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An investigation of scaffolding strategies to support structured inquiry language teaching to novice learners in a Primary school setting

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ABSTRACT

It is believed that Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) affords relevant and meaningful L2 instruction given its contextualised and experiential approach. IBL, which only recently gained popularity in the L2 classroom, strongly differs from that of traditionally didactic methodologies and can present challenges for L2 educators. Research shows that many struggle to adopt a well-rounded inquiry approach and instead tend to over-rely on strategies aiming to make meaning comprehensible to learners, thus neglecting a focus on language form, language use and inquiry skills. This literature review examines current trends in L2 teaching and learning when implementing a structured inquiry approach in the primary school setting and attempts to uncover and evaluate various scaffolding strategies that can be employed to support a more holistic approach to IBL. The language scaffolding practices described in this paper are categorised into four areas of focus: focus on meaning, focus on form, focus on language use, and inquiry skills.

Keywords: *Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL); Scaffolding, Second Language Acquisition (SLA); Language and Curriculum Integration; Constructivism*

I. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Over the last few decades, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have actively sought to comprehend how languages are acquired and learnt (Chomsky, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). Over time, an array of sometimes contradicting theories emerged in response to a perceived deficiency of previous approaches. Traditional methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method, with a focus on learning about the language (Bonilla Carvajal, 2013), and the Audiolingual Method, which encouraged memorisation of chunks of languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), were later replaced by the Natural Approach (Terrell, 1977) which emphasised the importance of exposing learners to an extensive amount of comprehensible input in the target language (TL) (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). More recently, the importance attributed to communicative competence and proficiency have given way to 'middle ground approaches' which blend pragmatic and functional knowledge, thus placing language acquisition as a social practice. Researchers such as Cummins (2000), Gibbons (2002), and Ellis and Shintani (2013) strongly support the importance of social interactions and learning in authentic situations as they believe that languages are best acquired in context and through real-life experiences. Although it cannot be said that contemporary theorists have overlooked the cognitive aspects of SLA, current trends advocate for a more balanced focus on form and meaning, a mixture of implicit and explicit teaching, emphasis on extensive and varied language input as well as ample opportunities for output, to name a few of the ten principles of SLA as enunciated by Ellis (2005).

I.1. Constructivism

In addition to the ever-evolving field of SLA, over the last century, pedagogy has undergone equally tremendous transformation and now favours approaches that promote more student-centred classroom practices (Matamoros-González, Rojas, Romero, Vera-Quiñonez & Soto, 2017). With the student at the centre of the learning experience, values of mutual respect, growth mind-set, and emotional support are embedded in the learning environment, and thus, guide transformative education in any discipline (Cummins, 2000). At the heart of this revolutionary pedagogical perspective is Constructivism (Piaget, 1952), rooted in the 20th century works of academics from various disciplines including education pioneers Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Maria Montessori, among others. Constructivism (Piaget, 1952) considers the learner to be an active participant in the discovery and creation of meaning, where learning is embedded in, and occurs from an accumulation of authentic and contextual social interactions experienced by the learner (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). These general pedagogical concepts transfer effortlessly to language learning, therefore, academics in the fields of applied linguistics are encouraging educators to link instructional content to real-world experiences (Ozverir & Herrington, 2011).

Such theoretical frameworks of SLA and pedagogy gave rise to Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in the language classroom, which offers a framework that allows learners to construct meaning and build knowledge through discovery and investigation. Proponents of IBL argue that children are naturally inquisitive (Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Townsend, 2005), and thus inquiry is a natural process of learning (Short, 2009). Although such an approach to teaching languages may appear to be the perfect hybrid of student-centred learning that fosters social interaction, there are several contingencies to its successful implementation which will be explored in further detail in the subsequent sections of this paper.

II. INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Originally used as a scientific exploration method (Pedaste et al., 2015; Rocard et al., 2007), IBL has proven to be efficient and engaging for all ages and subject matter (Short, 2009; Wells, 1995). However, it presents unique considerations depending on the educational context or discipline at hand (Papaevripidou, Irakleous & Zacharia, 2017).

IBL encompasses various degrees of facilitator support from high to low levels of guidance, with an inquiry continuum that ranges from 'very structured' with strong teacher guidance, to 'open', student-generated investigation. While open inquiry does offer more voice and choice to students, it is advised to introduce the process gradually and to provide sufficient scaffolding, especially for primary-aged children (Banchi & Bell, 2008; Killen, 2012).

II.1. Language and inquiry integration: Opportunities and challenges

The combination of an inquiry-based approach and the use of the TL affords endless possibilities of contextualised scenarios, which as a result are thought to provoke deeper student engagement and motivation as well as more profound opportunities for SLA (Caputo, 2014; Cummins, 2000; Killen, 2012). In line with this notion, Larsen-Freeman (2018, p.64) strongly advocates for a "porous classroom" where the teacher invites a flow of exchange with the world outside the traditional boundaries of the classroom, thus exploring and creating language within the context of its natural sociocultural and historical occurrence, not as a series of stand-alone topics or set of grammar rules (Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Ozverir & Herrington, 2011).

In addition to IBL, other discovery methods have served SLA in the past few decades, mainly driven by the need for authentic contexts and the desire to emphasise communicative skills. Such methods, including Content Based Instruction (CBI) (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989) and Problem Based Learning (PBL) (Boud & Feletti, 1997), are commonly encountered in the literature. Both operate under the same constructivist paradigm and social constructivist theories as IBL, whereby knowledge is mainly constructed by learners through social interactions, rather than solely via a traditional model of didactic delivery. These approaches have been widely implemented with great success for English Language Learners (ELLs), therefore offering the tangible experiences and relatable contexts sought after in language inquiry interaction (Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Walqui, 2006).

In spite of growing evidence to support the benefits of IBL in language classrooms, given the highly contextualised learning environment it affords (Caputo, 2014; Lee, 2014; Wells, 1995), such an approach in an additional language (L2) presents significant challenges for educators and learners alike. This is particularly true among novice language learners of primary school age, which will be the focus of this paper.

Indeed, research in IBL approaches to teaching languages shows that some primary years educators report difficulties in implementing IBL in their L2 classrooms, claiming its incompatibility with novice language learners (Lebreton, 2014; Ledger, Van Vooren, Villaverde, Steffen & Lai, 2016; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001). Researchers in the field (Caputo, 2014; Lebreton, 2014; Lee, 2014; Van Vooren, Lai, Ledger, Bueno Villaverde & Steffen, 2013) have attempted to gain knowledge on this issue and shed light on the following question: How can L2 teachers implement IBL in a language that learners have not yet mastered? To further highlight the relevance of this question, Davidson (2009, p.27) clearly explains that the 'inquiry tools' needed to lead an investigation, such as proficiency in an L2, are still being developed, thus leaving learners faced with a linguistic overload that is likely to cause a major impediment to the proper adoption of IBL in the TL. Inquiring in a language that is still being acquired proves challenging for both the learners and the teacher alike, as it forces the inquiry to remain at low-level questioning and thinking (Van Vooren et al., 2013). As a response to such high linguistic demands, learners might resolve themselves to use their mother tongue (L1) to assist them through the inquiry process. This notion is highly debated in the literature, as research shows that some teachers attempt to ban the use of the L1 in their classrooms, considering it to be a practice that is counterproductive to SLA (Dare, 2009), while other studies indicate that the use of the L1 can be a valuable tool to support novice learners in their cognitive development, ensuring a positive psychological outlook towards the L2 (Caputo, 2014; Cummins, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001).

In addition to the challenge of linguistic load, discovery learning (Bruner, 1961), as a broader pedagogical approach, has also been criticised for putting excessive cognitive pressure on learners (Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006; Tuovinen & Sweller, 1999). This argument is based on the claim that minimally guided instructional methods such as IBL, PBL and CBI are less effective for novice learners than more traditional approaches that emphasise direct instruction and strong guidance. According to Kirschner et al. (2006), free exploration and open inquiry put excessive strain on the working memory of the novice learner, who does not yet possess the required prior knowledge to retain new information or apply it in creative ways. However, SLA literature suggests that structured inquiry, or a strongly guided approach to teaching and learning in the TL, can support learners during the acquisition of new knowledge (Caputo, 2014; Killen, 2012; Kirschner et al., 2006).

A structured approach is based on the idea of a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986), in which the teacher supports students in bridging a learning gap through scaffolding strategies. It is assumed that such 'structure' in the approach to IBL will be gradually removed in the future when the learner becomes more autonomous and advances in L2 proficiency beyond the novice stages. Therefore, in order to provide tasks that are appropriately challenging, while avoiding cognitive overload or compromising the use of the TL, a high level of teacher support is imperative throughout this approach. This notion is highlighted by Dare (2009), who suggests language teachers should aim to place their pedagogical practices in the "developmental zone" (Dare, 2009, p.76), where high-challenge and high-support coexist.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND APPROACH TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

As presented above, the context of this paper is inscribed in a constructivist approach to L2 teaching, where appropriately structured inquiry and language integration offers valuable learning opportunities. However, some challenges related to adequate linguistic and cognitive loads with respect to novice language learners in an IBL context still need to be addressed in order to ensure the successful implementation of this approach. Therefore, this study aims to explore scaffolding practices found in the literature that can be implemented to support primary-aged novice language learners within a structured inquiry approach based on the recommendations gathered from SLA research, in an attempt to answer the following questions: How can structured inquiry support L2 teachers working with novice learners in primary years curricula that incorporate such methodologies? More precisely, what scaffolding strategies are essential to support language acquisition in a structured inquiry approach?

While the focus of this paper is IBL, it became evident that limited studies have tackled the narrow topic of inquiry-based L2 learning in primary-aged students. Therefore, the search had to expand its scope to include comparable teaching approaches, namely Concept-Based Learning, PBL and other curriculum integration models such as CBI and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Evidence of scaffolding strategies in the literature, where a discovery approach was offered to students, were classified into two main categories: language-specific scaffolding and inquiry-specific scaffolding (see Table 1). In order to organise the language-specific strategies, the framework proposed by Cummins (2000) was adapted to comprise the following three areas of language teaching: focus on meaning, focus on form and focus on use. The focus on meaning category encompasses all strategies and tools that support meaning making and help generate comprehensible input in the TL. Focus on form gathers strategies that teach the language structure and system in a consciousness-raising manner. Focus on use covers strategies that allow learners to use the language in a meaningful and creative way. For the purposes of this study, each area of language teaching mentioned above was analysed separately, however in a classroom context they tend to overlap seamlessly.

Inquiry-specific scaffolding strategies were classified according to an adapted version of Wells' (1995, p.244) "Interactive inquiry model of learning and teaching". This simplified framework consists of three main phases of inquiry: research, interpretation and presentation. The research phase includes all strategies related to initiating interest, formulating questions and explicitly teaching research skills. The interpretation of data stage allows for categorising strategies related to organising and analysing information gathered during the research process. The presentation of findings phase groups teaching strategies related to the ways in which students showcase learning constructed during the process.

Table 1. Evidence of scaffolding strategies present in the literature for a structured language inquiry approach

Structured language inquiry approach	
Language-specific scaffolding	**Inquiry-specific scaffolding**
○ Focus on meaning	○ Research skills
○ Focus on form	○ Interpretation of data
○ Focus on use	○ Presentation of findings

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, an adaptation of Cummins' (2000) framework allowed for a categorisation of the type of scaffolding in the following three areas: (a) focus on meaning, (b) focus on form, and (c) focus on use. The data found in the literature are in the form of pedagogical practices as well as recommendations offered by academics in the field of SLA and structured inquiry teaching. A discussion for each category ensues.

IV.1. Focus on meaning

The literature reveals that in attempts to enrich students' vocabulary and to provide comprehensible input, language educators are using various scaffolding strategies that fulfil three main language-related pedagogical purposes: contextualising, bridging and interacting.

IV.1.1. Contextualising

Contextualising strategies attempt to make meaning clear to students. The literature advises teachers to present their speech in conjunction with non-linguistic tools to provide a rich sensory context with a strong emphasis on visual aids (Dare, 2009; Townsend, 2005; Walqui, 2006). With this purpose in mind, modelling the language through action and dramatisation as well as with visuals, realia, manipulatives and films are commonly employed by language teachers to make the TL accessible to low proficiency learners (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Moses, Busetti-Frevert & Pritchard, 2015; Thomson, 2012; Van Vooren et al., 2013; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012). In addition, contextualisation can take its source directly from the content of the curriculum with a CLIL approach. As discussed, language integration has become a trend to promote teaching through the language, rather than about the language; thus making it a popular approach with ELLs in the USA to accelerate the command of academic literacy (Moses et al., 2015; Walqui, 2006; Wells, 1995).

IV.1.2. Bridging

Generally perceived as good pedagogical practice, bridging strategies are recommended for making connections between background knowledge and new information, and to encourage recall, prediction and inference (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Walqui, 2006). Some evidence of this technique is present in the literature in the form of activities in the Chinese language that involve the exploration and distinction between similar phonological, orthographical or semantic words as a means of highlighting difficulties and ensuring appropriate usage of vocabulary (Lee, 2014). Similarly, in the context of ELLs, Walqui (2006) suggests providing schema building activities in the form of a compare/contrast matrix that offers structured and clear connections between students' prior knowledge and new information. Other researchers enable the creation of links between students' personal interests and emotional connections with curriculum content to provide meaningful educative experiences that are relevant to students, and therefore increase individual motivation to learn (Cummins, 2000; Short, 2009). Similarly, when conducted prior to the study of a unit, field trips afford personal experiences and generate enthusiasm about inquiring (Van Vooren et al., 2013). However, it can be argued that it may prove challenging for novice language learners to reach such levels of deep reflection given their age as well as their limited fluency and free expression in the TL. As a means of diminishing such difficulties, front-loading, or pre-teaching new vocabulary/pre-formulating the content that will be covered, is an effective technique for novice learners to access new information and activate prior knowledge (Dare, 2009). Resources such as vocabulary lists, dictionaries, and cue cards are common tools to pre-teach unknown content in order to facilitate comprehension of a text (Moses et al., 2015; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Thomson, 2012; Van Vooren et al., 2013).

IV.1.3. Interacting

A final category appears in the form of interactional strategies. Classroom interactions including those of teacher-to-student nature, whole class and group discussions, are building blocks of the social constructivist learning theory (Dare, 2009; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Thomson, 2012; Townsend, 2005). During classroom inquiry, questioning, which ultimately drives thinking, is an essential part of IBL (Cummins, 2000; Dare, 2009) and is extensively demonstrated in practice with multiple examples in the literature of whole-class discussion and teacher-led questioning (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Moses et al., 2015; Thomson, 2012; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012). The quality of teacher-student and student-student interactions is instrumental in ensuring an effective learning environment. The teacher's role in establishing a safe and welcoming classroom culture is an underlying requirement to the success of any of the strategies that are referenced in the literature. Thus, a supportive school context where all learners feel valued and respected as individuals is essential (Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Townsend, 2005). It is effectively with the learners' emotional well-being in mind that some teachers are allowing the use of the L1 during L2 lessons (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001). The process of utilising multiple languages to communicate, also called translanguaging[i], is increasingly perceived as a meaning-making strategy by language educators despite generating contentious debates. When students switch languages, not only is comprehension possible, but the learners' individual identity and culture is acknowledged and valued (Cummins, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

Finally, language educators use corrective feedback during classroom interactions to emphasise appropriate sentence structure and choice of words (Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Thomson, 2012; Van Vooren et al., 2013). According to Ellis (2006), corrective feedback enables a focus on syntax through reformulation to enhance meaning as well as reflection on errors, especially in oral interactions.

Considering the variety of 'focus on meaning' strategies encountered in a wide array of action-research papers and linguistic theory, it appears that teachers have a reasonable understanding of how to enhance input for novice language learners by making it more comprehensible. In addition, this varied repertoire may also indicate the belief that offering repeated exposure to the language in the receptive mode is a prerequisite to building meaning (Cummins, 2000; Pritchard, 2009; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001; Walqui, 2006).

IV.2. Focus on form

This category focuses on the teaching of formal features and functions of language such as grammar, syntax and orthography (Long, 1988, 1991; Long & Crookes, 1992). As discussed, while recent SLA research tends to agree on the need to teach grammar, how it is taught is still a controversial topic as contemporary researchers have suggested a more balanced approach (Cummins, 2000; Ellis, 2006). Effectively, it is recommended that teachers continue to give priority to language form, but the approach should be more implicit in nature and based on explorative learning. By raising awareness of the language structure instead of explicitly offering the rule and practicing it through rote exercises, students are able to observe and infer correlation between the meaning and function of certain language structures to thereafter, with appropriate teacher guidance, deduce the grammatical rule in question (Caputo, 2014; Lee, 2014). As a result of this approach, according to Townsend (2005, p.152) "when students increase their awareness of the structure and effects of language, they gain proficiency in the use of language". Linking back to the concept of contextualising learning (mentioned in the previous section), research in language teaching shows that enabling connections between content and learners' personal interests also helps to teach grammar in a meaningful way (Gibbons, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). To illustrate this instructional approach, it is useful to consider Cummins' (2000, p.276) idea of "critical language awareness" which accentuates the need to engage learners in critical inquiry into language form by providing authentic texts with real-life implications or cultural messages that link to students' interests and passions. While many examples can be found that have the potential to promote engagement and motivation to explore forms (Cummins, 2000; Moses et al., 2015, Schwarzer & Luke, 2001), the literature lacks detail to truly evaluate the effectiveness of such projects, and the degree to which they are conducted in an inquiry-based approach.

It is important to note that form-focused strategies seem underrepresented as a category in comparison to the wider variety of meaning-making strategies introduced above. According to Larsen-Freeman (2015), despite the advice offered by researchers to avoid explicit grammar teaching as an exclusive method, grammar instruction is predominantly taught in a traditional (or didactic) way at the expense of IBL (Lebreton, 2014; Van Vooren et al., 2013). Therefore, it could be hypothesised that progressive language scaffolding strategies, such as raising awareness, only appear sporadically in the literature because they are rarely implemented in practice.

IV.3. Focus on use

As described by Cummins (2000, p.9), the "focus on use" component of his framework assumes that linguistic production should emphasise the real-life usage of language rather than exclusively its practice; characterised as low-level activities or exercises that involve the repetition of a specific form or function of the language, often deprived of meaningful context. This distinction between practice and use is essential as it has a direct (and generally positive) impact on students' motivation to engage in language production given that true 'usage' of the L2 can only be achieved through learner-centred tasks that are both relevant and challenging (Bunch, 2013). The nature of such tasks in the language classroom is described by Ozverir and Herrington (2011) as being ill-defined, close to real-world communicative situations and potentially including various sub-tasks that both scaffold and guide the inquiry process.

In addition, Cummins (2000) emphasises the importance of providing a purpose for language use that affords deeper thinking and questioning to motivate learners to construct and express understanding and meaning. He urges teachers to aspire to educate students, rather than simply teach them, something that can be achieved by offering truly enriching learning experiences rooted in authentic contexts. Field trips, also referenced as a means of contextualising a new language under the heading 'focus on meaning' as mentioned above, even if only possible occasionally, provide rich and authentic opportunities with a genuine purpose for L2 communication. However, as an alternative, authentic tasks designed in the classroom –which entail a level of superficiality because of the contrived environment within the school walls–, still demonstrate a positive impact on the attention span and motivation of young learners who can recognise the applicability of these tasks to real world contexts.

Although sporadic, some evidence of language use classroom strategies embedded in potentially rich communicative opportunities is present in the literature. For instance, tasks requiring students to represent or transform a text into another genre (Walqui, 2006; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012) or even the creation of trans-disciplinary texts. While such activities can be engaging and may promote language use (Cummins, 2000; Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera & Cummins, 2014), there is a lack of instructional evidence of adequate inquiry depth. Other instances of language use are offered in the literature such as plays (Ntelioglou et al., 2014; Townsend, 2005) and posters as products of an inquiry project (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Moses et al., 2015); however, once again only described briefly. Further information on the approach for each task would be necessary to ensure IBL is properly used in conjunction with the TL, thus presenting the needed conditions for effective language use.

