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Trabajo Fin de Grado

Learning English accents and increasing motivation  
through original series viewing: Second Language  
Acquisition in the analysis of *Outlander*

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## **Abstract**

This project pursues to show how watching foreign series provides students with acquiring a second language and help them to improve their English accent in the classroom context. The series used in this paper is called *Outlander* which deals with two dialects of English (Standard English and Scottish) showing the learner their differences not only in vocabulary but also in pronunciation. To achieve a positive impact on the students using foreign series in the class, there are two important factors to consider: the learners' motivation and the use of English subtitles that help to keep interest also out of the learning hours. Finally, it will be claimed the importance of teaching a second language through audiovisual materials for having several advantages for the students. Some of those advantages would be feeling hooked on the series and continuing to watch it at home, that is to say, a relaxing place without the pressure or anxiety opposed to an academic or institutional environment.

**Key words:** *SLA, subtitles, accents, motivation, English, Outlander.*

## **Resumen**

El Trabajo de Fin de Grado que aquí se presenta intenta mostrar cómo la visualización de series en inglés mejora la adquisición de la segunda lengua y el acento de los estudiantes. Para ello, la serie elegida ha sido *Outlander*, que trata con dos variedades específicas del inglés (inglés y escocés) mostrando al alumno las diferencias en el vocabulario y la pronunciación de ambas. Existen dos factores importantes a la hora de conseguir un impacto positivo en el alumnado a través de este tipo de materiales: la motivación del alumno y el uso de subtítulos en la lengua objeto de estudio, que van ayudar a mantener el interés por la serie fuera de la clase, y así mejorar las habilidades comunicativas. Finalmente, el trabajo se centrará en la importancia de la elección de los materiales audiovisuales complementarios de clase y las ventajas que para el alumnado tiene esta decisión, como es la continuidad de su visionado en casa, en un ambiente sin presión ni factores generadores de ansiedad más propios del ámbito físico académico.

**Palabras clave:** *Adquisición de una segunda lengua, subtítulos, acentos, motivación, inglés, Outlander.*

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## 1. Introduction

The inclusion of audiovisual materials in the classroom will be crucial for learning and improving a second language and its accent acquisition. The present essay aims to analyse the importance of using native-language subtitles when you are watching series with a foreign regional accent to keep not only learner's motivation but also learner's improvement in all English skills. English subtitles will facilitate the student to a better understanding of the dialogues, internalise the grammar shown in conversations and the knowledge of tone inflections. To develop this study, an audiovisual resource is going to be used representing the two dialects (Standard English and Scottish English) through native-language subtitles in a TV series called *Outlander*. The theories of Dörnyei (1994) and Mitchell and Myles (2004) have been used in the basis to write the present study supporting the idea that the use of English subtitles provides with a detailed study and acquisition of the second language through the activation of a specific internal process: motivation, processing approach and a constructivism view (connectionism).

As a consequence, the term dialect will be sharply defined and its importance in the classrooms explained. Besides, it is important to know that any group of speakers in Great Britain is characterised by a specific dialect so that there are a great number of dialects that co-exist in Britain such as Scottish (a regional dialect) opposed to Standard English (a social one). In the pages that follow, both dialects are going to be distinguished on the screen and their differences are going to be portrayed in the main characters in *Outlander*.

## 2. Purpose, objectives and motivation

This essay aims to demonstrate how audiovisual material in the classroom offers exciting possibilities for language teaching and learning, especially for second language acquisition and learning. It is clear that the teacher has to be familiar with the video materials before they are used in class. Using this kind of materials has had some important effects on language-teaching broadcasts. That is explained through the fact that four of five minutes of audiovisual material with second language subtitles provide stimulating input for one hour's teaching (Lonergan, 1984). The audiovisual material used in the classroom has to be intrinsically interesting to language learners, thus, the learner will want to watch more at home, to ask questions and to follow up ideas and suggestions. In the following lines, the notion of motivation mainly influenced by English subtitles will be analysed as crucial to second language learning and acquisition. This interesting audiovisual material used in class can create a climate for reaching this objective with success.

There is a controversial discussion among researchers using ESL/EFL video or authentic video in the classrooms (Stemplesky, 1990). Even though ESL/EFL video is particularly used in low levels, authentic video, in contrast to ESL/EFL video, presents real language; it is intended for native speakers. It deals with spoken English at a normal pace and in typical accents. Moreover, it provides an authentic look at the culture, that is, native speakers of English show learners how people in Englishspeaking countries lived, their values, customs, clothing, food and other aspects of their daily life. *Outlander* is a good example that portrays those features through their characters.

### **3. A world of English variations: sociocultural aspects of regional accents in Britain**

According to Ranzato (2010), dialect refers to any phonetic, lexical, morphological, or syntactical variation, which is considered not belonging to the so-called Standard English whose grammar, vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and slang is most widely accepted and understood, becoming the main object of study in schools. In Britain, many different accents can be found depending on the area such as Geordie, Scottish English, Cockney or Estuary English. Those variations are mainly influenced by the sociocultural aspects of the community, that is, the society will build a dialect for its group. However, this paper will focus on Scottish English and Received Pronunciation that is the accent of Standard English. Those accents are characterised by being defined by the society who speaks them, that is, Received Pronunciation is going to be closer to high social class rather than Scottish English that is associated with low or middle social class. In fact, if you want to be respected in life your language should be “*good language*”, that is, Standard English with Received Pronunciation. (Douglas, 2009).

#### **3.1 Dialects in Britain: Standard English and Scottish**

Dialect refers to grammatical, lexical and phonetic aspects of a variety of a language (Wells, 1982). In this broader sense, it can be associated with social, ethnical, gender and age variation as well as with regional aspects. Therefore, on the following lines, we will examine Received Pronunciation (often shortened as RP) and Scottish varieties depending on the place that they are used and their common features through examples shown in *Outlander*.

