

(C-79)

**MAKING STUDENTS AWARE OF ENGLISH FOR
SPECIFIC PURPOSES: THE CASE OF ENGLISH FOR
TOURISM**

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Indique uno o varios de los siete Temas de Interés Didáctico: (Poner x entre los [])

Metodologías didácticas, elaboraciones de guías, planificaciones y materiales adaptados al EEES.

Actividades para el desarrollo de trabajo en grupos, seguimiento del aprendizaje colaborativo y experiencias en tutorías.

Desarrollo de contenidos multimedia, espacios virtuales de enseñanza- aprendizaje y redes sociales.

Planificación e implantación de docencia en otros idiomas.

Sistemas de coordinación y estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Desarrollo de las competencias profesionales mediante la experiencia en el aula y la investigación científica.

Evaluación de competencias.

Resumen.

Los alumnos de Filología Inglesa y Turismo de la Universidad de Jaén (España) cursan tres asignaturas que versan sobre el uso del inglés. Sin embargo, ninguna estas asignaturas contempla la realización de prácticas reales. Por este motivo, se diseñó y se realizó una actividad semi-real con estudiantes de *Gramática Inglesa*. Los objetivos que se perseguían eran los siguientes: primero, familiarizar a los alumnos con las guías turísticas; segundo, concienciarlos de la importancia de la aplicación de los conocimientos de gramática inglesa y vocabulario, así como hacerles notar los patrones lexico-gramaticales propios de las guías turísticas. Este artículo describe las actividades desarrolladas en el primer año de este proyecto. Así, se describirá cómo se familiarizó a los alumnos con las guías turísticas, el uso de recursos online adecuados, para que cada alumno redactara una guía, la creación de un glosario y la presentación oral de un edificio de la ciudad de Jaén en una actividad simulada.

Keywords: Guía turística, toma de conciencia, corpus de estudiantes periférico, glosario

Abstract.

English + Tourism students at the University of Jaén (Spain) are offered three courses on the use of English. However, no real practice is offered in any of them. For this reason, a real-like activity was devised and carried out with students taking the course *Gramática Inglesa* (English Grammar). The objectives were two-fold: first, to familiarize students with tourist brochures; second, to make students aware of the importance of applying their knowledge of English Grammar and vocabulary, as well as make them notice the special lexico-grammatical patterns used in tourist

brochures. This paper describes the activities developed in the first year of the project, which involved the students' familiarization with tourist brochures, the use of appropriate sources of information online so that each student could write a tourist brochure, the compilation of a glossary and the oral presentation of a building in the city of Jaén in a simulated activity.

Keywords: Tourist brochure, learner awareness, peripheral learner corpus, glossary

1. Background to the project: our students' reality

English + Tourism students at the University of Jaén (*Titulación Conjunta de Licenciatura en Filología Inglesa y Diplomatura en Turismo*) take two compulsory courses on the use of English. Both of them, *Inglés Instrumental Intermedio* and *Inglés Instrumental Avanzado*, focus on the use of English at intermediate and advanced levels, respectively. However, none of them deals with the use of English required in the tourist field and, consequently, students are not provided with the input which they will need for their future careers. It is in the third year of the degree that an optional course on English for Tourism is offered and, in the last year, the fourth one, students undergo a training period in the tourism-related business, but find few opportunities to use their English.

When sharing worries and interests with English + Tourism students in the third year, their feeling that they have not had enough practice in the foreign language is noticeable, especially when considering real activities which require their use of English for Tourism. Furthermore, they tend to think that the contents of courses such as English Grammar (*Gramática Inglesa*) are not of any use for their future jobs, which affects their motivation.

These two thought-provoking ideas led to the design of a two-year project entitled 'Elaboración y aplicación de la guía turística bilingüe (español/inglés) en la provincia de Jaén', which was funded by the *Secretariado de Innovación Docente y Formación del Profesorado* at the Universidad de Jaén.