In complement to the tasks evaluated above, other individual scaffolding tools enabling language use are mentioned in the literature. As such, the strategy of shared-writing, by which the learners contribute as a group to the production of a text with the help of the teacher, enable emerging L2 users to be supported in accessing meaningful language production (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Fullerton et al., 2015; Moses et al., 2015; Ntelioglou et al., 2014). Other tools such as journaling and small group work are reported to be valuable in allowing shy and less confident learners to express their thoughts in the TL in a safe environment (Capitelli, Hooper, Rankin, Austin & Caven, 2016; Cummins, 2000, Thomson, 2012; Townsend, 2005). For complete language beginners, the use of L1 can also be used to facilitate expression in the most fluent language available, thereby allowing higher-level thinking, which is later translated into the TL to the learner's best ability (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Cummins, 2000).

V. INQUIRY-SPECIFIC SCAFFOLDING STRATEGIES

According to Killen (2012, p.300), "… [the] primary role [of teachers] should be to help students learn how to think, rather than teaching them how to remember". With this quote as a guide, this next section gathers evidence of scaffolding strategies that support the inquiry process and explicitly teach the skills necessary to successfully conduct IBL in the L2. An adapted version of Wells' (1995) framework was used in efforts to organise the data collected from theoretical academic works and accounts of teachers' pedagogical practice, as described in Table 1.

V.1. Research of empirical data phase

According to Wells (1995), the research phase of the inquiry cycle should include scaffolding strategies that aim to fulfil three main purposes: to initiate interest, to help in formulating questions, and to teach research skills. The first of these purposes implies offering access to carefully curated, relevant and varied resources. Offering a choice of literary genres, including fiction pieces in addition to informational resources, is recommended to allow the student to consider various standpoints for the same historical event (Short, 2009). Moreover, engagement activities that allow for multiple experiences through exploration of real-world phenomena (Capitelli et al., 2016; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012) are powerful tools to support and extend understanding beyond factual resources that are generally prescribed by the curriculum (Short, 2009). In order to generate enthusiasm, such resources and activities should also attempt to connect with the learners' prior knowledge and current understanding before being extended.

Once learners have gained familiarity and developed a keen interest in a topic, a natural wondering should occur out of issues discovered in the information-gathering phase. Guidance towards developing a research question is needed at this stage. For this purpose, Short (2009) recommends tools such as "I wonder" journals or classroom charts to follow the process of questioning and reasoning of each student. Other teachers have used modelling and thinking-aloud to generate questions with young emerging L2 learners to help with reasoning in the TL (Moses et al., 2015). The KWL chart –what a student knows [K], wants to know [W], and has learned [L] – is another tool commonly used to track student progress in their investigation and wondering (Moses et al., 2015). At this stage, it is important to note that a structured inquiry approach generally implies that the teacher initiates the topic or question to be explored; therefore, Killen (2012) warns teachers to ensure that the research questions are challenging and engaging for students as well as open for interpretation and adaptation so that they are malleable throughout the inquiry process.

V.2. Interpretation and analysis of data phase

Once the research stage has generated enough material, learners can start organising and interpreting the data in order to make sense of evidence and attempt to answer the research question. This implies that learners systematically and purposefully collect and record information before coming to conclusions (Wells, 1995). With this purpose in mind, some teacher-researchers report adopting various strategies to keep track of findings. Moses et al. (2015) taught students to record newly learnt information on sticky notes with sentences starting with "I learned" in order to record key information as well as to practice rephrasing relevant content with this sentence starter. Other teachers exploring inquiry-based instruction for ESL, co-create anchor charts with students that enable emerging bilinguals to record their learning and reflect on their thinking. These large classroom displays not only provide a representation of the inquiry pathway but also make an easy reference visual for key vocabulary and meaningful chunks of language which have the added benefit of supporting learners with making meaning more comprehensible (Buhrow & Uoczak García, 2006; Moses et al., 2015).

Although some instances of strategies for organising data are present in the literature, little evidence of strategies enabling an analysis of the data is offered. Instead, the analysis phase is only implicitly mentioned without tangible examples. On the other hand, and in line with socio-constructivist theories, it could be argued that classroom interactions in both L1 and L2 have the potential to facilitate the interpretation and analysis of data phases. Therefore, given the extensive use of class discussion, group and pair work during the inquiry process as presented throughout the reviewed literature (Capitelli et al., 2016; Caputo, 2014; Cummins, 2000; Moses et al., 2015; Wells, 1995; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012), it is possible that L2 teachers are heavily relying on this strategy to generate understanding and analysis of data during the inquiry cycle.

V.3. Presentation of findings phase

This phase includes teaching strategies that support learners in showcasing newly acquired knowledge at the end of the inquiry process. Research shows that presentation skills can be explicitly taught to novice L2 learners through modelling, with an emphasis on common mistakes in efforts to highlight preferred techniques (Moses et al., 2015). Other final products may include brochures, audiotapes, posters or student-directed lessons to the whole class (Moses et al., 2015; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001). Surprisingly, the use of technology is only mentioned on rare occasions in the literature (Ntelioglou et al., 2014; Zeegers & McKinnon, 2012), despite having the potential to be a valuable tool to support language production thanks to its multimodal possibilities to showcase learning (Ntelioglou et al., 2014). Although some examples of what the presentation of findings may look like are offered in the literature, there is very little evidence of how teachers are assisting learners to acquire the needed skills to successfully achieve this goal.

VI. CONCLUSION

This work aimed to provide a comprehensive literature review of language teaching strategies based in constructivist theory to demonstrate that a structured inquiry approach can support L2 educators in teaching novice language learners in a primary school context. Such evidence was collected from a range of academic research on language acquisition and IBL among primary-aged learners.

In line with current language acquisition research that emphasises the importance of offering extensive comprehensible input (Cummins, 2000; Pritchard, 2009; Swartzer & Luke, 2001; Walqui, 2006), the above literature review revealed that educators prioritise a wide array of strategies dedicated to meaning-making (i.e. focus on meaning). However, it could be indicative of a tendency towards a more didactic model at the expense of a student-centred IBL approach. Although research supports that learners should also be offered ample opportunities for meaningful language output (i.e. focus on use) as well as being exposed to the language systems through raising awareness (i.e. focus on form) (Cummins, 2000), less evidence of such scaffolding is found in the literature. It was also discovered that few strategies are employed to explicitly teach inquiry skills, especially with respect to the interpretation of data phase. It is unclear whether this lack of information is due to a deficiency of knowledge of inquiry and language integration on behalf of teachers, or whether this topic is still at the early stages of exploration as a field of research; therefore, a more extensive search would be valuable.

Congruent with constructivist ideas, structured L2 inquiry should employ varied scaffolding strategies to equally address language meaning, form and use alongside authentic learning as a means of acquiring the TL. Therefore, the present work may be useful in promoting teachers to rethink L2 pedagogy and ensure that all phases of the inquiry process and all language modes and skills are adequately supported with efficient strategies to yield meaningful learning experiences for students; something that can be achieved through a successful process of structured inquiry.

Notes

[i] Defined by Larsen-Freeman (2018) as situations "where students use, rather than exile, their existing language resources in their learning of a new language" (p.61).

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English in the linguistic landscape of Thailand: A case study of public signs in Hat Yai

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ABSTRACT

During the last decades, English has become an international language in all kinds of contexts, including business and tourism, and Asian linguistic landscapes are a good reflection of this phenomenon. This paper focuses on Thailand and the city of Hat Yai, where a corpus of 165 public signs were collected. These were analysed quantitatively to discuss the functions that English performs in public domains, and also qualitatively, by means of a multimodal analysis, to observe the Thai and English prominence in the case of multilingual signs. The results show the importance of English, not only as an international communicative tool, but also as a language of prestige and media impact. Furthermore, some features of written Thai English or Tinglish were found in some signs, which may confirm the early stages of development of a possible new emerging variety of World Englishes.

Keywords: *Linguistic Landscape; Thailand; Hat Yai; Functions of English, Language Prominence; Thai English.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Landscape (henceforth LL) research is defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) as the study of “the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (p. 23); that is to say, it involves the study of the presence and dominance of languages displayed in the public domains of a particular location. These languages are to be found in written signs “outside private homes”, such as “road signs, names of streets, shops and schools” (Shohamy et al., 2010, p.xiv), and it can also be extended to advertisements and even product names.

Thailand has been a very attractive destination for LL researchers, given the prominent economic growth that the country has experienced thanks to tourism during the last decade, and therefore, the impact that this phenomenon has had on the language exposure and usage. Ever since Huebner (2006) explored 15 neighbourhoods in Bangkok, other relevant studies have followed, such as Thongton’s (2016) in Chiang Mai, and Prasert and Zilli’s (2019) in Pattaya. Nonetheless, all these studies have been carried out in the capital or in popular tourist urban areas of the country, and little attention has been paid to other cities that are not especially well-known, such as Hat Yai.

Hat Yai is the fourth largest city of Thailand, located in the Southeast, so that it is a transit location for travellers who pass through and from Malaysia, its neighbouring country. Most tourists it receives are of Malaysian and Singaporean origin, and the presence of Western people is not very common. The English language is not as widely spoken as in other tourist-destined locations such as Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Phuket; nevertheless, its presence on the public signage is notorious and worth examining.

Undoubtedly, English has become a global language during the past decades, and its use in the LL of Hat Yai can be primarily justified by the need of communicating with tourists and expats of any origin. Some public signs in this city, however, prove that on many occasions, the choice is linked to a question of language prestige and globalisation. The choices made in terms of visual prominence of one language or another on those signs may reveal those functions. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that quite a few signs written in English by Thai authors do not adopt any specific standard variety of English, such as the Australian or the British. What at first sight may be considered a poor use of grammar and vocabulary, reflects that a new potential variety of English, known as Thai English or *Tinglish* (Bennui & Hassim, 2014, p. 16), may be developing. Together with the use of English as the international language for communication (p. 14), ThaiE is slowly spreading, and the LL of Hat Yai shows it.

This article will therefore focus on the specific functions that the English language performs in the public sphere of Hat Yai, the visual prominence of this language in the case of multilingual signs, and the incidence of signs written in ThaiE. These aims have been summarised in the following research questions:

(i) What are the most frequent functions of English in the LL of Hat Yai?

(ii) How visually prominent English is on signs, and what part of the message is translated into English?

(iii) How prevailing is the use of ThaiE in signs and which are its features?

These questions will be answered by gathering and analysing some data that (i) include public signs belonging to different domains, and therefore, carry out different functions;

(ii) contain several multilingual signs that can display the preference for visual prominence of English in relation to Thai and other languages and the amount of information that is provided in those languages; and (iii) display, where applicable, some features of ThaiE.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. Previous LL Studies

The notion of LL constitutes a relatively recent or "fertile" area of study in the field of sociolinguistics (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009, p.14). Even though a few early works already explored the choice of languages displayed in public scenarios, like that of Spolsky and Cooper (1991) in Jerusalem, the concept of LL was not introduced until 1997 by Landry and Bourhis. Since then, relevant works have been compiled and edited by well-known scholars, such as Gorter (2006) and Shohamy et al. (2010), in their respective books: *Linguistic Landscape. A New Approach to Multilingualism*, and *Linguistic Landscape of the City*.

The scope of study is large and diverse. Some researchers have analysed the language choice in shop signs, like Wang (2013) did in Beijing and Amer and Obeidat (2014) accomplished in Aqaba City. Others have centred on the promotion of multilingualism through landscapes, such as Dressler's (2015) work in a public school with German-bilingual program and Siricharoen's (2016) at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. There are also those who have engaged in a discussion on the presence of the English language in the public sphere and have therefore been an inspiration and a source of theoretical and practical proposals for the present analysis. For instance, Lawrence (2012) analysed the use of English in the LL of Korea and its impact on the national language, and Takhtarova et al. (2015) examined the role of English as an international language in the cities of Paris, Berlin, and Kazan.

II.2. Actors and Functions of Public Signs

Most scholars, like Backhaus (2007), Shohamy and Gorter (2009), and Coulmas (2013), agree that the target location for analysis is the urban environment, for most written signs are exposed there. Depending on the LL actors (i.e., the authors who shape the LL), Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) classify signs into two groups: public actors, or “top-down”, and private actors, or “bottom-up”. The former consists in “official signs placed by the government or related institution” and the latter refers to “non-official signs put there by commercial enterprises, organisations or persons” (p. 3). In any case, written signs are created by city residents for the public (local or non-local) to see; thus, the language choice in them is not random.

The LL of a city provides information about the history, ideology, political system, economy, geography, and demography of the society. It also projects values like “patriotism, national pride, ethnic allegiance, commercial competition and globalisation” (Shohamy et al., 2010, p.xiii), which unfold some functions of multilingualism in public writing. Additionally, apart from communicating, a LL also aims to transmit messages to its readers and its study is fundamental to understand the background and current behaviour of a community. At the same time, it may be as powerful as to lead to changes in society (Coulmas, 2013): it can serve as a tool for protest, media broadcast or diffusion, and even language input.

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), there are two major functions of public signs: informational and symbolic. The informational function aims at indicating the geographical territory of a language group and the symbolic function reveals how different languages are perceived by a particular linguistic community in terms of their value and status. When dealing with English language use in a particular LL, another function could be considered: media diffusion. In this current era of digital globalisation, with English as the dominant language over the internet (Flammia & Saunders, 2007), it is noticeable that the English language may also be used to broadcast certain information faster than it would be done with another language, and this may also be displayed through the LL.

II.3. Choices about Language Prominence in Public Signs

The positioning and the spatial appearance of a language in a public sign is also an aspect that some other LL experts (Haynes, 2012; Huebner, 2006) have shown awareness of in the study of linguistic landscapes, since it provides significant information about the power and relevance of such language in a community of speakers or in a particular domain. In his article, Huebner (2006) explores language prominence in the linguistic landscape of Bangkok, and Haynes (2012) also compares the positioning of English and Welsh in signs in the city of Cardiff.

According to Huebner (2006), language prominence depends on: (i) placement of text, or primary or secondary position that the language occupies on the sign; (ii) size of font; (iii) amount of text provided in a particular language in comparison to another; and (iv) colours of font or surrounding design around the text.

Together with language prominence, another interesting aspect is the amount of text that is devoted to each language in multilingual signs, as all the content of the message is not always provided in both languages. According to Reh's (2004) classification of multilingual signs, there are 4 types of relationship between the content of the message and the languages used in the signs: duplicating (all information is provided in each language), fragmentary (one language provides more information than others), overlapping (two or more languages present shared information in the sign, but each of them also provide other details not found in the other languages) and complementary (two or more languages show different information).

II.4. The English Language in Thailand

Unlike most Southeast Asian countries, Thailand always managed to avoid colonialism from any European empire (Baker, 2012), and standard Thai has always been the only official language of the country. Bolton (2008) affirms that only around 10% of the Thai population are English speakers and according to Kachru's (1985) *Three circles of English* theory, Thailand is included in the 'Expanding circle' of *World Englishes* (see Figure 1), where "English plays no historical or governmental role" (Wilang & Teo, 2012, p.4).

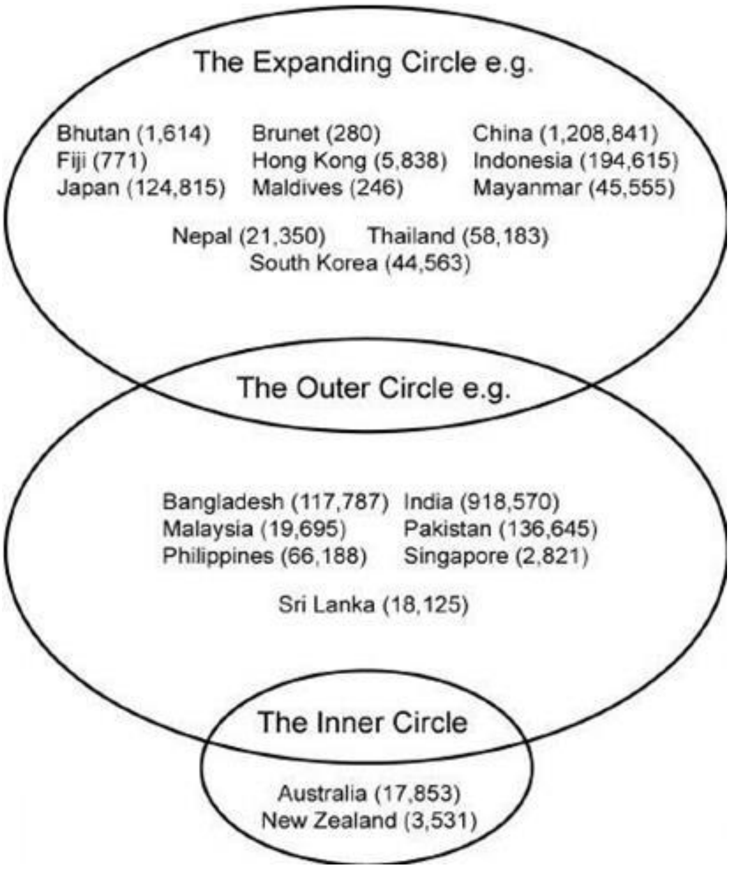

Figure 1. Three Concentric Circles of Asian Englishes (Populations in Thousands) (Kachru, 1998, p. 94).

Conversely, while the presence of English in Thai people's daily lives is rare, it does play an important role in international communication and digital technology these days, and it is regarded as a language of prestige and professionalism. It constitutes the means of communication with not only the Western world, but also with other Asian countries: it is the common tongue in ASEAN[i] and ASEAN+3[ii] (Baker, 2012). In addition, as the field of *World Englishes* evolves, and English usage is slowly spreading around the country, ThaiE is emerging as a new English variety (Chutisilp, 1984; Watkhaolarm, 2005).

III. METHODOLOGY

III.1. Materials

For this project, 165 pictures of public signs where English was included were taken randomly. 35 signs were monolingual (only written in English) and the remaining 130 signs were multilingual, where more than one language appeared: 123 were written in English and Thai, 3 in English and Chinese, 2 in English, Thai and Chinese, and 2 in English, Japanese and Thai.

To collect a diverse sample and to compare the linguistic behaviour of different landscapes around the Hat Yai, the following locations were chosen:

1. *Prince of Songkla* University Campus, with address Kanjanawanich Soi[iii] 15 Rd, Tambon[iv] Kho Hong, Amphoe[v] Hat Yai, Changwat[vi] Songkla 90110.

2. *Central Festival* Shopping Centre, with address Kanjanawanich Rd, Hat Yai.

3. *Vongvanit* Rd, Tambon Hat Yai, Amphoe Hat Yai, Chang Wat Songkla 90110.

4. *Thumnoonvithi* Rd, Tambon Hat Yai, Amphoe Hat Yai, Changwat Songkla, 90110.

These areas can be classified into three domains: education (university campus), commerce (shopping centre) and the public way (the two streets chosen at random). For obtaining a balanced collection of signs, I took the same number of pictures for each of them; namely, 55 signs at *PSU* campus, 55 at *Central Festival*, and another 55 at the streets *Thumnoonvithi* and *Vongvanit*.

There is no general consensus on what signs can be representative of the LL, since several points of view have been provided (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Landry and Bourhis (1997) would consider roads and street signing, advertisements and public signs in official buildings, whereas Backhaus (2006) would select "any piece of written text within a definable frame" (p.56). During the analysis of signs in Hat Yai, I used Backhaus's definition, selecting every sample of writing publicly displayed, not only outdoors but also inside buildings and businesses open to the public, like book covers and names of products.