Received Pronunciation is considered the most prestigious accent in English and the word “received” has to do with the idea of being “*accepted in the best society*”

(Santipolo, 2003). Regarding the historical context, the dialect that is known as Standard English is often linked to Received Pronunciation, and it is a result of slow changes that were influenced by social (The Black Death in 1348), political (Hundred Year's War during 1337-1453), cultural and economic (the printing press in 1476) factors starting in the Middle English period (Santipolo, 2003). By the end of the Middle English period, Standard English with RP accent became more visible and it was the variety of London and its surroundings. The fact that the court and the centre of commerce were in London contributed to the consideration of London dialect as the model. A clear statement of this socially based standard was made by Alexander J. Ellis (*On Early English Pronunciation*, Part I (1869-89)) who defines "received" pronunciation as "*the educated pronunciation of the metropolis, of the court, the pulpit and the bar*".

Besides, regarding the dominant spoken tongue in Scotland, it may be claimed that "*...until the late eleventh century the trend was toward the linguistic dominance of Scotland by Gaelic*" (Aitken, 1984, 2015). Nevertheless, there are authors such as Niven (2017) who states that there are three languages spoken in Scotland and they are divided as follows: Scottish English, Scots and Gaelic. Firstly, Scottish English and Scots language are closely related to each other, but they do not share the same features. On the one hand, Scottish English refers to the varieties of English spoken in Scotland. On the other hand, Scots refers to the Germanic language variety spoken in the Lowlands. Even though Claire, the main female character of the series, understands the different vocabulary, she does not use it. For instance, she is having a conversation with Jenny, Jamie's daughter, and she asks Claire "*Did ye have any bairns?*" and Claire answers "*No. I never had children with him*" (S3E8, 29:00). Therefore, the use of subtitles in this conversation will play an important role to know the lexis of the word *bairns* providing the viewer with the meaning of that new word; *children*.



However, Scottish English accent employs much opener and more centralised realisations of vowel /ɪ/. Therefore, there is a “linguistic distance” in the phonetic of words such as *hame* [hem] (Scots) and *home* [hom] (Scottish English). Regarding those previous examples, it is clear that there is another difference in terms of vocabulary. Scots uses more often non-standardisms which are also known as “Scotticisms” or “vulgarisms” (Aitken, 1984, 2015). Those “vulgarisms” are associated with the lowerclass speech or highly informal middle-class speech styles while Scottish English is linked to high social class and education (Aitken, 1984, 2015). Secondly, Gaelic is a Celtic language historically spoken in the Scottish Highlands and it is very distantly related to Scottish English and Scots language. Even though Gaelic represented the culture of the Highlands, it disappeared together with the Battle of Culloden (1746) where the highlanders lost against the British army. This battle took place near Inverness because the Jacobites wanted to protect it from the British army since it was the main source of soil that they had. As a consequence, it can be said that Gaelic disappeared together with this battle because it was the bloodiest battle that lasted less than an hour. In sum, Scottish English is the Standard English spoken with a Scottish accent. Besides, Scots is distinct, having diverged from a dialect of Middle English, and having characteristics that differ from English. In sum, according to Derrick McClure, he explained that Scots was not “*neither Standard English, Gaelic, nor any immigrant language*” (1995).

Finally, regarding those two varieties, it has to be pointed out that in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were “*two national languages in use in Britain*” (Aitken, 1984, 2015). Those two national languages were the metropolitan Tudor English, obviously in the kingdom of England, which represented the Southern dialects of English and the metropolitan Older Scots in the kingdom of Scotland, which represented the

Northern dialects of English (Aitken, 1984, 2015). Nevertheless, the tongue had already suffered many changes from that of the Anglo-Saxon invaders of fifth-century Britain.

### **3.2 Accents and sociocultural features in Britain**

RP and Scottish accents have changed over the course of time. According to *British Accents and Dialects* (Robinson, 2009), he associated RP with early BBC broadcasts and Queen's English. For much of the twentieth century, RP represented the voice of education, authority, social status and economic power. The period after the Second World War was very important because it was a time when educational and social advancement became a possibility for many more people. Those who took advantage of these possibilities felt the pressure to conform linguistically and they had to adopt their accents of the establishment or at least they had to modify their speech towards RP norms. Consequently, RP's use is closely related to high social class and it is considered the model of pronunciation in the classrooms of non-native learners.

However, as it is changing all the time, this model of pronunciation must be revised and updated from time to time by the teachers. Regarding Scottish accent, there are two main varieties: Standard Scottish English and Scots. In practice, the distinction between those who speak Scots and those who speak Standard Scottish English is still blurred. Then, speakers tend to drift between the two varieties depending on the context, that is, they speak a version of Standard English with a local accent mixing features linked to Scots. There is another variety called Gaelic which is no longer in use. In sum, those dialects have maintained a strong presence in rural communities. Despite the fact that Scots is a dead-tongue, some authors such as McClure (1982), Corbett and StuartSmith (2012) supported the status of Scots as a dialect of English in the present day. Those authors defended this idea because what is now known as Scots was previously known as

*Inglis* and that it changed into *Scottis* simply to identify it with Scotland. Consequently, it does not matter the status of Scot language so that many speakers claim to speak Scots rather than English.

Before starting to distinguish the social differences between people who use RP rather than Scottish accents, the own social stratification that Scotland suffers is going to be highlighted. On the one hand, Douglas (2006) states that the closer the speech of a speaker resembles Broad Scots, the less social prestige this speaker has. And, the closer the speech resembles Standard (Scottish) English, the more social prestige they have. Moreover, she also described Highland English as the variety spoken in the Highlands and it is influenced by Gaelic and not Scots. On the other hand, the main relevant distinction in social class between people who speak RP and Scottish is that Scottish people speech is ruder in terms of accent because of the use of rhotic accent, than the people who speak with RP accent, who speak with a non-rhotic accent (see appendix 8.1). That is to say, Scottish people pronounce the <r> sound after a vowel while people who speak Standard English and RP pronunciation do not pronounce the <r> sound at all because they drop it. With both Received Pronunciation and Standard Scottish English being given particular prestige in England and Scotland respectively, it is proper and necessary to explore distinctions between them. These two varieties differ in many aspects such as pronunciation (rhoticity), grammar (tag questions or negation), vocabulary as well as expressions (see appendix 8.2), even though their phonological distinctions are the most obvious (Miller, 2004).

