me design my own learning strategy.	1.59	20.63	28.57	33.33	15.87	3.41	1.04
(Q2) I like using new and different methods to study English.	0.00	3.17	12.70	41.27	42.86	4.24	0.80
(Q3) Learning English using an app is an interesting challenge.	0.00	7.94	30.16	42.86	19.05	3.73	0.87
(Q4) Using an app to learn English makes me invest more time in my learning.	0.00	7.94	30.16	42.86	19.05	3.65	0.94
(Q5) Using an app to study English makes it more fun.	1.59	4.76	14.29	53.97	25.40	3.97	0.86
(Q6) Using an app to study English makes me feel good.	4.76	9.52	26.98	38.10	20.63	3.60	1.07
(Q7) I can improve my competence in English up	9.52	23.81	31.75	33.33	1.59	2.94	1.01

to the level I need only with an app.							
(Q8) The combination of my previous knowledge in English and the information I get through an app can help me improve my marks in English.	0.00	9.52	31.75	50.79	7.94	3.57	0.78
(Q9) After this experience, I will use other mobile apps to study English.	4.76	7.94	22.22	50.79	14.29	3.62	0.99

Almost 85% of the students who used the application demand new learning methodologies and agree or strongly agree that they like to use new and different methods to study English (Q2). However, less than 50% identify these technologies as a tool to design their own learning strategy (Q1). These results indicate that, although students consider this app as a novel and innovative learning tool, they are not willing to incorporate this tool into their personal learning strategy in the long term.

65% of the students plan to continue using mobile applications to study English (Q9). In addition, approximately 59% agree that this app helps to improve their competence in English (Q8).

Motivational factors are linked to gamification as the basis to understand motivation to play. Five motivational adaptive factors to use the application have been selected from the questions in the survey based on Personal Investment Theory (PIT) (Shilling and Hayashi 2001, McNamara et al. 2009) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Selected motivational adaptive factors.

IMMEDIACY	(Q10) The app has allowed me to obtain information to learn English quite immediately.
INNOVATION	(Q11) I am a person who is in the habit of trying new things before others.
USEFULNESS	(Q12) I consider this application useful to learn English.
EASINESS	(Q13) Learning English has been easier with this app.
INTERACTIVITY/ CONNECTIVITY	(Q14) The app let me interact with other students.

The correlation coefficients of these motivational factors are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation Spearman's coefficient.

		Innovation	Usefulness	Easiness	Interactivity/ Connectivity
Immediacy	Correlation coef. (bilateral significance)	-.096 (p = .455)	.390** (p = .002)	.468** (p = .000)	.332** (p = .008)
Innovation	Correlation coef. (bilateral significance)		.069 (p = .592)	.074 (p = .563)	.272* (p = .031)
Usefulness	Correlation coef. (bilateral significance)			.795** (p = .000)	.420** (p = .001)
Easiness	Correlation coef. (bilateral significance)				.424** (p = .001)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral)

Whereas innovation factors do not seem to be important as a motivational factor to use the application, connectivity and interaction of the application influences the rest of the motivational factors (immediacy, innovation, usefulness, easiness). As connectivity and interaction motivational factors are provided by the gamification elements, we can conclude that incorporating gamification elements increases students' motivation to study. The positive feedback they get pushes students forward and they become more interested and stimulated to learn (Muntean 2011). Gamification has been frequently used to provide incentives seeking to modify specific negative behaviours such as discouraging interruptions or distraction. Previous studies provide convincing arguments for what is viewed as the core of mobile learning: the facilitation of learning across different contexts, as defined by Sharples et al. (2007) or Pachler et al. (2010).

V.3. Students' usage profile

Learning outside the classroom places the responsibility for time management on the students themselves. Ubiquity provided by mobile devices is especially useful for non-formal learning because it is integrated into the users' real life. Undertaking learning activities, for example, while in transit, is only made possible by using mobile devices.

Generally speaking, there are two ways of using mobile devices to support mobile language learning: as a regular, habitual pattern of activity or in a spontaneous, unplanned way (Kukulska-Hulme et al. 2012). Regular patterns revolve mainly around opportunities in daily routines, such as at breakfast, lunch times or last thing before

going to bed, whereas spontaneous learning is determined by sudden available time and student's mood for learning.

In this research, ubiquitous learning and use patterns are preliminary studied from the histogram of times at which students use the app in a day or during the week as well as the time spent playing with the app per day. The actual usage pattern is valuable information in order to make future improvements to the app usability and, consequently, to improve the students' learning experience. For example, implementing specific feedback for students who follow a planned app usage schema, e.g. every night before going to bed, will be easier.

In what follows, results are discussed in terms of students' activity profile. Figure 4 shows the tendency in the times at which the app is used and supports the idea of a greater degree of freedom to use personal time, thus personalizing the way and the context in which the student actually studies. This is a clear example of anytime/anywhere learning patterns that MALL technologies make easier (Saleh and Bhat 2015).

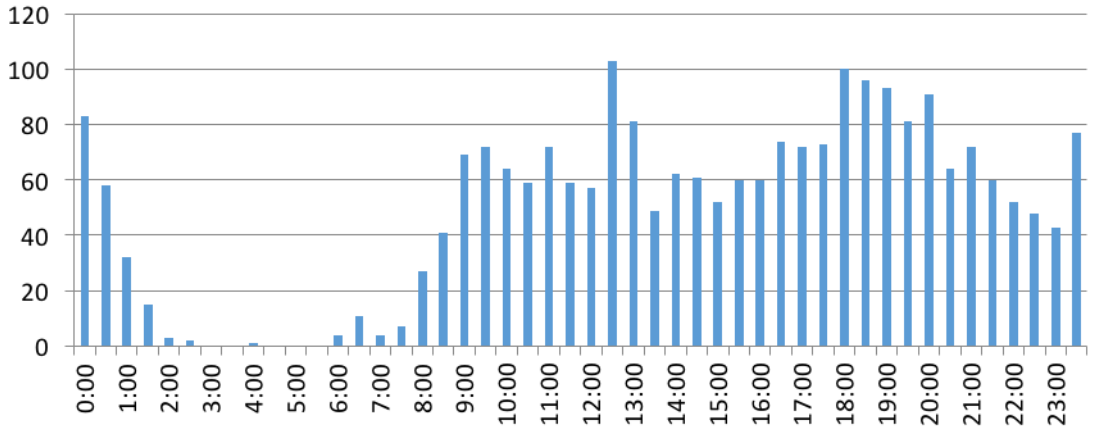

Figure 4. Daily usage profile.

Figure 4 shows the histogram of times at which students accessed the Up2B2 system throughout the day. The server logs revealed that there are high activity levels around midnight, from 11:30 pm to 2:00 am, which falls drastically after this time. This can be considered a good use of time available after having dinner and before going to bed.

Activity resumes again at 6:00 am and starts increasing from 8:00 am, which can be considered breakfast time. Another moment that can be related to common daily activities is seen at 13:30, lunch time in Spain, when there is a peak of activity. Students might be using the app while waiting in the cafeteria self-service queue.

Regarding Saturday and Sunday, many people try to plan time at the weekend for homework or extra activities and, therefore, these could be considered regular planned activities. However, in our study, as shown in Figure 5, most of the students prefer not to carry out learning activities with the app at the weekend. Even Mondays exhibit low figures, only around 10% of test activity. The bulk of activity occurs in the middle of the week, with a high concentration of activity around Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

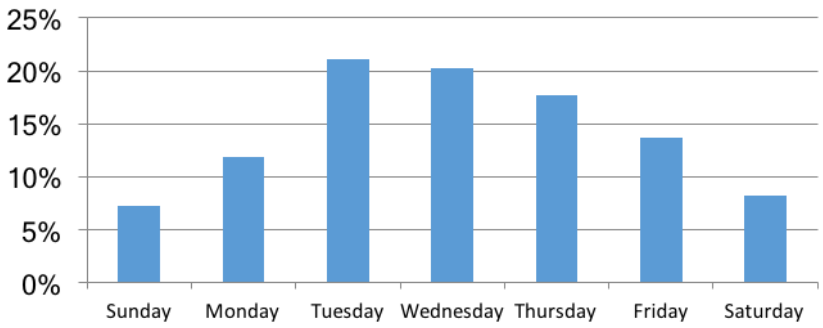

Figure 5. Weekly usage profile.

Finally, it is important to know how long the students are engaged doing tests. As shown in Figure 6 most of the days (35%) students do just one test. 55% of the days students did between two and 10 tests per day. There are a residual number of situations (10%) where students do more than 10 tests per day.

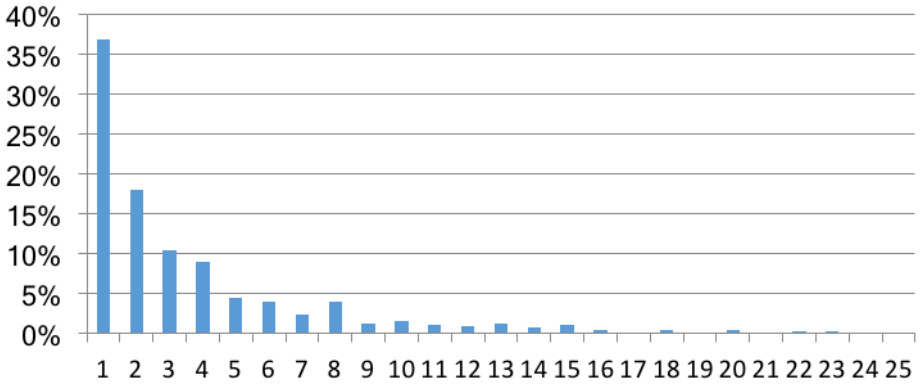

Figure 6. Students tests per day histogram.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

In this article we have presented the fundamental characteristics of an application consisting of a question-answer competition game for the learning of English language at a B2 level. The application has been oriented to its use from mobile terminals in accordance with the MALL approaches, and has been designed integrating a strong gamification component which aims at motivating its users to use it regularly. In addition, as an innovative contribution, the application has been fed with a wide battery of questions and answers, previously validated by their use in official examinations for the accreditation of the B2 level in English at the UPM.

The app has been evaluated through an ANCOVA analysis by measuring the students' improvement in their results in an English test. Two groups of statistically homogeneous students were selected, i.e. the experimental and the control groups. After the competition period with the app, the experimental group obtained higher marks in the post-test than the control group.

Regarding motivation, the accomplishment of competition tests and the subsequent positioning on a mastery ranking has proved to be a challenging practice. On the other hand, training tests allow the students to exercise specific language skills. Students' motivation and expectations have been studied by means of a survey, in which a standardized evaluation instrument based on a Likert scale has been used. The use of the app has been found to be positive for the objective of learning English, even though it is not considered as the only instrument neither is it seen as a tool to be included in a

personal learning strategy in the long term. Five motivational factors have been evaluated in the survey and the correlation coefficients among them have been extracted. From the results, we have found that connectivity and interactivity are the main motivational factors that influence the rest. These two factors are directly related to gamification features, and we can conclude that gamification has played an important role in fostering motivation to study English.

Study habits are influenced by the "anytime / anywhere" possibilities that mobile apps present. In our analysis we have found that students tend to make a good use of, otherwise idle, periods (just before going to bed or waiting in the cafeteria queue), although weekends are not their preferred time to study. Regarding frequency of use, only 10% of the students do more than 10 tests per day, 1 or 2 tests per day being the most usual frequency.

Up2B2 offers university students interested in improving their competence in English anytime and anywhere a convenient way to study, provided they have access to a smartphone. Moreover, working with a technology that they use on a daily basis and with which they feel confident, favours acceptance and learning becomes easier. From the results obtained, MALL should be considered as another resource alongside the others in the educational toolbox.

The relationship between personal differences or learning styles and proficiency in English is an area worth investigating. The results derived from this analysis could be very useful for improving the app in order for it to better adapt to the students' needs and preferences. As a secondary future objective, we will aim at receiving feedback on from the students using the app regarding aspects more related with the technology and its usability. These are interesting from the point of view of the app functionality and the users' experience in order to improve the prototype in further stages of the research. The evaluation of this experience and the students' sensitivity to the app from a more technical point of view will also allow us to reach conclusions regarding possible individual differences among users.

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Notes

[i] Among these projects we highlight the following: ILLLAB: Mobile Application for Language Learning "Up2B2" (course 2014/2015, UPM code: IE1415-59002), and TechEnglish (course 2014/2015, UPM code: PT1415-01000).

[ii] Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería y Sistemas de Telecomunicación (School of Telecommunications and System Engineering) at the UPM.

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APPENDIX 1

Cuestionario posterior a la utilización de la aplicación

Valore las siguientes cuestiones relacionadas con su experiencia durante la utilización de la app UP2B2 para la mejora de sus conocimientos de inglés. Evalúe cada una con un número entre 1 (nada de acuerdo, muy poco) y 5 (muy de acuerdo, mucho).

		1	2	3	4	5
La app me ha permitido utilizar contenido para aprender inglés cuando y donde lo he necesitado.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La app me ha permitido obtener información para aprender inglés de manera inmediata.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
He podido estudiar el contenido necesario para el aprendizaje del inglés a través de un proceso de aprendizaje auto dirigido.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
He podido acceder al contenido necesario para el aprendizaje del inglés directamente a través de la app.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La posibilidad de utilizar varios modos (competición, entrenamiento) para trabajar le da un carácter más personal a la app.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
El poder utilizar las distintas modalidades de trabajo cuando yo quiera me ha permitido diseñar mi propia estrategia de aprendizaje.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Me gusta utilizar métodos nuevos y diferentes para estudiar inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Soy una persona que suele probar cosas nuevas antes que otros.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Encuentro el contenido de la aplicación completo.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La aplicación funciona bien.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Esta aplicación me ha resultado útil para aprender inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Con esta aplicación me ha resultado más fácil aprender inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La app me ha permitido interactuar con otros estudiantes de inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La utilización de una app facilita la comunicación entre estudiantes de inglés y proveedores de contenidos.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Aprender inglés utilizando una app es un reto que me agrada.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Utilizar una app para aprender inglés me hace invertir más tiempo en este aprendizaje.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Utilizar una app para estudiar inglés lo hace más divertido.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Utilizar una app para estudiar inglés me hace sentir bien.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Estoy satisfecho con el uso de una app para el aprendizaje del inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Prefiero el uso de una app a otros métodos de aprendizaje del inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Puedo mejorar mis conocimientos de inglés hasta el nivel que necesito a través de una app.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
La combinación entre mis conocimientos previos de inglés y la información que puedo adquirir a través de una app me puede ayudar a mejorar mi nota de inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Después de esta experiencia pienso seguir utilizando aplicaciones móviles para estudiar inglés.	◉	○	○	○	○	○

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Medical English teaching and beyond: A multimodal and integrated approach

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to show how Medical English teaching materials may be improved by introducing multimodal tasks encouraging a holistic approach to communication. Medical English for Specific Purposes textbooks and coursebooks typically focus on how to speak effectively, but they fail to prepare doctors to speak and behave affectively, although it has been demonstrated that how doctors communicate is as important as what they communicate in order to build a therapeutic alliance with their patients (Ambady et al. 2002; Cao et al. 2016; DiMatteo et al. 1980; Hall 1995, among others). Teaching materials should thus include activities aimed at strengthening doctors' ability to offer patient-centred care through mindful communication in association with specific body signals. A proof-of-concept teaching unit is provided here in order to exemplify how ESP materials could be made more responsive to the needs of professional practice by adopting a method that brings together targets for learning Medical English as well as counselling techniques.

Keywords: *Medical English teaching, ESP, multimodal learning, patient-centred communication, counselling*

I. INTRODUCTION

Doctor-patient communication has been studied extensively over the years (e.g. Fong Ha & Longnecker 2010; Salanger-Meyer 2014), with the ultimate aim of improving the quality and effectiveness of medical encounters. Most studies, however, have remained confined to the observation of the linguistic and paralinguistic features of this type of specialised spoken discourse (Gülich 2003; Adolphs et al. 2004; Ten Hacken & Panacová 2015), disregarding the interplay of the verbal dimension with other semiotic modes, which also play an important role in successful communication between doctors and their patients. Research has recently started to show that non-verbal elements (e.g. facial expressions, hand gestures, body posture and movement) are also fundamental for patient engagement and management (cf. among others, Duffy et al. 2004; Yasmeen 2013; Franceschi 2017). These studies suggest that healthcare professionals should be made aware of the whole range of possibilities and strategies, both linguistic and para-linguistic, available to them for effective communication.