2. The project

Tourist brochures may be regarded as one of the most well-known genre addressed to tourists and, therefore, designing and writing them may become one of the potential tasks of our students. Although they are trained to design them in the mother language (in the course *Patrimonio Histórico*, run in the first semester of the third academic year), this is not the case in the foreign language. As a consequence, fostering the writing of tourist brochures in English was considered a good opportunity to practise the students' English in a real-like activity, make them aware of the need to apply the contents of courses such as English Grammar, and motivate them in their language learning process.

Thus, the first year of the project was devoted to train students to design and write tourist brochures in the mother tongue (in the course *Patrimonio Histórico*), and to provide them with information on how to do so in the foreign language (in the course *English Grammar*), following an ECTS methodology.

Table 1 presents the parts in which this activity was further subdivided and the methodology employed to do this optional practical/practice exercise

Familiarizing English + Tourism students with tourist brochures		
	Parts of the activity	Methodology employed
Second semester or the academic year 2007-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation ‘Writing a tourist brochure: a practical guide’ • Selection of building • Search for information (architectonic style, period, etc.) • Glossary compilation • Design of the tourist brochure • Process of writing • Oral presentation: being a tour guide • Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar (in practice sessions) • Individual tutorials (online or face-to-face) • Group tutorials (in practice sessions) • Group work

Table 1. Parts of the activity and methodology employed

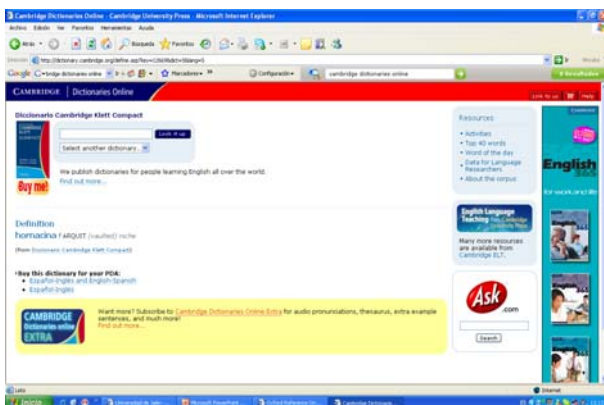
2.1 The seminar

The first step consisted in a two-hour seminar entitled ‘Writing a tourist brochure: a practical guide’, which was subdivided into two parts.

The first one focused on the analysis of real tourist brochures (in paper format or online) as a genre. Thus, students could see the sections in which the information is organized, the edition, the register, style, language used, etc.

In the second part of the seminar, students were reminded of the need to use bilingual, monolingual and specialised dictionaries, so that they can check the terminology and check the lexico-grammatical patterns. Similarly, the importance of enriching the students’ vocabulary was reinforced by means of a brainstorming activity in which participants were invited to provide the necessary words to describe a building in Jaén. Once the students had finished this activity, they shared their words in small groups and classified them into semantic fields (Renaissance art, architecture, sculpture, location, layout, etc.). As expected, many specialised words were not provided in the foreign language.

After this awareness raising exercise, the word *hornacina* (niche) was used to provide students with an example of how to use monolingual, bilingual and specialised dictionaries online to look the word up, find the translation, check its meaning and find out the possible types of niche (Figure 1).