III.2. Methods of analysis

The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative data to give an answer to the previous research questions. Quantitative analysis was used to provide an illustrative idea (in percentages) of the most common functions of English in signs, as well the visual and linguistic prominence in English and Thai and the incidence of signs displaying ThaiE features. The signs were first counted and categorised according to type (advertisement, book cover, shop sign, and so on) and actor (private or public), to facilitate the discussion around functions and language prominence depending on those categorisations. In order to discuss the functions that the English language performs, every item of the collected data was thoroughly observed and then classified according to informational, symbolic and media diffusion functions. As for the qualitative content, it consisted of a multimodal analysis to interpret the visual prominence of English and Thai in signs and to analyse the amount of text provided in each language. Huebner's (2006) and Reh's (2004) frameworks (previously developed in the literature review) were used respectively for these studies. ThaiE features in signs were contrasted to those listed in previous literature (Snodin, 2014; Thammawan, 2008; Trakulkasemsuk, 2012).

IV.ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF HAT YAI: FINDINGS

IV.1. Categorisation of signs

The following sign types were obtained:

- 59 advertisements (products, events, courses, etc.).
- 40 informative signs (opening hours, warning signs, instructions, directions, requests, and greetings).
- 29 shop signs.
- 14 street and place signs.
- 12 book and magazine covers, taken at *B2S* stationery store, located inside *Central Festival* shopping centre.
- 7 Thai products found in a 7 *Eleven* supermarket in *Vongvanit* Road.

- 4 objects, such as a phone box or a letterbox, also contemplated by Spolsky and Cooper (as cited in Shohamy & Gorter, 2009).

The data were also classified according to the actor: the sample provided 57 signs set in public institutions (top-down) and 108 signs created by private actors (bottom-up). Top-down signs were mostly found in *PSU* campus and its nature was informative in large part, whereas the majority of bottom-up sign included advertisements, found in commercial private establishments such as *Central Festival*. In the streets, the selected signs were mainly taken at private institutions too, which contributed to the final higher proportion of private (65%) versus public actor signs (35%).

IV.2. Functions of English

The incidence of each function was provided in percentages rounded up to the nearest integer number. In short, the functions of English in signs, as previously mentioned in the literature review, were classified as: informational, symbolic and media diffusion (See Table 1). Many signs were included in more than one classification, since it was determined that the use of English in them had more than one function; therefore, the sum of the percentages was higher than 100 as these multifunctional signs were counted more than once.

Table 1. Incidence of the Different English Functions in the LL of Hat Yai.

Functions of English	Number of signs performing this function	% of signs performing this function
Symbolic	93/165*	56%
Informational	85/165	51%
Media diffusion	23/165	14%

* Total number of signs

IV.2.1. Informational function

The type of signs fulfilling this function are advertisements, and more predominantly, those signs that provide what Karapalo (2011) considers as “non-commercial” information (p.32): greetings, instructions, directions, opening hour signs, place names, mandatory requests, objects, and warnings. All these include English and Thai (sometimes other languages as well) since they aim to address the message not only to local people, but also to foreigners, as exemplified in the Figures 2 and 3 below:

Figure 2. Road signs.

Figure 3. Motorcycle Parking.

There are also those signs in which the Thai language is not present, for they are intended only to newcomers (See Figures 4 and 5):

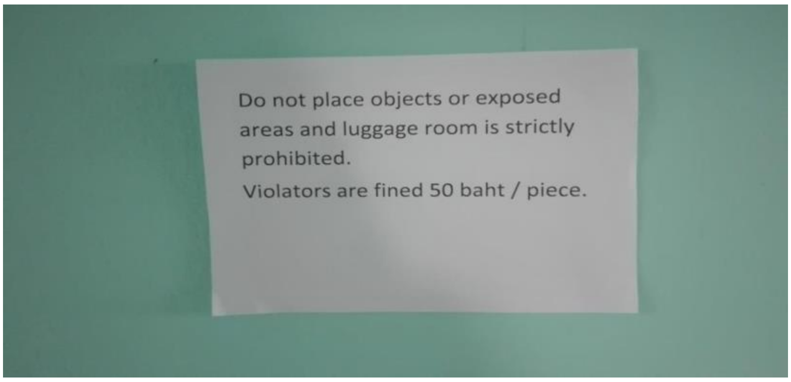

Figure 4. Warning to PSU International Students.

Figure 5. Advertising of Tourist Member Card at Central Festival.

Figure 3 consists of a warning sign found in a students' dormitory inside *PSU* campus where only international students were hosted, and Figure 4 shows an advertisement that was located at *Central Festival*, in which a shopping discount membership card only for tourists is promoted. In this advertisement, the sentence "Register at information counters", on the left-hand side of the sign, may want to indicate that an English speaker is available at the counter in case international visitors wish to obtain more information about the member card.

The informational goal of English was mainly found at *PSU* campus with 40 signs. This is explained by the number of international students accommodated in the campus at that moment (more than 300, as stated by Ana Maria Pavel, secretary of the International Affairs Office at *PSU* campus) to whom the signs were addressed. As for the streets and the shopping centre, 29 and 15 signs were related to it, respectively.

IV.2.2. Symbolic function

As Bierma (2008) explains, many shops, restaurants and any type of businesses choose a foreign tongue for their names, slogans, or promotional texts. In these cases, the language choice is not motivated by the presence of foreigners, but by the positive associations that such language is presumed to evoke.

In the case of English, numerous LL researchers (Lawrence, 2012; Mensel et al., 2016; Snodin, 2014) assure that it makes products or businesses more attractive, since it carries a series of positive connotations: modernity, progress, prestige, wealth, technological development, sophistication, reliability, globalisation, success and exclusiveness. Moreover, Siricharoen (2016) also affirms that the use of English may be motivated by its aesthetic value, since its font is considered to have a minimalist style.

Consequently, many advertisements display some parts of the text in English, being normally the name of the product or business, to attract customers' attention, and then turn to Thai for explaining the characteristics of the product, as in the case of *Hi-Precise Eye Pen* (See Figure 6).

Figure 6. Advert of eyeliner.

The symbolic function was mainly found in the signs located in the *Central Festival* shopping centre (47 signs), and the streets *Thumnoonvithi* and *Vongvanit* (38 signs), where most advertisements, businesses and products were found.

IV.2.3. Media diffusion function

When discussing LL research and my findings with Dr. Premin Karavi, a Thai professor of the Faculty of Liberal Arts in PSU, he made me reflect about the media diffusion function of English in the LL of Hat Yai. Apart from the informational and symbolic functions, signs in Thailand prove to carry other purposes when written in English, as in Figure 7:

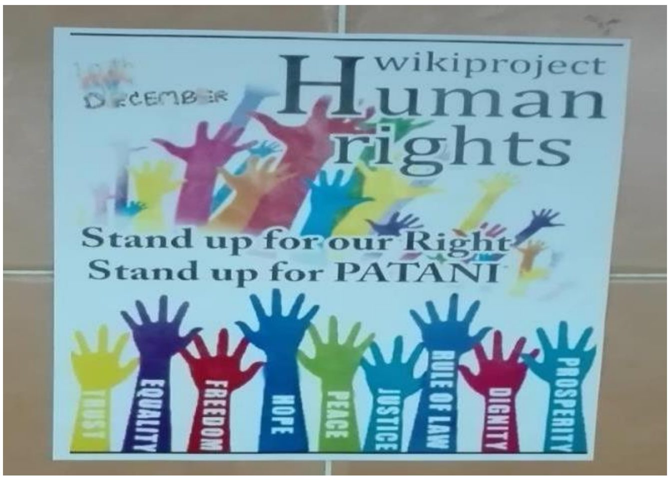

Figure 7. Claiming Independence in Patani.

This sign, for example, aims to mobilise people to support the old Sultanate of Patani, under Bangkok's administrative control since the early 20th century, in its fight for independence from the country[vii]. Here, there is an informational function for its readers, but the use of English does not seem to pursue any symbolic goal; instead, it may intend to favour the media dissemination of the message, since it announces a *wikiproject* that is stored on the internet, and that everyone can check and circulate easily. It is worth arguing as well that English writing in this case may be used as means of resistance against the imposition of the Thai language in that area; and at the same time, to reach outsiders who presumably do not speak the local language, and therefore, shed light on the readers to whom the message may be addressed.

Given the strong dominance that English has over the mass media, especially on the Internet, some actors may use it on their signs to promote businesses, products, or events internationally. Thus, this function may also explain why Thai writers decide to write their books' titles in English even though the full content is written in Thai, business owners and suppliers choose an English name for their shops or products, and some adverts of events only include their name in English, as illustrated below (See Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13):

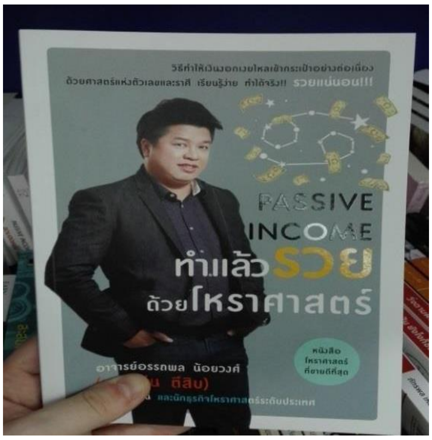

Figure 8. Passive Income.

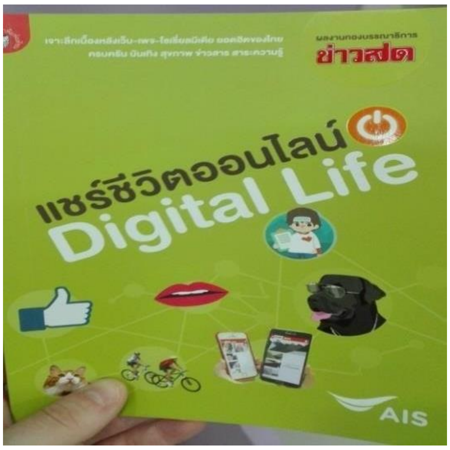

Figure 9. Digital Life book.

Figure 10. Look at Me.

Figure 11. Student First Academy.

Figure 12. Aquaful life 2017.

Figure 13. NCAM 2017.

It can be confusing to see so many adverts where the relevant information is written in Thai and only the title of the event, book, business, or product is provided in English. If the function of English here were informational, the whole message (or a higher proportion of it) would be provided in this language, as it is displayed in, for instance, Figures 1 and 2, where the function is merely informative for those who encounter the sign physically.

If, on the contrary, the actors of this LL provided the whole message (titles included) in Thai, the content would only be understood by the local Thai speaking public that came across the sign. The media diffusion function may provide a tentative explanation for this phenomenon: the use of English in the titles of events, products and promotions may facilitate their diffusion on the digital environment since the viewers can do internet search to obtain more information about them. Sometimes, as it is the case of Figures 10, 11 and 13, the signs even include internet links (which are always in English) that may make this function more explicit.

In brief, 23 signs were considered to perform the media diffusion function: 12 at *Central Festival*, 8 inside *PSU* Campus and 3 in the streets. What most of them have in common is that the main information of the sign is written in the Thai language and the title of the event, book, business, or product is produced in English, so that it can be spread more easily through the media.

IV.3. Language Prominence

Following Huebner's (2006) framework, the language prominence between English and Thai in signs was noticed and exemplified according to each variable:

- Placement of text. It refers to the primary or secondary position of the language in the sign. If one language appears above the other in a vertical position, the former could be considered prominent, and the same would occur if considering the horizontal perspective, that one language would be positioned first (See Figures 14 and 15).

Figure 14. Warning about belongings.

Figure 15. Opening Hours SONY shop.

It should be stressed that in Figure 14, the dominant language is English, for it is placed above Thai, and by contrast, Thai prevails over English in Figure 15, since it can be found on the left-side door of the shop[viii].

- Size of Font. The more visible the language is in terms of letter size, the more prominent it will be meant to be in the sign. Sometimes size of font may overrule the position or placement; that is to say, a language can appear in the second position (on the right or under the other language) but be dominant because the font size used is relatively bigger, and therefore, more eye-catching (See Figure 16).

Figure 16. Lady First shop.

In Figure 16, even though Thai occupies the first vertical position, English is obviously the dominant language selected for the name of this clothes shop.

- Amount of Text. It can also be argued that the language prominence is determined by the text quantity. In this case, the prevailing language will be the one in which most text or the most important information of the sign has been written. Here, the choice of dominant language for analysis may be rather subjective, since this will depend on the information of the sign that the reader considers to be most relevant. As a proficient English speaker with no knowledge of Thai, I had to ask for translations to make decisions here. In Figure 17, for instance, I regarded that English was not the dominant language: although the acronym "IELTS", which could be working as a logo for branding purposes, is the most visually appealing message of the advert, all the information about the preparation course for this English test appears in Thai, and I considered that to be the most important part of the message.

Figure 17. IELTS Preparation Course.

In contrast, in Figure 18, English seems to carry the most important information of the advertisement: "SALE 30-50%". Even if the description of the available products and services are written in Thai, I considered the main point of the advertisement to be the interesting discounts that could be found in the shop, since the products are also illustrated by images.

Figure 18. Haus Interior Sales.

- <u>Colours</u>. A language can also stand out from the others depending on the colour used for the font or the image or design over which the text is written. In Figure 19, even though most of the text is written in Thai, the language that prevails visually is English, not only because of the font size, but because of the golden colour in which the text was written.

Figure 19. Ultra Screen Ad.

Regarding Figure 20, the fact that the Thai language is positioned first vertically does not prevent English from being the dominant language of the sign thanks to the blue textbox on which the text was situated.

Figure 20. PSU Open Week.

By considering all these variables, the number of signs in which English or Thai were dominant were counted according to the domain (shopping centre, university campus and street), sign type (ads, books, place names, informative signs, etc.) and actor (public or private institutions), to observe the language that was most popular in terms of prominence. The data are presented in the three tables below (See Tables 2, 3 and 4):

Table 2. Language Prominence in Signs according to Domain.

DOMAIN	LANGUAGE PROMINENCE
Central Festival Shopping Centre (43)*	English (54%)**
Prince of Songkla University Campus (41)	Thai (85%)
Vongvanit and *Thumnoonvithi* Streets (46)	English (53%)

* Total number of multilingual signs in that domain
** Percentage of signs showing that prominent language

According to domain (See Table 3), it can be observed that Thai was the most prominent language in those signs collected from PSU campus, which may suggest that even if it is an international campus hosting students from many other linguistic backgrounds, the LL intends to make explicit the country in which the campus is set in.

Table 3. Language Prominence in Signs according to Sign Categorisation.

SIGN TYPE	LANGUAGE PROMINENCE
Advertisements	English (54%)
Informative signs	Thai (85%)
Product and business names	English (76%)

Street and Place names	Thai (100%)
Book covers	Thai (73%)
Objects	Thai (100%)

For obvious geographical reasons, Table 3 shows that Thai is the most prominent language in informative signs, street and place names, and objects, since there may be no need to emphasise English for symbolic or media diffusion functions, as it is the case with advertisements, product and business names, and book covers. As far as the actor of the sign is concerned, it is not surprising that Thai is the dominant language in top-down signs and English is chosen by private institutions whose main objective is selling or promoting products and events (See Table 4):

Table 4. Language Prominence in Signs according to Actor.

ACTOR	LANGUAGE PROMINENCE
Public Institution / Top-Down (48)	Thai (90%)
Private Institution / Bottom-Up (82)	English (57%)

In sum, some conclusions can be drawn about the utilisation of English or Thai in signs. On the one hand, it can be stated that Thai is the dominant language in those multilingual signs that perform a more informational function: objects, street and place names and any other informative signs, created by public actors. Consequently, PSU campus is the location with more Thai-dominant signs because these were mostly discovered there. On the other hand, English is the preferred language when dealing with symbolic and media diffusion functions; that is to say, with commercial or business-oriented signs established by private actors, especially advertisements, product packages, and shop signs.

Together with language prominence, another interesting aspect is the amount of text that is devoted to each language in multilingual signs, as all the content of the message is not always provided in both languages.

Regarding Reh's classification of multilingual signs (2004), the four types of multilingual writing that also explore language prominence were also identified in the signs. Prior to this analysis, I had to ask again for translations to Thai speakers.

- Duplicating Multilingual Writing. The whole content has been fully translated into another language or languages, as in the example below (See Figure 21).

Figure 21. Traditional Thai Medicine Hospital.

- Fragmentary Multilingualism. The whole content of the message is provided in one of the languages, and just some part of it has been translated. In Figure 22, even if the name of the place appears in both English and Thai, the name of the university (in red font) is only written in Thai.

Figure 22. Office of Sports and Health Center.

- Overlapping Multilingual Writing. Two or more languages present shared information in the sign, but each of them also provide other details not found in the other languages. In Figure 23, both languages share some information (the name of the restaurant, “Wooden Box”, has been translated into Thai above the arrow); and at the same time, there is some information that each language provides separately: the type of cuisine and drinks in English, and the address of the restaurant in Thai (above the arrow too).

Figure 23. Wooden Box.

- <u>Complementary Multilingual Writing</u>. In this case, two or more languages show different information, as in Figure 24. English covers the slogans of the race, the dates and the city where it will take place, and in the bottom left corner of the sign, the Thai language informs about the exact address and the purpose of the event (learn how to drive a motorcycle in KTM style).

Figure 24. Ready to Race.

Once this classification was made, I proceeded to another quantitative analysis, this time to remark the most common type of multilingual writing according to the sign type. In the sample, 130 out of 165 signs are multilingual. Table 5 demonstrates that the most frequent multilingual signs are duplicating (59 signs), and these can be spotted in informative signs, where the content is meant to be understood by all audiences, local and non-local. 33 signs are fragmentary, 32 complementary and only 6 proved to be overlapping. Furthermore, it was interesting to encounter most complementary signs in advertising.

Table 5. Number of Signs for each Multilingual Type according to Sign Type.

	Adverts	Informative signs	Business and Products	Streets and Places	Books	Objects	**Total**
Duplicating	5*	25	13	11	2	3	**59**
Fragmentary	8	9	7	1	8	0	**33**
Complementary	23	0	8	0	1	0	**32**
Overlapping	5	0	1	0	0	0	**6**
Total	**41**	**34**	**29**	**12**	**11**	**3**	**130**

* Number of signs in each type.

As it can be distinguished, the amount of information written or translated in English is related to the functions that the English language performs in public signage.

When it comes to business, product names, and titles of events, English is the preferred language in multilingual signs, whether they are translated into Thai (not very usual in this sample) or not. This LL behaviour seems comprehensible enough when considering the symbolic and media diffusion functions discussed previously: the English language allows a rapid diffusion in the case of events, and at the same time, makes the business or products sound reliable, trendy and prestigious. As for the use of English in the promotion and discount signs, it may serve as both a pole of attraction for tourists, and a medium to associate the business with the Western world.

With regards to the Thai language, it is used to provide further information about those companies, products, events, or promotions that have gained more prestige with the use of the international language. Here, the informational purpose of the Thai language in signs is confirmed again. In short, English creates international visibility, and Thai communicates with local people.

IV.4. Thai English

When carrying out the previous quantitative and qualitative analysis, I remarked that a quarter of the signs did not adopt any specific standard variety of English, such as the American or the British. Instead, some Thainess was revealed in the morphology, syntax and lexicon, which have been previously described as typical features of Thai English or *Tinglish* (Snodin, 2014; Thammawan, 2008; Trakulkasemsuk, 2012). Chutisilp (1984) and Watkhaolarm (2005) were also pioneers in analysing Thai English writing and concluding that this may be a new developing variety of *World Englishes*.

As in these previous studies, the LL of Hat Yai shows that even if at a very early stage of development, ThaiE is displayed publicly: 27 % of the signs (44 out of 165) show some features. As it can be noticed in Tables 6, 7 and 8, ThaiE is mostly used in *Central Festival* and informative signs, with no significant difference among the authors: 28 % were produced by public actors and 25 % in the case of private.

Table 6. Incidence of Signs Written in AE/BE or Tinglish according to Domain.

Domains	**% Monolingual signs written in American English (AE) / British English (BE) or multilingual signs written in AE/BE and other languages**	**% Monolingual signs written in ThaiE and Multilingual signs written in ThaiE and other languages**
Central	64%	36%
PSU Campus	73%	27%
Streets	82%	18%

Table 7. Incidence of Signs Written in AE/BE or Tinglish according to Sign Type.