The existing materials for teaching Medical English, however, still focus almost exclusively on the analytic (or verbal meaning) component of language, with activities that help learners to

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expand their knowledge of specialised terminology and their speaking skills in a number of different situations. In other words, teaching materials tend to give more importance to language content (i.e. what is communicated) than to form (i.e. how something is communicated) (Franceschi, forthcoming). Although various types of tasks for developing appropriate communicative strategies are present in course and textbooks, they typically draw learners' attention only to a range of standardised rhetorical devices, e.g. for showing politeness, care and understanding towards patients when communicating a diagnosis. The fact that these attitudes towards the patient can be enhanced and supported through the use of accompanying non-verbal signals has been overlooked. Therefore, the following sections put forward a series of activities for teaching Medical English to trainee and practising doctors from a multimodal perspective, i.e. with audiovisual exercises aimed at raising their awareness of how the verbal message can be reinforced via specific non-verbal elements and behaviours.

The activities proposed below are based on authentic video-recorded interviews between doctors and patients with hepatitis C,[i] which can be considered model examples of successful recipient-tailored, i.e. patient-centred, communication.[ii] The following sections illustrate in detail a number of integrated techniques from two unrelated fields, i.e. EFL/ESL teaching and psychology/counselling, which should ideally make practising and prospective doctors more aware of the importance of affective communication in the medical sector. The didactic approach followed is thus multimodal[iii] and holistic in that it addresses both the verbal dimension and other modes of meaning-making in context. The watching/listening and speaking activities presented here are suitable for upper-intermediate and advanced learners, at a B2 or C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), respectively.

II. OBSERVING NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR

The first and fundamental step in the methodology proposed here consists in training learners to activate channels of attention that usually remain semi-dormant, because we tend to grant more importance to the expression of our inner thoughts and feelings rather than to the observation of the other. Listening and observing with full presence, however, is a necessary ingredient for doctors to be able to understand their patients' requests and what lies behind and beyond their words. In order to tune in with their patients, doctors need to adopt a receptive and supportive attitude consisting in specific behaviours aimed at facilitating communication. Despite the importance of the latter elements, learning how to deal with patients is often left to the doctor's own sensitivity and experience because university modules seldom teach communication and

relational skills explicitly.[iv] Language instruction may represent an opportunity to work both on the development of linguistic competence for specific medical purposes and on the doctors' ability to better liaise with their patients.

Doctor-patient dialogues contain several non-verbal elements worth drawing learners' attention to. As an in-class task, learners may first of all be asked to watch a fragment of a video-recorded dialogue without any audio and to observe physiognomy and body language. This silent observation phase, instead of a more traditional listening comprehension exercise, may be viewed as somewhat odd. This is because language learners usually listen for the gist, specific information, or new words and expressions to be acquired. The approach used here, instead, consists in first focusing learners' attention on facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements. An initial uninterrupted watching of a 2-3 minute segment is recommended,[v] after which some general questions need to be asked, as illustrated in Table 1, in order to gather learners' impressions about the nature of the relationship they have observed. This activity is geared towards raising learners' awareness of deceivingly peripheral issues, which are in fact important factors for successful medical communication.

Table 1. Initial questions following the silent observation phase

1. What is the doctor's attitude? How does the patient seem to react to it?
2. What do you think the doctor is like as a person?
3. Does the doctor behave in a professional manner?
4. How would you feel if you were the patient?
5. In your opinion, how does the doctor feel while talking to the patient?

Indirectly, this exercise also helps learners to broaden their knowledge of adjectives used to describe people's personalities and attitudes. It is important at this stage to brainstorm them and come up with as many words and phrases as possible, which may also be written on the board and clarified before continuing with the rest of the activity. The language instructor needs to expand vocabulary by introducing synonyms and antonyms, and may perhaps also ask learners to make comparisons between their own doctors and the one in the video, in order to stimulate more active participation and involvement. This may be done in small groups, in pairs or individually.

The next stage consists in identifying and naming the exact non-verbal elements associated with speech. The language instructor must pause the video whenever facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements appear to play an important supporting

function. Table 2a is an example of an exercise that each learner will do while the instructor shows and pauses the video at relevant moments. Every image frame in the exercise must correspond to the actual moment of the video shown on the screen for the whole group.

Table 2a. Example of a video observation exercise

Describe and interpret the doctor's behaviour (gaze, facial expressions, hand gestures, body posture, etc.)	
Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation
1 	
2 	
3 	

4		
5		
6		

Learners should be encouraged to describe, in their own words, the doctor's behaviour in the greatest detail possible. They could start, for instance, by considering gaze direction, facial expressions and specific hand gestures, and then observe body posture/position and proximity to the patient. It may be necessary to elicit responses with direct questions, such as *Is the doctor looking at the patient while talking to him/her? Is the doctor smiling? What movements is the doctor doing with his/her head/hands/body? How close to the patient is the doctor (standing/sitting)?* and so forth. All these aspects then need to be described in terms of their function. Learners should therefore interpret the doctor's behaviour by answering a number of questions that the instructor will have prepared in advance, e.g. *Why is the doctor nodding? What do the doctor's smiles suggest? What do the doctor's open hands with intertwined fingers indicate?* etc. Table 2b gives an example of what learners should ideally

produce. Finally, a closing discussion on the possible effects that the doctor's behaviour may have on the patient is advisable.

Table 2b. Example of a completed video observation exercise

Describe and interpret the doctor's behaviour (gaze, facial expressions, hand gestures, body posture, etc.)	
Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation
1 	Slightly shaking head (doesn't know why patient is there), slightly worried gaze (waits for presentation of symptoms), holding open hands together with fingers intertwined (welcoming attitude)
2 	Nodding (shows understanding), looking straight into patient's eyes (shows attention and interest), slightly worried gaze, holding hands together with fingers intertwined (shows willingness to wait and listen)
3 	Nodding, smiling (shows understanding and sympathy)
4 	Smiling and keeping an upright position (shows confidence and ease), looking straight into patient's eyes (shows interest and engagement), holding hands together with fingers intertwined (shows willingness to wait and listen)

5		Steepling (as if begging for an answer), squinting with head slightly turned to the right (looking for an answer that may not be easy for the patient to find)
6		Sitting across the table, not too far from the patient (shows willingness to be there for the patient)

Learners should reflect at the end of this session and draw up a list of those extra-linguistic features appearing in the video that seem to positively impact the interaction between the doctor and the patient. Alternatively, the instructor may prepare a preliminary list of elements, which learners may contribute to, tick or comment in terms of level of importance. Table 3a provides an example of an activity that could be used for wrapping up and stimulating further discussion on the perceived importance of non-verbal elements in doctor-patient interactions.

Table 3a. Learners' perception of the importance of non-verbal elements in doctor-patient interactions

Please tick the appropriate boxes and add information in each of them with reference to the physical appearance and behaviour of the doctor in the video. Do not tick where there are no instances of that category or if you view a certain aspect as irrelevant, add 1 tick if that particular aspect is only marginally important, 2 ticks if you consider it important and 3 ticks if you think it is very important.					
Clothing	Formal	Casual	Medical		
Kinesics	Posture	Positioning	Proximity		
Gestures	Head	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet
Touch	Arms	Hands	Fingers		
Facial expressions	Smiling	Frowning	Aggressive	Non-committal	Other
Gaze	Eye contact	Length of eye contact			

Learners will first add elements to the relevant categories and then comment on the role that specific factors play in the interaction. For instance, in the case observed in Table 2b above, the doctor repeatedly makes head movements. Therefore, the category 'gestures' and the subcategory 'head' need to be further specified as exemplified in Table 3b. Nodding could be perceived as an important element in the conversation[vi] and learners may want to add two ticks there and then explain what impact such behaviour has on the quality of the interaction.

Table 3b. Example of a completed exercise on the perception of the importance of non-verbal elements in doctor-patient interactions

Gestures	Head shaking head nodding √ √

III. USING YOUR IMAGINATION

Before letting learners listen to the doctor's actual words, they can be finally asked to imagine the dialogue with the patient and produce a possible version of those exchanges that they have previously analysed only in terms of non-verbal behaviour. In particular, they should focus on what they think the doctor's responses to the patient might be; an example of what learners may add next to each image frame is provided in Table 4.

This writing activity actively involves learners and helps them to structure a possible doctor-patient interaction. The instructor should assist them in finding ways to construct the dialogue with phrases and expressions that are likely to be encountered in this context.[vii] Once learners have completed the conversation, they will act it out in pairs or in front of the class after spending a few moments memorising it.

Table 4. Example of a completed multimodal writing task

Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation	Verbal text
1 	Slightly shaking head (doesn't know why patient is there), slightly worried gaze (waits for presentation of symptoms), holding open hands together with fingers intertwined (welcoming attitude)	*So, what can I do for you, Mr X?*

These role-plays may also be used to work on different types of registers, speaking styles and behaviours. To this end, the instructor needs to ask learners to modify the dialogues and introduce elements expressing, for instance, disinterest, annoyance or excessive caution on the part of the doctor. It is important to give learners the opportunity to experiment with various communication strategies and behaviours and see what effects they may have on both the patient and the doctors themselves. Since a fuller range might be possible in future situations, learners should amplify the variability and intensity of their responses as much as possible,[viii] shifting from a polite and reassuring attitude to a rather aggressive, impolite and even uncaring mode. Learners need to notice how facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements change together with the use of a different oral style. These acting-out activities are usually engaging, although some learners might be shy and unwilling to take on a certain role. However, the more they manage to reproduce and identify with various behavioural patterns, the more effective these activities will be. Role-playing offers an opportunity to act out various feelings and to learn the language required to express them.

IV. ACTIVE LISTENING AND WATCHING

Language acquisition and learning necessarily entail processes of imitation and subsequent internalisation of exemplars. In an L1 setting there is a natural and continuous exposure to stimuli that are spontaneously and unconsciously absorbed from

an early age. Learners of a second or foreign language, instead, need to be guided and instructed to develop that metalinguistic knowledge required for grammatically accurate and socio-linguistically appropriate production. Hence the importance of exposing learners to authentic language inputs, while at the same time also asking them to actively reflect on these inputs.

Transcription exercises, although difficult and time consuming, prove useful to work on these two aspects simultaneously. The instructor should pause, rewind and play the video segment as many times as necessary to allow learners to listen to and transcribe the actual conversation. The next suggested activity consists in asking learners to notice the differences between the expressions and speaking style used by the doctor in the recording and their previous creative version of the interaction with the patient. In the cases in which this task has been implemented, learners have often reported that their phrasing is not as natural and loose as the doctor's way of speaking. Although they are generally able to structure a conversation with a potential patient in English, they present difficulties in the choice of rhetorical strategies. Therefore, it is important to explicitly inform learners about the repertoire of devices at their disposal. The following sections examine five phenomena (i.e. repetition and reformulation, hedging, informality, figurative language and the expression of empathy/sympathy), which have been identified as recurrent features of doctor-patient communication and recognised as essential elements for successful medical interactions (Franceschi 2017). It will also be observed how the use of these elements may be sustained by accompanying non-verbal signals that validate verbal information. Learners should be made aware of these features of spoken medical discourse through a number of multi-modal activities that will be outlined below.

IV.I. Repetition and reformulation

Repetition and reformulation are typically two sides of the same coin (Gülich 2003), meaning that they have the same function, i.e. that of presenting facts in a simplified and easier-to-understand way. Since medical discourse is often filled with a wealth of technical terminology patients may not be necessarily familiar with, it is important for doctors to be able to rephrase concepts using simpler language and synonyms. This is a particularly important aspect to be considered especially by those learners who are L1

speakers of a Romance language, such as Italian, French, Spanish, etc. These learner populations have a tendency to be verbose and to use copious Latin-based vocabulary due to issues of language transfer. Words of Latin origin, however, are usually considered formal in English and are not always easy to understand for the layperson. The following examples show how the doctor in the video segment examined successfully manages to substitute medicalese[ix] with plain English and express the same idea in other, more straightforward words:[x]

(1) We have not seen the **remission**, *in other words* the getting rid of the virus, just with alternative medicine.

(2) And I'm wondering if you know anybody that has gone through standard of care treatment with the, *we call it* **adjunctive**, *meaning* 'in addition to' standard of care, these **adjunctive** treatments.

(3) The fluid in the abdomen *is called* **ascites**.

Another common technique to ensure that a patient understands what is being talked about is the introduction of synonyms and paraphrases, often resulting in the use of doublets as well as of lists of several items that essentially express the same idea:

(4) Some patients with genotype two can even take fewer weeks of therapy, but because you have significant **fibrosis and scarring** […].

(5) You know, working out in the farm, where you get **injuries** and **sores** and **cuts** and **bruises** and **scrapes**, that's ways of again transmitting blood between people that would be minor and nothing that you would pay attention to, but potentially could have occurred […].

After being shown some instances of these rhetorical strategies, as in the examples above, learners should be asked to identify similar phenomena of simplification. Tables 5 and 6 present activities aimed at helping learners to develop their ability to repeat and reformulate ideas.

Table 5. Example of a vocabulary exercise on synonymous words and expressions

Identify words and expressions in the following sentences that are synonyms or basically express the same concept
1) What our therapies can do is help minimise the toxicity or side effects of standard of care therapy. 2) There are some good studies that show that with weight loss and exercise that can be reversed. […] there are good studies that show that that can be turned around.

Table 6. Example of a vocabulary exercise on reformulation (explanation)

Underline the expressions in the following sentences that provide an explanation of the words in bold
1) […] when you have underlying, active sores, if you will, the **hepatitis**, then the alcohol is much more damaging than it would be to a normal liver. 2) Some of them already have very advanced disease, **cirrhosis**, which would be at the one extreme of severe scarring damage to the liver.

Finally, but just as importantly, learners will observe the association of the various verbal strategies (used by the doctors to reformulate and simplify their speech) with non-verbal cues that appear to have the same function. Table 7 below presents a succession of images and the corresponding text, which learners will have previously transcribed. This time they will be asked to identify the verbal elements that are being given prominence to through the use of gestures.

Table 7. Example of a completed multimodal listening comprehension/watching exercise

Identify those words and phrases that hand gestures appear to highlight		
Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation	Verbal text
1 	Bringing hands together vertically (indicates a narrower space)	*What our therapies can do is help **minimise** the toxicity or side effects of standard of care therapy*

2		Moving left hand to one side as if supporting something (describes the idea of there being another possibility)	*And I'm wondering if you know anybody that has gone through standard of care treatment with the, we call it* ***adjunctive****…,*
3		Lifting left hand as if preparing to put something into a container (simulates the movement of 'adding' something to something else)	*… meaning '****in addition to****' standard of care, …*
4		Bringing hands together as if holding something round (suggests holding something heavy)	*… these* ***adjunctive*** *treatments.*

It is obvious that hand gestures are used here to aid the patient's comprehension of complex lexical items, such as *minimise* and *adjunctive*. They appear to have the same goal as paraphrases and reformulations, i.e. the simplification of a certain concept, by means of an iconic or metaphoric illustration of the meaning of words.

IV.II. Hedging

Hedging (Lakoff 1972) is a useful rhetorical strategy for doctors who often need to speak with tact and soften the blow of what they are communicating, for instance while giving a diagnosis. It consists in not speaking too directly thanks to the use of elements, called 'hedges', aimed at mitigating the emotional impact on the addressee of what is being discussed. Hedging may also have other functions (cf. Frazer 2010), e.g. suggesting that the speaker is not fully committed to what is being said.

In the conversations examined for the present study, the doctors attempt to persuade their patient that standard of care therapy is the best option for his condition, despite the possibility of

a number of side effects that he may experience while on treatment. The patient fears that these side effects might aggravate other problems he has and for which he is also being treated. Therefore, the doctors have to find a way of encouraging him to follow their advice, while at the same time dealing with his worries and taking his requests into consideration. This is an example of hedged communication:

> (6) Well, the interferon side effects make you feel like you have [***pause***] the flu, **to some extent**. **Erm**, you **may** have **some** loss of appetite, **may** lose **a little** weight on treatment. **Erm**, the ribavirin **might** give you, **oh**, **sometimes a little** funny taste in the mouth, **sometimes a little** soreness, **maybe** some rash.

The elements in bold in this example are used to attenuate the force of the utterance and perhaps allow the patient to accept the doctor's advice more easily. Although the initial *well* suggests that there is indeed a likelihood of side effects, such a verbally unexpressed message is mitigated by the use of the two modal verbs *may* and *might*, the adverbs *sometimes* and *maybe*, and the expression *a little*. The interjections (*erm*, *oh*) and the pause also seem to attenuate the force of the utterance, because they give the doctor time to think and to present facts in a less direct way. The modal items in particular introduce optionality and help to minimise the threat potentially perceived in the doctor's words.