In the following lines, it will be analysed the influence of the phonological study of English dialects and accents as a great significance in helping non-native learners, who become more sensitive to differentiate English varieties, with acquiring English speech better so that they are able to distinguish between the different dialects and also their

phonemic variations. Consequently, non-native learners will become able to acquire the dialect that is more appropriated for their purposes.

#### **4. Accents and variations in Second Language Acquisition: an analysis of key concepts and main theories**

Along the following lines some theories of different authors will be examined. Those theories demonstrate how watching series provides the student with acquiring a second language and its accent. Therefore, audiovisual material that motivates the student will be very useful to improve second language acquisition in the classrooms. Furthermore, some authors who support second language acquisition and its accent through watching series with second language subtitles are going to be shown as follows.

The importance of Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (1977) in acquiring a second language is very relevant, nevertheless, his theory is mainly based on that the input has to be one step beyond of the current stage of the learner's linguistic competence. That is, it is important to analyse the level of the class to show the learners an audiovisual material that is a slightly over their level to push them to make an extra effort. Besides, according to him, it may be highlighted the relevance of the age when learning a second language. That is because, regarding the critical period hypothesis, humans are programmed to acquire certain kinds of knowledge and skills at specific times in life (before puberty). For this reason, motivation in the class will be crucial in acquiring a second language as it will be explained later on. In order to achieve a successful second language through audiovisual material in a foreign language, English subtitles will play an essential role because they will support the disambiguation of perceptual input (Mitterer and McQueen, 2009). Besides, using English subtitles have many advantages

because they have an impact not only on phonological knowledge but also on comprehension while reading them.

Another important theory consists of explaining how the audience uses unconsciously its psychomotor domain (see appendix 8.3) That is based on getting familiar to sounds, movements or similar through repetition, therefore, you succeed in carrying out them unconsciously (Simpson, 1972). Moreover, someone used to listen to English sounds, process them, and understand what it is said will be able to pick up the pronunciation. This theory is important to show the process of the learner when starts to watch series in second language because he needs to read the subtitles, or even he has to stop to find some vocabulary. However, over time, he will achieve to understand the series without reading the subtitles and even inferring the meaning he does not know. That happens because he has passed through a process that consists of intensive practice that, as time goes by, it becomes in something natural (Simpson, 1972). In sum, it can be claimed that audiovisual activities in class provides convincing evidence of how learners acquire new vocabulary and expressions, grammar, and improve comprehension and listening skills through using English subtitles. Therefore, after acquiring those features, the student will be able to speak more fluently and with a better pronunciation than before watching series in a foreign language.

Finally, those authors have in common that starting from the motivation of the learners, watching foreign series with English subtitles at the beginning, improve all skills of a second language. This takes place through having an active role in class that is, watching, listening, and processing the information (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation). Additionally, those theories are going to be deeply analysed through examples of the series that is the object of study in this paper as can be seen as follows.

## **5. SLA and series visualization: the importance of O.V. subtitles**

The audiovisual material with English subtitles let the viewer process the information through his reading skills. However, the addition of more channels such as visual, oral and textual will also enhance writing or listening skills having an impact on increasing the capacity of processing information (Mayer, 2003). Consequently, audiovisual material subtitled, captioned and dubbed will make easier to deal with information (vocabulary, grammar, accent and pronunciation) and to acquire the second language.

### **5.1 Differentiating subtitles, captions and dubbing**

According to Rick Altman (1989), foreign language teachers were sceptical about the educational prospects of the small screen. For this reason, there was not considered a second language acquisition impact while watching series or films in the first researches. However, it is claimed that subtitles play a key role in acquiring second language so that they present the written text on the screen (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2012). Furthermore, it is relevant to highlight that subtitling draws learner's attention to unfamiliar dialects, accents, sentences and words (Vanderplank, 1988, 1990) improving their reading, pronunciation and listening skills. Secondly, captions were only used for deaf people, although some researchers realised that captions also had a positive impact when people wanted to acquire a second language while watching a series. That happens because captions provide information about who is speaking or about sound effects that may be necessary to understand the plot. Therefore and lately, captions were understood as subtitles, nevertheless, Vanderblank (2016) chose to call them captions "*for simplicity and consistency*" instead of subtitles for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Finally, dubbing also contributes to show the learner with new vocabulary so that it is the translated message of the soundtrack. However, there are some drawbacks in using dubbing so that

they do not portray the actual accents or dialects successfully because they are dubbed in a standard variety.

## **5.2 Accents in *Outlander*: to put SLA into practice**

In the following lines, it is going to be analysed the series more deeply and its impact on the classroom. The series shows both varieties Standard English and Scottish English, even some examples of Gaelic. Those varieties will be represented through the main characters that are going to be described in order to understand the importance of their backgrounds to build their specific dialects and accents. Moreover, it will be claimed the importance of those different accents shown in the series for the learner who is going to become to choose the one that is more appropriate for his purposes.

### **5.2.1 What is *Outlander*?**

First of all, *Outlander* is a series based on the *Outlander* series of books written by Diana Gabaldon. This paper will focus on episodes that take place in the Highlands, therefore, it will be used the Highland English from the Highlands (Douglas, 2006). As it has been previously mentioned, this variety differs from Standard English mainly by the phonology as it can be seen later on.