Sign type	**% Monolingual signs written in American English (AE) / British English (BE)or multilingual signs written in AE/BE and other languages**	**% Monolingual signs written in ThaiE and Multilingual signs written in ThaiE and other languages**
Informative	65%	35%
Book covers	67%	33%
Advertisement	69%	31%
Streets	76%	24%
Product	83%	17%

Objects	100%	0%

Table 8. Incidence of Signs Written in AE/BE or Tinglish according to Actor.

Actor	% Monolingual signs written in American English (AE) / British English (BE)or multilingual signs written in AE/BE and other languages	% Monolingual signs written in ThaiE and Multilingual signs written in ThaiE and other languages
Public	72%	28%
Private	75%	25%

From these data, it can be concluded that ThaiE is used by Thai population to some extent, no matter the producer or the reader. Even if some consider it "abhorrent" and "not counted" (Bennui & Hashim, 2014, p.16) or simply do not regard it as a "stabilised form" (Buripakdi, 2011, p.73), the LL of Hat Yai demonstrates that ThaiE is showing some features, to be exemplified below.

- Lexical Borrowing. Some concepts have no translation or simply cannot be explained in other varieties of the English language. Consequently, loans from Thai are detected in ThaiE (See Figure 25).

Figure 25. Street name.

In Figure 25, the word "soi" is the Thai word used to refer to a side street that branches off a main bigger street. It is interesting how the word "road" is translated into English, but not "soi", probably because there is no exact translation for it (streets in Thailand are organised in a different way with respect to other countries).

- <u>Word Order</u>. The natural word-order in Thai is different from English. For instance, adjectives in English are normally placed before the noun, whereas in Thai, the usual behaviour is exactly the opposite. Because of this, it is common to find the Thai grammatical order in ThaiE (See Figures 30 and 31).

If any variety from the inner circle of World Englishes were used in these signs, the message in Figures 26 and 27 shall be "all beautiful things" and "1st Floor" respectively, but the sentence structure reveals a Thai producer.

Figure 26. The Quality of Service Excellent Billboard.

Figure 27.Tourist Center Sign.

- <u>Redundancy</u>. As Trakulkasemsuk (2012) explains, the proper Thai language writing aims to comprise as much information as possible into a sentence, which is why using many modifiers around a noun to provide full explanations is a natural linguistic behaviour and "embellishes" language (p.108). As a result of the transfer of Thainess into English, some redundant structures can be found in signs (See Figures 28, 29 and 30).

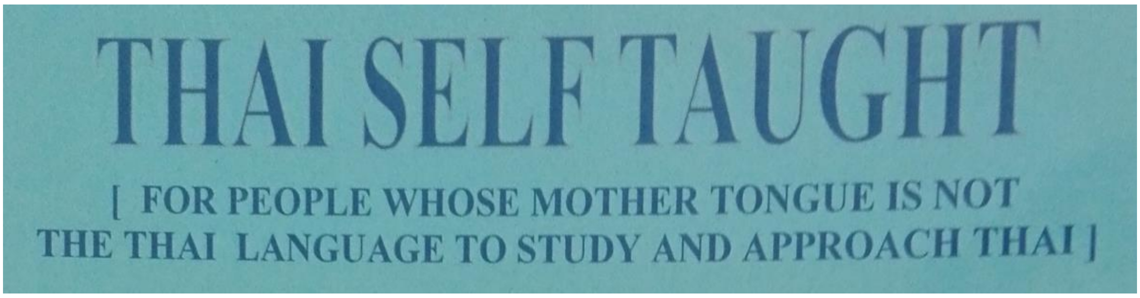

Figure 28. Thai Self Taught Book.

Figure 29. Faculty of Environmental Management Ad.

Figure 30. Southern Laboratory Animal Facility.

In Figure 28, the sentence “For people whose mother tongue is not the Thai language to study and approach Thai” sounds definitely wordy and complex in the inner circle varieties of English. The same occurs in Figure 29, where the announcement “All admissions are opened year round” could be simplified to something like “Open admissions year round”. As for Figure 30, Kathleen Nicoletti (a New Yorker professor from *PSU*) and I agreed that the term “facility” is not necessary to designate this place; moreover, it also proves that ThaiE word order is influenced by the Thai language grammatical structure, for the standard grammatical order in English would produce something like “Southern Animal Laboratory”.

- Creative Spelling. In her article, Snodin (2014) mentions the linguistic creativity and originality of the Thai LL actors in the media when dealing with spelling. To illustrate that, she points at the English names of two Thai media shows where the spelling is different than expected: “Klear” and “Dezember” (p.109).

In this sample, I encountered a few cases in which this behaviour could be regarded, and the most repetitive was the spelling of “Beauty” with “i” in cosmetic products (See Figures 31 and 32).

Figure 31. Beauti Powder Product.

Figure 32. Inner Beauti Product.

- No Verb Inflection. As explained by Thammawan, the Thai language uses no verb inflections to indicate tenses as in the English language; instead, tenses are expressed by temporal adverbs (2008). For this reason, some verbs do not include verb inflections that would be used in other English varieties, as "Recommend" in Figure 33 and "close" in Figure 34:

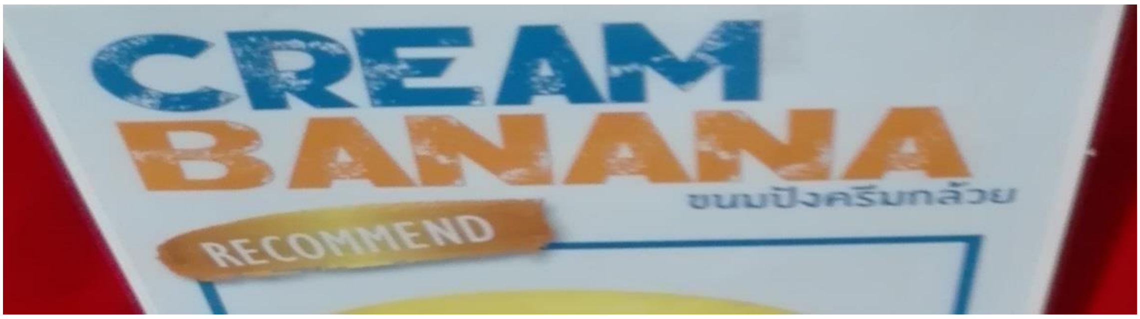

Figure 33. Cream Banana Product.

Figure 34. Close Informative Sign.

These are some illustrations of the most evident features of Thai English in this sample of signs. The fact that these features are present in advertising, product packaging, book covers and business names, where the message is intended to have diffusion, suggests that this potential variety of *World Englishes* may be spreading, and as a result, could become a regularised variety in the future.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In a city where local citizens prove to have very little or no knowledge of English, the LL demonstrates the influence that this language has over the country of Thailand. Whether people use it or not in their daily life, English is present everywhere through public signs, especially in the advertising field.

According to the present corpus, the main functions that English performs in public signs are symbolic, informational and media diffusion, being the first two the most representative. These results demonstrate the effects of an increasingly globalised world, where even in a country like Thailand, whose national language and culture have been strongly preserved along history, the use of English in publicity or business affairs provides an air of westernisation, attractiveness, modernity and reliability, and makes communication easier all over the world.

Regarding language prominence, this analysis shows that English is the dominant language in those signs whose functions are symbolic and media diffusion, and Thai is more visible in informational signs created by public actors. Moreover, English is the preferred language for names of events, promotions, companies and products because of the its positive connotations, and Thai provides further information about those items. Otherwise speaking, English is used to indicate internationalisation and create visibility, and Thai communicates with local people and symbolises local allegiance.

The presence of ThaiE or *Tinglish* features in a quarter of this corpus was an unexpected but worth mentioning finding that may confirm the early stage of development of a potential variety of *World Englishes.* In order to draw further conclusions about the position of ThaiE in the next decades, future research will need to be conducted to observe its evolution.

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Notes

[i] Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1967.

[ii] Association of Southeast Asian Nations Plus Three (ASEAN + 3) was institutionalised in 1999 and it consists of a cooperation on energy, transport and technology between ASEAN and three other countries: Japan, China and South Korea.

[iii] Soi: alley, lane or side street.

[iv] Tambon: sub-district

[v] Amphoe: minor district

[vi] Changwat: province (http://www.thai-language.com/dict)

[vii] The population in this South-Eastern region in Thailand is 80% Malay Muslim who speak Jawi, a Malay dialect, and due to cultural contrasts, have chosen to be resistant to the strong Buddhist Thai pressure. Consequently, major disputes are still taking place between the Thai government and these inhabitants, who have been claiming independence since 1902 (Croissant & Trinn, 2009, p. 17).

[viii] The Thai language is read from left to right, which is why this reasoning about left- right language prominence makes sense.

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Audiovisual translation tools for the assessment of hard of hearing students

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ABSTRACT

The Spanish University requires all its students to reach a specific level in a foreign language, as part of the requisites to obtain their degrees. At present, there is a lack of homogeneity in the criteria set for the assessment of hard of hearing students' skills. A preliminary survey reveals the current measures applied in a number of Spanish universities. Our suggestion is that a uniform listening test should be implemented for hard of hearing students. The main goal of our research was to check what kind of test is more adequate for these students. For that purpose, several hard of hearing students did different listening activities using audiovisual materials that had been previously edited and adapted to their special needs. They also responded to different question tasks: multiple-choice, true/false, gap-filling. The results throw some light on the type of test format that should be used with the hard of hearing community.

Keywords: *EFL assessment; SDH; hearing-impaired university students; audiovisual texts; listening comprehension test; Spanish university*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Spanish University requires all its students to reach a specific level in a foreign language –established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth CEFR)– as part of the requisites to obtain their degrees in any discipline. That means all students must pass a language exam designed and conducted by the universities themselves or, alternatively, take an external exam (such as the Cambridge English Preliminary (PET) or First (FCE)), to provide evidence of that command of a foreign language, which is, predominantly, English. Hard of hearing students must also comply with this requisite.

The University of Zaragoza issues the CertAcles B1 certificate through the Centro Universitario de Lenguas Modernas. This certificate, approved by the CRUE (Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas), the Government of Aragón and the Ministry of Education, is issued by Spanish universities[i]. The test assesses reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing and speaking. The details on the assessment of every skill are shown on the web page of the Centro Universitario de Lenguas Modernas[ii].

The Royal Decree *1791/2010* of 30 December, on the status of university students, establishes that the assessment tests must adapt to the needs of students with disabilities[iii], starting with the University Entrance Examination, as specified in the Royal Decree 1892/2008, 14 November[iv]. In the case of students entering a Master's degree programme, the university should also provide support, advice and consider the adaptations required.

After some months of cooperation with the Office of Disability Services at the University of Zaragoza we had the suspicion that there was lack of homogeneity in the criteria set for the assessment of hard of hearing candidates in their foreign language exams nationwide.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This work has been inspired by previous research on subtitling as well as by the work carried out by professionals related to students with disabilities. In this line, a useful starting point has been the *Guía de adaptaciones en la Universidad, de la Red de Servicios de Apoyo a Personas con Discapacidad en la Universidad* (SAPDU, 2015)[vii], written in collaboration with the National Organisation of the Spanish Blind (ONCE) and the CRUE. This association comprises 76 Spanish universities. In the section on teaching, it recommends the use of subtitles when using videos in class.

We also consulted the Standard UNE 153010 (AENOR, 2012)[viii] and the analysis of current practices in subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing in Spain, like the work by Báez Montero and Fernández Soneira (2010). They undertake a revision of the features that characterise subtitle recipients (i.e., deaf readers of closed-captions) that present deep deafness or have a partial loss of hearing.

Our research is aimed not at profound prelocutive deaf students, whose "hearing loss appears during gestation or within the first two years of life" (Fischer, 2012, p.306). These students are exempted from taking the listening and oral tests. It is aimed, instead, at postlocutive deaf students, for whom subtitles should work well increasing the exposure time of the captions on the screen, and at implanted deaf, who may be even able to read unadapted captions.

Also, helpful has been Pereira (2010), whose contribution intends to check the validity and functionality of a set of technical, orthotypographical and linguistic criteria for elaborating subtitles for deaf and hard of hearing adults in Spain. Moreover, Lorenzo's (2010) recommendations serve as a guide to be taken into consideration when drafting the *Spanish Standard for Subtitling for Deaf and Hard of Hearing for digital television*. Her recommendations are distributed into three levels of interest: the technical, the linguistic and the cultural level. Lorenzo and Pereira also (2011) present some of the most frequent difficulties met by subtitlers of audiovisual texts for the deaf, highlighting oral language comprehension problems and comprehension problems derived from culture and intertextuality. Pazó (2011) supports the issue of adapted subtitles that allow the deaf and hard of hearing viewers to exercise their right to information. For that purpose, she explains the need and the advantages of adapted subtitles and describes that process of adaptation. Varela Romero's (2011) analysis makes clear the urgent need of guides for subtitlers, which should, among other things, contain glossaries of the commonest vocabulary for deaf viewers as well as information about the structures that facilitate the decoding of the message. Moreover, Talaván (2019) points out the efficiency of the use of subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) as a pedagogical tool in L2 settings, particularly in the enhancement of listening and writing skills. These research articles, among others, have been taken into consideration for the elaboration of our proposal.

III. CASE STUDY

III.1. Participants

The Office for Students with Disabilities at the University of Zaragoza provided 28 hard of hearing students (all of them had partial hearing loss and used hearing aids or had cochlear implants). They were divided into two groups: Group A included those with lower linguistic abilities, and Group B were more mature linguistically. Each of these groups was then subdivided into two, A1-A2 and B1-B2, so that all students could take all test formats, which would allow them to have a broader vision of assessment methodologies; the results obtained would also be more reliable.

III.2. Methodology

The main interest of this research was to check what kind of test was more adequate for hard of hearing students. Three types of listening comprehension tests were distributed, where all the questions were closed, so as to get the most objective results. Our study, structured in two stages, had as a point of departure the results of the preliminary survey, which reveals the criteria of the different Spanish universities regarding the requirements needed in the case of hard of hearing students. Then we proceeded, in the first place, to carry out a series of listening activities in which different test formats were used. An analysis followed that included both the comparison of the students' results in the activities proposed and a post-questionnaire where students assessed the activities.

III.2.1. Preliminary survey

In order to verify this, we designed a short survey and the Office of Disability Services at the University of Zaragoza distributed it to the 58 Spanish universities which belong to the SAPDU network (Red de Servicios de Apoyo a Personas con Discapacidad en la Universidad, in Spanish). The aim was to obtain a clearer map of the skills currently considered in the assessment of the foreign language ability of hard of hearing students. At this stage, we needed to find out:

a) The level of command of a foreign language required in each university to obtain a bachelor degree or to enrol in a Master's programme.

b) What skills hard of hearing students need to pass that exam.

c) How their listening skills are assessed, and more precisely, whether they had to take the same listening tests as the other students.

How their oral skills are assessed, and more precisely, whether they had to take the same oral tests as the other students.

III.2.1.a. Answers

A total of eighteen universities, namely, the University of Alicante, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the University of Barcelona, two campuses of the Carlos III University of Madrid, the Catholic University of Valencia, two campuses of the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Córdoba, the Jaume I University, the University of La Coruña, the University of La Rioja, the University of Málaga, the Miguel Hernández University, the University of Oviedo, the Comillas Pontifical University, the University of Salamanca, the University of Santiago de Compostela, the University of Valencia and the University of Zaragoza, participated in the survey, which represents 31% of the total number addressed. The number of hard of hearing students ranged from three (University of Oviedo) to fifty (University of Valencia and Complutense University of Madrid, in two campuses[v]. The results of our observation were the following:

a) With regard to the level of command of a foreign language required to obtain a bachelor's degree or to enrol in a Master's programme, in the majority of cases, 15 universities (83.25%) B1 is the requirement. In the two universities of Barcelona (11.11%) it is B2; only one, the Miguel Hernández University, answered that no level is required.

b) There seems to be certain homogeneity in the universities' criteria for the skills assessed in the case of hard of hearing students. Three skills are tested in the majority of the enquired universities: writing in 17 (94.35%), listening in 16 (88.8%) and reading in 14 (77.7%), while speaking is only required in eight universities (44.4%). Two universities did not answer this question.

c) For students who do not have a disability the oral production test may consist of a dialogue or/and the exposition of a subject during 7-10 minutes. As the description of the test points out, two tasks are undertaken and the test is recorded[vi]. When asked about how they assess the oral production skills of their hard of hearing students, the results were: 8

> universities did not answer this question, 7 adapt or modify the test, according to the level of hearing loss, the adaptation consisting in a time extension; and 3 universities admitted that the hard of hearing students take the same test as the rest of students. There is, therefore, no agreement on the type of oral production test for hard of hearing students.

For students who do not have a disability he listening comprehension test consists in hearing or watching a minimum of two and a maximum of four documents, where students have to answer multiple-choice, true/false, matching pair questions. As to how hard of hearing students are tested in their listening skills, five universities did not answer this question, three offer a lip-reading test, and three admitted that the hard of hearing take the same test as the rest of students. The rest adapt or modify the test, according to the level of hearing loss: the listening test may be replaced with a written exam, or may be combined with lip-reading; in other cases, the adaptation may consist in a time extension. The answers of the universities do not specify how they grade this level of impairment, although, according to the information provided by the Office of Disability Services at the University of Zaragoza, the procedure for grading is similar in all universities. All this shows that there is no agreement on the type of listening test for hard of hearing students. This encouraged us to suggest a method, supported by previous research on accessibility (Lorenzo & Pereira, 2011; Pereira, 2010) and usability of subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, to assess listening comprehension skills in hard of hearing students.

III.2.2. The texts

III.2.2.a. Subtitling

The three texts chosen for this study complied with the B1 level of English (according to the CEFRL)[ix]. They were documentaries with only one voice, the narrator's, dealing with the Orinoco River, the process of mummification and the Australian landmark Uluru[x]. They lasted for three minutes each, following the recommendations of scholars like Rost (2002) and Talaván (2013), and they were also self-contained so that their comprehension did not depend on previous scenes and the level of concentration required was not too high. In all the cases, they were listened three times. The clips on the Orinoco River and the process of mummification were subtitled in English according to the established conventions of SDH (subtitling for Deaf and Hard of Hearing) included in the present Spanish regulation UNE-153010 (AENOR, 2012). Besides this, they were also prepared for lip-reading[xi].

The subtitles were positioned near the bottom-centre of the screen. As Pereira (2010, p.90) points out, "deaf and hard of hearing viewers are used to this format since most television channels, following the Standard UNE 153010 recommendations, use this format for non-simultaneous subtitles". We used an opaque box so that the text would not fade into the background. Only one colour was used in the clip, as there was only one voice, the narrator's. The subtitling process also included the adaptation of the reading speed to SDH. According to some studies carried out in the United Kingdom, the reading ability of prelocutive deaf viewers is one or two words per second, which means that subtitles should be displayed between one and five seconds longer than for hearing viewers or postlocutive deaf viewers (Pereira, 2010). Thus, the six-second rule used in general subtitling that supports a reading speed of 17 cps (characters per second) was replaced with 15 cps in SDH, in accordance with the UNE-153010 (AENOR, 2012). According to Báez Montero (2010, p.39) "research on the reading levels of the Deaf reveals that the population that generally finishes compulsory school reaches a reading-writing level comparable only to the reading-writing level of a hearing counterpart aged 10". Furthermore, she points out:

> because of educational issues (…) the deaf users' command of a second language (L2) or foreign language in a written version does not allow them to read at the same rate found for users reading a first language (L1). This is why it will be essential to adapt the speed of the captions to their needs so that they can grasp the actual message of the captions (Báez Montero, 2010, p.42).

Therefore, we had to opt for the strategy of omission in those cases in which the image allowed the students to infer the referent. As is well known, overall comprehension of a subtitled audiovisual text does not rely only on subtitles. For hard of hearing youngsters, image is probably the main way to build meaning (Lorenzo, 2010, p.146).