Learners should be asked to read examples like this one aloud and compare them with their unhedged (fabricated) counterparts in order to see what changes in terms of tone. Other activities may consist in identifying elements with a similar hedging function, exemplified in Table 8 below, or in adding them to sentences where none of these elements appear, as in Table 9:

Table 8. Example of an exercise on the use of hedges (I)

Exercise: Identify hedges in the following sentences
1) It also looks like being stage three, which you've seen the model of the liver and how the next stage is cirrhosis, which is the worst, you know, stage that you can get to, kind of the final stage with hepatitis C, that your condition which it sounds like you have had for a while, you know, that case scenario was non-A non-B was hepatitis C from what we can tell. 2) […] there was a recent study with acupuncture that actually just showed that this is the case in people with hepatitis C.

Table 9. Example of an exercise on the use of hedges (II)

Exercise: Add linguistic hedges to the following sentences
1) Now it's time for you to consider getting the hep C treated and trying to get rid of that infection. 2) In that case you must consider the treatment.

It is interesting to observe how the use of non-verbal cues may also play a role in allowing utterances to be perceived as less assertive. This is possible when hand gestures, for instance, visually depict the semantic content of hedges. Learners should therefore be engaged in activities that draw their attention to the possibility of supplementing spoken language with non-verbal items, which may facilitate communication and ultimately have an impact on the likelihood of the patient's compliance. In order for learners to take a more active role in the teaching and learning process, they will be asked to tell the instructor to pause the video when a certain form of behaviour on the part of the doctor appears to support the use and function of linguistic hedges. Table 10 below shows what learners should ideally be able to do while or after watching a segment of a hedged doctor-patient dialogue.

Table 10. Example of a completed multimodal listening comprehension/watching exercise on the use of hedging devices

Highlight linguistic hedges in the text and identify co-occurring non-verbal cues	
Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation	Verbal text
Doctor raises left hand towards his mouth, brings thumb and index finger together, with squinting eyes (physically reproduces the concept of 'smallness');	*Erm, the ribavirin might give you, oh,* ***sometimes a little*** *funny taste in the mouth,* ***sometimes a little*** *soreness, maybe some rash.*

IV.III. Informality

We have already observed in section IV.I. above that replacing Latin-based terminology with words and expressions of Anglo-Saxon origin is likely to facilitate comprehension by the layperson. The avoidance of technical vocabulary produces an informal, often colloquial style, which may be used in those contexts where the need for clarity is particularly strong, e.g. when doctors need to inform and educate patients about surgical procedures. In the example below, for instance, all the verbs used by the doctor are multi-word verbs describing straightforwardly how a liver biopsy is performed. Such a

style is assumed to soften the perception of fear and danger associated with the description of the procedure in question:

> (7) Your liver is up here under the ribs. We numb up the area of the skin and we put the needle directly into the liver, we suck up a little piece of liver and take it back out. […] And the piece of liver that we take out, it's about as thick as the lead in the lead pencil, not the pencil itself, just the lead.

This is an example of recipient-tailored language use (Brown and Fraser 1979), aimed at establishing doctor-patient alignment. Learners of Medical English need to be aware of the fact that the use of a certain type of register may have a significant impact on the quality of the relationship with patients. Therefore, they should experiment with different speaking styles and consider what effects they may bring about. For instance, Table 11 below shows an example task where learners substitute the underlined items with more formal words and expressions carrying the same meanings.

Table 11. Example of a completed exercise on register variation

Exercise: Provide Latin-based alternatives to the underlined verb phrases
Your liver is up here under the ribs. We numb up (**anaesthetise**) the area of the skin and we put (**insert**) the needle directly into the liver, we suck up (**suction**) a little piece of liver and take it back out (**extract**). […] And the piece of liver that we take out (**extract**), it's about as thick as the lead in the lead pencil, not the pencil itself, just the lead.

Another activity may consist in simply asking learners to identify instances of informal language use in a series of sentences, as in Table 12 below, in order to draw their attention to the fact that register variations may be due to different elements, e.g. the presence of colloquialisms, onomatopoeic phrases and slang expressions.

Table 12. Example of an exercise on register variation

Exercise: Identify colloquial elements in the following sentences
1) Well, turns out, if you get rid of the hepatitis C with treatment, there's a good chance that your risk of cancer is gonna go way down. 2) The biopsy itself, the needle is in there less than a second. Boom boom, it's done! 3) Why the heck would you want treatment?

Generally speaking, it may be argued that the use of body language and gestures emphasise informality and add a sense of commitment and enthusiasm to what the doctor is talking about. Instead of focusing on a fragment of a videoed doctor-patient interaction, learners could be invited to watch a longer segment and locate all those relational signals that help to establish an informal rapport.

IV.IV. Figurative language

Speaking figuratively, i.e. by means of similes and metaphors, is a common strategy that doctors use to increase message clarity, as can be observed in the following example, in which hepatitis C infections are compared to different types of cars:

> (8) Cos hepatitis C is more than one virus, if you will. There are different subtypes, just like Ford has different kinds of cars, they are all Fords, but one's a truck and one's an SUV etc. Hepatitis C has different subtypes.

In the data examined, hepatitis C is also figuratively associated to a fire and drinking alcohol is presented as dangerous for the liver of a person with hepatitis C as pouring gasoline on fire would be (9). The hepatitis C virus is then indirectly referred to as a friend when it remains dormant and does not cause any complications (10). The latter meaning is activated by the phrasal expression *to get along alright together*, which is normally used to refer to people who are on good terms:

> (9) The combination of alcohol with active hepatitis, I look at this **as kind of putting alcohol on a fire or putting gasoline on a fire**, it just makes the fire worse.
>
> (10) […] and their disease never progressed anywhere very seriously. So for some reason their body and the virus are kind of **getting along alright together**, without major damage occurring.

A rather challenging, creative activity may consist in asking learners to enrich the descriptions and explanations provided by doctors, in the conversations they analyse, with imagined scenarios that compare different aspects on the basis of qualities they have in common, as in the examples above. Such a technique seems to facilitate comprehension of both human anatomy and medical conditions and processes. The doctors under scrutiny repeatedly also show their patients anatomical models and

encourage them to think in terms of comparisons and associations, as exemplified in Table 13 below.

Table 13. A doctor's use of a liver model to aid the patient's understanding of its physiological/pathological anatomy

Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation	Verbal text
1 	Showing a healthy liver model, rubbing hand on its surface (indicates it has a smooth surface)	*This piece of a liver, if you will, is what a normal liver would look like. It's* ***kinda like*** *what you'd see in a supermarket. You know, just kind of smooth and a little reddish-purple, but a very smooth, shiny, nice surface*
2 	Showing a cirrhotic liver model, pointing to its surface (indicates that it has a very hard, non-smooth surface)	*This would be cirrhosis, which would be stage four disease. Lumpy, bumpy,* ***rock hard****. […] Cirrhotic liver is […],* ***it literally feels like a rock***

Since it might be complicated for learners to use objects and models in the language classroom, they could simply try to draw or find photos on the Internet in order to complement their talking with visual aids or props.

IV.V. Empathy and sympathy

The doctor's ability to imagine himself/herself in the patient's position, thus experiencing the emotions and ideas of that person (empathy), will most probably activate feelings of sorrow and compassion (sympathy) and then a willingness to help. The development of both empathy and sympathy seems to play a fundamental role in the doctor-patient relationship (Anfossi & Numico 2004, Halpern 2003, Larson & Yao 2005, Williams & Bendlow 1996). The analysis of the data used for the present study has suggested that initially uncooperative patients, who refuse to undergo treatment and

to follow their doctor's advice, may eventually change their attitude if approached in a suitable communicative style that shows understanding and care. The latter elements therefore appear as crucial for building trust and achieving patients' compliance.

The expression of sympathy and empathy needs to be made explicit both linguistically and non-linguistically, i.e. it has to translate in the use of specific language patterns and also find support in a series of non-verbal signals that sustain what words are communicating. These two aspects are bound together and cannot contradict each other. In other words, there has to be a correspondence between the choice of words and expressions that doctors use and their behaviour. Caring words alone would not be enough if the doctor's attitude expressed disinterest, for instance. Therefore, learners of Medical English should be constantly reminded of the importance of accompanying their speech with suitable behaviours, thus reflecting their ideas and intentions. The multi-modal transcription in Table 14 shows how the verbal and non-verbal dimensions can be felicitously combined for effective and affective communication.

Table 14. Showing and expressing sympathy/empathy

Image frame	Non-verbal behaviour & interpretation	Verbal text
1 	Keeping lips shut, looking at patient with a sad expression, almost about to cry (simply listens and deeply sympathises/empathises with the patient)	***I hear you***. *I think that I'm not gonna take your alcohol away from you right this minute, but […]. And so,* ***I hear you***, ***I hear that*** *this is really important for you and that you're not ready to give it up…,*
2 	Keeps looking at patient, but with head slightly turned to the right (suggests that she is considering things from another perspective), hands pointing together (suggests the idea of cooperation)	*…, but if you are willing to talk about alternatives* ***I can certainly help you*** *in that, in that way.* ***I'm willing to be there for you and work with you*** *in terms of being able to trade the alcohol for those alternatives to PTSD.*

Learners should discuss techniques and brainstorm ways to express empathy and sympathy that they feel most comfortable with. Owing to individual differences in personality, certain communicative styles may be perceived as more or less natural or difficult to adopt. It is therefore crucial to assist learners in finding a personal compromise in their choice of the type of language and behaviour they are willing to use with patients, within their own abilities and limits.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

This article has put forward some alternative classroom activities for teaching Medical English multi-modally, thus going beyond what is usually found in ESP texts and coursebooks to this day. The basic assumption is that meaning does not lie solely in the choice of language forms and strategies in given situations, but it is also created in the course of the interaction via non-verbal signs (Argyle 1975/1988, Poyatos 1992, Wharton 2009). This is particularly true in doctor-patient exchanges, in which what is left unsaid and is otherwise communicated appears to be of paramount importance for building rapport and trust. Such an aspect, however, has not been taken into consideration sufficiently in English language teaching materials geared towards the medical profession.

Future research should be aimed at producing a systematic taxonomy of non-verbal behaviours that doctors could adopt in various situations of their daily practice with patients. While medical staff certainly know how to express thoughts and feelings verbally, they seem to find it much harder to pinpoint their natural behaviour non-verbally in different contexts, e.g. to express concern, disappointment, empathy and so forth.

This consideration raises a number of questions. It seems clear that there is a need to train English language instructors for Healthcare and Medicine to combine their teaching skills with specific competences and knowledge that are usually required of psychologists and counsellors. This is certainly not an easy task, as it presupposes a significant change in our training programmes. In addition, there are both cultural and gender-related issues that need to be observed if a behavioural repertoire were to be proposed for its use in the language classroom. What works in one country might be

viewed as culturally inappropriate in another. The same applies to the perceived level of acceptability in the use of certain non-verbal elements by men and women doctors with their male or female patients.

Notes

[i] These interviews are part of a database prepared by Caring Ambassadors Program Inc., Oregon City, OR, which can be accessed for free at http://hepcchallenge.org. I would like to thank Lorren Sandt (Executive Director of Caring Ambassadors Program Inc.) and Dr Lyn Patrick (Medical Director at Progressive Medical Education, Irvine, CA, www.progressivemedicaleducation.com) for allowing me to use the interviews and reproduce some images for my research.

[ii] Authentic video-recorded doctor-patient dialogues are extremely difficult to find and use because of privacy issues. However, there are several medical drama TV series, which may also be used for teaching purposes, despite their tendency to present situations in a more dramatised way.

[iii] Kress & van Leeuwen (2001: 20) have defined multimodality as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined – they may for instance reinforce each other […], fulfil complementary roles […], or be hierarchically ordered".

[iv] This can be easily verified by checking the curricula of University courses on-line. The University of Yale, for instance, only offers basic and clinical courses for students of Medicine (e.g. Energy and Metabolism, Genes and Development, Human Anatomy) and does not seem to include modules on more 'peripheral' topics, such as communication (http://medicine.yale.edu/education/curriculum/integrated/index.aspx). The same applies to courses offered by Harvard-MIT Programmes in Health Sciences (https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/find-by-topic/), which are also strictly medicine-oriented to the detriment of a more humanistic approach to healthcare.

[v] 2-3 minutes of silence can actually be perceived as quite long by the language instructor, who usually promotes frequent spoken interaction in the classroom. However, it is important not to interrupt this silent phase in that it helps learners to observe rather than listen.

[vi] See Lambertz (2011) for a discussion and a review of the literature on the use of backchannels to show engaged listenership.

[vii] It would be useful to encourage learners to think of alternative expressions, possibly with different levels of formality, to what they have written. For instance, instead of saying *What can I do for you?* a conversation with a patient might begin with other questions, such as *What brings you here today?* or *How can I help you?* and so on.

[viii] This technique is commonly used in Gestalt therapy (Naranjo 1993). It proves particularly powerful and effective for making people more aware of the costs/harms/risks and benefits of a certain behaviour.

[ix] Medicalese is the jargon used by medical and healthcare professionals.

[x] Technical terms are in bold, while their explanations have been underlined. It is also interesting to note that the reformulations are often introduced by a word or phrase signalling that we are faced with a paraphrase into a more popularised/ordinary style. These words or phrases have been italicised.

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Assessing politeness of requestive speech acts produced by Japanese learners of English in a spoken corpus

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate whether it is possible to assess learners' sociopragmatic competence in learner spoken data by examining requests produced by Japanese learners of English. Various pragmalinguistic features of requests in shopping role plays in the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology Japanese Learner English (NICT JLE) Corpus were extracted and the appropriateness of these linguistic features was rated by twenty English language instructors (10 native speakers and 10 Japanese) in terms of their politeness in different shopping situations. A significantly high rate of agreement was only obtained in judging the requests negotiating for a refund or exchange of the purchased item. The Japanese informants showed a relatively lower agreement than the natives especially on requests asking for permission to test an item. The highly rated linguistic features were not frequently used in the corpus. Therefore, annotating the sociopragmatic information in the target corpus seems unrealistic.

Keywords*: Learner spoken corpora, requests, speech acts, judgements on politeness, pragmalinguistics, sociopragmatics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learner corpora provide *criterial features*, which are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each proficiency level and which distinguish one level from the next (Hawkins and Filipović 2012). Granger (2002) highlights the importance of learner corpora in investigating learner language as they produce more generalised conclusions from larger amounts of quantitative data of naturally-occurring language. She notes that "much current SLA research favours experimental and introspective data and tends to be dismissive of natural language use data" (Granger 2002: 5). Learner corpora in various languages have been compiled and they are now the major resource in the study of interlanguage, allowing researchers to explore learner language with different variables such as "diverse mother tongues, ages, and levels of competence" (Leech 2014: 270).

The current study aims to present how spoken learner corpora can be applied to research on the developmental stages of pragmatic competences of Japanese EFL learners with

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different levels of proficiency. In order to investigate pragmatic competences, the author examines requests as speech acts, focusing especially on interactions in shopping role plays in the oral interview tests contained in the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology Japanese Learner English (NICT JLE) Corpus. The findings of the study extracting criterial features of pragmatic competence should be of interest to educators involved in teaching foreign languages.

Adolphs (2008: 133) notes that the context-sensitive descriptions of the pragmatic function in a corpus of spoken discourse should be important for English language teaching (ELT) as a "shift in focus towards a communicative approach". However, corpus-based pragmatic studies tend to concentrate on the surface forms of linguistic patterns extracted in the concordance lines, i.e. pragmalinguistic features.

Pragmatic competence is composed of pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence (Kasper and Roever 2015, Leech 2014). Kasper (1997) defines that pragmalinguistics includes "pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness, routines, and linguistic forms which can intensify or softening communicative acts" (Section 1, Paragraph 2). On the other hand, sociopragmatics refers to "the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action", which may differ depending on speakers' and hearers' speech communities (Kasper 1997, Section 1, Paragraph 3).

The present study aims to give pedagogical implications to those who instruct EFL learners to communicate successfully in their target language, by clarifying how they develop their pragmatic competence in L2. Sociopragmatic competence is also necessary for learners' successful communicative acts, in addition to pragmalinguistic competence. Therefore, the study further explorers whether it is possible to annotate the degree of politeness according to the pragmalinguistic features the learners used in their requests. An online survey was conducted to elicit native and non-native EFL instructors' assessment of the sociopragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English in their requestive speech acts.

II. PRAGMATIC PRODUCTION: DIFFICULTIES IN CONDUCTING CORPUS STUDIES IN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

To date, a number of studies have investigated learners' pragmatic competence by focusing on requests produced by learners of English using various methods of collecting data about learners' production. Examples of such methods include role plays, discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and authentic discourse including learner corpora (see Kasper and Dahl 1991, Kasper and Rose 2002, Kasper and Roever 2005, Leech 2014, Schauer 2009).