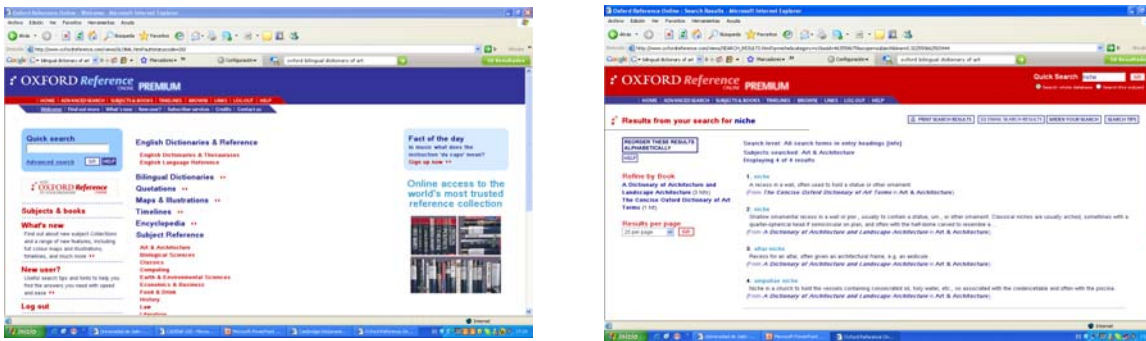


Figure 1. Looking for types of niche

Another source of information online with which students are familiar is *Wikipedia* (see Figure 2). Therefore, making students aware of its potential use to facilitate their searching for semantic fields was thought to be helpful. Since the description of buildings and churches in Jaén involves the layout of the building, its functionality as well as the decoration the building, the use of the vocabulary related to those areas of meaning was set as an example. Thus, the words ‘chapel’ and ‘niche’ were searched in the English version of the Wikipedia. In the first case, students could notice the words ‘worship’, ‘Lady Chapel’, ‘apse’, ‘aisle’, ‘Eucharist’, ‘services’, ‘parish church’, etc. In the second case, ‘exedra’, ‘apse’, ‘half-dome’, ‘tabernacle framing’, ‘reliquary’, etc. were retrieved. Therefore, students were provided with further words which they could use, if necessary, in their descriptions and, if in doubt, they could further see the description of the artistic words in the specialised dictionary.

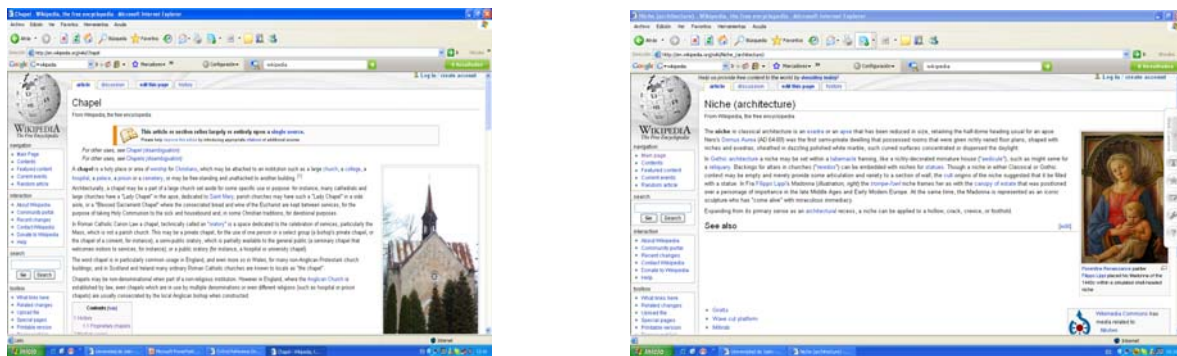


Figure 2. Use of the English version of the *Wikipedia* to look for semantic field

At the end of the seminar, students were kindly invited to think about a building in Jaén that they liked and write a tourist brochure on it. Furthermore, they were offered the possibility to develop their communicative skills in a real-like activity: a guided tour around the city of Jaén, in which all the students could participate by describing their building.

2.2. Individual tutorials

During the following two weeks, the activity involved face-to-face or online tutorials with the fifteen students who decided to do the activity. During those tutorials, the building to be described was chosen, appropriate sources of information provided, etc. The building selected and the information found, the individual tutorials were established at the students' disposal to solve particular doubts regarding artistic aspects of the building (which the lecturer in charge of the course *Patrimonio Histórico* solved) or the structure of the tourist brochure in itself. However, it is important to notice that corrections on the use of the foreign language as far as vocabulary, grammar or style are concerned were never made. Therefore, when students asked whether a word had been appropriately used and if the lexico-grammatical pattern was correct, they were taught how to look for such information and decide by themselves.

2.3. Group tutorials and group work

During the six weeks that students had to write their tourist brochures, three two-hour group tutorials were devoted to solve the possible doubts that students had. Since some buildings were closely related as far as their style is concerned, groups of students were established so that they could work on the vocabulary needed for their descriptions collaboratively. In this way, individual and group work was fostered and the task of vocabulary search and glossary compilation was shared, which increased the students' motivation.