We also reduced the number of characters, using 'river' or 'delta' as a substitute for 'the Orinoco River' or 'the Orinoco delta', respectively, in order to match the speed-reading restrictions and facilitate the reading, respecting the technical limits of the subtitle, being at all times loyal to the content of the video clip (Pazó, 2011). In addition, in the clip on the Orinoco we had to cope with another problem: vocabulary. We cannot forget that the hearing impaired do not have a wide range of vocabulary in their mother tongue or in their second language. Therefore, the strategy applied in those cases was the replacement of the complex term ‘capybara’ with an easier one, ‘rodent’. This substitution technique is frequent in the creation of subtitles for the hard of hearing. The structure and vocabulary of the adapted subtitle gets closer to their linguistic competence, making a more complete reading comprehension possible. However, the adapted subtitle does not always correspond with the audio, leading therefore to the feeling that some information gets lost. This could possibly be avoided by putting into effect awareness-raising campaigns (Pazó, 2011).

In the clip about the process of mummification, as in the previous one, we found problems of relatively hard terminology and reading-speed. Moreover, due to the somehow technical nature of the text, there were originally more difficult words and syntax was more complex, too, for this specific audience. Therefore, we had to pay special attention to the choices made in terms of structures and lexis, making sure that the chosen elements would be understood by deaf viewers, relating new knowledge (lexis, cultural referents or structures) to the knowledge that they already had (Lorenzo 2010, p.143). For this reason, the vocabulary was adapted, following the same strategy as in the clip on the Orinoco. We replaced those terms with others with similar or identical meaning. For example:

Table 1. Adaptation of the vocabulary in the text on the process of mummification

Original version	Subtitled version
Pouch	Bag
Religious significance	Religious value
Wading bird	Bird
Bill	Beak
Votive offerings	Offerings
Shroud	Cloth

We omitted them whenever possible, as in ‘imported lead-based pigment’, which was reduced to ‘imported pigment’.

About syntax, we cannot forget that the passive voice is too abstract for the hard of hearing, although not so for regular students. This led us to turn the passive voice into active or to use the continuous form, simplifying both complex structures and verb forms, according to the guidelines proposed by the UNE-153010 (AENOR, 2012, p.29), as shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Adaptation of the syntax in the text on the process of mummification.

Original version	Subtitled version
All moisture was eliminated	eliminating all moisture
Being mummified with a human	mummified with a human
A portrait panel was placed over the face	a portrait was over the face
A large linen cloth was wrapped around the mummy	a large linen cloth wrapped around the mummy
Very few red mummies are known to exist	very few red mummies exist
All moisture was eliminated	eliminating all moisture

We also considered maintaining those words which could be clearly identified due to their position in the sentence. This was the case of ‘very few red mummies are known to exist’, in which, instead of subtitling it as ‘we know very few mummies’ our option was ‘very few red mummies exist’, keeping the word ‘exist’ at the end and avoiding confusion in the listener, who could have identified it in the original soundtrack.

As far as the reading-speed problem is concerned, in the clip on the process of mummification the solution was given by the video itself, as there were long pauses while the process described was portrayed. This gave us more time and extra frames for the subtitles.

III.2.2.b. Lip-reading

The lip-reading test was carried out with small groups of three to five students in a peaceful and well-lit classroom. The preparation of the lip-reading was based on the instructions followed by supervisors who administer versions of the Cambridge PET listening tests for the hearing impaired. It required previous training, following carefully the indications provided in the supervisor’s booklet. The reader asked the students to read first the instructions of the test. She stood facing the students at a short distance, so that they could easily read her lips. The reader had trained the reading, marking pauses along the text with asterisks. Those pauses allowed the students to read the questions or check their answers. The intonation of the reading sounded as natural as possible. The examiner read the texts three times with a careful articulation, pausing at the asterisks. When she stopped, the students had time to read the questions again or take notes.

III.2.3. The tests

Three different test formats, multiple-choice questions, true or false, and fill-in-the-gaps, were chosen to test the students' skills with documentaries about the Orinoco, the process of mummification and the Uluru, respectively. While in the first and the second case students had to make inferences, gathering different pieces of information in order to answer the questions, in the third test, they were asked more specific information.

III.2.4. Implementation

Students of Groups A1 and B1 watched the subtitled clip on the Orinoco three times. Simultaneously, the students of Groups A2 and B2 took the same test using the method of lip-reading in a different room. Once finished, the former subgroups took the test on the process of mummification but this time with the lip-reading method and the latter with subtitles. Finally, all the students took the listening test on the Uluru and watched the video without subtitles three times.

III.3. Results and Discussion

The results in the multiple-choice format test based on the clip of the Orinoco revealed that Group A (See Figure 1) behaved unevenly in the lip-reading test, none obtaining more than 4 out of 10: 0 (40%), 2 (40%), 4 (20%); their results were much better in the test based on the subtitled clip, in which 90% obtained a score of 4 or more: 0 (10%), 4 (30%), 6 (40%) and 8 (20%).

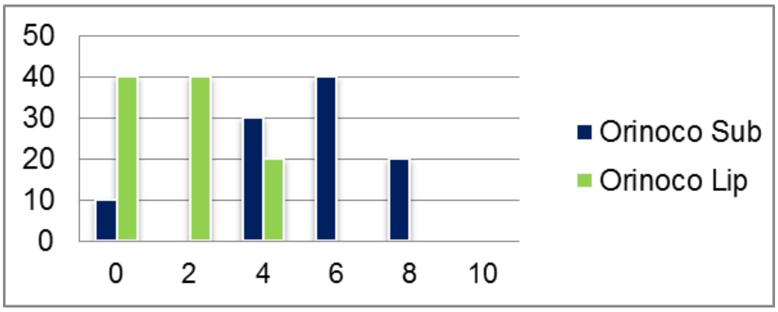

Figure 1. Results Group A. Orinoco.

In general, Group B (See Figure 2) obtained better results than A, scoring between 6 and 10 in the lip-reading test of the Orinoco: 6 (25%), 8 (50%) and 10 (25%), a fact that could be expected, as this group was more mature linguistically. Moreover, the results in the subtitled test improved those of the lip-reading test: 8 (50%) and 10 (50%), that is, the lowest score was 8; and, consequently, the scores obtained in the subtitled test were higher in both groups.

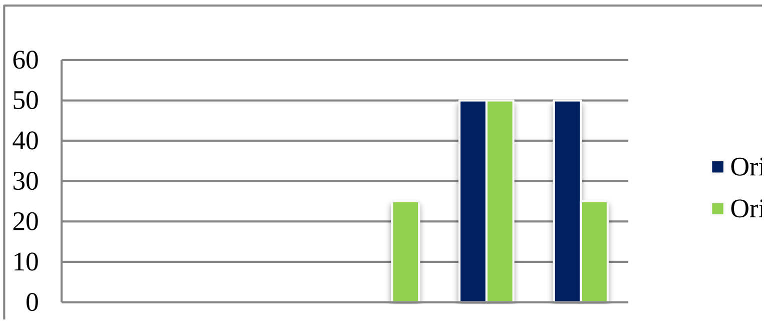

Figure 2. Results Group B. Orinoco.

In the case of the test with a True/False format based on the clip about the process of mummification, Group A (See Figure 3) distributed its scores in the lip-reading test as follows: 0 (10%), 4 (30%), 6 (20%), 8 (20%), 10 (20%), which means that 60% achieved 6 or more. The results for lip-reading were better in this text than in the Orinoco text. This could be due to the format itself, as students had to choose between two options, whereas in the previous format they had four. By contrast, the results in the test based on the subtitled clip did not show remarkable differences in Group A compared to the lip-reading test, although they were slightly better here: 2 (20%), 4 (20%), 6 (40%), 8 (10%) and 10 (10%).

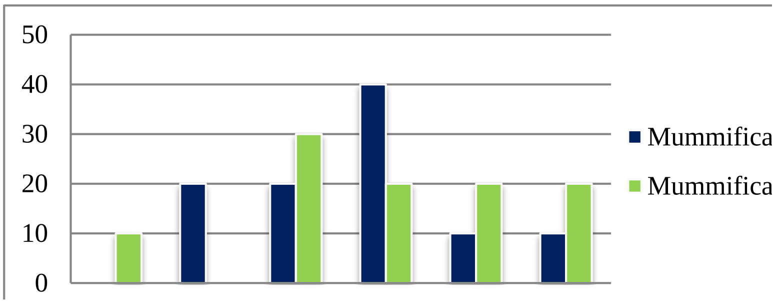

Figure 3. Results Group A. The process of mummification.

It is worth drawing attention to the distribution of the scores in Group B (See Figure 4). Even though this group of students was stronger than A, their results in the lip-reading test were even weaker than in Group A. None of the students in Group B scored more than 4: 0 (50%) and 4 (50%), all of them failing in the lip-reading test on this occasion. Nevertheless, all Group B students who took the test using the adapted subtitled version succeeded, scoring 6 or more: 6 (25%), 8 (50%) and 10 (25%). They did far better than with the lip-reading test.

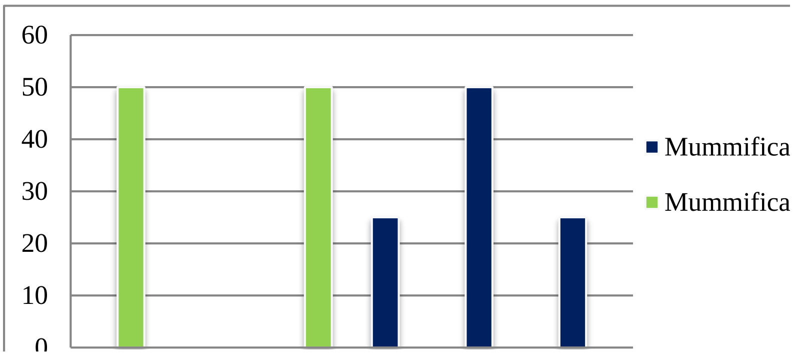

Figure 4. Results Group B. The process of mummification.

The third test was a short documentary about the Uluru rock, with no subtitles on the screen. The students had to fill in the blank with one word that was said in the video. Group A (See Figure 5) was mainly lost, as the results indicate: 75% scored 0, 15% scored 2 and 10% scored 4. Although Group B (See Figure 6) obtained better results, they were by no means good, being concentrated on 2 and 4 and amounting to 75% together: 0 (12.5%), 2 (37.5%), 4 (37.5%) and 6 (12.5%). This confirms that Group B was more mature linguistically and it may throw some light on the type of format that should not be used with the hard of hearing community. The overall results were too low in both groups and the lack of adaptations let the hard of hearing students in a position of inferiority with respect to hearing students, as they are confronted with a double problem: the comprehension of the text and its audibility.

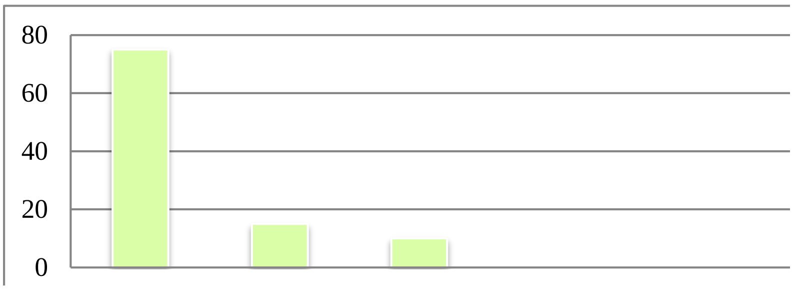

Figure 5. Results Group A. Uluru.

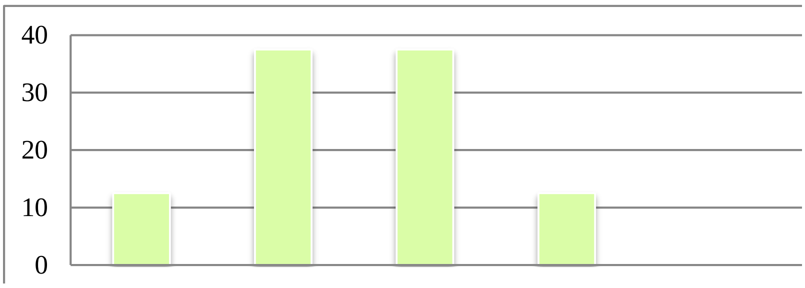

Figure 6. Results Group B. Uluru.

III.4. Final Questionnaire

Once the activities were done, students had to complete a final questionnaire (Table 3) concerning their opinion about the activities carried out. Its aim was to complement the information received from the objective test results. Thus, students were asked:

Table 3. Final questionnaire

1. Which of the three tests has been easier for you?
   a) Lip-reading
   b) Video
   c) Subtitled video

2. Have you previously done any listening comprehension activities in a foreign language?
   a) Yes
   b) No

3. If your answer was YES, select which method you have previously used for the listening comprehension activity (you can mark more than one answer):
   a) Lip-reading
   b) Subtitled video
   c) Audio track

4. Have you ever tested your listening skills?
   a) Yes
   b) No

5. Select which method you have used for the assessment of listening comprehension:
   a) Lip-reading
   b) Subtitled video
   c) Audio track

6. What has been most difficult for you in each text? Number from most difficult (1) to least difficult (3) in each case:

   Text about the Orinoco river
   - Vocabulary
   - Grammatical structures
   - Text speed

   Text about the mummification process
   - Vocabulary
   - Grammatical structures
   - Text speed

   Text about Mount Uluru
   - Vocabulary
   - Grammatical structures
   - Text speed

7. What kinds of questions have you found most difficult? Number from most difficult (1) to least difficult (3) in each case:
   - Multiple choice
   - Fill the gaps
   - True/False

The final questionnaire brought together the opinion of the students about the test format they liked most. The preference for the subtitled video clearly stood out in both groups. However, Group A also considered the option of lip-reading, even though in very low percentages. When asked what type of test format was the easiest, the preferences varied, depending on the group. In Group A 66.6% opted for the True/False format, whereas in Group B, more mature students, their preferences were divided. Overall, there was a common agreement that the most difficult format type was that of filling in the gaps.

Finally, as for the students' previous experience with listening skills, in the case of Group A 80% admitted they had never done any listening comprehension activity in class. An even higher percentage (90%) was also for those that had never taken a listening test and the method used with those who had done so (10%) had been the traditional test based on the listening of an audio track. In contrast with them, 62.5% students in Group B had done listening comprehension activities in class –this may have been another reason for their better results, too.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary survey completed by 18 universities revealed that in 83.25% of them the level of a foreign language required to obtain a degree is B1. In that exam on the level of a foreign language the assessment of the listening skills is required in 88.8% of the cases. But there is no agreement as to how those listening skills are tested in the case of hard of hearing students. It seems that universities tend to adapt the test, according to the level of impairment. Our suggestion is that a listening test should be implemented for hard of hearing students, provided they have partial hearing loss and use hearing aids or have cochlear implants. Students with severe hearing loss should ask the Office for Students with Disabilities at their universities to prepare a curriculum accommodation plan. If the student succeeds in the assessment of the other skills, s/he will receive a certificate saying that 'the candidate is exempt from satisfying the full range of assessment objectives in the examination'.

The main goal of our research was to check what kind of test is more adequate for these students. For that purpose, they did different listening activities using audiovisual materials that had previously been edited and adapted to the students' special needs. They also responded to different question tasks: multiple-choice, true/false, gap-filling.

The results show that in the multiple-choice format test the scores obtained in the subtitled test were higher in both groups. In the True/False format test, all Group B students who took the test using the adapted subtitled version succeeded. They did far better than with the lip-reading test. Last, the third documentary showed no subtitles on the screen and a gap-filling format test. The low results in this case may throw some light on the type of test format that should not be used with hard of hearing students.

The final questionnaire concerning the students' personal opinion about the activities carried out matched their preference for the subtitled video clip with the better results obtained in it. It also confirmed that the most difficult test format, the gap-filling format, was regarded as the least favoured one, possibly because it involves a higher cognitive effort. Therefore, we would recommend not using it in the case of hard of hearing students.

We agree with Báez Montero (2010) that the community of hard of hearing students "demands and requires the use of captions, not only as a source of information but also as a medium for overcoming the communication barriers which the members of their community have been encountering for centuries and which need to be abolished" (p.27). We firmly believe that the environment of the hard of hearing community must provide all the necessary tools to overcome the communication barriers they meet on a daily basis. Subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), moreover, foster their learning of oral languages, as they rely on another semiotic code, the image on the screen (Varela Romero, 2011). Our concern about the needs of these students also motivated our participation in the preparation of the *Protocolo de adaptación referido a la acreditación del nivel B1 en lengua extranjera: inglés específico* para personas con *discapacidad auditiva* for the University of Zaragoza.

With this goal in mind, we can make the best of the technical resources available and adapt them to their users' needs. Moreover, subtitles for the hard of hearing should be regarded not merely as "an aid to understanding the audiovisual text but also as an enjoyable system to learn oral languages" (Lorenzo, 2010, p.146). Universities should count on professionals that create these adapted subtitles or train their evaluators so that they can make the adaptations required.

Former research and the results obtained in our tests support our suggestion to promote the use of adapted subtitled video clips for hard of hearing students who need to pass the level of a foreign language required in a Spanish university. The use of audiovisual texts for that purpose would help them overcome the barrier of a foreign oral language with the aid of a visual support, something that is not provided by the traditional listening to an audio track. The fact that image is for many deaf and hard of hearing probably the main way to build meaning cannot be overlooked. Moreover, the student would face a more realistic text, more in line with the situations s/he has to deal with every day. The next step would be to make it extensive to the teaching and development of oral skills in the classroom. Taking a step further, our suggestion would be to encourage all universities to use these tools and materials for the assessment of the standards of competence required in foreign languages. This would open the way to homogeneity in the type of assessment of the skills and the number of skills assessed in the Spanish university.

Notes

[i] See general information about CertAcles on https://culm.xxx.es/sites/culm.xxx.es/files/users/jjc/1._que_es_un_certacles.pdf

[ii] See general information on https://culm.xxx.es/sites/culm.xxx.es/files/users/jjc/7.1._certacles_b1_-_descripcion_formal_del_examen.pdf

[iii] "Artículo 26. Estudiantes con discapacidad. Las pruebas de evaluación deberán adaptarse a las necesidades de los estudiantes con discapacidad, procediendo los centros y los departamentos a las adaptaciones metodológicas, temporales y espaciales precisas".

[iv] Real Decreto 1892/2008, de 14 de noviembre, por el que se regulan las condiciones para el acceso a las enseñanzas universitarias oficiales de grado y los procedimientos de admisión a las universidades públicas españolas (BOE 24 de noviembre de 2008):

> "Artículo 19. Estudiantes que presentan algún tipo de discapacidad. Estas medidas podrán consistir en la adaptación de los tiempos, la elaboración de modelos especiales de examen y la puesta a disposición del estudiante de los medios materiales y humanos, de las asistencias y apoyos y de las ayudas técnicas que precise para la realización de la prueba de acceso, así como en la garantía de accesibilidad de la información y la comunicación de los procesos y la del recinto o espacio físico donde esta se desarrolle".

[v] A word of caution: the number of hearing impaired students given by the universities that filled out the survey may not be the real facts: some students never go to the Office for Students with Disabilities or never reveal their special needs to the institution.

[vi] See the formal description of the test at https://culm.xxx.es/sites/culm.xxx.es/files/users/jjc/7.1._certacles_b1_descripcion_formal_del_examen.pdf

vii https://ouad.xxx.es/sites/ouad.xxx.es/files/users/ouad/Guia%20de%20adaptaciones_DIGITAL.pdf

viii Current studies of accessibility in immersive media show that “home users are willing to accept the implementation of new features in SDH in immersive content”, which might result in the introduction of modifications in the Spanish subtitling standard UNE 153010 (Agulló & Matamala, 2019).

ix One of the authors has been responsible for years for the preparation of the English test of the University of Zaragoza Entrance Examination, which assesses different competences in that level).

x As pointed out earlier, the listening skills of regular students may be assessed with audiovisual texts, although in this case dialogues among characters are expected.

xi The authors prepared the subtitles for the videos, as well as the lip-readings They were specifically produced for this study. The idea would be to have a number of subtitled videos prepared to test deaf students at the University of Zaragoza, a service which would be provided by the Office for Students with Disabilities.