Leech (2014: 16) states that "pragmalinguistic politeness is assessed on the basis of the meaning of the utterance *out of context*", while "*sociopragmatic politeness* […] is a matter of judging politeness in context" (2014: 17). Leech (2014: 271) also argues that "the learner corpus movement has so far contributed rather little to the study of politeness". Corpora of spoken interlanguage mainly allow researchers "to systematically examine lexico-grammatical patterns and syntactic structures that are part of the grammar of conversation" (Callies 2013: 17). By taking a corpus-based approach to the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), it is easy to extract concordance lines from the large-scale data and examine lexical behaviours, such as discourse markers (e.g. Fung and Carter 2007, Müller 2004, 2005, Romero-Trillo 2002, 2008). With this type of corpus-based approach, politeness can be "studied as how it is conveyed or manifested" in the surface forms of lexico-grammatical features, namely, pragmalinguistics (Leech 2014: 13). Unfortunately, without conducting contextual analyses manually, extracting concordance lines automatically only allows researchers to analyse "language forms, not [...] functions" (Adolphs 2008: 9). Sociopragmatics, in contrast, deals with social judgements of politeness not only regarding the words in the utterances and their meanings, but also about the occurring contexts, and the prosody and word stress (Leech 2014). This should be the main reason why the prevalent approaches to the investigation of speech acts are DCTs or similar elicitation formats (Adolphs 2008). Data collection in ILP requires researchers to control "contextual parameters" (Kasper and Roever 2005: 325). Besides, Granger (2002: 5) admits "the difficulty of controlling the variables that affect learner output in a non-experiment context", so that much of non-corpus-based "SLA research tends to be based on a relatively narrow empirical base".

III. PRAGMATIC AWARENESS: PAST STUDIES ON ASSESSMENT OF POLITENESS IN REQUESTS

In contrast with the studies on pragmatic production in the previous section, Schauer (2009) notes that only a limited number of studies investigated L2 learners' pragmatic awareness, and this area has not been studied extensively. Leech (2014: 250) notes that such tasks where "the respondent has to [make a] judgement as to how (in)appropriate to the situation, how (im)polite, etc., it is" went out of fashion in the 1990s as they tended to test pragmalinguistic politeness out of context, avoiding the sociopragmatic factors governing politeness. Apart from the drawbacks of this outdated methodology, the current section reviews the major studies on assessing politeness of requests since the learners' requests extracted from the corpus are judged by native and non-native speakers of English in the present study.

As questionnaire-type instruments in ILP, multiple choice (MC) and rating scales are used for "the contextual appropriateness of speech act realisations", designed to elicit "possible respondent preferences" of the utterances (Kasper and Roever 2005: 328). In scaled-response formats, respondents are asked "to assess situational contexts and instances of speech acts" (327), which "are suitable for sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic assessment" (328).

Tanaka and Kawade (1982) conducted a study to test the validity of Lakoff's politeness strategies, based on his claim that "politeness increases with decreasing imposition" (18) and "certain linguistic features can mark the varying degree of politeness in the speech act of requesting" (19). They replicated the study of Carrel and Konneker (1981), who highlighted the contribution of grammatical mood (e.g. interrogative, declarative and imperative) to politeness. Tanaka and Kawade (1982: 19) presented groups of native speakers of English and of non-native ESL learners with a set of request sentences with various linguistic features such as "mood, modals negation, tags, and tense or modals". The subjects were asked to rank the request sentences with different linguistic features in "situationally-null contexts" (23) and in a situation where someone borrows an item with varying degrees of "social distance and psychological distance" (24). As a result, in the null situations, there were no significant differences

between the subjects (10 native and 10 non-native speakers) in terms of judging the politeness based on grammatical features. However, in the second settings with a varying degree of distance-politeness, advanced ESL learners of 32 adults with different language backgrounds did not show the use of the target language as appropriately as a group of 53 native speakers of American English.

As a cross-linguistic study, Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) asked 172 American native speakers of English and 160 native speakers of Hebrew to rate six different request patterns in an "asking for a loan" situation in their native languages as "not appropriate", "more or less appropriate" or "most appropriate". As a result, for five out of six linguistic patterns, high levels of agreement (above 50%) were observed among the informants. A "negative-politeness-oriented indirect pattern" such as "Could you possibly lend me the money?" in the English language was assessed as the most appropriate with more than 80% of agreement.

Kitao (1990) compared how ESL learners and native speakers judged politeness in requests differently, with the use of rank-ordering questionnaires in which informants (80 natives, 34 ESL and 103 EFL Japanese speakers) were asked to rate 61 requests with direct and conventionally indirect strategies on a scale of 1-10. He found that there were no significant differences between natives and Japanese.

To sum up, the aforementioned studies basically show no significant differences between the native and learner judgments of politeness in the request utterances. Leech (2014: 250-251) also argues that "pragmalinguistic politeness, or context-invariant politeness" can be assessed out of context, based on his study in which 45 native speakers of English were asked to judge the utterances from most polite to least polite. As a result, an overall consensus of 89% on their judgements was observed. His attempt was to see whether native speakers reached an agreement on the "default interpretation of speech events" (250), out of context without giving any definitions of politeness to the respondents.

In the present study, applying and using the research methodologies in the past studies described above, the author attempts to test whether their remarks on general agreement on politeness by native and non-native speakers are valid and applicable to learner data taken from the NICT JLE Corpus. The assessment survey is conducted for the following

reasons. First, the NICT JLE Corpus lacks audio data, which might be useful contextual information for judging the politeness of the produced requests, and it is only available as written transcripts of oral interview tests with a few extra-linguistic tags such as pauses, repetitions and overlaps (Izumi et al. 2002, The NICT Japanese Learner English (JLE) Corpus 2012). Next, being a non-native speaking EFL instructor, the author has little confidence in determining whether particular pragmalinguistic features in certain contexts are sociopragmatically appropriate in terms of politeness in the target language.

Therefore, using the methods of MC questionnaires and rating scales, groups of native and non-native English language instructors in tertiary education in Japan, having similar vocational backgrounds to the author, were asked to assess the learner production extracted from the NICT JLE Corpus. The extent to which they reached a consensus on their judgements is investigated. If the agreement among respondents is significantly high, it should be possible to assess the sociopragmatic competence of learners in the NICT JLE Corpus. The author also compares the judgements made by native and non-native speakers.

The paper addresses the following research questions (RQs).

RQ1. What kinds of different pragmalinguistic features and functions of requests are observed in the NICT JLE Corpus?

RQ2. What kinds of pragmalinguistic features and functions obtain higher values of agreement among the respondents when they evaluate the appropriateness of the requests? Are there any differences between the judgements made by English-speaking and Japanese-speaking respondents?

RQ3. What are the distributions of highly evaluated pragmalinguistic features by the respondents in the NICT JLE Corpus?

IV. CLASSIFICATION OF REQUESTS BASED ON THE CROSS-CULTURAL SPEECH ACT REALISATION PROJECT (CCSARP) AND APPLYING IT TO STUDIES ON LEARNER LANGUAGE

The classification of requests in the present study is based on the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the CCSARP, which aims to cross-

linguistically compare requests and apologies across different languages and language varieties including English, Hebrew, German, amongst others.

First of all, as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 275-276) note, the *head act* is identified as the core of the request sequence, preceded by an *alert* and/or followed by a *supportive move* as in "Excuse me (i.e. alert), could you give me a lift to town (i.e. head act)?" and "Could you clean up this mess (i.e. head act)? I'm having some friends over for dinner tonight (i.e. supportive move)". Then, head acts can be classified into one of the following request strategies: *direct, conventionally indirect* and *non-conventionally indirect strategies*. Direct strategies are realised in the form of *imperatives*, *obligations* (e.g. "must", "have to"), *performatives* (e.g. "ask", "require"), *wishes* (e.g. "would like") and *desires* (e.g. "want", "need"). By using this strategy, "a requester wants to make the illocutionary point of his/her utterance explicit" (Flores Salgado 2011, p. 248). The second type are conventionally indirect strategies, realised as linguistic features such as *ability* (e.g. "could", "can"), *willingness* (e.g. "would you") and *suggestion* (e.g. "How about"). According to Blum-Kulka (1989: 33), "certain forms habitually used to perform certain acts become the conventional ways for performing these acts". Therefore, conventionally indirect strategies are different from non-conventionally indirect ones "where the speaker's intentions are not clearly stated and the hearer has to infer the request" (Flores Salgado 2011: 249). For example, "The kitchen seems to be in a bit of mess" can be reformulated as the request asking "Could you clean up this mess?"

Head acts can be modified both internally and externally. *Internal modification* can be divided into *syntactic downgraders* (e.g. interrogatives, negation), *lexical* and *phrasal downgraders* (e.g. politeness marker "please") and *upgraders* (e.g. "really"). *External modification* functions as a supportive move, for example as *grounders* (reasons and explanations), *threats, cost minimisers, disarmers, promises* and *confirmations* (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Flores Salgado 2011).

The coding scheme of the CCSARP has been modified and applied to various studies of the requests and apologies made by language learners at different levels of proficiency, sometimes in comparison to the native speakers' production (e.g. Hill 1997, Kaneko 2004, Flores Salgado 2011, Trosborg 1995). Targeting Japanese learners of English,

Hill (1997) employed a DCT method, and Kaneko investigated the extracts from the NICT JLE Corpus. The aforementioned studies based on the CCSARP coding scheme indicate that learners at higher proficiency levels tended to produce more indirect strategies, in a similar way to the native speakers, than lower-level learners.

Leech (2014) in fact points out that some classifications and distinctions of the head acts and modifications such as downgraders in the CCSARP are rather vague, noting that "the CCSARP coding scheme and its more recent variants are not ideal for investigating politeness" (267). However, Leech (2014) also admits that a number of studies of speech acts drew on the scheme so that it is advantageous when comparing results across various research settings, such as comparing the tendencies of learners with different mother tongues.

V. THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

V.1. The NICT JLE Corpus

The NICT JLE Corpus consists of one million words from the written transcripts of the 15-minute oral interview test, called the Standard Speaking Test (SST), taken by Japanese learners of English (Izumi et al. 2004). The SST, which draws on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), is composed of five stages: (1) answering warm-up questions (3–4 minutes), (2) describing a single picture (2–3 minutes), (3) engaging in a role-play scenario with the interviewer (1–4 minutes), (4) narrating picture sequences (2–3 minutes), and (5) answering questions, the purpose of which is to wind down the subjects' tension (1–2 minutes).

In the role-play stage (3), the interlocutor (who is a Japanese-speaking approved interviewer) selects a suitable task for a test-taker (i.e. interviewee), according to his or her proficiency level, from the five topics that are made available, such as "Invitation", "Landlord", "Shopping", "Travel" and "Train", with three levels of difficulty: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The present study investigates the data referring to "Shopping" taken from the role-play stage. In the beginner and intermediate version, the interlocutor plays the role of a shop assistant, and the interviewee is given a task

consisting in purchasing a particular item as a customer. The advanced version contains a situation where the interviewee has to negotiate a refund or exchange of the purchased item with the interlocutor.

In the SST, the test-takers are holistically evaluated into nine proficiency levels: Novice (SST Levels 1, 2, and 3), Intermediate Low (Levels 4 and 5), Intermediate Mid (Levels 6 and 7), Intermediate High (Level 8), and Advanced (Level 9). Based on studies which attempt to align the proficiency levels provided by the SST and ACTFL OPI with the CEFR levels (Kaneko and Izumi 2012, Tschirner and Bärenfänger 2012), Level 3 groups learners as CEFR A1 learners, Levels 4 and 5 as A2, and Levels 6, 7, and 8 as B1 in the present study.

V.2. The Multi-Layered Scheme for Extracting Requests from the NICT JLE Corpus

Drawing on the coding scheme proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), the author (Miura, 2015) used the UAM CorpusTool to build an annotation scheme for requests, which has a multi-layered structure. The present section describes two annotation schemes: the first is to extract and annotate various linguistic features of the requests, and the second is to annotate the functions of the requests by identifying the situations. By identifying the linguistic features and their functions cross-schematically across different proficiency levels, learners' pragmalinguistic developmental stages are revealed as criterial features.

Firstly, the manual annotations were conducted based on the coding scheme of the CCSARP, as a top-down procedure, by applying to the shopping role-play data comprising 68 learners corresponding to A1 learners, 114 learners of A2, and 66 B1 learners in the NICT JLE Corpus. However, it was necessary to add a bottom-up analysis, as the author encountered difficulties in applying the scheme to some parts of the target spoken learner data. The reason underlying these problems was that they contained a number of erroneous and developmental productions, in addition to the fact that the requests occurred in a rather limited situation, namely, shopping.

IV.2.1. Requests

Tables 1, 2, and 3 show a set of multi-layered annotation schemes for extracting requestive speech acts. Tables 1 and 2 represent schemes for direct strategies and conventionally indirect strategies with some examples taken verbatim from the written scripts in the corpus, respectively. Non-conventionally indirect strategies in the CCSARP, in which requests were not manifested in the surface linguistic forms, were not taken for analysis since there were no ways to confirm the meanings of the speakers' utterances.

The CCSARP coding scheme was modified. For example, the categories "non-sentential phrase", "statement", "not classifiable" and "yes/no" in the direct strategies in Table 1 were characteristic of the learner data. The categories "existence" and "intention" in Table 2 were added as patterns which were especially commonly observed in a shopping situation. Thus, "existence" was created referring to Leech's (2014: 143) comment that "Got a pen?" is a "highly conventionalised" request. Table 3 shows the scheme for extracting linguistic features of internal modification. The three tables below show verbatim transcripts from the corpus and most of them indicate erroneous and developmental patterns, which are characteristic of learner language.

Table 1. Annotation scheme for extracting direct strategies of requests

Category	Subcategory		Example
Obligation	should		*"So I think you **should** take it back."*
	must		*"I **must** pay I **must** pay."*
Non-sentential phrase	item please		*"**This please**?"*
	item only		*"**This one**."*
Desire	want		*"I **want** to buy it."*
	need		*"I **need** to get a new one."*
	would rather		*"So **I'd rather** pay the gap."*
	would like		*"**I'd like** to buy this by this card."*
Imperative	imperative please		*"**Please show** me."*
	imperative only		*"So **let** me know about it."*
Statement	declarative	explanation	*"**My size is M**."*
		purchase	*"**I buy it.**"*
		other	*"**I try it.**"*
	interrogative		*"**So do you have some recommend?**"*
Request verb			*"I'm **asking** you if we could if we could ur exchange or refund it."*
Not classifiable			*"**Buy it.**"*
Yes/No			*"**No?**"*

Table 2. Annotation scheme for extracting conventionally indirect strategies.

Category	Subcategory	Example
Ability/Permission	can	*"**Can** I, **can** I try it?"*
	could	*"**Could** I, **could** I use credit card?"*
	may	*"And **may** I open it?"*
Willingness	will you	*"**Will you** exchange it?"*
	do/would you mind	*"So **would you mind** changing another er shirts instead?"*
	would you	*"So **would you** change a sweater?"*
Suggestory	why not	*"**Why don't** you go to outside and look at the color with with me?"*
	how/what about	*"So **what about** just refund?"*
Possibility	possible	*"**Is it possible to** take back this notebook computer today?"*
	subjunctive	*"**So I'm OK if you um if you give me a red sweater with no no extra money.**"*
Subjectiviser	wonder if/whether	*"I **was wondering if** I can get another colour or if you don't have one.*
	appreciate if/whether	*"I **appreciate if** you could change eh with change it with other ones."*
	hope that	*"So I **hope** you can exchange other bigger one."*
Existence	do you have (item)	*"**Do you have**, **do you have** any jacket?"*
	is there (item)	"***Is there*** a walking shoes?"
	I look for (item)	*"**I'm looking for** uum jacket."*
Intention	I will	*"**I will** have it."*
	I like	*"**I prefer** this ten thousand yen."*
	I decided to	*"**I decided to** buy this one."*
	I come/am here to	*"Today, I I **come to here to to** see some personal computers."*

Table 3. Annotation scheme for linguistic features of internal modification.