3. The glossaries and tourist brochures

As a result of the steps undertaken to accomplish the activity, fifteen tourist brochures (amounting to 13,859 words) and fifteen glossaries were completed.

3.1. Compilation of glossaries

Three pieces of information were provided in the glossaries: i) the words which had to be looked up and checked (in the source and the target language), i.e. the words which they already knew were not to be added; ii) the description in the dictionary, and; iii) the source where they had obtained the information from.

In this way, it was possible to: i) analyse the words students found difficulty with, either because they ignored them or they needed to check its meaning or its lexico-semantic pattern; ii) make students familiar with further words related to the one looked up, and; iii) see which sources of information were preferred.

Table 2 contains the most frequent words in the students' glossaries, which can be divided into parts of buildings (churches mainly), decorative elements, materials, and words used to describe scenes in altarpieces or canvases (see Figures 4 and 5 for two examples of the students' glossaries). Among the words on the list, it is interesting to notice that other general words such as 'confession', 'Mass', 'gardens', 'corridor, or 'façade' are included in the glossaries, which may indicate that students double-checked these words in a dictionary.

Words included in the glossaries
altarpiece, apse, arch, architrave, archivolt, balustrade, belfry, bramble, buttress, canvas, caryatid, chancel, chapel, choir, cloister, coat of arms, coffered ceiling, coffer, column, confession, cornice, corridor, cradle, to carve, dome, entablature, façade, frieze, gardens, garland, jambs, limestone, marble, marble slab, martyr, Mass, mitre, mouldings, nave, niche, openings, pediment, pilaster, pillar, pinnacle, plaster, plasterwork, polychromy, porthole, pulpit, sculpture, sepulchre, sacristy, shrine, stained glass, transept, transfiguration, tympanum, urn, vault and wrought-iron gate.

Table 2. The most common words in the glossaries compiled by students (in alphabetical order)

Regarding the sources of information from which students obtained the translations or definitions (see Figure 3), bilingual dictionaries are the ones most commonly used, amounting to 70% of the cases, *Word Reference* (bilingual dictionary_wr) being used twice as frequently as www.dicionary.reverso.net (Bilingual dictionary_dr). Monolingual dictionaries, specially *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, rank in second position of use, then followed by the *Wikipedia*, the specialised webpage *Artlex*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* online and one thesaurus. As can be seen, students rely on bilingual dictionaries and do not normally check the meanings in monolingual or specialised dictionaries, which results in the students' lack of lexico-grammatical or collocational information. Furthermore, the specialised dictionary shown in class (*Oxford Reference Premium* online; Art and Architecture) was not used at all, possibly due to the fact that students needed to be at university to have free access.