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Learning vocabulary for IELTS Academic Reading: An evaluation of some pedagogical materials

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ABSTRACT

A large receptive vocabulary could have a significant impact on scores in the IELTS Academic Reading test. However, the lack of official information about vocabulary in this test raises questions regarding how lexis is selected and approached in existing IELTS training materials. This paper evaluates three books issued by leading ELT publishers to assess how far they effectively help learn vocabulary for the Academic Reading test. First, the lexis in the test is identified based on what can be gleaned from official information and available research. Then, the three books are evaluated using a checklist of criteria relevant to the acquisition of this lexis. The results suggest that the materials investigated may not contribute enough towards the acquisition of vocabulary useful for success in the Academic Reading test. This paper offers some important insights into some shortcomings of current IELTS training materials and points to ways of surmounting them.

Keywords: *IELTS; reading; materials; evaluation; acquisition; vocabulary*

I. INTRODUCTION

Passing IELTS Academic with an overall score of 7.0 (C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)) is a goal for many students worldwide. The IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Academic test is used by universities worldwide to determine whether candidates' proficiency in English will enable them to study in English-medium environments. An IELTS score above 6.0 is usually required for admission.

I.1. A strategy for success in IELTS

Many candidates find themselves in the need of attaining an overall IELTS score that is above their current level of proficiency, in a limited period of time dictated by university application procedures. Candidates also tend to approach the exam with different levels of ability in the four language skills. As the overall IELTS score is the average of the scores attained in each of the four discrete skills tests that make up the exam, good results in one or more tests can significantly raise overall exam scores. Thus, it can be a useful strategy to dedicate efforts to improving results in the test in which success is most likely. One of the tests in which candidates attain their highest scores, regardless of overall level (IELTS, 2020), is the Academic Reading (AR) paper. In AR, candidates must answer 40 questions about three long, real-world texts in one hour.

One way of improving reading scores could be by developing receptive, or recognition, vocabulary knowledge. Research has established the key role of vocabulary knowledge in reading (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Nation, 2013; Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011) and relevant literature suggests that vocabulary can be learnt quite quickly for receptive purposes (Nation, 2013; Sökmen, 1997; Webb & Nation, 2017). Although not specifically assessed, knowledge of vocabulary seems to play a key role in the AR test. A close inspection of published practice tests[i] reveals that answering the majority of the questions requires the recognition of synonymy and paraphrase. Additionally, the length and density of the texts mean that a lack of vocabulary may constitute a major handicap in this high-stakes language examination. Therefore, increasing receptive vocabulary size could positively impact reading scores and as a consequence overall scores could be raised.

I.2. Framing the problem

In order to increase the size of candidates' receptive vocabulary for success in IELTS AR, it is necessary to know what vocabulary is involved. However, guidance as to the vocabulary to study for IELTS AR is scarce. The test is not based on a set vocabulary syllabus, and the IELTS consortium divulges little information regarding vocabulary useful towards passing the test successfully. At the same time, existing literature on vocabulary in IELTS mainly regards the IELTS Speaking and Writing tests. At the same time, IELTS coursebooks usually include sections on vocabulary, and some textbooks dedicated to vocabulary for IELTS are also available. Given the dearth of research and information about vocabulary in this test, it is unclear how these materials are informed. Furthermore, recent literature suggests that coursebooks often seem to lack a solid grounding in principle and familiarity with state-of-the-art research on vocabulary (Schmitt, 2019).

I.3. Aim and scope

This paper critically evaluates three books that claim to help learners acquire vocabulary towards IELTS. The aim of the study is to understand whether these books effectively provide exam candidates with the vocabulary they need for success in the AR test. To this purpose, a checklist was developed and used to evaluate how far the books address the features of AR vocabulary that can be gleaned from official information and available literature. The checklist also examines the books' grounding in established pedagogical principle

The outcome of the evaluation suggests that the books examined fall short of their claims due to their unsatisfactory grounding in research and pedagogical principle. This paper provides some important insights into the limitations of current vocabulary study materials for IELTS. The results presented here may usefully inform future IELTS vocabulary learning materials.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Although it is well-researched that vocabulary is crucial for reading (Alderson, 2000; Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011), this paper evidences that only a surprisingly small body of literature is available on vocabulary in the IELTS AR test. Nonetheless, relevant information about the lexis in the test can also be learnt from some studies on other aspects of IELTS. This section provides an overview of research that provides key insights into vocabulary in IELTS AR and that underpins the present investigation.

II.1. Vocabulary and reading

Research indicates that reading comprehension is dependent on high percentages of vocabulary knowledge (Hu & Nation, 2000; Milton, 2009). In fact, Alderson (2000, p.35) asserts that vocabulary knowledge is "the single best predictor of text comprehension" among the many other variables that are also involved. Knowledge of vocabulary applied successfully to reading implies the possession of a large receptive lexicon, that is, a strong form-meaning knowledge (Schmitt, 2014). As aspects of deeper word knowledge such as morphology or collocation are provided or clarified by the context, depth of vocabulary knowledge may be of less relevance (Schmitt, 2014). However, phonological knowledge may be highly relevant to reading as phonological memory may play a greater role than has previously been considered (Lin, 2019; Milton, 2009; Walter, 2008) Awareness of derivation may also have a bearing on reading, as research indicates that knowledge of a stem word is no guarantee of recognition of its derived forms (Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002).

A further element of vocabulary knowledge that affects reading is formulaic language, that is, the tendency of vocabulary to take the shape of phraseological units of two or more words, rather than consist in single words connected syntactically (Schmitt, 2013). Martinez and Murphy (2011) showed that formulaic units can be the source of incomprehension, as they are often semantically opaque and readers may not recognize them as units of meaning. Thus, knowledge and awareness of formulaic language is key to successful reading.

It would seem, therefore, that a good receptive knowledge of vocabulary should be highly useful towards passing the IELTS AR test. This lexicon should be composed of key individual words and opaque formulaic or multiword units (MWUs) (Martinez and Schmitt 2012). This strong sight knowledge should be supported by some aspects of deeper vocabulary knowledge such as phonology and morphology.

II.2. Vocabulary and IELTS AR

Vocabulary in IELTS has received little attention overall in the literature to date. However, a few specific studies are available. Bax (2013) found that successful AR candidates were more lexically proficient and better able to match words in the questions with synonyms in the text than less successful candidates. Milton, Wade & Hopkins (2010) correlated IELTS scores to vocabulary size test results, finding a very strong relationship between receptive vocabulary size and the AR test. Moreover, they found that 48% of variance in scores in this test can be explained by orthographic, or sight, vocabulary size, making this the possibly most determining factor for success in the AR test. This suggests that attention to orthographic knowledge of vocabulary is highly relevant for the AR test.

Relevant insights about vocabulary in IELTS AR can also be gained from work not specifically investigating vocabulary. In their study of how AR test materials are developed, Green and Hawkey (2011) show that source texts for AR reading passages tend to be more general than academic. Even after adaptation to the IELTS test format, the texts seem uncharacteristic of standard academic texts, as they contain larger than typical percentages of high-frequency vocabulary (Green & Hawkey, 2011; Weir Hawkey, Green, Unaldi & Devi, 2009). This suggests that focusing strictly on academic vocabulary is not useful when approaching the AR test. In fact, it can be deduced from Schmitt and Schmitt (2014) that concentrating on general high-to mid-frequency lexis would be more appropriate, as their seminal paper shows that this vocabulary tends to be prevalent in non-specialist, university-level texts. The relevance of these frequency levels is corroborated by the findings in Drummond (2018), which reveal that candidates attaining an overall IELTS score of 6.5 to 7.0 may have a vocabulary size that affords them approximately 90% text coverage. According to Schmitt and Schmitt (2014), such coverage is granted by knowledge of the first 3- to 4000 most frequent words in English, i.e. high- and early mid-frequency vocabulary.

II.3. Vocabulary learning and published pedagogical materials

Classroom experience and research show that many learners struggle to acquire substantial amounts of vocabulary, even over time (Henriksen and Danelund 2015), and often have a poor knowledge of high-frequency vocabulary (Lawley 2010). One reason for this situation may lie in the shortcomings of published learning materials. In his recent research agenda, Schmitt (2019) lists investigating why these materials so often do not reflect current vocabulary teaching principles. To mention just a few of the numerous studies that reveal such deficiencies, Lawley (2010) and Acosta Moncada et al. (2016) found that the coursebooks they analyzed dedicated a surprising amount of space to less frequent lexis, to the detriment of high-frequency vocabulary. O'Loughlin (2012) and Demetriou (2017) also found that extensively used coursebooks contained little frequent vocabulary and overall approached it unsystematically, often only providing one encounter with the target items.

Given these premises, prospects appear inauspicious also for published vocabulary-learning materials aimed at IELTS. A few dedicated books are currently available on the market, as are some IELTS training materials that contain a section on vocabulary. These materials would seem to merit close inspection for a number of reasons. Firstly, they may effectively be the only existing guides to learning vocabulary for IELTS, given the dearth of research and information available on vocabulary and the exam. At the same time, this very lack of information gives rise to questions regarding how the pedagogical choices in these books are informed. Moreover, assessment materials such as those mentioned above outline potential weaknesses that should be verified also in these materials.

III. METHODOLOGY

This investigation sets out to answer the following research question: Are existing published vocabulary learning materials for IELTS useful towards increasing receptive vocabulary size with a view to successfully passing the AR test? In this section the methodology and the materials used to answer this question are described.

III.1. The books evaluated

Three books were selected for the present investigation (See Table 1). Four main criteria were used to select these books. Firstly, all three were issued by well-established English Language Teaching (ELT) publishers. This suggests that they are pedagogically sound and developed by experts in the field and therefore valid materials for IELTS candidates. Secondly, the presence on an international level of all three publishers means that the books are available to students in many countries and that it is therefore useful to examine their content. Thirdly, the three books have good face-value, in that they look clearly structured, cover a variety of IELTS topics, seem to present and practice vocabulary in contexts and exercises that are relevant to the exam, and provide an array of apparently useful ancillary material such as vocabulary lists, revision tests and exam tips. A final criterion for selecting these books for evaluation was that they seem to be aimed at a target level of IELTS 6.0 and above, which tend to be the scores from which IELTS is accepted in university application processes around the world, thus making the books relevant to IELTS candidates.

Table 1. The books evaluated.

Title	Authors	Publisher	Year of publication	Referred to in text as
Vocabulary for IELTS. Self-study vocabulary practice	Cullen, P.	Cambridge University Press	2008	VFIS
Focusing on IELTS Reading and Writing skills (2nd ed.)	Lindeck, J., Greenwood, J., & O'Sullivan, K.	Macmillan Education Australia	2011	FIRW
Vocabulary for IELTS	Williams, A.	Collins	2012	VFI

All three books are directed at both IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training. VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and VFI (Williams, 2012) approach the target vocabulary topically, rather than by individual test. The items are presented and practiced in different exam-type contexts throughout the units, but no indication is provided as to which items or learning strategies might be specifically useful for each of the four different tests in the exam. FIRW (Lindeck, Greenwood & O'Sullivan, 2011) is aimed at developing reading and writing skills for IELTS. Vocabulary is dealt with in two brief subsections in the unit on reading, where some suggestions are made about identifying and learning useful lexis, but no specific words are taught.

VFIS (Cullen, 2008) teaches about 1,211 lexical items including MWUs, organized into twenty topic-based units, with a test every five units. Lists of all the target items in each unit are provided at the back of the book. The vocabulary is taught through a variety of exercises including exam-type tasks, and listening and reading activities. A further five units close the book and focus on vocabulary learning skills, and on vocabulary for the Writing tests. The book boasts the label 'CEF (Common European Framework) B2–C1', but it is not clear whether these are starting-out or target levels.

VFI (Williams, 2012) covers about 277 different words through 18 topic-based units, with two revision units. The input does not include MWUs, and a complete word list is not supplied. By contrast, the book provides a list of common collocations for most of the target vocabulary. Each input unit focuses on 14-15 words connected to the unit topic. The target words are presented at the beginning of every unit using a dictionary-entry format for each word, providing part of speech, a definition and one or two example sentences. The subsequent sections of each unit practice these words through a variety of exercises, including listening, reading and exam-type tasks. The book targets students at an IELTS level of 5.0 - 5.5 who are aiming at a score of 6.0+.

FIRW approaches vocabulary for the Reading tests in two subsections (Lindeck, et al., 2011). *Building up your vocabulary* (pp.43-44) offers some brief suggestions on how to learn vocabulary in general and what type of lexis to look out for. In *Identifying how words relate to each other* (pp.44-47) learners are advised to notice relationships between words such as hyponymy, meronymy and collocation. The aim of these subsections is therefore not to teach a specific list of words, but rather to outline some useful strategies to learn vocabulary for IELTS Reading. No level is specified, but the presence of lengthy explanations and the choice of language used seem to target students beyond an intermediate level of proficiency.

III.2. The checklist

A simple checklist was developed to analyse the usefulness of the three books towards learning vocabulary that will help pass the AR test at a band level above 6.0 (See Table 2).

Table 2. Checklist for evaluation

CHECKLIST
1. Does the book teach the 1 – 8000 most frequent words in English, including multiword units (MWUs)?
2. Is the vocabulary-learning program clearly defined?
3. Is a strong form-meaning knowledge developed?
4. Is morphology addressed?
5. Is phonology addressed?
6. Is synonymy and antonymy addressed?

7. Are clear explanations provided regarding how to use the book?
8. Is feedback provided?
9. Is repetition facilitated and encouraged?
10. Are vocabulary learning strategies suggested?

The checklist takes inspiration from materials analyses such as Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), Tomlinson (2010), and Reinders and Lewis (2006) and the questions are grounded in the following pedagogical and theoretical principles:

- frequency should be a key consideration when selecting vocabulary (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2008).
- vocabulary does not only involve individual words (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012)
- receptive vocabulary knowledge includes morphological and phonological awareness (Walter, 2008; Gardner, 2013)
- learners need to be aware of the dimensions of the task ahead in order to set targets and plan their work (Dörnyei, 2001; Little, 2003; Schmitt 2008)
- autonomous learning strategies need to be fostered as the classroom typically does not afford sufficient time to deal with the amount of learning required (Webb & Nation, 2017).

III.3. Procedure

The target words in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) are listed at the back of the book, while in VFI (Williams, 2012) they are at the beginning of each unit. These words were counted using the Microsoft Word word count tool in order to determine the books' learning load. As this tool cannot identify formulaic units as single lexical items, the components of the phrases and two-word compounds in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) were counted as individual words. This was not considered a miscount, as many of these components are also dealt with individually in the books. Furthermore, many of the formulaic units covered are semantically transparent, making it useful to understand their individual components. Nonetheless, the phrases and compounds were also counted as individual units, totalling 300.

In order to establish the levels of frequency of the vocabulary in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and VFI (Williams, 2012), all the words were processed through the frequency analysis tool Compleat Web VP BNC-COCA 1-25 (Cobb, n.d.). This web tool matches the words inputted to corpus-based frequency lists, identifying the level of frequency of each word. Some of the words used as examples in FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) were also profiled on this tool. The phrases in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) were checked manually against the PHRASE list (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012).This is a list of the 505 most frequent semantically non-transparent MWUs in English. The aim was to assess the usefulness of the phrases included, given the relevance of frequency to vocabulary learning. The results and implications of this frequency profiling are discussed in Section IV below

IV. THE EVALUATION: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having examined the books known as VFIS (Cullen, 2008), VFI (Williams, 2012) and FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011), the results obtained can be observed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Results of the evaluation.

	VFIS (Cullen, 2008)	**FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011)**	**VFI (Williams, 2012)**
1. Does the book teach the 1 – 8000 most frequent words in English, including multiword units (MWUs)?	×	×	×
2. Is the vocabulary-learning program clearly defined?	×	×	×
3. Is a strong form-meaning knowledge developed?	×	×	(✓)
4. Is morphology addressed?	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)

5. Is phonology addressed?	(✓)	×	(✓)
6. Is synonymy and antonymy addressed?	(✓)	✓	(✓)
7. Are clear explanations provided regarding how to use the book?	✓	✓	✓
8. Is feedback provided?	✓	(✓)	✓
9. Is repetition facilitated and encouraged?	(✓)	×	(✓)
10. Are vocabulary learning strategies suggested?	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)

IV.1. Question 1: Does the book teach the 1 – 8000 most frequent words in English, including MWUs?

As argued above, the AR passages can be predicted to require knowledge of high- to mid-frequency vocabulary, i.e. the 8,000 most frequent words in English. Since research has established that language is highly formulaic, and that opaque formulaic units can challenge reading comprehension, knowledge of MWUs (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012) at similar levels of frequency should also be necessary.

The vocabulary profiles of the words in VFIS and VFI show that they largely belong to the appropriate frequency range. However, the books only target a small number of vocabulary items. No explanation is provided as to the choice of these particular items, no reference is made to the (rest of the) 8,000 most frequent words in English, and the concept of frequency and its key role as identifier of usefulness (Schmitt, 2010) is not mentioned.

FIRW indirectly refers to frequency by dividing vocabulary into *versatile* words (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.43) which “can be used in many different contexts”, and *specific* words (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.43) “[of] very limited use, as they are usually used in one field or context only”. The vocabulary profile of the example *versatile* words reveals that they fall into the 1-5k range, i.e. high- to mid-frequency according to Schmitt and Schmitt (2014). Thus, *versatile* would seem a suitable name for these words, and, given their relevance for the AR test, prompting students to learn them is clearly appropriate. However, learners are again not informed of how many *versatile* words there are in

English, nor that research-based, pedagogical lists of *versatile* words exist and are available free of cost on the web, for example the frequency lists published on Compleat Lextutor (n.d.).

VFIS (Cullen, 2008) includes 50 MWUs, and VFI (Williams, 2012) none. Of the MWUs in VFIS (Cullen, 2008), only 15 appear in the PHRASE list (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012). Why such a large amount of low-frequency phrases are included is unclear, particularly as high frequency formulaic units are often poorly known even at more advanced levels (Martinez & Murphy, 2011). FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) touches on formulaic language in the section on collocation, which is part of a larger section discussing word relationships. Being able to identify these is presented as an important reading skill. Collocations are initially approached as a two-word pair phenomenon, with examples such as *ask a question*, *interested in* (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.47). Subsequently, formulaic units, such as *hold the key or facing stiff competition*, are shown as further examples of collocation (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.47). Given their semantic opacity, these phrases qualify as MWUs and could therefore more profitably approached as units of meaning rather than as a sequence of related words (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012). No distinction is made between the two types of formulaic unit and no indication is given as to which might be more relevant to learn for reading purposes (i.e. MWUs).

IV.2. Question 2: Is the vocabulary-learning programme clearly defined?

Setting goals is key towards ensuring a principled and systematic learning program,e (Nation, 2013), determining the scope of the task (Schmitt, 2008), developing and maintaining motivation (Dörnyei, 2001), and supporting autonomous learning (Little, 2003). VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and VFI (Williams, 2012), however, outline their vocabulary-learning programmes only in very broad terms. VFIS "aims to extend and improve the accuracy of your vocabulary and help you prepare for the IELTS test" (Cullen, 2008, p.4), while VFI claims to help "improve your vocabulary when preparing for the IELTS examination" (Williams, 2012, p.4). Close inspection of the contents reveals that neither book explicitly states exactly how many words they teach nor why these words should be learnt. In fact, in the two chapters on vocabulary learning skills

(21 and 22), VFIS suggests acquiring further, non-specified vocabulary beyond the book’s word list (Cullen, 2008). Thus, the dimensions and the exact composition of the learning programme are not clear.