This series deals with the story of Claire Randall, a married combat nurse from 1945 who is mysteriously swept back in time to 1743 while she is celebrating their honeymoon with her husband. They each served for the duration of the war, Frank as an officer with MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service), and Claire as a combat nurse. Her experiences of treating the wounded men of the war will always stay with her. Once the war was over, Claire and Frank reunited and decided to go on a second honeymoon in Scotland, to Inverness, a city in the Scottish Highlands situated near an ancient stone circle called Craigh na Dun. This stone circle is going to be the one which takes her back in

time. Through this time travel, she is thrown into an unknown world where her life is threatened. Therefore, she is forced to marry Jamie, a brave and romantic young Scottish warrior. As the episodes continue, a passionate affair is ignited that tears Claire's heart between two different men who are in two different worlds.

Despite the fact that the series is a common and passionate romance, this love story is built by important events from the English history that influenced the sociocultural aspects of the society in both places, Britain and Scotland. So, the viewer is going to be hooked on *Outlander* because of both the love affair and the interesting battles that take place in beautiful landscapes in Scotland.

### **5.2.2 Main characters and their accents (RP and Scottish)**

Regarding Claire's personal history, she was adopted by her uncle, Quentin Lambert Beauchamp, an archaeologist historian. Her uncle attempted to enrol her at an English boarding school, but she stubbornly refused to attend. Even though she did not receive an education, she was surrounded by educated and smart people. Consequently, she represents the posh accent of Britain; Received Pronunciation. Her education is opposed to Jamie's education so that he has grown between wars, violence and in a modest family. Those backgrounds of the main characters will demonstrate the features of their accents in the following lines.

After being captured by the highlanders, Claire is taken to the seat of Clan Mackenzie where she realises that she is in 1743. People of the clan Mackenzie think that she represents the perfect example of the British posh woman due to her accent and education for helping Jamie with his dislocated shoulder. For this reason, all people of the clan start calling her "Sassenach". The use of "Sassenach" is controversial because it is the Gaelic translation of "outlander" or "Englishman" so that she had not been well



received in those Highlands for her British accent (Helen, 1986). The main reason for not being well welcomed and being named Sassenach by Jamie Fraser is because British people believed themselves being superior to everyone. One way to represent this superiority was the accent, therefore, Scottish people already felt threatened with the way in which British people spoke (see appendix 8.4).

It could be said that those characters, Claire and Jamie, are defined by their social classes and also by the period in which they were born (see table appendix 8.5). The different social class and the period in which they belong to are very distinct from each other providing them with a distinction between the sociocultural backgrounds of each character. That differentiation among the period in which the characters belong helps the learner to understand the features of the actual and past English. On the one hand, British people have not modified too much their pronunciation and accent along the history. By contrast, Scottish people do not use Gaelic in present times. Claire's correct education even in difficult moments and Scottish variety through the series is going to be shown in the lines that follow with some examples.

Furthermore, one feature that is completely different between Claire and Jamie is the way how both understand the world. Obviously, she is going to be more openminded than Jamie due to her origin and historical background. An example of that is when Claire comes back to the eighteenth century after twenty years and she finds out Jamie got married for following the traditionalism of his society that is based on having children and building a family. At this moment, Jamie reproaches Claire "*Ye're the one that told me to be kind to the lass*" (S3E8, 24:00). Even though she is sad and angry, she keeps calm and she clarifies him that she "*told you to thank her not marry her*". That is another example of showing her education in disputes and the different vocabulary ("ye" or "lass") and accents among both characters. Therefore, the Highlanders would be characterised by

being rude, stubborn and narrow-minded what is going to be portrayed in their rhotic accent. One example of those features is the moment in which Claire tells Jenny, Jamie's sister, she is from the future. Jenny's reaction is very suspicious because despite trusting her she stays thinking she is a witch or a fairy woman.

In the eighteenth century, women were only focused on home-tasks and waiting for their husbands, nevertheless, Claire's arrival to a Scottish society had a positive impact in terms of progression. It is true that at first Claire, due to her British accent, is not welcomed but step by step, women and some men realise of the relevant ideas that she has about medicine and the usefulness of that for improving their society. Although she is not warm welcoming because of the actual tension between the British and Scottish society of that time, she starts to introduce to the clan Mackenzie. Besides, people of the clan start to trust her medicine knowledge asking her for help. An example of that is when after the death of a child of the Scottish society, there is another boy ill and Claire is asked to help him. The mother of the boy thinks that is something about the devil because of his weird symptoms. However, Claire realises that he is poisoned due to his hallucinations although the old woman is still thinking he is "*seeing the demons even now*" (S1E3, 28:00). Finally, as the Scottish society is very religious, the mother of the boy does not allow Claire to help her son "*Best make way now, lass. Let the father do his work*". That is another example of different vocabulary ("lass" what means "young girl") and the obstinacy that predominates in Scottish society rather than in British society.

In sum, at first, she is cut off Scottish society, nevertheless, later on, it could be claimed that Claire benefits in many aspects of the Scottish lifestyle. From the first moment she is introduced to the Scottish people, they realise she is British, and she belongs to the high social class due to her accent related to the Received Pronunciation.

Most men do not trust her, even they think she is a spy. Nevertheless, women teach her to behave as a good Scottish and she has to adapt herself to the new world she is living. One example of adaptation to the Scottish world is when she starts drinking whisky so that this is not very usual in England. There is a moment in Lallybroch, Jamie's home, in which Jenny's daughter offers her whisky. She is getting used to the traditions although her British educated accent that represents her high social class remains (S3E8, 28:00).

Jenny's daughter: *Would ye like a whiskey?*

Claire: *I supposed I would do with one.*

All of those examples that have been taken from the series will be the first contact that the learner is going to be with a different dialect (Scottish English). Therefore, subtitles will play an essential role so that the viewer may feel lost for the new vocabulary and accent. However, over time, he will be accustomed to listening to this kind of vocabulary and accent without needing reading the subtitles.

### **5.2.3 *Outlander* as a source of motivation in class**

First, it is important to highlight that the earlier you are at the language-acquisition process, the more input in the native language you are probably going to need. The age in which the learner will successfully start learning a second language loses efficacy at the age of twelve (Littlewood, 1984). For instance, young learners can learn a second language effectively before puberty (twelve years old) because their brains are still able to use the mechanism that assisted first language acquisition.