Category	Subcategory		Example
Politeness marker please			*"I can get brown one, **please**."*
Discourse marker	interpersonal marker	I mean	*"Do you have a some cigar like a urm **I mean** like ten hundred yen?"*
		you know	*"I was wondering, **you know**, if I can get refund or change to something else."*
		well	*"Uhm **well** um ehm another one, please."*
	downtoner	maybe	*"I would like you to other um change to another another skirt, or **maybe**, pay back um pay back money."*
		possibly	*"I wonder if you could **possibly** err replace this shirt."*
		little (bit)	*"So I play the guitar for you, mm could you discount **a little bit**?"*
	DM subjectiviser	I think	*"Well, **I think** I'll go ahead and make this I'll go ahead and take this six-hundred-dollar one."*
		I hope	*"Uum um m more s small T-shirts I **I hope** so."*
	upgrader		*"So if you can, I **really** want you to change exchange."*
	just		*"**Just just** I I I I want to buy this."*
If clause	if you can		*"So **if you can**, I really want you to change exchange."*
	other if clause		*"But urm **if I can**, I I want to refund."*
	if possible		*"**If possible**, nn could you nn discount, please?"*
	If you don't mind		*"So, **if erm if you don't mind**, I wanna return this stuff.*

V.2.2. Situations: Identifying Functions of Requests

Independent from the schemes for extracting request strategies in the previous section, the requests were classified into one of two function groups: (1) "commutation for transaction" and (2) "dealing with transaction". The first group contains nine functions of requests made to the interlocutor in a transaction (see Table 4). The requests in the second group are further divided into subgroups: (1) "expressing intention to buy" and (2) "expressing or asking about item", which are typically evident when purchasing a particular item and paying for it. The scheme was originally devised by the author to identify the functions of requests in shopping transactions on the basis of the bottom-up manual annotation.

Table 4. Annotation scheme for identifying functions of utterances.

Categories	Subcategories		Examples
Communication for transaction	Requesting an action	Negotiating for discount	*"So, **how about** er ten percent off?"*
		Asking for alternative item	*"So, **can** I have the different one instead of this?"*
		Asking for recommendation	*"**Could** you recommend?"*
		Asking someone to show	*"**Please show** me other colour?"*
		Asking for permission to test	*"Umm **Can** I try it on?"*
		Negotiating for exchange or return	*"I **want** get it back."*
		Asking for refund	*"So **what about** just refund?"*
		Suggesting	*"So uh **would you like to** wrap specially?"*
		Asking someone to perform	*"**Please bring** me ii some wear."*
Dealing with transaction	Expressing intention to buy		*"I **will** have it."*
	Expressing or asking about item		*"**Do you have** another s size?"*

VI. STUDY 1: JUDGING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF REQUESTS

VI.1. Methodology

The judgement survey was conducted to investigate the degree of appropriateness of requests extracted from the NICT JLE Corpus in terms of politeness. The survey was given to the respondents online, using the SurveyMonkey® tool (see Appendix A).

VI.1.1. The Respondents

All of the respondents were experienced English language instructors (including part-time and full-time lecturers, associate professors and professors) in tertiary education in Japan, comprising 10 native speakers of English and 10 Japanese speakers. Table 5 summarises their personal information and Table 6 shows the respondents' length of stay in Japan and their experience in teaching English to Japanese students.

Table 5. Respondents' personal information.

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Gender		Age					
		Male	Female	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s
Native	10	9	1	4	4	1	1	0	0
Japanese	10	2	8	0	4	4	1	0	1

Table 6. Length of stay and experience teaching English in Japan.

Questions	Respondents	3 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	Over 10 years
How many years have you lived in Japan?	Native	1	1	8
	Japanese	0	0	10
How many years have you taught (or did you teach) English in Japan?	Native*	0	1	8
	Japanese	0	2	8

Note: *One respondent did not answer the question regarding teaching experience in Japan.

VI.1.2. The Online Survey

The respondents were informed of the following conditions before answering the questionnaire: (1) The survey is to investigate how people respond to various expressions used in a shopping situation, and the questionnaire is only given to those who teach English in tertiary education in Japan; (2) the respondents are given some excerpts of conversations between a shop assistant and a customer, and are asked whether the customers' utterances are appropriate or not, from the perspective of a shop assistant; (3) there are some erroneous utterances included in the conversations as some of them were produced by Japanese learners of English; and (4) the excerpts do not contain information regarding the speakers' gestures and pronunciation, which might be useful information to rate the appropriateness. They were also asked not to think and spend too much time answering the questionnaires, and asked to follow their instinct without being too prescriptive as an English teacher. The respondents were not instructed or trained to become familiar with the methods of analysing politeness or

pragmatic competence. The main purpose of the present study was not to attempt to achieve consensus among the respondents on social judgement of politeness, but to see whether they reach an agreement and, if so, how much their agreement is statistically significant, by observing Japan-based instructors' general perceptions towards Japanese EFL learners' pragmalinguistic choice for their requests.

The online survey contained the following three kinds of situations with various linguistic features: (1) "negotiating for exchange or return", (2) "asking for permission to test", and (3) "expressing intention to buy", selected from the annotation scheme for identifying the functions of requests (see Table 4). In each situation, two types of questions were given: (1) to select a response/s they would like to hear as a shop assistant, and (2) to choose the degree of appropriateness for each response from appropriate (i.e. polite enough), a little appropriate (i.e. a little too polite or a little impolite) or inappropriate (i.e. too polite or very impolite).

VI.1.2.1. Situation 1: Negotiating for Exchange or Return

The questionnaire begins with the following interaction with the customer's possible response in blank, as shown in Figure 1. The interaction below was actually taken verbatim from a subcorpus of the native speakers who took the same interview test in the NICT JLE Corpus.

<Shop Assistant> Good afternoon, madam. How can I help you?
<Customer> Hi. I just bought this shirt. And when I got home, I just realised that it was the wrong size. _____.

Figure 1. Prompt for Situation 1

The respondents were asked to answer a set of two questions (i.e. choosing the responses they like and rating them). Ten responses (numbered from E-1 to E-10 in Table 7, where E stands for "exchanges") were taken verbatim from the data of learners and a native speaker in the NICT JLE Corpus. As explained in the section "V.1 The NICT JLE Corpus", a negotiation task was given to the advanced interviewees, who belong to the CEFR B1 level (i.e. SST Levels 6, 7 and 8). The direct head acts of the

sentences numbered as E-1 and E-2 are internally modified with "if clauses". E-3 is a combination of conventionally indirect "intention" and direct "imperative please". E-4, E-5, E-6, E-8 and E-9 contain various patterns of conventionally indirect strategies. Externally modified by "Is that possible?", E-7 is also a conventionally indirect pattern. E-10 was intentionally selected by the author as it sounds quite offensive as a response.

Table 7. Responses given for situation 1: Negotiating for exchange or return.

No.	Strategy	Linguistic Feature		Sentence	SST Level
E-1	Direct	desire	want & IM*: if clause	"So *if you can*, I really **want** you to exchange. But *is it OK?"*	7
E-2			would like & IM: if clause	"So, *if possible*, I'**d like** to change this one to another, *a little bit* smaller one."	6
E-3	Direct & Conv. Indirect	intention & imperative please		"I'**ll** take another shirt, a bigger one. So *please* **exchange** it."	6
E-4	Conv. Indirect	ability/permission		"So **can** you exchange it?"	7
E-5		willingness		"So **would** you change a shirt?"	6
E-6		subjectiviser		"I **was wondering if I could** exchange it for something else."	Native Speaker
E-7		subjectiviser & external modification		"I **thought I could** exchange this into another one. *Is that possible*?"	8
E-8		suggestory		**"Why can't** you exchange it?"	8
E-9		possibility		**"Would it be possible** for me to exchange it to the other size?"	8
E-10	*Other*			"If it says M, I *think I have a right to* get that one because *I wanted to* buy a smaller shirt at first."	8

Note: *IM stands for "internal modification".

VI.1.2.2 Situation 2: Asking for Permission to Test

The interaction for the second situation is given in Figure 1, and six responses are shown in Table 8. The responses numbered as T-1, T-2, T-3 and T-4 (where T stands for "test") were typical requests made by learners at the SST Level 3 (i.e. CEFR A1) and/or Level 4 (i.e. A2). There were no patterns with "could" (T-5) and "subjectiviser" (T-6) in the NICT JLE Corpus, but they were formulated deliberately by the author.

<Shop Assistant> May I help you, ma'am?
<Customer> Yeah. _____

Figure 2. Prompt for situation 2

Table 8. Responses given for Situation 2: Asking for permission to test.

No.	Strategy	Linguistic Feature		Sentence	SST Level
T-1	Direct	desire	want	"Um I **want** to try on this shirt."	3 & 4
T-2	Conventionally Indirect	intention		"I **will** try on this shirt."	4
T-3		ability/permission	can	"**Can** I try on this shirt?"	3 & 4
T-4			may	"**May** I try on this shirt?"	3 & 4
T-5			could	"**Could** I try on this shirt?"	N/A
T-6		subjectiviser		"**I am wondering if** I could try on this shirt."	N/A

VI.1.2.3 Situation 3: Expressing Intention to Buy

The third situation involves requests expressing an intention to buy a particular item, as Figure 3 shows. Nine responses (from P-1 to P-8, where P stands for "purchase") were given (see Table 9), all of which were taken verbatim from the NICT JLE Corpus. The responses include the data from A1 (Level 3) and A2 (Levels 4 and 5) learners as well as one native speaker.

<Shop Assistant> May I help you, ma'am?
<Customer> _____.

Figure 3. Prompt for Situation 3

Table 9. Given responses for situation 3: Expressing intention to buy.

No.	Strategy	Linguistic Feature		Sentences	SST Level
P-1	Direct	desire	want	"Er I **want** to buy a jacket."	3
P-2			would like	"Er I**'d like** to buy a jacket."	4
P-3			would like & IM: please	"Yes. I**'d like** to purchase this jacket, please."	Native Speaker
P-4		declarative	purchase	"Uhm Today I **buy** my jacket."	3
P-5	Conventionally Indirect	intention		"I'**m here** to look for a jacket."	5
P-6		existence		"Yeah. Ahh I'**m looking** a new jacket."	3
P-7				"OK. I'**m searching** a jacket."	3
P-8	Direct & Conv. Indirect	desire & existence	want	"Thank you. I **want** to buy a jacket. *Do you have that?*"	5

VI.2. Results and Discussion

VI.2.1. Degree of Agreement among the Respondents

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, *W*, was calculated for the second questions (i.e. rating scales) from three situations in the survey, in order to see the degree of agreement among the respondents. The results are summarised in Table 10. The agreement of all the respondents including native and Japanese speakers was only moderately high and significant in the first situation, i.e. "exchanges", (W=0.64, p<0.0001). In contrast, the *W* values of the remaining situations, i.e. "test" and "purchase", were smaller than or equal to 0.5. While a group of native speakers of English in the first two situations showed high and significant agreements with values higher than 0.7, a group of Japanese speakers showed the lowest values, which were around 0.4.

The current section summarises the results of the rating scales of the situations only when Kendall's *W* was significant and higher than 0.6. For the first and second situations, see sections VI.2.1.1 and VI.2.1.2. The results of the third situation, where a consensus among the respondents was not reached, are shown in Appendix B.

Table 10. Kendall's coefficient of concordance, *W*, for three situations.

Situation	Total (Native & Japanese)	Native Instructors	Japanese Instructors
1. Negotiating for Exchange or Return	***W*=0.64** df=9, ChiSq=115.08 p<0.0001	***W*=0.75** df=9, ChiSq=67.42 p<0.0001	***W*=0.56** df=9, ChiSq=51.59 p<0.0001
2. Asking for Permission to Test	***W*=0.50** df=5, ChiSq=49.77 p<0.01	***W*=0.73** df=5, ChiSq=36.34 p<0.01	***W*=0.41** df=5, ChiSq=20.49 p<0.01
3. Expressing Intention to Buy	***W*=0.41** df=7, ChiSq=56.87 p<0.0001	***W*=0.47** df=7, ChiSq=33.23 p<0.0001	***W*=0.38** df=7, ChiSq=26.61 p=0.0004

VI.2.1.1 Ranking of Responses for Negotiating for Exchange or Return

Table 11 shows the results of the rating scales of ten requests in the first situation assessed by native (abbreviated as "N") and Japanese-speaking respondents (i.e. "J"), based on the scale: "inappropriate", "a little appropriate" and "appropriate" (abbreviated as "Inapp.", "Little" and "App." respectively). In Table 11, the 10 responses are ordered

according to the values of the weighted average scores (i.e. "Av."). Each response is indicated as its number and a simplified form of the linguistic features with a strategy type (i.e. CI or D, where CI stands for "conventionally indirect strategy" and D stands for "direct strategy").

As a result, E-6 and E-9 were rated as the most appropriate features in terms of politeness, followed by a direct pattern, E-2. Then, E-7 was moderately appropriate, showing slightly higher scores than those of E-1 and E-4. While the evaluation of three of the Japanese respondents on E-6 was "inappropriate" or "a little appropriate", all of the natives agreed that it was "appropriate". In contrast, Japanese respondents tended to evaluate E-1, E-5 and E-10 more highly than a group of native speakers. E-3 is the second least appropriate type of request, although one Japanese respondent regarded it as "appropriate." E-8 was the only request on which there was consensus among the respondents, which turned out to be the least appropriate. Interestingly, those which scored lower, such as E-10 and E-8, were the requests produced by high intermediate learners, who belong to the SST Level 8, and had the highest proficiency level among a group of B1 learners (see Table 7).

Table 11. Ranking of rating scales of ten responses made by natives and Japanese: "exchanges".

Rank	Av.	No.	Linguistic Feature	Inapp.		Little		App.	
				N	J	N	J	N	J
1	2.80	E-6	CI: "I was wondering if I could …"	0	1	0	2	10	7
1	2.80	E-9	CI: "Would it be possible…"	1	0	0	2	9	8
3	2.65	E-2	D: "If possible, I'd like…"	1	0	2	3	7	7
4	2.40	E-7	CI: "I thought I could... Is that possible?"	1	0	5	5	4	5
5	2.05	E-1	D: "If you can, I really want you…"	3	0	5	8	2	2
6	2.00	E-4	CI: "Can you…?"	2	2	6	6	2	2
7	1.60	E-5	CI: "Would you…?"	7	3	3	5	0	2
8	1.35	E-10	Other: "I think I have a right … I wanted…"	8	6	2	4	0	0
9	1.30	E-3	CI&D: "I'll take… So please…"	8	7	2	2	0	1
10	1.00	E-8	CI: "Why can't you...?"	10	10	0	0	0	0

Thus, Table 12 compares the ranking of selections conducted in the first question with that of rating scales (i.e. Table 11). In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to choose any numbers of the given responses they liked, but the number of selections differed greatly from one respondent to another. There were no responses which all of the respondents preferred to hear from their customers. However, the first three requests

in the ranking (E-9, E-2 and E-6) were rated highly by most of the respondents as "appropriate" patterns. The requests other than these top three were chosen by less than 25% of the respondents. In fact, E-1 and E-3 were chosen by only one single native-speaking respondent.

Table 12. Comparison between rankings of selections and rating of appropriateness.

No.	Ranking of Question 1 (Selection)	Number of Respondents Who Chose the Response			Ranking of Question 2 (Appropriateness)
		Total	N	J	
E-9	1	12 (60%)	6	6	1
E-2	2	10 (50%)	4	6	3
E-6	3	9 (45%)	4	5	1
E-7	4	5 (25%)	3	2	4
E-4	5	4 (20%)	3	1	6
E-5	6	3 (15%)	2	1	7
E-1	7	1 (5%)	1	0	5
E-3	7	1 (5%)	1	0	9
E-10	9	0 (0%)	0	0	8
E-8	9	0 (0%)	0	0	10

VI.2.1.2 Ranking of Responses for Asking for Permission to Test

Table 13 shows the ranking based on the ratings of six requests evaluated by the native speakers. Although Kendall's *W* was not significant among Japanese respondents, their weighted average and distribution values are also shown in brackets.

Six of the native respondents rated the "intention" pattern "I will" as "a little appropriate" in this situation, while two of them did so in the previous situation (see Table 11). However, none of the native respondents selected this pattern as the response they would prefer to hear from their customers.

The lower value of Kendall's *W* among the Japanese respondents might be attributed to the idiosyncratic ratings made by the two Japanese, who underrated the conventionally indirect linguistic features such as a modal verb "could" (T-5), "may" (T-4) and "can" (T-3) and a subjectiviser "I am wondering if…" (T-6), but overrated a desire verb "want" (T-1).

Table 13. Ranking of rating scales of six responses by the native speakers: "test".

Rank	Av.		No.	Linguistic Feature	Inapp.		Little App.		App.	
	N	(J)			N	(J)	N	(J)	N	(J)
1	3.0	(2.6)	T-5	CI: Could I…?	0	(0)	0	(4)	10	(6)
1	3.0	(2.9)	T-4	CI: May I…?	0	(0)	0	(1)	10	(9)
3	2.9	(2.9)	T-3	CI: Can I…?	0	(0)	1	(1)	9	(9)
4	2.7	(2.1)	T-6	CI: I am wondering…	1	(3)	1	(3)	8	(4)
5	2.2	(2.3)	T-1	D: I want to…	1	(0)	6	(7)	3	(3)
6	2.2	(1.6)	T-2	D: I will…	1	(6)	6	(2)	3	(2)

VII. STUDY 2: DISTRIBUTIONS OF REQUESTS IN THREE SITUATIONS IN THE NICT JLE CORPUS

The distribution of each linguistic feature investigated in the judgement survey was retrieved from the NICT JLE Corpus, based on the annotated information regarding three different situations: (1) "negotiating for exchange or return", (2) "asking for permission to test" and (3) "expressing intention to buy".