FIRW does not quantify vocabulary learning aims. Instead, learners seem to be invited to build up an IELTS lexicon through reading generally (Lindeck, et al., 2011) p.44). This seems an impractical suggestion for time-strapped IELTS candidates, as research has amply proven that incidental learning of vocabulary through reading yields far smaller and slower results than intentional word learning (File & Adams, 2010; Laufer, 2003; Webb & Nation, 2017). IELTS candidates cannot afford to spend time on undefined learning programmes with no clear predicted outcome.

A further problem regarding the definition of the learning programme in these books is that learners are not advised to identify where their vocabulary knowledge intersects with the books’ syllabuses. Only advanced learners are advised to begin study of each block of five units in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) by taking its corresponding vocabulary test. The assumption seems to be that learners at lower levels are unlikely to be familiar with most or any of the words in the book. This is not necessarily the case: research suggests that learners do not acquire vocabulary linearly, but rather according to their needs and to the language they are exposed to (Schmitt, 2019). As discussed above, textbooks often focus more on low-frequency vocabulary than on high-frequency lexis (Lawley, 2010; O’Loughlin, 2012). Thus, determining their distance from the target is useful for all learners. However, to achieve this, they must be informed of the dimensions of the task and be provided with the means to assess their position with respect to the target. None of the books afford this support satisfactorily.

IV.3. Question 3: Is a strong form-meaning knowledge developed?

Schmitt (2014) claims that a receptive lexicon useful for reading involves a strong form-meaning knowledge. To this purpose, learners need to recognize word form and connect it with its meaning, and re-encounter target items repeatedly at spaced intervals (Webb & Nation, 2017). Recent literature consistently recommends the use of flashcards to develop form-meaning knowledge (Gardner, 2013; Nation, 2013, Webb & Nation, 2017), as cards allow manipulation such as randomization and reshuffling (Ballance &

Cobb, 2018). Bilingual L1–L2 word cards have been found to be particularly conducive to learning (Schmitt, 2008, Webb & Nation, 2017).

None of the books in this evaluation focuses explicitly on developing form-meaning knowledge nor mention bilingual word pair learning nor flashcards. VFI (Williams, 2012) can be seen to facilitate form-meaning knowledge in that it presents the target words in the dictionary-entry format of word plus brief definition, but not so repeated retrieval and manipulation. VFIS (Cullen, 2008) prefers a word list, without providing meaning or guidance for learning it, and in spite of the risk of serial learning induced by the list format (Nation and Webb 2011). FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) might have been ideally positioned to advise students to use flashcards, as its vocabulary section consists in suggestions for learning vocabulary. It does not mention flashcards, however, and instead discusses guessing from context and dictionary use to discover meaning, which are reading skills rather than ways to learn vocabulary.

IV.4. Question 4: Is morphology addressed?

Awareness of morphology can help increase vocabulary size and the recognition of lexis (Gardner, 2013, p.131). Awareness of derivation is particularly relevant for reading, as research has shown that derived forms may not be understood, despite knowledge of stem forms (Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002). Morphology is dealt with in a variety of ways in the three books, although overall a lack of underlying systematicity is apparent.

VFIS (Cullen, 2008) draws attention to aspects of morphology in page margin notes randomly placed through the units. For example, "prefixes can help you work out the meaning of unknown words" (Cullen, 2008, p.113). Students are invited to find derivations for words learnt and to record them in a table, and word-family table completion exercises appear at different points in the book. The word list includes derived forms for at least 112 stem words, but attention is not specifically drawn to this relationship, and it is not clear why these particular words and forms have been selected and not others.

VFI (Williams, 2012) provides inflections for the nouns and verbs covered in every unit, and also dedicates some attention to affixation via exercises and Exam tip boxes in page margins. However, the importance of these concepts for vocabulary development is not explicitly addressed. By contrast, FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) mentions the importance of affixation for guessing the meaning of unknown words. Unfortunately, prefixes are defined as “usually show[ing] the opposite or a contrast” (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.51), while suffixes are defined as “chang[ing] the word form” (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.51). These are, to say the least, incomplete and infelicitous explanations.

Overall, morphology is addressed to some extent in all three books, but without the systematic, explicit attention it requires.

IV.5. Question 5: Does the book address phonology?

Phonology is usually assumed to regard speaking and listening. This may explain why it is not addressed in FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011), which focuses on reading and writing. However, some research suggests that phonology is highly relevant for reading, particularly for speakers of languages with alphabetic orthography. Walter (2008) argues that words read are stored first in the phonological loop rather than in the visuospatial sketchpad. Milton (2009) claims that it is strongly possible that the phonic representation of words is far more significant than their written form for the mental lexicon of most learners. Furthermore, it seems that it is the specific prosodic features of formulaic sequences which identifies them as linguistic units, to the point that Lin (2019, p.90) suggests that they would be better treated as “strings of sounds rather than strings of words”.

Of the three books, VFIS dedicates most attention to pronunciation, including one pronunciation exercise in each of twelve units, which focuses on individual sounds, minimal pairs and stress patterns. The exercises always have an audio component. Learning the pronunciation of a word is listed as one of the steps in the general word-learning plan outlined in Unit 22, and the word list at the back of the book provides the phonemic transcription for each individual word, but not for the MWUs. This is unfortunate, as Lin (2012) suggests that learning MWUs as sound units facilitates the learning and retention of the phrases and can contribute towards greater reading fluency.

VFI (Williams, 2012) only touches on pronunciation in Unit 4 (stress patterns), Unit 8 (/s/ vs /z/), Unit 12 (“problem consonants”, p.53) and Unit 16 (/ə/). A brief exercise is included that uses the book CD. Phonemic transcriptions or audio tracks of the target words are not provided. Thus, phonology is addressed summarily in VFIS (Cullen, 2008), minimally in VFI (Williams, 2012) and not at all in FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011).

IV.6. Question 6: Is synonymy and antonymy addressed?

Bax (2013) stressed the value of attending to synonymy when preparing for IELTS, and practice material[i] endorsed by IELTS reveals that recognition of synonymy is highly relevant in order to answer questions in the AR test. VFI (Williams, 2012) explicitly draws attention to synonymy in units 2 and 14. However, work is limited to one or two exercises, with no suggestions for how to build up a lexicon of synonyms or what words to concentrate on. VFIS (Cullen, 2008) regularly includes exercises that require identifying synonyms in a text or finding synonyms for words extracted from a text, but never mentions the specific importance of synonymy for the AR test. By contrast, FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) dedicates a whole section to synonymy and antonymy, where it defines the concept and explains the importance of being able to identify synonyms and antonyms in text and questions in the AR test, and provides examples of both types of word relation. Prefixes are underlined as frequent identifiers of antonymy, but suffixes (e.g. useful-useless) are not mentioned. Techniques are not suggested for developing a lexicon of synomyms and antonyms, as could be keeping tables of word families, or making mindmaps, and this seems an opportunity missed in this guide to building up vocabulary for the AR test.

IV.7. Question 7: Are clear explanations provided regarding how to use the book?

Nation (2011) posits that the focus of a vocabulary learning programme should be more on learning than on teaching vocabulary. This suggests that self-study plays a major role in this learning process, also considering that classroom time is too limited to ensure large amounts of vocabulary learning (Webb & Nation, 2017). In their list of features of good self-study materials, Reinders and Lewis (2006) include the need for clear explanations on how to use them. It therefore seems appropriate to critically assess whether, how and how much learners are guided in using the books investigated here.

Both VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and VFI (Williams, 2012) provide detailed suggestions for how to work through the units, using the ancillary materials (word list, tests and reference section in VFIS; collocations list and revision units in VFI) and keeping a vocabulary notebook. FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011), by contrast, limits instructions for using the book to one paragraph–where learners are advised to do all the exercises provided. They are also told that they can "easily select the particular sections to study based on [their] specific needs" (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.V). A useful improvement would be to supply tools to help learners identify these needs. However, this would only be helpful if clear vocabulary learning targets were identified previously, and this does not occur, as has been discussed with regard to question 2 above.

IV.8. Question 8: Does the book provide feedback?

Feedback is a key factor in learning, as it facilitates self-evaluation and fosters motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). In all three materials analyzed here, feedback can be obtained from the answer keys provided at the end of each book. FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011) offers no further occasions for feedback, while in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and VFI (Williams, 2012) many of the learning tips found in the units can be viewed as indirect feedback, as they can stimulate reflection. The five tests in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) and the two revision units in VFI (Williams, 2012) are further sources of feedback. Some check questions at the end of each unit, or a plan of expanded rehearsal (Schmitt, 2010) could be useful additions to develop the feedback features in these books.

IV.9. Question 9: Is repetition facilitated and encouraged?

Repeatedly meeting a new word strengthens knowledge of and about it (Nation, 2013; Webb & Nation, 2017). Although there is no agreement in the literature as to how many revisitations of a lexical item are necessary in order to learn it (see Schmitt (2007) for some possible numbers of repetitions), systematic revision sessions are necessary, as research shows that forgetting begins shortly after the end of a learning session (Schmitt, 2007).

Basic repetition tools are provided in VFIS (Cullen, 2008) in the shape of regularly spaced vocabulary tests –one test every five units, for a total of five tests– while VFI (Williams, 2012) provides two tests, after the first and last ten units. Aside from this, there are few further opportunities for revisiting vocabulary, as only a handful of target words ever appear more than once in these books. By contrast, revisiting vocabulary is recommended in the two-page *how to use the book* sections of both volumes, although no guidance is provided as to how or how often to do it. Repetition is neither mentioned nor facilitated in FIRW (Lindeck et al., 2011). It would therefore appear that the books investigated here do not offer sufficiently structured recycling programmes.

IV.10. Question 10: Are vocabulary learning strategies suggested?

Memorization and retrieval techniques play a key role in retention of vocabulary (Ellis, 2001). Moreover, research indicates that successful learners seem to use a variety of vocabulary learning strategies, and therefore explicit instruction of these techniques could be beneficial (Chacón-Beltrán, 2018). In Unit 22, VFIS (Cullen, 2008) proposes the following sequence of learning steps, illustrated with example words and exercises: find out the meaning and the different forms of a word, learn its pronunciation and how to spell it; use the word, remember the context, apply spelling rules (Cullen, 2008, pp.114-116). The book can therefore be said to provide a framework for learning the basic aspects of a word, i.e. form, meaning, and use. Curiously, the examples and exercises that illustrate each step do not use vocabulary taught in the book. This word-learning plan could usefully be moved to the beginning of the book, focusing it on the book's word list, thus furnishing learners with a practical strategy for setting out to learn the target vocabulary. The plan should include concrete learning techniques for memorizing, retaining and retrieving the new vocabulary.

FIRW usefully suggests trying different strategies to decide which are more effective (Lindeck et al., 2011, p.43). Further useful suggestions are using target words in a written sentence, checking their pronunciation and then saying them out loud repeatedly, and learning to distinguish between frequent and less frequent words. Learners are also advised to guess meaning from context and check the accuracy of the guess at a later stage, which is again more of a reading strategy than a technique for "building up your vocabulary", as the section heading would have it (Lindeck et al., 2011, p. 43). Other essential word-learning methods are not mentioned, such as memorization and retrieval techniques. No activities for trying out the proposed techniques are included, and no tools are suggested that can help learners record, memorize and retrieve new vocabulary.

VFI (Williams, 2012) makes brief but frequent suggestions for vocabulary learning throughout the book in the 'Exam tip' boxes, such as studying example sentences or learning the different parts of speech of a new word. Curiously, here too the strategies are not applied to the vocabulary syllabus in the book, but seem to be aimed at a broader and undefined vocabulary learning program. The suggestions in the tip boxes might more usefully be related to the target vocabulary in the units, facilitating its learning, recycling and retrieval.

As can be seen, the learning strategies proposed in all three books are suitable for long-term study programs. This seems an impractical approach for IELTS materials, since studying for IELTS typically takes place within a short time span. Student life is articulated by a variety of short-term deadlines, such as those imposed by university application and admission procedures, which usually include presenting IELTS scores by a given date. The provision of a framework for short-term vocabulary learning would be desirable in materials that claim to prepare for IELTS. Such a framework could consist in the deliberate learning of form-meaning pairs from word cards and word lists. The literature shows that this is a highly effective way of quickly acquiring significant amounts of vocabulary, particularly if the word lists are bilingual (Elgort, 2011; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997, Schmitt, 2008, Webb & Nation, 2017).

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to investigate whether three vocabulary learning books for IELTS issued by authoritative publishers could be considered effectively useful towards passing the AR test successfully. The outcome of the evaluation performed suggests the contrary. None of the books make a clear case as to what vocabulary is necessary for IELTS AR, nor how much of it can be learnt by using the materials. At the same time, the vocabulary addressed seems to be the result of an insufficiently informed and incomplete selection, as no mention is made of relevant frequency levels, target vocabulary size or text coverage afforded. Schmitt (2019) identified the need for current vocabulary materials to be more systematic and principle-based. He also pointed at the key role of materials writers as the most appropriate players to develop pedagogically sound vocabulary learning programmes, as teachers tend to be time-strapped and unable to keep up with state-of -the art research. The results of this study confirm Schmitt's research agenda and lay bare the urgent need for appropriate vocabulary materials for IELTS study.

This paper identifies relevant issues regarding vocabulary learning materials for IELTS, in particular the need for materials to use a principled approach, grounded in research. They also need to outline clear learning objectives based on the effective requirements of the exam. A limitation of this study is the lack of a more precise knowledge of the features of the vocabulary typical of AR texts. As an independent study not funded or endorsed by IELTS, access to authentic IELTS exam materials was impossible. Future research could usefully investigate a statistically significant sample of AR passages, making it possible to provide IELTS candidates with evidence-based vocabulary learning goals.

Notes

[i] Cambridge University Press publishes past IELTS papers on a more or less annual basis in their IELTS Practice Tests volumes. A practice test is also available on https://www.ielts.org/

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BOOK REVIEW

Analyzing Digital Discourse: New Insights and Directions
Patricia Bou-Franch and Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich
Palgrave Macmillan, 2019 (1st ed.). 400 pages.
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Analyzing Digital Discourse: New Insights and Directions, edited by Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, provides orchestrated accounts of current trends in 'digital discourse', which seek to understand up-to-date communicative situations occurring online and the manifold affordances at users' disposal. At the core of the volume lies the necessity to comprehend the latest technological evolutions enacting new forms of digital interaction, which should lead to adapt traditional approaches and adopt innovative, suitable methods to identify and analyse users' semiotic and discursive practices. Such changes and adaptations are empirically examined in a plethora of digital genres and media from several sociocultural and interpersonal contexts.

Therefore, the studies deployed in the book will be undoubtedly of interest to researchers of digital communication and of its prominent medium- and user-dependent characteristics, from several interdisciplinary perspectives including, *inter alia*, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Discourse Analysis (CMDA), ethnography, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, multimodality, social media analysis and pedagogy. Following the introductory chapter by the editors, the remaining chapters are thematically organised in sections which single out the study of digital discourse from four different vantage points: historical development, multimodality, face and identity, and ideologies triggered by language and media.

Part I is constituted by Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich's "Introduction", where they establish the theoretical foundations for the analysis of digital discourse, which "lies at the intersection of (non)language resources, society, and technology" (p.1). The relevance of holistic analyses of online communicative acts is stressed by emphasising the pertinence of considering semiotic modes and contextual clues. The three identifiable waves of CMC are reviewed to observe the progression in digital discourse approaches and methods over the years. Subsequently, the overarching parts and the individual chapters in the volume are suitably linked to the rationale of digital discourse and carefully contextualised by relating them to seminal, previous literature and present needs.

Part II contains Herring's contribution, who tackles the "Past, Present and Future" of CMC. She offers a retrospective, holistic overview of the Internet and the framework, outlining the consecutive technological affordances and research interests in the Pre-Web, Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 stages. Then, the author reinforces the urgent demand to reconceptualise CMDA by successfully integrating the framework of multimodality. Accordingly, new research directions are unveiled, such as communication on interactive multimodal platforms, graphical communication in the form of avatar-mediated communication and telepresence robot-mediated communication, all of them enabling media convergence and taking on new angles on social interaction.

Herring's chapter gives way to Part III, "Multimodality", dedicated to analyses of both everyday digital communicative acts, in the format of videocalls and news texts, and interactional resources, such as memes and WhatsApp emoticons. Sindoni investigates in Chapter 3, through a case study, a two-party intercultural Skype interaction, as a source of synchronous Video-Mediated Communication (VMC). Her goal is to grasp students' underlying ideologies and biases on language communication through their own perceptions and multimodal transcriptions. Students' critical observations of the video-related data are contrasted with the researchers' and complemented with students' comments. The verbal components scrutinised in the communicative exchanges are qualitatively supported by insights into kinesics, gaze and proxemics. The author ultimately claims the predominance of verbal resources over non-verbal ones and students' tendency towards the standardisation of chaotic, overlapping speech, highlighting the pedagogical advantages of manual, multimodal transcription of VMC to foster their multiliteracy skills.

In Chapter 4 Yus explores 100 image macro memes to track visual explicatures and implicatures from distinct text-picture combinations under the scope of cyberpragmatics. A set of inferential strategies is put forward to find out users' expectations and processes in the search for relevance in meme communication, and the saliency of meme elements is said to yield user-dependent non-linear reading paths. McCloud's (1994) taxonomy of multimodal combinations in comics is drawn upon to manifest that pragmatic relevant interpretations and the global meaning of memes are fully retrieved when both text and picture are interlaced. This is evidenced in the two most prominent categories: the additive, where one mode amplifies the implications conveyed by the other, and the interdependent, where the coexistence of the two modes is quintessential to elaborate an idea.

In Chapter 5, Johansson concentrates on the political opinion review genre in an online news text intertwining a written storyline with digital quotations, i.e. "multi-layered" and "polyphonic" linguistic phenomena (p.140). The genre analysis swiftly describes how the quotations –photos, tweets and a video– are integrated in the three topical sections of the texts, and confirms its commenting, rather than reporting, nature. The roles of journalists as gatekeepers and mediators are also acknowledged, based on the cross-media confronted dialogue arranged. In brief, Johansson verifies the hybridity of nowadays digital news genres, and her chapter is a first step in understanding the recontextualisation of digital quotations in news texts.

Pérez-Sabater closes this section with Chapter 6 about the gendered distribution of emoticons in communities of adult close friends through WhatsApp. The discourse analysis of eight male-only and female-only naturally-occurring chat threads is combined with an online questionnaire for initial insights and face-to-face interviews with participants. Dissimilarities concerning gendered emoticon use in her sample are statistically evidenced, with women's occurrences greatly outnumbering men's. Moreover, women's lengthy, intense style is in stark contrast with men's straight, brief and brisk contributions. Participants' perceptions of (un)necessary emoticons in the interaction demonstrate that women tend to build group intimacy and affectivity, while men favour instrumentality and avoid superfluous exchanges. Pérez-Sabater's qualitative results thus remark stereotypes of gendered emotional expression that need further analysis with a greater variability of participants and mixed group interactions.

Part IV, "Face and Identity", covers a diverse set of identities (gendered, professional or social) and generic and discursive practices in relation to various digital platforms. Specific verbal and technical mechanisms are discussed for the creation, maintenance and deconstruction of users' identity. Chapter 7, by Vásquez and Sayers China, specifically analyses gendered identity (de)construction through discursive and stylistic choices in Amazon reviews. Across two datasets of legitimate and parody reviews, the authors account for the ways reviewers build and perform their identity rendering both normative and counter-hegemonic gender ideologies in this digital genre. The analysis of the legitimate dataset unravels how users reproduce heteronormative gender ideologies in their discursive choices. On the contrary, users' relational identity is much more frequently deployed and consciously visible in parody reviews, which contest engendered products and ideologies, mainly using deconstructive linguistic mechanisms.