In addition,

*“...looked at the relationship between captioning effectiveness and proficiency level, they found a medium effect for both beginners and advanced-level learners, and a large effect for intermediate-level learners”.*

(Montero Perez et al, 2013).

So, the more level the students have, the more captioning effectiveness will take place. The process of learning is a cognitive process that involves learning different skills of the second language. To achieve optimal results the second language has to be not only worked in class but also interiorised in learner's speech ability (McLaughlin, 1987). For instance, it would not be enough studying the grammar structure of different verbs if the learner is not able to speak fluently without thinking if the verb is followed by gerund or infinitive.

Consequently, cognitive approaches such as processing and connectionist approaches will be used by the student to learn a second language. On the one hand, the processing approach examines how the learners process the linguistic information, that is, the grammar, the accent or the pronunciation, and how they are able to progress practising those skills over time (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). For instance, when the viewer is reading L2 subtitles is processing the linguistic and phonetic information shown in the screen. Nevertheless, as he will improve this ability, he will no longer need to read the subtitles to understand what is said. That can be explained because he will create associations with the sounds he listens to.

Therefore, the connectionist approach consists of acquiring “connections” between words or expressions and the situation in which they occur. That is, students' brains are ready for making associations between the element they watch creating links

between the words and their meanings. (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). A good example of connectionism watching *Outlander* happens when it deals with vocabulary about war and strategies. At first, the learner will not understand everything because the vocabulary used is old and unknown (*bayonet, amiss, mount up, quill, to thatch*) but after searching the words' meaning they will be able to make associations with the words and the different parts of the clip that they appear. Another example is the use of the word "bargain" to refer to make a deal turning Jamie in the British army to achieve Dougal's freedom. The learner may not know the meaning of that word, but if he associates it with the visual image in which is represented, he will remember through making connections. Even though the student is not accustomed to listening to this kind of vocabulary, when he reads about war, he will manage to understand it because of the process of association. Consequently, those links created by the viewer will "*become stronger*" at the moment the learner keep doing associations often. (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Besides, connectionism also provides the student with making connections regarding pronunciation and accents. That is, once the learner realises of different pronunciations and accents, he will make associations with the new ones and the ones he already knew (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Additionally, the learner will be able to choose the most appropriate accent for him improving his oral skills.

However, it can be highlighted the importance of keeping in mind the level of the class because the difficulty of the audiovisual material must be appropriate for the rank of the classroom (Guillory, 1998). Therefore, it is not enough to play videos as a mean of developing language skills. Teachers in the classrooms have to concentrate on providing the ideal input, that is, "*comprehensible, relevant to their immediate interests, not too complex but not strictly graded, either.*" (Littlewood, 1984). It is important to stress that the input has not to be "*strictly graded*" related to Krashen's comprehensible input

hypothesis (1977) because the input received by the learners has to be one step beyond of their levels to second language acquisition takes place.

Regarding the variation in people's personal preferences, the teacher in the classroom will have to consider a source of motivation for the children. As previously mentioned, L2 learning is not an easy process of knowing to use second language successfully but it also implies a good predisposition for the learner to manage acquiring second language (Dornyei, 1994). Along the following lines it will be explained those traits and social components as being very relevant in the cognitive process of acquiring a second language.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), there are two kinds of motivation which are distinguished as follows: integrative and instrumental motivation. On the one hand, a learner with integrative motivation has an interest in the second language community, therefore, he wants to learn their language in order to communicate with native speakers and to keep in touch with them and their culture. On the other hand, a learner with instrumental motivation is interested in how the second language can be useful for other purposes, such as gaining a necessary qualification for the future or improvement employment prospects. Consequently, for those all reasons, I would choose *Outlander* because a learner who is motivated to learn English, he should be also interested in the country of this language (integrative motivation).

In the series chosen, *Outlander*, it is very important to infer, that is a cognitive strategy (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990), from the context because it uses Gaelic vocabulary that the audience does not usually know so that it is a dead tongue. At first, the learner will not understand it, nevertheless, after listening different times, the learner will become able to process the meaning of those words (processing research). This may happen when

it uses the word “bonnie”, at first the viewer does not know its meaning, but when it is used to refer to a woman, the viewer has to be able to infer that is an adjective and depending on the context that is used it could be a positive or a negative adjective.



This process of inferring meanings from the context takes place because the viewer feels motivated thanks to the English subtitles while watching a series and is receiving a lot of input. English subtitles influence not only learner’s motivation but also learner’s pronunciation and accent so that led him to determine the information shown on the screen in his brain. In order to acquire a specific pronunciation and accent, the learner will have to distinguish the phonemic information and to associate it with the words that later on he will acquire repeating it (Joanisse and McClelland, 2015). For instance, the teacher could stop the clip and make his students repeat the conversation enhancing their oral skills.

Finally, the relevance of choosing *Outlander* in the class as interesting audiovisual material is closely related to keeping learner’s motivation so that this phenomenon would not happen whether the learners are in class and receiving uninteresting or irrelevant input.

What happened is that at the moment in which the learners would not understand a word or a sentence, he automatically loses contact with the lesson because he probably does not feel motivated with the issue.

Furthermore, I consider this series as a great phenomenon that explains not only the History of England from the eighteenth century until the twentieth century but also how English people were perceived by Scottish people. *Outlander* is an audiovisual document that shows a historic and a philological recreation of those periods. Even though it is a fictional series, it narrates some real historic events such as the Battle of Culloden (1745). Therefore, the series itself is not only a sociology study but also an ethic-moral-religious study of the society analysed along the series. Finally, this series will motivate and instruct different fields within the English world such as history, second language acquisition, cinema and culture. In sum, this suggestion demonstrates why English people had their own dialect quite different from this of Scottish people. The different use of the dialects among those people was a way to highlight their differences in terms of society and social class. This can be related to the idea of acquiring RP instead of Scottish dialect because RP is considered as Standard English (see appendix 8.6). Finally, selecting one accent or another may be highlighted for those learners who have instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation.