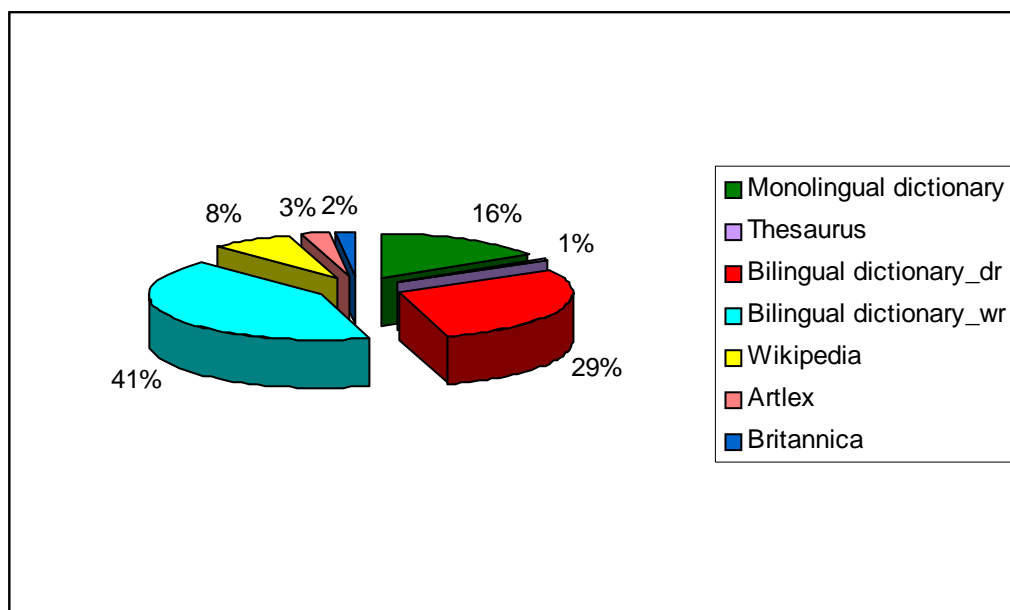


Figure 3. Use of sources of information, as shown in the glossaries

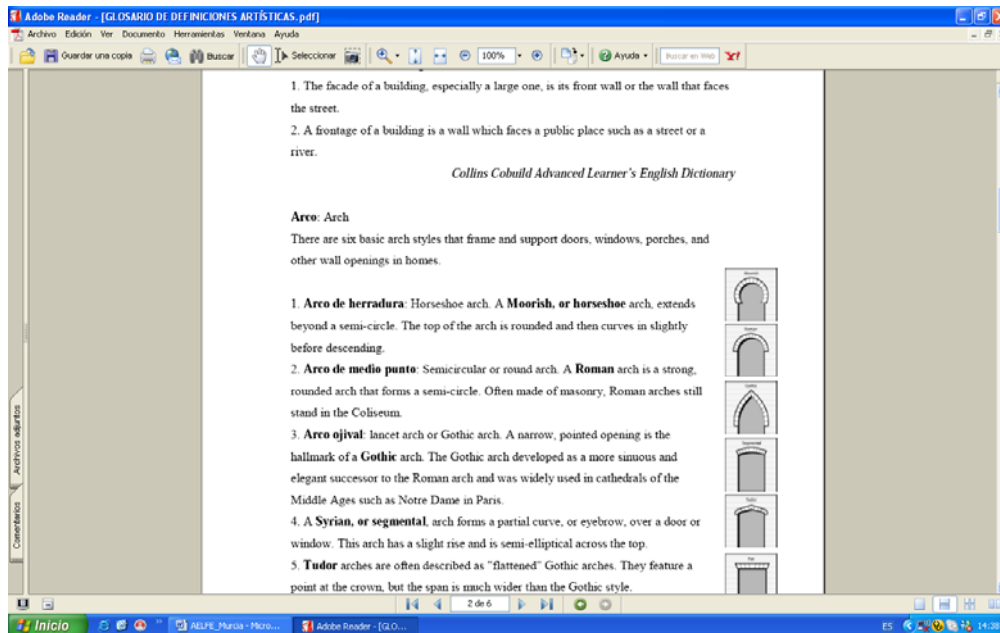


Figure 4. Example of a glossary

3.2. The tourist brochures

The peripheral type of learner corpus (Nesselhauf, 2004: 128) compiled with the students' tourist brochures (fifteen tourist brochures, 13.859 words) made it possible to analyse the texts written by students and see if they were able to autonomously use the sources of information at their disposal and include the necessary vocabulary to improve their descriptions.

When running a word list with *WordSmith Tools*, version 3, (Scott, 1999) and analysing lexical words, the first thirty lemmas in decreasing frequency order were those in Table 3.

Nouns	'chapel', 'church', 'century', 'building', 'square', 'cathedral', 'Jaén', 'door', 'side', 'city', 'part', 'house', 'Christ', 'street', 'place' and 'image'
Verbs	'to be', 'to have', 'to find', 'to make', 'to work'
Adjectives	'holy'
Adverbs	

Table 3. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs most commonly used (in decreasing frequency order)

As far as nouns and verbs are concerned, it is easily seen that the ones that have been used in a higher number of occasions are not specialised ones. In fact, none of these is found in any of the glossaries compiled. Far more striking is the limited use of adjectives, which involves a lack of adjectival premodification in the tourist brochures. In fact, the only adjective which appears in the first thirty positions, 'holy', is related to the description of the 'Holy Face', kept in

the cathedral (see Figure 5). Similarly, the absence of adverbs in the first positions also denotes that the tourist brochures are not as descriptive as expected.