VII.1. Results and Discussion

VII.1.1. Distribution of B1 Learners' Requests in Negotiating for Exchange or Return

As Table 14 shows, the major linguistic features produced by 66 B1 learners are 37 desire verbs ("want" and "would like") and 28 modal verbs of ability/permission ("can" and "could"), out of 93 speech acts in the first situation. The two top-ranked features – "possible" (E-9) and "wonder if" (E-8) – had only four occurrences, in comparison to "would like" (E-2), which was in the third place and turned out to be the most frequent form used by the learners.

Table 14. Distribution of linguistic features of requests in negotiating for exchange or return.

Strategy (Raw Freq.)	Linguistic Feature		Raw Freq.	Percentage	Similar Type (Av.)
Direct (44)	desire	**want**	**17**	**18.28**	**E-1 (2.05)**
		would like	**20**	**21.51**	**E-2 (2.65)**
	yes/no		2	2.15	N/A
	imperative	**imperative please**	**1**	**1.08**	**E-3 (1.3)**
		imperative only	1	1.08	N/A
	obligation	should	2	2.15	N/A
	request-verb	ask	1	1.08	N/A
Conventionally Indirect (49)	ability/permission	**can**	**10**	**10.75**	**E-4 (2.0)**
		could	18	19.35	N/A
	willingness	will you	2	2.15	N/A
		do/would you mind	3	3.23	N/A
		would you	**2**	**2.15**	**E-5 (1.6)**
	suggestory	**why not**	**4**	**4.03**	**E-8 (1.0)**
		how/what about	1	1.08	N/A
	subjectiviser	**wonder if**	**1**	**1.08**	**E-6 (2.8)**
		appreciate if	1	1.08	N/A
		hope that	1	1.08	N/A
		think/thought that	**2**	**2.15**	**E-7 (2.4)**
	possibility	**possible**	**3**	**3.23**	**E-9 (2.8)**
		subjunctive	**1**	**1.08**	**E-10 (1.0)**
	TOTAL		93	100	

VII.1.2. Distribution of A1 and A2 Learners' Requests in Asking for Permission to Test

Table 15 summarises the distribution of requests produced by 68 A1 and 114 A2 learners. The most frequent pattern is a modal verb "can" (T-3), which was rated highly by native respondents (see Table 13). However, no-one from either the A1 or the A2 group produced "could" (T-5), which was rated as the most appropriate. "May" (T-4), which also ranks the highest, was not used as frequently as "can".

Table 15. Distribution of Linguistic Features of Requests in Asking for Permission to Test.

Strategy (Raw Freq.)	Linguistic Feature		Total Freq. (%)	A1 Freq. (%)	A2 Freq. (%)	Similar Type (Av.)
Direct (7)	desire	**want**	**4 (9.76)**	**1 (7.69)**	**3 (10.71)**	**T-1 (2.2)**
	statement	declarative (other)	2 (4.88)	2 (15.38)	0	N/A
	not classifiable		1 (2.44)	0	1 (3.57)	N/A
Conv. Indirect (34)	ability/ permission	**can**	**22 (53.66)**	**6 (46.15)**	**16 (57.14)**	**T-3 (2.9)**
		could	**0**	**0**	**0**	**T-5 (3.0)**
		may	**10 (24.39)**	**4 (30.77)**	**6 (21.43)**	**T-4 (3.0)**
	willingness	would you mind	1 (2.44)	0	1 (3.57)	N/A
	subjectiviser	**I am wondering if…**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**T-6 (2.7)**
	intention	**I will**	**1 (2.44)**	**0**	**1 (3.57)**	**T-2 (2.2)**
	TOTAL		41 (100)	13 (100)	28 (100)	

VII.1.3. Distribution of A1 and A2 Learners' Requests in Expressing Intention to Buy

Table 16 shows that there were 282 requests altogether, and desire verbs (P-1, P-2, P-3 and P-8) accounted for 48.2% of the total, followed by conventional expressions including "I look for item" (P-6 and P-7), which were used more frequently by A2 learners than those at level A1. The results seem to suggest that as the level of proficiency increased, the ratio of the direct pattern "declarative purchase" (i.e. "Uhm Today I buy my jacket" (P-4)) decreased, while the ratio of "intention" with "I-will" as an indirect pattern increased. This increase may be reflecting the fact that A1 learners employed more unnatural and erroneous productions, compared to A2 learners. Conversely, the raw frequencies of "would-like" were only 6 (6.25%) at level A1, but 28 (15.05%) at level A2. However, as respondents failed to reach an agreement for this situation, it would be difficult to assume that A2-level learners tended to behave more politely than A1 learners due to their development of sociopragmatic competences.

Table 16. The Distribution of Linguistic Features of Requests in Expressing Intention to Buy.

Strategy (Raw Freq.)	Linguistic Feature		Total Freq. (%)	A1 Freq. (%)	A2 Freq. (%)	Similar Types
Direct (172)	desire	**want**	**101 (35.82)**	**41 (42.71)**	**60 (32.26)**	**P-1, P-8**
		need	1 (0.35)	0	1 (0.54)	N/A
		would like	**34 (12.06)**	**6 (6.25)**	**28 (15.05)**	**P-2, P-3**
	declarative	**purchase**	**21 (7.45)**	**11 (11.46)**	**10 (5.38)**	**P-4**
Conv. Indirect (110)	ability/ permission	can	4 (1.42)	3 (3.12)	1 (0.54)	N/A
		could	0	0	0	N/A
		may	1 (0.35)	1 (1.04)	0	N/A
	existence	**do you have item**	**5 (1.77)**	**2 (2.08)**	**3 (1.61)**	**P-8**
		Is there item	3 (1.06)	1 (1.04)	2 (1.08)	N/A
		I look for item	**35 (12.41)**	**8 (8.34)**	**27 (14.52)**	**P-6, P-7**
	intention	I will	52 (18.44)	13 (13.54)	39 (20.97)	N/A
		I like	2 (0.71)	0	2 (1.08)	N/A
		I decided to	7 (2.48)	1 (1.04)	6 (3.23)	N/A
		I come/am here to	**1 (0.35)**	**0**	**1 (0.54)**	**P-5**
	TOTAL		282 (100)	96 (100)	186 (100)	

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Regarding RQ1, using the NICT JLE Corpus, various pragmalinguistic patterns of direct and conventionally indirect request strategies, with internal modifiers, were observed in different situations. In addition to the original coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), learner-specific features which contain erroneous and developmental characteristics were evident, especially in the category of direct strategies, as "non-sentential phrase", "statement", "not classifiable" and "Yes/No" patterns. Furthermore, specific to shopping role plays, asking for the "existence" of particular items and showing an "intention" to purchase a particular item were added to the non-conventionally indirect category.

In answer to RQ2, the situations "negotiating for exchange or return" and "asking for permission to test" were the ones where respondents, especially native speakers of English, reached an agreement. However, no consensus was obtained for the situation "expressing intention to buy". The order of rating scales for the "exchanges" situation is somewhat in line with the results obtained by Tanaka and Kawade (1982). In the present study, the top four ranked features were "I was wondering if I could…", "Would it be possible…", "If possible, I'd like…" and "I thought I could… Is that possible?", most of which were conventional indirect patterns of "subjectiviser" and "possibility" with

"if clauses". Tanaka and Kawade (1982) investigated assessment of pragmalinguistic features in requesting a hearer to turn down the radio, and concluded that the top ranked features shared by 10 Japanese and 10 American respondents were "I'd appreciate…", "Could you…?", and "Would you…?". These conventionally indirect features were followed by the use of ability modal "can", direct verbs (i.e. "want" and "would like"), imperatives with tag questions (such as "won't you" and "will you"), and suggestory (i.e. "why don't you…?"). The lowest ranked items were the use of the imperative (i.e. "Turn down X.") and item ("X (the radio)!). The obtained coefficient of concordance, *W*, was .74 for the rank orderings made by American respondents, and .88 for those by Japanese respondents. The value *W* of the native respondents in the present study was approximately the same as the American respondents in the study conducted by Tanaka and Kawade (1982), but the value of the Japanese instructors was relatively lower.

In Carrell and Konneker (1981), on the other hand, the value of Kendall's *W* for 42 native speakers was .56 and for 73 ESL learners, .61. The *W* values were not as high as the results in Tanaka and Kawade (1982), probably due to the larger number of respondents. Thus, "Could you…X?" represented the highest degree of politeness in a situation where a speaker purchases tobacco, followed by a group of "Can you…X?", "I'd like…X." and "Do you have …X?", then "I'll have…X", "I want…X.", and the lowest group was "Give me X." and "X." (Carrell and Konneker 1981:28). In comparison, the native speakers' ranking of requesting strategies to "test" an item in the current study showed a similar tendency: "could", "may", "can", "I am wondering", "I want to", and "I will". Besides, the Kendall's *W* was .73, which was higher compared to the results of Tanaka and Kawade (1982) and Carrell and Konneker (1981). To summarise, although the past studies showed that the degree of agreement amongst native speakers was lower than that amongst learners, this was not the case in the current study.

Finally, regarding RQ3, conventionally indirect features such as "I was wondering if I could…" and "would it be possible for me to…?", which were the most highly rated by the respondents, were rarely used by the learners of any levels in the NICT JLE Corpus. In the "exchanges" situation, the most frequently used patterns were the desire verbs "want" and "would like", as well as "could". "Can" was the most frequent in the "test"

situation, and "want" in the "purchase" situation. There seems to be a big gap between the learners' production and native EFL instructors' preferences of types of pragmalinguistic features in their pragmatic awareness.

To conclude, the present study suggests that Japanese-speaking instructors should be aware of the need for explicit teaching of conventional expressions in requests. Leech (2014) indicated the possibility of reaching an agreement on politeness of requests referring only to pragmalinguistic features but not to contextual features. However, it seems difficult to verify the validity of his hypothesis and unrealistic to annotate the information regarding sociopragmatic judgements to the NICT JLE Corpus.

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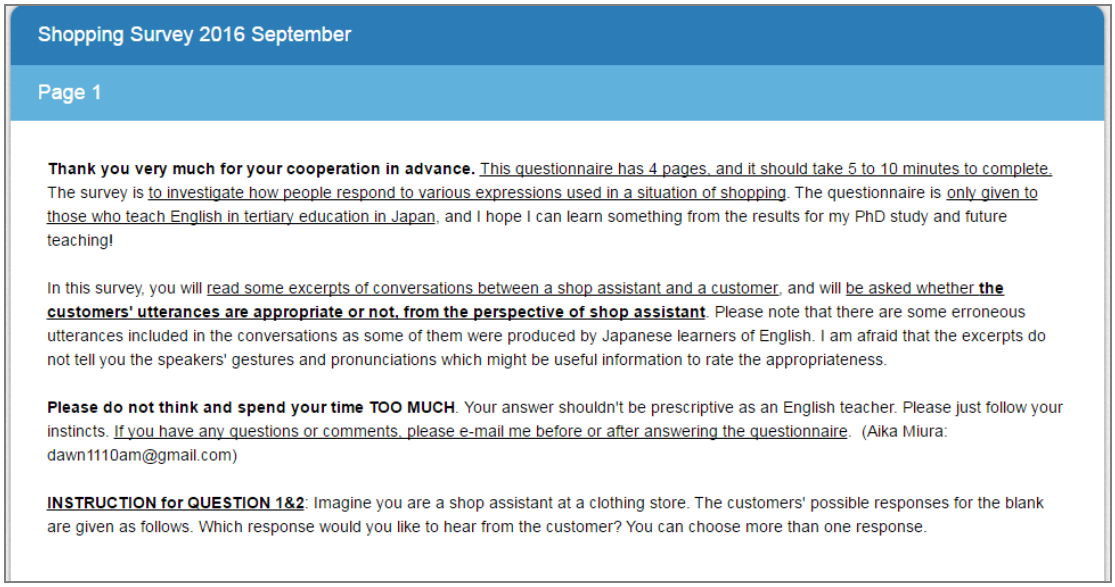
APPENDIX A



Shopping Survey 2016 September

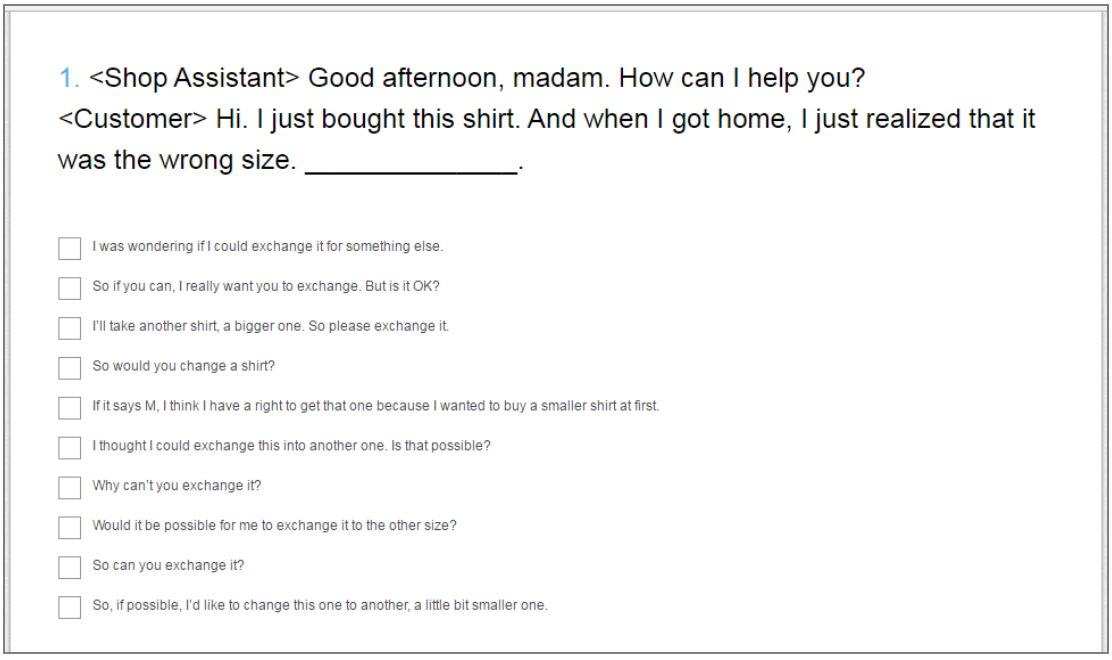
Page 1

Thank you very much for your cooperation in advance. This questionnaire has 4 pages, and it should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The survey is to investigate how people respond to various expressions used in a situation of shopping. The questionnaire is only given to those who teach English in tertiary education in Japan, and I hope I can learn something from the results for my PhD study and future teaching!

In this survey, you will read some excerpts of conversations between a shop assistant and a customer, and will be asked whether **the customers' utterances are appropriate or not, from the perspective of shop assistant**. Please note that there are some erroneous utterances included in the conversations as some of them were produced by Japanese learners of English. I am afraid that the excerpts do not tell you the speakers' gestures and pronunciations which might be useful information to rate the appropriateness.