Moreover, when learners successfully deal with and understand “*the real thing*”, English that is directed towards native speakers, in a classroom situation, they may be motivated to seek out and try to understand other authentic materials on their own (Farrell and Jacobs, 2010). In sum, the fact that audiovisual material brings “*an air of reality into the classroom*” (Lonergan, 1983 and Geddes, 1982) by exposing students to native speakers, sociocultural issues, and its uses of the language represent the target language



and culture (Maxwell, 1983; McGroarty and Galvan, 1985). Therefore, to be in touch not only with the culture but also with native speakers make the students feel closer to the culture of the language they are learning, and they make a sense of what they are doing. That is relevant because, in education, the student sometimes does not know why he is learning an issue and it is relevant to give the things meaning in which the students are focused on.

The same process will happen when they see themselves with a better pronunciation and accent, that is, they will follow repeating the dialogues imitating character's pronunciation and accent. Roxanna Moreno (2006) and Richard Mayer (2007) have pointed out the importance of motivation, attitude and other affective factors to bear in second language viewers benefiting from captioned viewing for language learning to take out the language. That happens because it has been argued that there are a lot of second language speakers who watch series with captions every day and they have to revise the rapid or unclear speech that they are listening to. As a result of all this, those researchers highlight the importance of "*interest*" as given and the interest in watching foreign audiovisual material as a key factor in engagement and attention. That "*interest*" is found in the class when the teacher observes that his students have an active role in the classroom's tasks and even when they speak about the series beyond what the teacher may require them. For instance, the teacher could invite them to participate to speak about what they think about a specific episode (vocabulary, accent or pronunciation used). After finishing the activity, they may continue talking about other episodes or acts. Nevertheless, if the interest achieved is not enough for acquiring second language and its accent appropriately, the interest will be increased through changing the source of motivation to one more adequate for the learners' interest.

Furthermore, watching series at home could have a positive impact on acquiring a better pronunciation and accent for the learner because he may feel less embarrassment. This phenomenon of anxiety is related to William Littlewood's (1984) idea that consists of feeling anxiety or insecurity in the class what harms learners' speech. This impact is based on hindering the capacity of the learner to express more fluently or with clearer ideas. Besides, if the learner is not able to manage his nervous, those feelings may become an obstacle to the second language acquisition. So, it could be a good option to follow with the idea of watching the same series at home, in a noneducational setting, to learn foreign language words and, to analyse if the pressure suffered in class may affect in feeling students' embarrassment (d'Ydevalle and Pavakanun 1995).

Moreover, several studies in the Montero Perez et al. (2013) meta-analysis have included the issue of captions or no captions in their research questions. Therefore, regarding Price and Dow study (1983), it is claimed that "*learners understood more when watching a video with captions than without*". Those studies enhance how and when to use captions to best effect. An interesting moment to use captions in order to achieve language acquisition and accent is when the learner is not familiar with the dialect that he is listening to. At first, the learner watching *Outlander* will experience that phenomenon and the captions will be necessary to follow the conversations, especially between the Highlander characters. However, over time, students will be used to listening to this Scottish language, accent and new vocabulary without the need to use captions.

Consequently, it can be highlighted the importance to keep in mind the level of the class. Therefore, it is not enough to play videos as a means of developing language skills. On the one hand, most authors (Garza, 1991, Huang and Eskey, 1999 –2000, Chung, 1999) claim that L2 captions would be more useful than L1 in higher-level proficiency students. On the other hand, for lower levels both subtitles might be needed

(Montero Perez et al., 2013). Based on the findings, the authors Markham and Peter (2003) suggest that it might be reasonable with lower-level learners to begin with L1 subtitles on a challenging L2 video (as Montero Perez et al., 2013, mentioned before), then progress to L2 captions and then finally to no captions.

However, if learners are watching series with regional accents (such as Scottish) they will keep the English subtitles to understand it, so that, it is a difficult and different dialect from Standard English that they are accustomed to listening to. To sum up, it could be argued that rather than treating L1 subtitles as “*harmful*,” they should be characterised as second best compared to L2 captions. In the moment in which L2 captions are not available or proper to the level of the class due to its difficulty using L1 would be very useful instead of being “*harmful*” (Vanderblank, 2016). Consequently, the idea of using L1 or L2 subtitles will depend on the level of the learners because it does not make sense that the learner with a low level of English starts listening everything in a second language. For instance, *Outlander* would be useful in secondary school rather than in primary school. Therefore, whether the teacher is in a low-level class of English, he has to be able to interact with his students mixing first and second language. For instance, he could introduce a summary of the audiovisual material in the first language but then, the clip would be in the second language. However, the student, who has previous information, is able to make associations between the second language input with the first language information explained by the teacher (Cook and Singleton, 2004). In sum, the “*teacher talk*” with definitions in both languages in second language classrooms will have an impact on the input received by the learner tuning the information thanks to the previous information offered by the teacher (Cook and Singleton, 2004).

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this project was to point out the relevance of acquiring a second language throughout watching foreign series in class, with special attention to its accent and focusing on two main accents: English and Scottish. For that, it is important to know that the accent is linked to the speakers' identity and also to notice that its features are influenced by the country, region or social class, so they cannot be changed. On the other hand, pronunciation is included in the concept of 'accent' because it is linked to the movement of the tongue and lips to articulate sounds, the intonation used and the syllable stress. In this essay, it has been focused on Received Pronunciation that is considered the Standard English pronunciation and the one that non-native students should adopt while studying English. However, before choosing the most appropriate accent, learners have to be aware of the different dialects that co-exist in the United Kingdom.

Even though it has had few kinds of research and articles on the use of subtitles in teaching a foreign language and improving students' pronunciation, it has been claimed the idea of captioned viewing as an area of second language acquisition. It is impossible to keep learners' motivation in the class whether they do not understand what they are watching at the beginning. So, it could be said that at a level for beginners, audiovisual material with English subtitles is going to be essential in the class. However, over time, the student will be able to understand it without using subtitles and infer what he does not understand from the context by using his/her cognitive strategies.