Von Rohr, Thurnerr and Locher's Chapter 8 delves into the construction of expert identities in online health practices, especially in advisory situations. A close discourse-analytic approach is shown around four objects of enquiry: anti-smoking websites, online advice columns, counselling emails and online forums. The embeddedness of the strategies identified in the digital environments and their affordances, the complementary co-occurrence of strategies, and the degree of interactivity of the medium that hosts them are regarded as key in considering how expertise is enacted in these contexts. Excerpts from the sub-corpora epitomise the different promotion of professionals, clients and laypeople's authority and credibility in each of the scenarios.

Petroni's contribution, Chapter 9, revolves around the linguistic processes and technological affordances that shape professional identity construction in LinkedIn, relying on Goffman's framework on identity (1956). To that endeavour, a corpus-assisted analysis of top-ten nouns, adjectives and verbs in summary sections of LinkedIn is undertaken, displaying a general "scarce use of self-branding techniques" (p.268). These results are further assessed by taking a descriptive glance at other LinkedIn sections and their functionalities, with respect to the principles of social media logic (van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Hence, self-profiling and identity placement are demonstrated not to be as effectively prompted by users' verbal practices as by the platform architecture and connectivity potential.

Last in this section, Chapter 10, written by Maíz-Arévalo, tracks face-saving techniques in a corpus of Facebook conversational turns from one Spanish common interest group. To Guerrero, Andersen and Afifi's (2014) classification of face-repairing strategies, the author pertinently adds two categories for the analysis of this digital context, namely expressing support and appealing to group's unity. Participants' most employed strategies in such a low-tied community are revealed to include expressing support, giving an account, showing ignorance of a conflict, using humour and aggression. The author's initial hypothesis that participants would not jeopardise their own face to help others proves interestingly wrong, since extensive fragments illustrate that "users are very participative when repairing the group's harmony" (p.305). Illustrative implications from the case study may set the ground to identify more meaningful generalisations.

Part V gathers a collection of studies around "Language and Media Ideologies", highlighting the sociocultural attitudes and practices endorsed in an array of digitally-mediated communicative situations, and how these contribute to the linguistic portrayal of the self. In Chapter 11, Antonio García-Gómez investigates the linguistic strategies of heterosexual British young men to construct and negotiate their gendered identities in the context of sexting: "the electronic swapping of sexually provocative images and/or texts" (p.313). The discourse analysis of guided discussions with participants is combined with personal interviews. Out of Hecht et al.'s (2005) three layers of the self, the communal layer is argued to stand out in their discursive self-representation through informative and eliciting pragmatic acts. Insights from the interviews corroborate participants' digital performance towards individual and in-group masculine positivity, but also discern competing, interwoven male narratives ranging from socially legitimate to unconventional, subordinated discursive identities.

Sifianou and Bella in Chapter 12 focus on the pragmatic lay conceptualisation of politeness and its relationship with self-representation in their Twitter Corpus of Greek Politeness. Their filtered analysis of tweets containing the keyword phrase "politeness is/is not" unveils users' definitions of politeness and the values they attach to this concept. Although a more visual representation of findings would be welcome, the authors noticeably show the consideration of politeness as an abstract, intersubjectively enacted phenomenon, and explain how the inherent disembodiment and required brevity of Twitter influence the content of the messages, but do not impede users to exploit creative, playful linguistic mechanisms fostering their individual and social identities. Finally, recontextualisation and appropriation from other-than-Twitter Internet sources are discussed to pinpoint how networked users favour their searchability and self-representation.

Last chapter by Roeder, Miller and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich presents a preliminary study on the benefits of pedagogical intervention to increase undergradutes' metalinguistic consciousness of virtual communicative norms, specifically in texting practices. Participants' perceptions were surveyed to analyse their pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences, involving audience awareness and their positioning about text appropriateness. Quantitative findings and participants' qualitative comments attest that the target group bolstered the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1993) and did achieve a more heightened accommodation to audience types than the control group. The interplay between the deployment of textese and positive self-presentation is also briefly explored, to underline that targeted class work on language pragmatic functions aids students in resisting prescriptive norms and raising their overall metalinguistic awareness.

Taken together, the chapters compiled in this edited volume entail a pioneering move forward in the analysis of digital communication and in the recognition of the multimodal and linguistic patterns that foreground specific communicative situations online. Bou-Franch and García-Conejos Blitvich's book is indeed worthy of reflection for those researchers who seek for contemporary digital practices, and may definitely inspire them to expand the scope and the tools to promote state-of-the-art approaches and analyses of digital discourse. The wide variety of objects of study and the refining of theoretical and methodological tenets introduced in this volume profusely invite researchers to continue looking into the technical affordances and users' (non)verbal choices characterising ever-changing digital communication.

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BOOK REVIEW

Translation Quality Assessment: From Principles to Practice
Joss Moorkens, Sheila Castilho, Federico Gaspari and Stephen Doherty (Series Editor: Andy Way)
Springer, 2018 (1st edition). 287 pages.
ISBN: 978-3-319-91240-0.

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With the growth of digital content and the consequences of globalization, more content is published every day and it needs to be translated in order to make it accessible to people all over the world. This process is very simple and straightforward thanks to the implementation of Machine Translation (MT), which is the process of translating texts automatically with a computer software in a few seconds. Nevertheless, the quality of texts has to be checked to make them comprehensible, since the quality from MT is still far from perfect. *Translation Quality Assessment: From Principles to Practice*, edited by Joss Moorkens, Sheila Castilho, Federico Gaspari and Stephen Doherty (2018), deals with the different ways (automatic and manual) these translations can be evaluated. The volume covers how the field has changed throughout the decades (from 1978 until 2018), the different methods it can be applied, and some considerations for future Translation Quality Assessment applications.

Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) focuses on the product, not on the process of translation. In one way or another, it affects everyone in the translation process: students, educators, project managers, language service professional and translation scholars and researchers. Therefore, this book is addressed to translation students, lecturers, and researchers who are interested in learning about the industry, research about the topic, or even creating new methods or applications.

The volume consists of 11 chapters that are divided into the following 3 parts:

- Part 1: Scenarios for Translation Quality Assessment (Chapters 1– 4).

- Part 2: Developing Applications of Translation Quality Assessment (5–8).
- Part 3: Translation Quality Assessment in Practice (9–11).

The first chapter, written by the editors, is an introduction to Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) and the different methods it can be applied. As aforementioned, there are two main ways to assess the quality of translated texts: manually and automatically. The manual evaluation can be done in several ways; however, the most known approaches are Dynamic Quality Framework (DQF), Multidimensional Quality Metric (MQM) and the LISA QA (Localization Industry Standard Association Quality Assessment) Model. These approaches evaluate the final quality of a translation (for instance, checking if there are terminology errors or mistranslations). The automatic evaluation also has a variety of approaches, for instance, Bilingual Evaluation Understudy (BLEU, Papineni et al. 2002), Metric for Evaluation of Translation with Explicit Ordering (METEOR, Banerjee and Lavie, 2007), and Translation Error Rate (TER, Snover et al. 2006). These approaches measure the quality of a translated text comparing the final output with one or more reference translations. However, the editors claim that no approach or metric is sufficient to all scenarios and text types (literary translation, audiovisual translation, etc.) and these approaches may be changed by the users accordingly to meet their needs.

The next chapter (Chapter 2) introduces how translation is managed and its quality evaluated in the European Union (EU) institutions. The texts published by the EU are official texts that must be translated into many languages. Therefore, quality must be maintained in all the versions and the consistency must be maintained. There are a lot of quality checks and steps that texts must go through before publishing the official version. As there are many texts published and a lot of languages, the EU outsources a lot of these texts, which have to follow the Directorate General for Translation norms. The EU has created its Translation Memory, MT and a glossary database: IATE. The authors conclude by emphasising that these texts are essential to inform the citizens about the EU projects (especially in a time where the opposition to the EU and populist media with anti-EU agenda is very common) and this is achieved through quality translations.

Chapter 3 explores the new phenomenon of crowdsourcing, in this case, translation crowdsourcing, and how its quality can be measured. Crowdsourcing entails the outsourcing of translation tasks (translation, revision, post-editing) for free or for low rates to large crowds. The problem is evident: as there are a lot of participants it is hard to check the quality of the texts due to stylistic issues. Another problem has to do with the scope of the translation: just for gisting purposes or for dissemination. Moreover, the author posed the following question: "*Who is responsible for quality?*" (p.79). The author argues that, in certain cases, those responsible for the final text may be the Language Service Providers and, in others, the translators and revisers. Although it may be difficult to carry out this process due to the challenges it poses, it has been used in a lot of platforms, such as *Amara*, *Wikipedia* or *Facebook.*

The last chapter of the first part (chapter 4) discusses the lack of education in TQA in degrees and even on postgraduates' translation courses. The authors advocate that it is crucial to teach translation students the quality evaluation methods to prepare them for the translation marketplace, especially since the use of MT is changing the role of translators into post-editors; thus their primary purpose will be to fix MT outputs.

The second part of the volume focuses on the development of approaches or metrics to assess the quality of translation. The first chapter of this part (chapter 5) analyses three different systems for TQA in depth: DQT, MQM and the harmonisation of the two, called the DQQ/MQM Error Typology. The author remarks that these systems were originally created to support translators with the reviewing process. The history of TQA is summarised, explaining that the first attempts to standardise the reviewing process were two standards: SAE J2450 and LISA QA Model. But as the author states, these approaches had important limitations: the low inter-annotator agreement and that they were not useful to all the possible translation scenarios or text types. As a result, DQF and MQM were created. Since 2015, their integration has become the preferred method.

Following this research, the following chapter (chapter 6) focuses on the analysis of the errors found in MT. While the previous approaches described in chapter 5 could be used for human or machine translation, the main focus in this chapter is on the error analysis of MT outputs. The evaluation of MT is usually carried out during the post-editing process; therefore, the author states that the classification of MT errors or post-editing operations is performed to analyse the process, not translation errors. This error classification can be done manually, automatically or with a combination of the two. There is not, however, a standard system to evaluate MT output.

Similarly, Chapter 7 discusses how MT output is evaluated. The author describes different human and automatic evaluations and their problems. There are three main different human evaluation types: Typological evaluation, declarative evaluation and operational evaluation. Regarding automatic evaluation, the following problems challenge the translation assessment task: 1) they do not compare the translation with the source segment; 2) they usually work with only one reference translation; 3) there is not a "perfect translation"; and 4) the human translation (used as reference translation) could be incorrect. To conclude, the author affirms that novel metrics are needed to improve the outputs of MT engines.

The second part of the volume concludes with chapter 8, which briefly describes audiovisual translation (AVT). It delves into the main features of this field, particularly into spatial and temporal restrictions, which produces a different set of norms and standards than differ from other text types. The authors describe how the Computer-Assisted Tools and MT are also being implemented in AVT, especially to improve the productivity of translators and preserve the consistency of the texts (for instance, on TV shows). Quality is still difficult to assess on these texts as metrics such as NER (Net Error Rate, Romero-Fresco & Pérez, 2015) or WER (Word Error Rate, Nießen et al., 2000) are not useful due to the inherent characteristics of AVT mentioned above.

The third and last part of the book includes chapters which analyse TQA in practice in different fields. Chapter 9 delves into Translation Quality Estimation (TQE) which differs slightly from TQA since TQE does not require a reference translation to estimate how good a translation provided by an MT engine is. The goal of the authors in this paper is to successfully implement TQE methods that can distinguish between "good" and "bad" translations. If the translation is "good", the MT output is post-edited; and if the output is deemed "bad", it will be translated from scratch. While this chapter is of interest, it may not be accessible to everyone as it has a lot of terms and mathematical formulas that only people that are familiar with Computational Linguistics may understand.

Chapter 10 explores the use of MT in Academic Texts. English has become a *lingua franca* worldwide and many scholars have to use it in order to publish their work. However, in many cases, English is not their first language, and this could produce some problems with the quality of the texts. The authors posed the following questions: "*is [MT] actually a useful aid for academic writing and what impact it might have on the quality of the written product*?" (p. 238). To this end, the authors conducted some experiments where 10 participants were asked to write half a text in English, and the other half in their native language, and this was later translated to English with an MT engine. Then, the texts were revised. The results of these experiments showed that the revision of the texts written in English was shorter and the opinions of the translators were mixed in terms of efforts and whether they would use MT again for this purpose. The texts were also checked with an automatic grammar and style checker, but there were no major differences in terms of quality.

Finally, the last chapter of this part and this volume (chapter 11) goes into research the use of Neural Machine Translation (NMT) into Literary texts. The authors' objective is to check whether literary texts can be translated correctly through NMT, namely novels from English into Catalan. To do this, they built a literary-adapted NMT system and compared the results with a Phrase-Based Statistical Machine Translation engine. The quality was checked with automatic metrics (BLEU) and manual evaluation and, as the authors expected, the results proved favourable to NMT.

All things considered, this volume is an excellent reference to learn and understand the different approaches and methods of TQA. It provides a very insightful look at the basics of TQA. The editors do not only present useful chapters about the basics of the theory, but they also present examples where these methods have been and could be applied. Hence, it will be very useful to scholars and translation students, whether they want to focus on research or the industry.

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BOOK REVIEW

Accessibilitat i traducció visual
Anna Matamala
Eumo Editorial, 2019. 275 pages
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Accessibilitat i traducció audiovisual (*Audiovisual Accessibility and Translation*, in English) by Anna Matamala (2019) is a book written in Catalan which delves into the possibilities of making the audiovisual experience complete for all consumers by modifying content. With the rise of audiovisual and virtual content in the communication media, many people with disabilities such as hearing loss or visual impairment are left behind in the most run-of-the-mill experiences, especially those containing aural and visual elements as they cannot fully participate in the imaginary construct created by the voices, images and sounds. This book not only intends to show how to accommodate films, series and TV programmes to the needs of the audience, namely the hard of hearing and the blind or partially blind, but it also provides a general overview of the job of the translator, including translation techniques, along with an analysis of media accessibility. Furthermore, the book proposes activities for the reader to reach their own conclusions and experience first-hand. In doing so, Matamala captures the reader's attention and attains reader's interaction and participation, making traditionally passive reading an active learning experience.

Although this book covers the subject of translation, it is not only addressed to professional translators inasmuch as they are already acquainted with the information regarding translation techniques and professional aspects of the job. The audiences that, to my mind, would benefit from this book the most are translation teachers and students, due to its manual layout. Matamala has written and designed this book in a way that learning occurs gradually; that is to say, definitions and more general aspects of translation are presented and illustrated at the beginning of the book to culminate in the explanation of those techniques that cater for the consumers' needs in order to accommodate content. The aim of content accommodation is to maximise the audiovisual experience in people with disabilities, namely subtitles, visual description or audio subtitling among others, in order to approach audiovisual content to them.

The book is divided into 11 chapters, which at the same time could be divided into 4 main blocks. The first three chapters constitute the first block. They are an introduction to the world of translation and the job of the translator. These first chapters contain information about adapting foreign content to the average viewer. The second block (Chapters 4 to 6) focuses on different adaptation or content modification strategies for the general public. Block three, includes Chapters 7 to 10, it focuses on media accessibility. That is, how the content-modification strategies described in previous chapters can be applied to make audiovisual content accessible to all, especially but not limited to those with visual or hearing impairment. The book comes to an end with an analysis of the state of the art and the yet-to-come (Chapter 11 –block 4). All of these chapters include a definition of the items covered as well as the current situation and their use in the Catalan context, along with the analysis of the adaptation methodologies used by public TV broadcasters, most common standards and practices, and some recommendations. Additionally, the author references countless authors and collects an extensive bibliography for further information on the topics.

The book opens with a 'reality check' of the limited accessibility to the audiovisual world. The author refers to the incomplete involvement of people with visual or hearing impairment in the audiovisual experience. In the first chapter, Matamala outlines and defines what the term 'audiovisual content' refers to, i.e. those products based on sound and visual elements. In addition to this, Matamala encourages the reader - and potential translator - to think of the purpose, the target audience or the setting the audiovisual product was designed to be enjoyed in, among others. Once the author establishes the important elements to bear in mind from an audiovisual perspective, a general classification is given to modify the original content and make it more accessible, namely sound and visual modifications. Matamala touches on the accessibility to information and communication, i.e. media accessibility, its evolution in the past decade and how the job of the translator becomes paramount to guarantee equal access to it. The focal point of Chapter 2 is on the barriers and challenges the translation of the audiovisual elements might pose. The first challenge for the translator is linguistic variation, both interlinguistic, i.e. more than one different language present, and intralinguistic, i.e. dialect and register. The second challenge is terminology, which is presented as a second challenge since it is key to the understanding of the meaning, whether technical or fabricated for the sake of the audiovisual work, in order to be able to transfer this meaning and ascertain that the target audience will be able to decode it. Along these lines, cultural references also pose a quandary to the professional translator, as well as intertextuality, i.e. reference to other works, and humour. The author proposes techniques to conquer these obstacles, but the suggestions are not without their limitations, which are also identified in this book and the reader is warned about them. In Chapter 3, Matamala enumerates and suggests a series of tools for professional practice such as linguistic, translation or time management tools among others, as well as tools for research. The resources mentioned in this chapter may be useful for both the self-employed professional translator and the translator-to-be, as the author reviews their utility and applicability.

All the chapters in the next two blocks include a definition of the technique exposed along with its evolution in the Catalan context. Chapters 4 to10 include a section in which the author compiles different possible groupings suggested by different authors for such content-modification modality. Furthermore, the author offers a description of the main characteristics as well as information on the technical and linguistic aspects. The last sections in all the chapters of this block aim at the professional world of the translator in which the process of the given modality, industry standards and recommendations are outlined along with further research on the topic.

Chapter 4 focuses on one of the modifications of audiovisual content: dubbing. The definition for this technique is given in the chapter in conjunction with a clarification for many widespread misconceptions about it, namely the mistaken belief that what translators do is merely translate a script. The author goes on to specify the detail and work behind a dubbing script to debunk this myth. The chapter that follows (Chapter 5) introduces voice-over as a second content-modification modality in contrast with dubbing and simultaneous interpreting. According to the author, these three are similar, yet different from each other. Despite having some shared traits with dubbing such as the modification of the soundtrack, voice-over does not require lip synchrony, for instance; and although in both simultaneous interpreting and voice-over the translation overlaps with the original, in the former the translation is live, whereas there is previous written preparation in the latter (Matamala, 2019). Chapter 6 deals with subtitling for the general audience, its uses, general characteristics and steps that need to be followed in the subtitling process. Matamala underlines the possible variations within the format and detail of the subtitles depending on whether the target audience is able to decode sounds. She goes on to provide a description of this technique by juxtaposing it with other techniques such as dubbing or voice-over.

Chapter 7 has to do with the accessibility of the audiovisual content and the job of the translator in interpreting those contents in an effort to decode them for those with a visual or hearing disability. An example the author points out is sign language. Additionally, Chapter 8 goes back to subtitling, although this time the writer unravels subtitling techniques for the hard of hearing. She recounts how Catalan public broadcasting services pioneered accessibility through subtitling in the Spanish media. Chapter 9 deals with video description, which consists in narrating what the eye can see. In other words, to transfer visual elements to linguistic and aural elements. This modality has been traditionally associated with lack of vision, although, as the author puts it, it can also enhance the audiovisual experience in the average viewer. Matamala provides an insight into the Catalan broadcasting context by giving a myriad of examples of audiovisual works that have been made accessible through this modality, as well as listing official regulations, namely in the Valencia area, which establish that certain government speeches of interest to the general public should be video-described. Chapter 10 is also connected with a modality to make the media accessible: audio subtitling. This modality, as claimed by the author, benefits a variety of audiences ranging from people with a visual disability to a reading disability. In this modality, it is important to identify the characters before their intervention, among other distinctive features listed in the book. Chapter 11 closes the book addressing the issue of new practices and recent research among which the field of virtual reality can be found. The book culminates in a look to the future and a critical eye on the present, including what is exposed in this book.

All things considered, the book is a useful guide book for translation students, professors and professionals since it defines and summarises the uses of translation modalities and their uses are illustrated with clear examples. These examples add a note of realism, which proves profitable for those who are about to be immersed in the translation labour market.

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