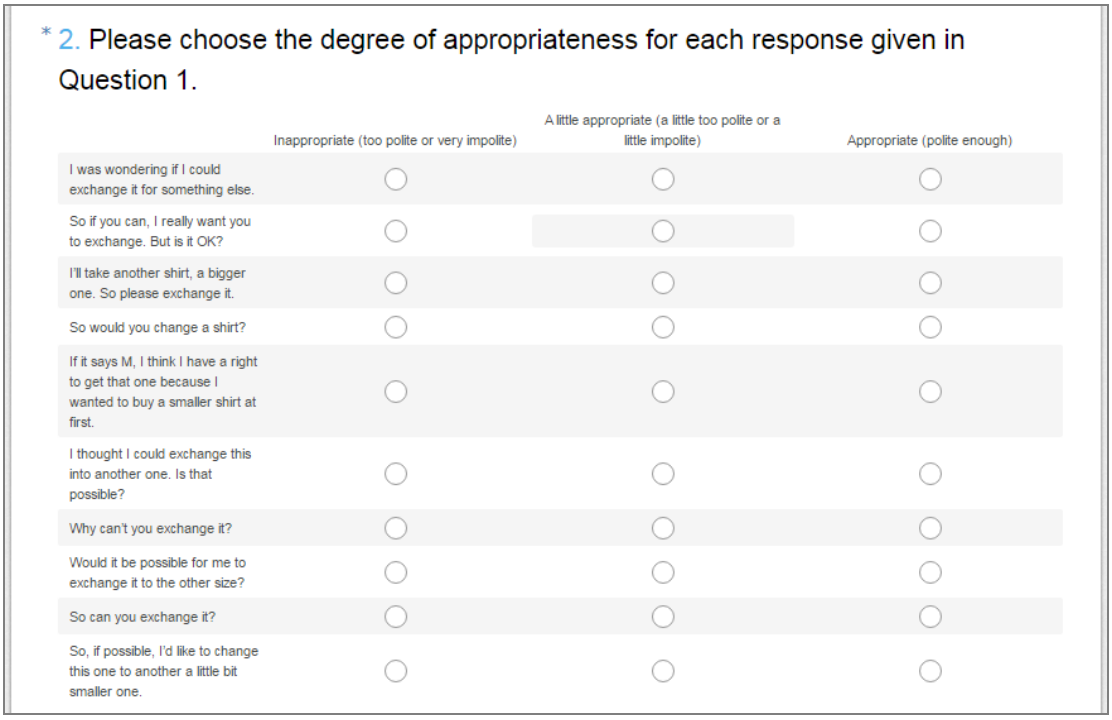
Please do not think and spend your time TOO MUCH. Your answer shouldn't be prescriptive as an English teacher. Please just follow your instincts. If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail me before or after answering the questionnaire. (Aika Miura: dawn1110am@gmail.com)

INSTRUCTION for QUESTION 1&2: Imagine you are a shop assistant at a clothing store. The customers' possible responses for the blank are given as follows. Which response would you like to hear from the customer? You can choose more than one response.



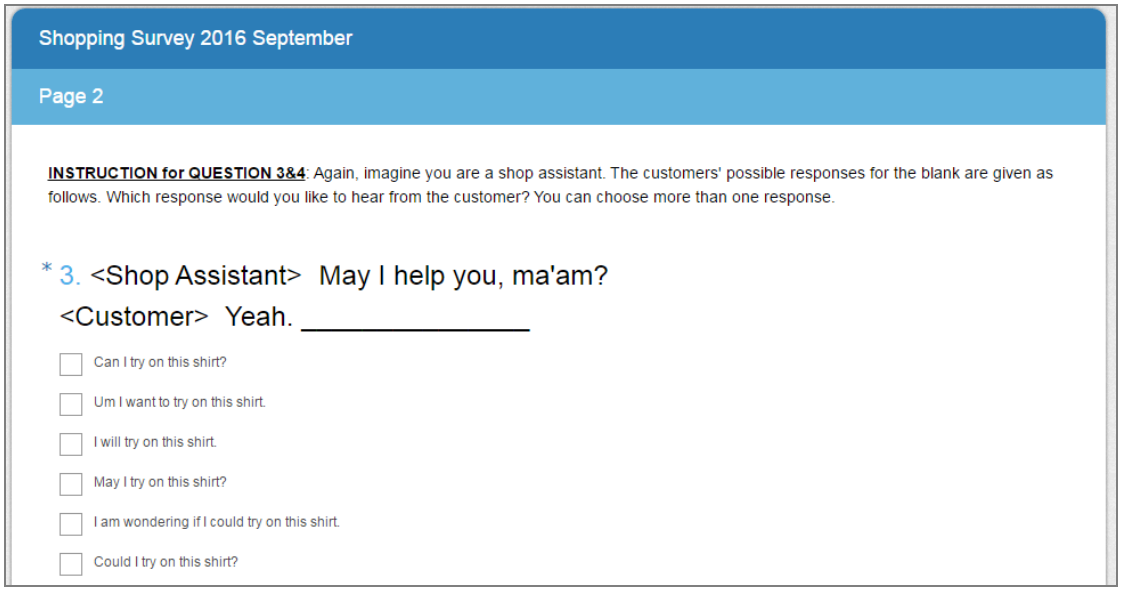
1. <Shop Assistant> Good afternoon, madam. How can I help you?
<Customer> Hi. I just bought this shirt. And when I got home, I just realized that it was the wrong size. _____.

- ☐ I was wondering if I could exchange it for something else.
- ☐ So if you can, I really want you to exchange. But is it OK?
- ☐ I'll take another shirt, a bigger one. So please exchange it.
- ☐ So would you change a shirt?
- ☐ If it says M, I think I have a right to get that one because I wanted to buy a smaller shirt at first.
- ☐ I thought I could exchange this into another one. Is that possible?
- ☐ Why can't you exchange it?
- ☐ Would it be possible for me to exchange it to the other size?
- ☐ So can you exchange it?
- ☐ So, if possible, I'd like to change this one to another, a little bit smaller one.



* 2. Please choose the degree of appropriateness for each response given in Question 1.

	Inappropriate (too polite or very impolite)	A little appropriate (a little too polite or a little impolite)	Appropriate (polite enough)
I was wondering if I could exchange it for something else.	○	○	○
So if you can, I really want you to exchange. But is it OK?	○	○	○
I'll take another shirt, a bigger one. So please exchange it.	○	○	○
So would you change a shirt?	○	○	○
If it says M, I think I have a right to get that one because I wanted to buy a smaller shirt at first.	○	○	○
I thought I could exchange this into another one. Is that possible?	○	○	○
Why can't you exchange it?	○	○	○
Would it be possible for me to exchange it to the other size?	○	○	○
So can you exchange it?	○	○	○
So, if possible, I'd like to change this one to another a little bit smaller one.	○	○	○



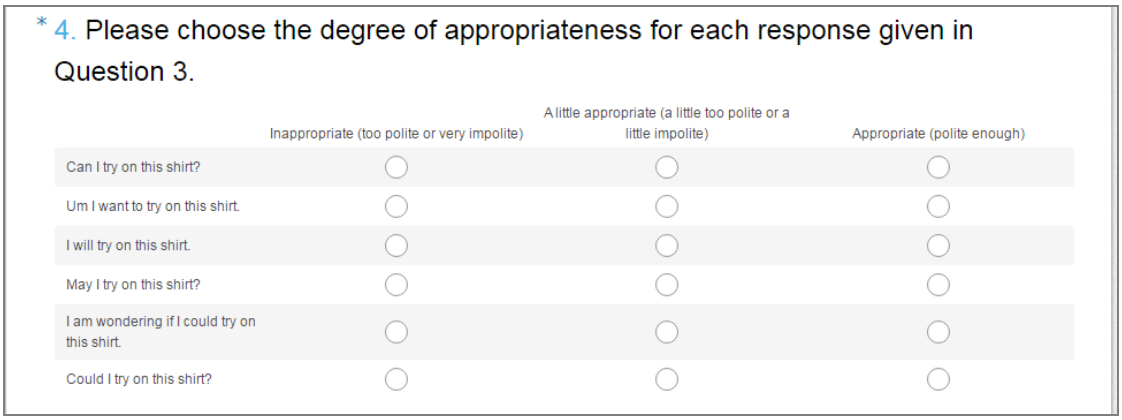
Shopping Survey 2016 September

Page 2

INSTRUCTION for QUESTION 3&4: Again, imagine you are a shop assistant. The customers' possible responses for the blank are given as follows. Which response would you like to hear from the customer? You can choose more than one response.

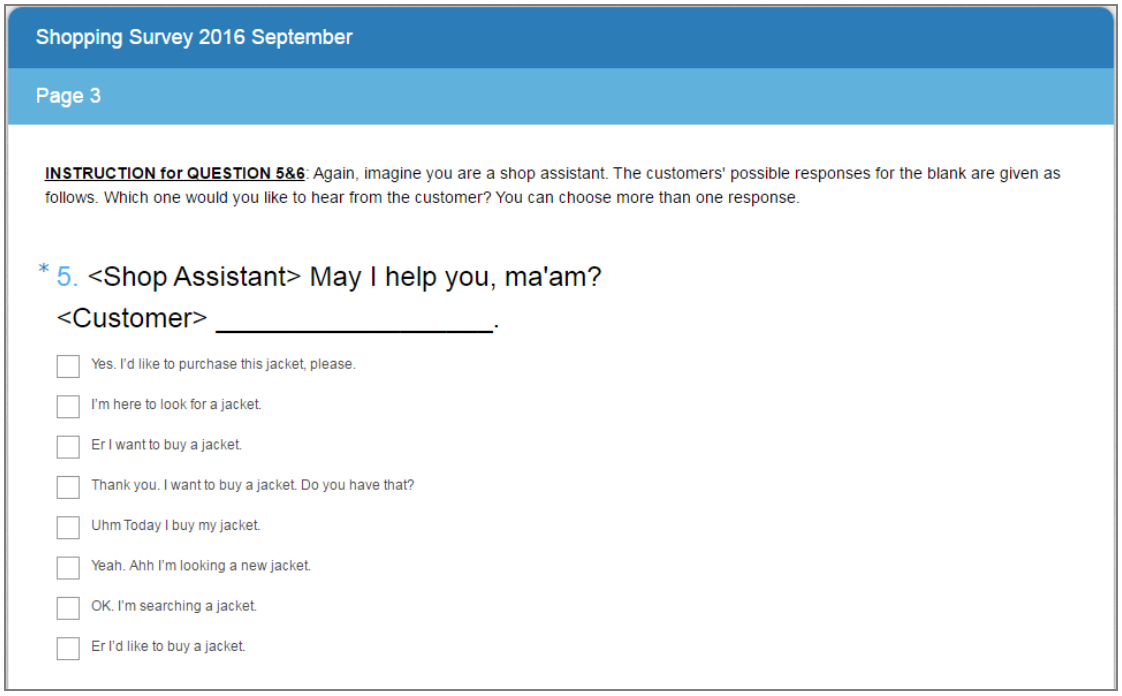
* 3. <Shop Assistant> May I help you, ma'am?
<Customer> Yeah. _____

- ☐ Can I try on this shirt?
- ☐ Um I want to try on this shirt.
- ☐ I will try on this shirt.
- ☐ May I try on this shirt?
- ☐ I am wondering if I could try on this shirt.
- ☐ Could I try on this shirt?



* 4. Please choose the degree of appropriateness for each response given in Question 3.

	Inappropriate (too polite or very impolite)	A little appropriate (a little too polite or a little impolite)	Appropriate (polite enough)
Can I try on this shirt?	○	○	○
Um I want to try on this shirt.	○	○	○
I will try on this shirt.	○	○	○
May I try on this shirt?	○	○	○
I am wondering if I could try on this shirt.	○	○	○
Could I try on this shirt?	○	○	○



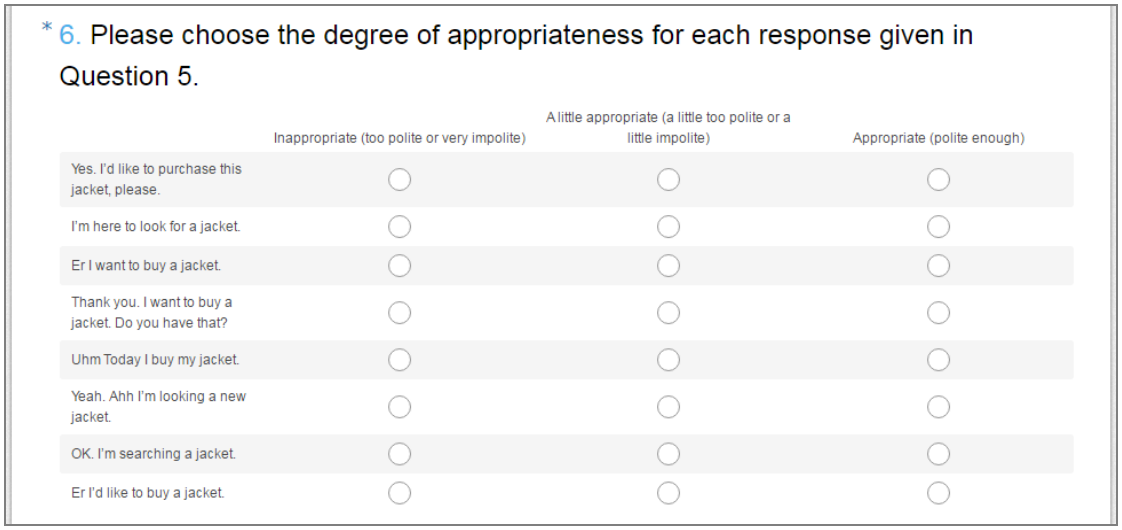
Shopping Survey 2016 September

Page 3

INSTRUCTION for QUESTION 5&6: Again, imagine you are a shop assistant. The customers' possible responses for the blank are given as follows. Which one would you like to hear from the customer? You can choose more than one response.

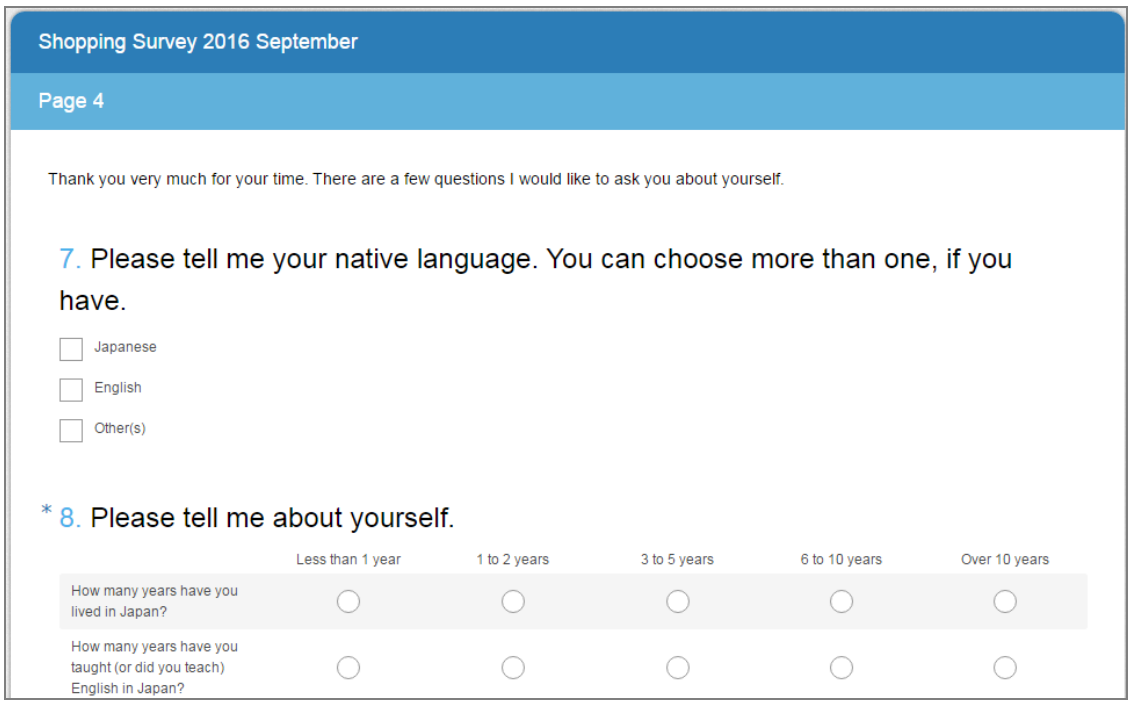
* 5. <Shop Assistant> May I help you, ma'am?
<Customer> _____.

- ☐ Yes. I'd like to purchase this jacket, please.
- ☐ I'm here to look for a jacket.
- ☐ Er I want to buy a jacket.
- ☐ Thank you. I want to buy a jacket. Do you have that?
- ☐ Uhm Today I buy my jacket.
- ☐ Yeah. Ahh I'm looking a new jacket.
- ☐ OK. I'm searching a jacket.
- ☐ Er I'd like to buy a jacket.



* 6. Please choose the degree of appropriateness for each response given in Question 5.