Furthermore, the advantages of watching series with English subtitles comprise to improve not only learner's comprehension and listening skills but also the learner's oral skills such as pronunciation, accent and fluency. Moreover, the opportunity of picking up pronunciation throughout watching series with subtitles is very significant because there

are many students who do not have the possibility to travel abroad to acquire it but they can do it through series viewing. In sum, in addition to being an innovative purpose for the class, watching series with subtitles in the foreign language provides the students with picking native pronunciation and knowing different cultures without the need of travelling to another country.

Finally, second language learners have a sense of accomplishment when they comprehend materials, especially spoken material that is intended for native speakers of English. So, this supports the idea of using English subtitles to keep learners' motivation not only in the class but also out of the learning hours. At the same time, thanks to this progress of acquiring new vocabulary and accent, learners start to repeat what they understand with the same accent enhancing their pronunciation and accent.

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1 Conversation between Dougal and Jamie (S2E10)

It is clear that Scottish English pronunciation is different from Standard English, therefore, what I have done regarding pronunciation in my transcription is to keep the standard orthography for words that would not significantly differ from Scottish English. The following transcription deals with a conversation between Jamie and Dougal, the last one is the uncle of Jamie, therefore, Dougal is older than Jamie. That difference in age is shown in Dougal's accent because he has a stronger accent and it is more difficult to understand to the audience. Age is highlighted here because according to Chambers (2002), he identifies speaker age as "*the primary social correlate of linguistic change*". So, it will be relevant to mention that over time, the speech portrays when the generation learned the language (Bailey et al. 1990).

Furthermore, I would like to point out that rhoticity is considered as standard and is even associated with prestige in North American, Ireland and Scotland. That feature can be shown in the following transcription opposed to the previous one because Claire (Standard English from England) uses non-rhoticity, that is, the standard form in England (Scobbie, 2006). Consequently, as has been previously mentioned, the learner has to be aware of those features depending on the variety of English that is being used. Therefore, he will be able to manage to the feature that is most appropriate for him; in that case, RP pronunciation from Standard English is the most used for foreign learners. Conversation between Jamie and Dougal:

Jamie: It would be an easy thing to have someone ride out to take a measure of the marshland.

/ɪt wʊd bi: ən 'i:zi θɪŋ tu: hæv 'sʌmwʌn raɪd aʊt tu: teɪk ə 'meɪʒər ɒv ðə 'mɑ:ʃlænd./

Dougal: And get a musket ball between the eyes for their trouble.

/ænd get ə 'mʌskɪt bɔ:l bɪ'twi:n ði aɪz fɔ: ðəə 'trʌbl/

Jamie: Not if he's prudent. And lucky. There is no other way about it. If the ground can support a man on horseback, it can support infantry.

/nɒt ɪf hi:z 'pru:dənt. ænd 'lʌki. ðeər ɪz nəʊ 'ʌðə weɪ ə'baʊt ɪt. ɪf ðə graʊnd kæn sə'pɔ:t ə mæn ɒn 'hɔ:sbæk, ɪt kæn sə'pɔ:t 'ɪnfəntri/

Dougal: And is it yerself ye're nominating? 'Cause if ye survive such foolishness, the prince would have yer head for endangering the life of one of his most trusted aides.

/ænd ɪz ɪt jɔ:'self jʊə 'nɒmɪneɪtɪŋ? kɔz ɪf ji: sə'vaɪv sʌʃ 'fu:lɪʃnɪs, ðə prɪns wʊd hæv jɔ: h ɛd fɔ:r ɪn'deɪndʒərɪŋ ðə laɪf ɒv wʌn ɒv hɪz məʊst 'trʌstɪd aɪdz./



Jamie: Aye. He would not be best pleased.

/hi: wʊd nɒt bi: best pli:zd. /

Dougal: no.

/nəʊ/

Jamie: Still and all, someone has to risk the doing.

/stɪl ænd ə:l, 'sʌmwʌn hæz tu: rɪsk ðə 'du(:)ɪŋ./

Dougal: and all I need to do is stay out of range of their guns.

/ænd ə:l aɪ ni:d tu: du: ɪz steɪ aʊt ɒv reɪndʒ ɒv ðeə ɡʌnz. /

Jamie: 125 yards should do it.

/wʌn 'hʌndrəd 'twenti-faɪv ja:dz ʃʊd du: ɪt./

Dougal: I was thinking more 105

/aɪ wəz 'θɪŋkɪŋ mɔ: wʌn 'hʌndrəd 'fɪfti/

Jamie: the Redcoats will only be too happy to crack away at a living, breathing target.

/ðə 'rɛdkəʊts wɪl 'əʊnli bi: tu: 'hæpi tu: kræk ə'weɪ æt ə 'lɪvɪŋ, 'brɪ:ðɪŋ 'tɑ:ɡɪt./

Dougal: Aye, it's a gamble, but it's worth the risk. Besides, I'd like to prove my mettle to the prince and Lord Murray and the rest of these jackanapes.

/aɪ, ɪts ə 'ɡæmbl, bʌt ɪts wɜ:θ ðə rɪsk. bɪ'saɪdz, aɪd laɪk tu: pru:v maɪ 'metl tu: ðə prɪns ænd lɔ:d 'mʌri ænd ðə rɛst ɒv ði:z 'dʒækəneɪps. /



Jamie: So then, more 125 yards?

/səʊ ðen, mɔː wʌn 'hʌndrəd 'twenti-faɪv jɑːdz/

Dougal: Or thereabouts.

/Or thereabouts./

## 8.2 Different vocabulary: Standard English and Scottish English

For a deep understanding of the issue mentioned before, it has been provided a list of distinctive vocabulary and sentences used by the main characters of *Outlander*; Standard English and Scottish variety (see appendix 8.4). Nevertheless, some vocabulary distinctions between Standard English and Scottish dialect in the series can be seen in the following table:

<u>SCOTTISH ENGLISH</u>	<u>STANDARD ENGLISH</u>
Ken	Know
Bonnie	Pretty
Bannock	Typical Scottish food
Bothy	Primitive dwelling or shelter
Braw	Fine, splendid, worthy, handsome
Corbie	Raven
Dinna fash	Don't worry
Dirk	A short dagger to defend themselves
Gomerel	Stupid person
Kine	Cows
Laird	Landed proprietor
Wee folk	Supernatural beings such as fairies
Sassenach	English-speaking person foreigner
Kebbie-lebbie	Altercation
Clot-heid/ Numpty	Idiot
My jo	My dear friend
Knivvle	To beat or thrash

### 8.3 Claire using “ken”

Claire is speaking with Jamie’s uncle, to clarify what she is telling him, she uses the term “ken”. Obviously, the learner who is watching this passage is aware of the use of this word. This word is never used in Standard English language. So, through the visualization of this episode with English subtitles, the learner will be able to distinguish the two different dialects that are being used along the series. Therefore, the learner will become able to pick up the dialect more convenient for his purposes, in that case, as a second language learner, he is going to be more closely to Claire’s speech than Jamie’s uncle speech.

**CLAIRE:**

Perhaps you don’t “ken” his mind.







Perhaps you don't "ken" his mind.

Conversation between Claire (Standard English) y Dougal (Scottish) (S1E4, 27:00)

**CLAIRE:** 27 Thank

you!

/θæŋk ju:!/

I should go.

/aɪ ʃʊd gəʊ./

I shouldn't be here.

/aɪ ʃʊdnt bi: hiə./



Thank you.  
I should go.  
I shouldn't be here.

**DOUGAL:**

Aye.

/ˈai/

Ye shouldn't be here.

/ji: ʃɒdnt bi: hɪə./



Ye shouldn't be here.

But since ye are, there's a penalty to pay for that.

/bʌt sɪns ji: ɑ:, ðeəz ə 'penlti tu: peɪ fɔ: ðæt./



But since ye are,

Get ye gone, lass.

/ get ji: gɒn, læs./



Before ye pay a greater price.

/ bɪ'fɔ: ji: peɪ ə 'greɪtə praɪs./

The learner is going to hear Scottish sounds (Dougal's rhoticity) and words ("lass") which he is not going to understand. Regarding Simpson's notion, he has to train his ear to relate those new sounds from Scottish dialect with their new meanings. Through practising this conscious process will become unconscious. Besides, he is going to tune its ear and to acquire new vocabulary.

## 8.4 Different use of the varieties: Standard English and Scottish variety

The following table shows some distinctions between Standard English used by Claire and Scottish dialect used by Jamie in *Outlander*. On the one hand, as it has been previously mentioned, Claire represents the voice of education so that her speech is linked to Queen's speech (Robinson, 2009). On the other hand, Scottish English is characterised for being ruder in terms of pronunciation due to the rhoticity (Douglas, 2006) and for having a vocabulary influenced by the Gaelic. Consequently, the students should pay more attention to acquire Claire's pronunciation and accent for being considered the model pronunciation that is applied in non-native classrooms.

### CLAIRE: Standard English



### JAMIE: Scottish variety



To know	Ken (derives from <i>kennen</i> )
Negation - <i>I do not what happened</i>	Negative particle replace by <i>no/ na(e)</i> - <i>They'll no leave us alone</i> - <i>I dinna ken what happened</i>
Modal verb: Must	<i>Have to</i> or <i>Need to</i> - <i>You needn't be afraid of me,</i> <i>Claire</i> instead of <i>mustn't</i>

Tag question	But we ate well, <i>no?</i>
Non-rhotic accent	Rhotic accent

That table presents how Scottish Highlands differ from the Standard English spoken by Claire, and that of present times. However, the main Scottish characters also use Gaelic at some points of the series, they may mix the varieties in order to avoid Claire understands them. Another issue that differs from Standard English is the phonology of the 1740s so that Scottish variety is characterised by the rhotic accent, that is, they pronounce the <r> sound after a vowel while Standard English is non-rhotic. However, Claire goes from Standard English to Scottish variety throughout the series, that is because she tries to understand and to learn Gaelic and also, she wears traditional



customs of Scottish people as it can be shown in the left picture.

Highland dress that represents the colours of Mackenzie's clan: dark green, navy blue and black

Source: *Outlander*

## 8.5 Different social class among characters

### DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASS IN THE MAIN CHARACTERS



<b>Claire</b>	<b>Jamie</b>
Posh British girl from the 20s	Scottish Highlander from the 18s
Nurse	Warrior
Peaceful	Rude
Educated	Uneducated
Down-to-earth	Stubborn
Open-minded	Narrow-minded
Confident	Adventurous
Well-off family	Orphan
Hard-worker	Hard-worker
Strong	Strong

## 8.6 Picking up the dialect more convenient

As has been previously mentioned in the conversation between Claire and Dougal, both dialects, Standard English and Scottish English, are distinguished not only by the use of the new word “ken” but also the different accent and pronunciation between those characters. Therefore, the learner will become able to pick up the dialect more convenient for his purposes, in that case, as a second language learner, he is going to be more closely to Claire’s speech than Jamie’s uncle speech. That is because RP, the accent used by Claire, is considered the model of pronunciation in the classrooms of non-native learners. Consequently, second language learners have to adopt the most appropriate accent, that is, Received Pronunciation. Nevertheless, non-native learners have to be capable of understanding every dialect what makes them be bilinguals. However, they have to be consistent when they speak and they cannot mix different dialects, they have to choose one. Finally, after selecting the most appropriate accent for their purposes, they will improve it in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and idioms typical of this dialect. One example of those differences in pronunciation and vocabulary have been previously shown between Standard English and Scottish English; words such as *bonnie* or *kine*, and features in the Scottish accent such as the rhoticity. In sum, students pick up the dialect more convenient what also implies to select the most appropriate accent for their purposes.