	Inappropriate (too polite or very impolite)	A little appropriate (a little too polite or a little impolite)	Appropriate (polite enough)
Yes. I'd like to purchase this jacket, please.	○	○	○
I'm here to look for a jacket.	○	○	○
Er I want to buy a jacket.	○	○	○
Thank you. I want to buy a jacket. Do you have that?	○	○	○
Uhm Today I buy my jacket.	○	○	○
Yeah. Ahh I'm looking a new jacket.	○	○	○
OK. I'm searching a jacket.	○	○	○
Er I'd like to buy a jacket.	○	○	○



Shopping Survey 2016 September

Page 4

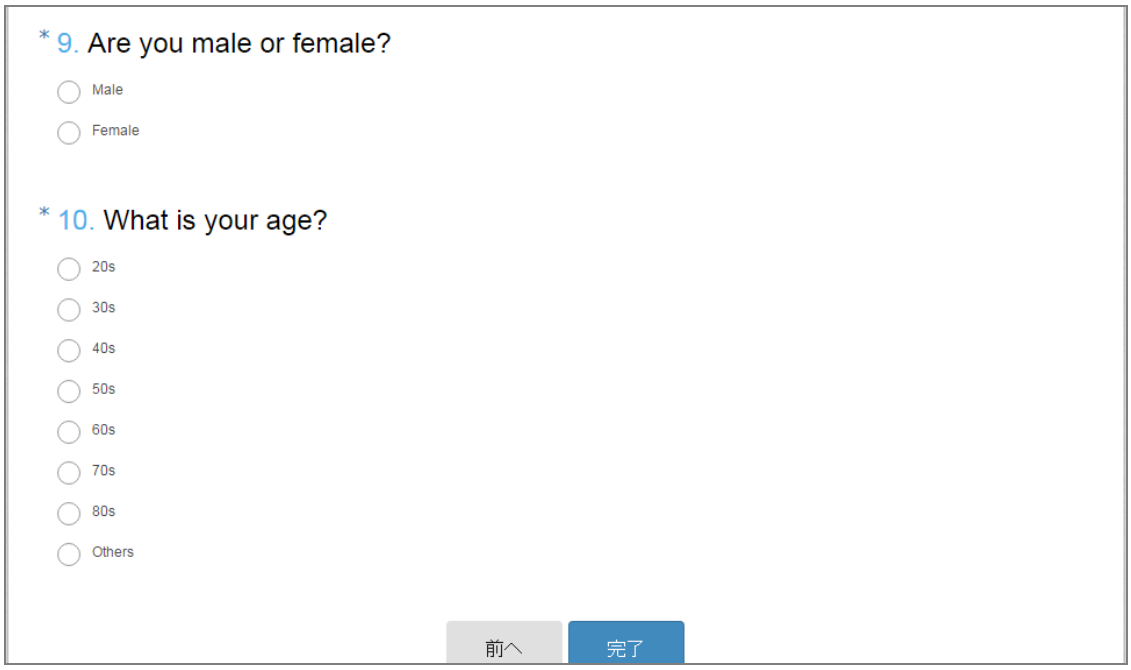
Thank you very much for your time. There are a few questions I would like to ask you about yourself.

7. Please tell me your native language. You can choose more than one, if you have.

- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other(s)

* 8. Please tell me about yourself.

	Less than 1 year	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	Over 10 years
How many years have you lived in Japan?	○	○	○	○	○
How many years have you taught (or did you teach) English in Japan?	○	○	○	○	○



Appendix B

Table 17. The ratings for expressing intention to buy.

No.	Av.		Linguistic Feature	Inapp.		Little App.		App.	
	N	J		N	J	N	J	N	J
P-2	2.8	2.8	D: I'd like to buy…	1	0	0	2	9	8
P-3	2.9	2.6	D: I would like to purchase, … please.	0	1	1	2	9	7
P-5	2.6	2.2	CI: I'm here to buy…	1	1	2	6	7	3
P-1	2.6	2.1	D: I want to…	1	2	2	5	7	3
P-8	2.3	2.0	D&CI: I want… Do you have?	1	3	5	4	4	3
P-6	2.3	1.9	CI: I'm looking…	2	3	3	5	5	2
P-7	2.1	1.7	CI: I'm searching…	2	5	5	3	3	2
P-4	1.4	1.4	D: I buy…	7	6	2	4	1	0

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DOI**:** http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/LanguageV.2017.9.8

ISSN 1989-7103

BOOK REVIEW

A Practical Guide to Integrating Technology into Task-Based Language Teaching
Marta González-Lloret
Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C., United States of America, 2016.
84 pages
ISBN-13: 9781626163577 **ISBN-10:** 162616357X

Reviewed by Salvador Montaner Villalba
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Over and above the fact that the latest educational technologies *seem* more exciting and more interesting than their earlier counterparts, because the implementation, use, and assessment of the originals was not guided by educational principles in language development, they could only really be utilized for entertainment purposes.

Today, however, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and its theoretical principles in Task-based Language Learning (TBLL) now provide an excellent and far more interesting approach for educators and teachers of foreign languages wishing to introduce technology into the classroom. As a direct result of this, students' learning of a foreign language can now be fostered within both the formal and informal contexts of school and home, thereby allowing them to achieve high-quality language learning through authentic tasks and in a fun way.

Many researchers studying second language acquisition have coincided in pointing out that the huge number of didactic applications designed to be used as a principled framework in TBLT are useful for organizing the technological implementation of language learning. Moreover, the innovative combination of tasks and technology, led by the principles of TBLT and TBLL, bring affordances for language learning through students' connection with other speakers of the language that they are learning. In this way learners are encouraged to be creative, which in turn makes language learning personally more meaningful to them and, practicing in this way, helps to minimize students' fear of failure or embarrassment, as well as, broadly speaking, promoting

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learning by doing. Thus, the student of a foreign language can become the main protagonist of their own language learning process.

The interest in the topic of this book is quite evident since the number of publications related to the marriage between TBLT and technology has grown rapidly in recent years, particularly, in the fields of second language studies, in the general fields of education and, moreover, in the field related to educational technology. In her own introduction to her book, the author, Marta González-Lloret, states that her aim in writing it has been to apprise and guide both teachers of foreign languages and educators who are interested in learning new techniques about how the theoretical principles of TBLT can be transferred to practical classroom tasks in order to improve technology-mediated materials for a TBLT syllabus.

Hence, this book is targeted, on the one hand, at both pre- and in-service teachers of foreign and second languages, who will find it useful in the day-to-day teaching of task-based, technology-mediated lessons. On the other hand, it is also oriented at professionals who develop both language curricula and materials, thereby giving them the opportunity to see for themselves how theoretical concepts can become authentic activities in the classroom by offering illustrations of materials which have been utilized effectively.

The author combines both the theoretical principles and practical illustrations of technology-mediated TBLT. The book comprises four chapters, each of which finishes with three different sections which are designed to afford the reader with an excellent opportunity to discuss the key aspects mentioned throughout the chapter with colleagues. The first of these sections is called “Reflective Questions” and is aimed at encouraging further personal research and debate on some of the topics raised. The next section invites the reader to carry out some tasks, which have been suggested as “Activities” for students in the chapter, so that they can put into practice and test the various concepts explained for themselves. Last, but by no means least, the reader is provided with a “Recommended Reading” section, so that the topic of the chapter can be further extended to the reader’s satisfaction.

Each of the four chapters follow the steps to be taken in the implementation of a TBLT syllabus, in accordance with the criteria established by Mike Long (1985, 2015) and John Norris (2009) for such a curriculum.

Chapter 1, entitled "*What is technology-mediated TBLT?"*, presents the reader with the book's approach. González-Lloret conceives "technology-mediated TBLT" as a recent method of thinking, and analyses the effects of combining TBLT and technology. Here we are introduced to the key concepts of TBLT, and are offered various definitions of the term "task", which lead us to reflect on the considerations we should take into account when contemplating the use of the Task-based Language-Teaching approach.

Chapter 2, the title of which is "*How to Conduct a Needs Analysis of Tasks and Technologies*", is related to the first step in the implementation of a TBLT syllabus, which is to conduct a "needs analysis". The importance of doing this for teachers contemplating the idea of working with TBLT underpins the creation of materials and is what tailors the tasks to their specific requirements. The author guides the reader through this process by offering illustrations of what to do and the various sources, resources and methods that can be employed. She examines: 1. What activities are needed, 2. What target language is required, and 3. What level of digital literacy is involved. An example of a Spanish program at an American university is given.

Chapter 3, called "*Creating, Organizing, and Sequencing Tasks*", deals with the creation, organization, and sequencing of didactic activities. This chapter explains the basic principles of TBLT that are to be taken into account when creating activities. It sets out the steps for implementing combined didactic language and technological activities in tasks that address the linguistic targets identified in the needs analysis, and goes on to illustrate possible activities which can be used to suit the needs of different situations. In this way González-Lloret proposes different methods to sequence didactic activities in order to create a technology-mediated, task-based unit. These sequenced pedagogic tasks are based on the task complexity theory.

The two major works on task complexity, Peter Robinson's *Cognition Hypothesis* (2001) and Peter Skehan's *Limited Attentional Capacity Model* (1998), are briefly explained in this chapter. In addition, further academic reading available on this topic is suggested. Various illustrations of complete units are shown and explained, together

with proposals for possible changes in order to fit them to various language levels and technological contexts. Examples of units in Chinese (an intermediate blended TBLT course in Chinese), Spanish (a unit for learners of Spanish with the focus on poetry classes), ESL (a commercially available illustration of English language materials), and the hospitality industry (a catering and hospitality Web-based language kit) are also included.

Finally, Chapter 4, the title of which is "*Performance-Based Assessment and Curriculum Evaluation*", is aimed at the last two steps: improving a TBLT syllabus after having implemented the materials, and learner evaluation and curriculum assessment. The author maintains that assessment/evaluation is of great relevance for the sustainability of any technology-mediated TBLT program, even though the assessment issue is one of the weakest areas in TBLT. This chapter pays special attention to how to connect and how to deal with performance-based evaluation in technology-mediated TBLT materials. González-Lloret continually highlights the key issues of performance-based evaluation throughout the chapter. She once again offers illustrations, as well as proposing different educational technologies that can make assessment of the learning process easier. In its conclusion, this chapter offers guidelines to help teachers of foreign languages assess the effectiveness of the materials that they have created, and provides illustrations of task-based unit evaluation.

This short, practical guide, first released as an ebook and currently in print, offers both *educators* and, more specifically, *teachers* of foreign languages a clear plan as to how to successfully integrate technology into TBLT in the classroom and to develop technologically-mediated materials. Whether the aim is to conduct a needs analysis, create homework or classroom materials, or design and implement a new approach to student evaluation, the book *A Practical Guide to Integrating Technology into Task-Based Language Teaching*, written by M. González-Lloret, will be a welcome resource for language teachers at any level.

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BOOK REVIEW

Second Language Acquisition: A Theoretical Introduction to Real World Applications
Alessandro G. Benati and Tanja Angelovska
Bloomsbury: London (UK), 2016. 200 pages
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Second Language Acquisition: A Theoretical Introduction to Real World Applications by Alessandro G. Benati and Tanja Angelovska (2016) is without doubt a help for undergraduate students and trainee teachers who need to deal with the issue of second language acquisition (SLA). The content is very precise but, at the same time, very clear and easy to understand and follow, even for those students who are dealing with this topic for the first time. It can be applied in the classroom, as a resource book or even a course book, to introduce SLA. It is true that the field has become very complex in the past years, as the studies include many different fields of knowledge: linguistics, psychology, sociology and education. However, the authors of this book have been able to highlight the most important theories in such a way that it can be an excellent resource for use in undergraduate classes. They have also incorporated some activities for students to reflect on the topic and to develop their critical thinking about it. Most of the activities are good and although some are unpretentious, they are effective for students to think about this issue. In short, all of the activities give an insight into the theory. The structure of the book is also very well organized. It is divided into six chapters, which summarize the main theories of SLA:

1. Introduction to second language acquisition.
2. Similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition.
3. How learners process information in second language acquisition.
4. How the internal system develops in a second language.

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5. How learners learn to communicate in a second language.
6. What we know about SLA.

The organization of each chapter follows the same order, which is very effective:

- A short summary of the chapter.
- The theoretical part with all the main authors on SLA analyzed and contrasted.
- Some activities to check understanding and to achieve a critical opinion on the topics, fields of knowledge, theories and issues.
- The application of the theory to the "real-world", that is, a guide for learners and language instructors to use these theories in an effective way when learning or teaching a second language.

The first chapter, "Introduction to second language acquisition", starts with a clear definition of SLA after examining different contexts and assuming three research methods: experimental (more pedagogical research), observational (in the classroom) and case studies (in the classroom). The starting point answers two questions, bearing in mind that L1 has already been acquired: first, how learners internalize the linguistic system of L2, and, second, how learners make use of the linguistic system. In this chapter there is a practical and straightforward summary of the main theories of SLA from the different fields of knowledge involved in the process of L2 learning: firstly, from a rationalist perspective, which proposes that the learning of an L2 is innate and, as such, in opposition to behaviorism, which was in fashion in the past; secondly, from a linguistic perspective (competences and skills); thirdly, from a cognitive perspective; fourthly, from a psychological approach, and finally, from a sociological perspective. The chapter continues by analyzing the nature of language: lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and discourse. It later continues by summarizing the main theories in second language acquisition: Behaviorism, Universal Grammar Theory, Monitor Theory, Interaction Hypothesis, Processability Theory, Input Processing Theory, Skill Acquisition Theory, Emergentism, the Declarative and Procedural Model, Complexity Theory and Sociocultural Theory. It is a reality that SLA is an active growing field in which researchers have not yet accepted just one

single theory, but all the main studies have been summarized in this book. After analyzing the key elements of SLA, the authors move on to the learning process, from declarative to procedural working memory, and to all those factors responsible for the acquisition of linguistic features.

The second chapter, "Similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition", shows the differences and similarities in the acquisition of L1 and L2 in a clear and down-to-earth manner. This chapter is significant as it clarifies the basis of SLA from the point of view of the learner: Chomsky's Universal Grammar (1965 and 1981), the linguistic constraints of transfer and markedness, the role of the brain and the matter of age. The matter of age has been a controversial question, and Lenneberg's (1967) "Critical period hypothesis" is still an issue of research in this subject. The question is whether there is an optimal age for acquiring a second language or if cognitive maturity and experience can be assets in learning a second language. The authors analyze the misconceptions about age from different areas of language skills: pronunciation, morphology and syntax. The authors extend their theory to a multilingual environment, which is nowadays becoming the reality of most learners, as most of them are living in multilingual societies.

The third chapter, "How learners process information in second language acquisition", studies the way in which learners process information. Learners do not always process all the input they are exposed to when learning another language. Moreover, the authors indicate the limited role of instruction in a second language due to external and internal factors. The importance of individual differences for SLA (age, language aptitude, working memory, learning strategies, motivation and learning styles) are reviewed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter, "How the internal system develops in a second language", is a key issue within SLA. It deals with the rules applied when learning a second language, the learner language or interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), that is, language transfer, over-generalization of target language rules, transfer of training, L2 communication strategies and L2 learning strategies. The cognitive theories of SLA are also examined in this chapter, in spite of the difficulties this issue entails.

The fifth chapter, "How learners learn to communicate in a second language", helps to understand the ability a second language learner has when using his or her communicative skills. This sociolinguistic aspect of SLA studies the different tools, skills, and competences that a learner must master for successful communication (Canale and Swain, 1980), which are linguistic (grammar and phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.), sociolinguistic (sociocultural), discourse and strategic. First, the social aspect of language, and what this entails, is emphasized in this chapter, and thus, it studies different approaches from a functionalist perspective, for example, the concept-oriented approach. Second, SLA is influenced by cultural practices and here Vygotsky's (1978) Social-Cultural Theory, Giles' (1978) Accommodation Theory, and Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model are summarized. Considering that our society is becoming multilingual rather than just bilingual, the authors state the differences in meaning in relation to the concepts of bilingualism, heritage language and multilingualism. A final thought is given to "multilingualism competence" and the Dynamic System Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997 & 2002).

The sixth, and last, chapter, "What we know about SLA", evaluates what is known in the field of SLA: the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 in both children and adults. It also deals with the role of implicit and explicit knowledge, input, interaction and output, and well as the impact of instruction in SLA. The remark the authors make is that, in spite of an increase in research since the basis of SLA was established, it is still a matter of continuous debate and controversy. The reason for this is that this topic is very complex and it involves many different fields of knowledge, as stated at the beginning of this review.

All these chapters end with a guide for learners and language instructors on how to apply these theories in the "real world". These sections are highly significant due to their practicality and they give language instructors valuable as well as useful information on how to apply the theoretical part in the learning and teaching of a second language. Chapter six should be highlighted, as it includes some approaches and concerns relating the teaching of a second language. The book also offers other helpful information, for example, the figures and tables included, as well as the final glossary, which is very useful in order to check terminology, theories,

hypotheses and models concerning SLA. The authors have researched the literature well and have included a wide range of references. Moreover, after each chapter they provide a list of references allowing the reader to go deeper still into the topic. All of the references are relevant, well-chosen and well cited.

I therefore think this book is a very good resource to introduce students and trainees to the topic of SLA in such a way that it can be easily understood. This knowledge is reinforced by the activities included and the references for further research on the topic. Moreover, the authors cover and review all the main areas of knowledge of this topic in an engaging, practical way for anyone dealing with this complex matter for the first time. In short, the main strength of this book is to help learners and teachers to tackle the numerous studies and theories on this issue. Its only slight weakness may be the simplicity of some of the activities provided by the authors.

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