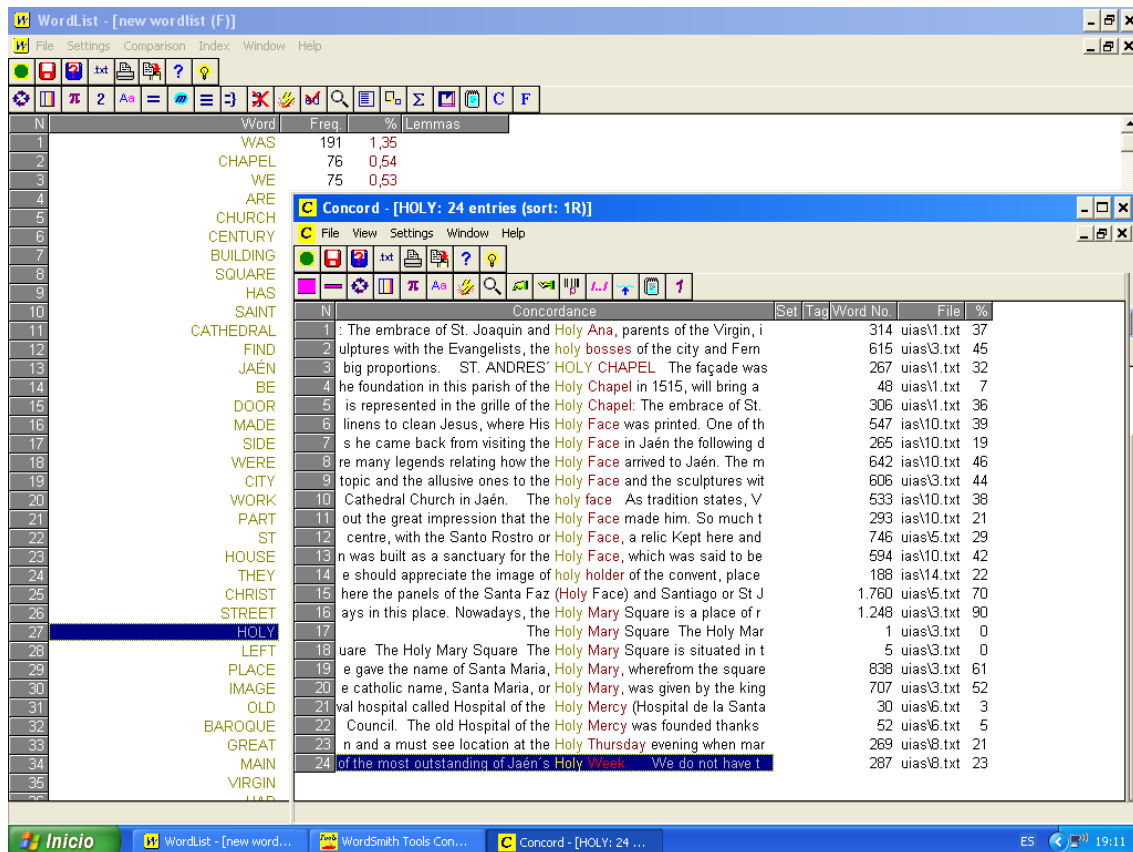


Figure 5. Use of the adjective 'holy'

The limited use of adjectives was further analysed, so that it was possible to find the ones which were employed by students and examine whether they were general ones, as it was the case with nouns and verbs, or specialised ones, which would somehow explain their low occurrence. Once the first thirty adjectives had been retrieved from the wordlist, it was possible to see that only the ones related to styles, i.e. 'baroque', 'renaissance', 'gothic', 'mudejar' and 'medieval', could be considered as specialised, while the remaining adjectives were related to decoration or to objective or subjective qualities of the aspect being described.

Finally, the nouns that students had checked and included in their glossary were also looked for in the corpus by means of the concordancer. As showed in Figure 6, they showed a low number of instances, the most commonly used being 'altarpiece', 'ceiling', 'entablature', 'niche', 'dome' and 'apse'.

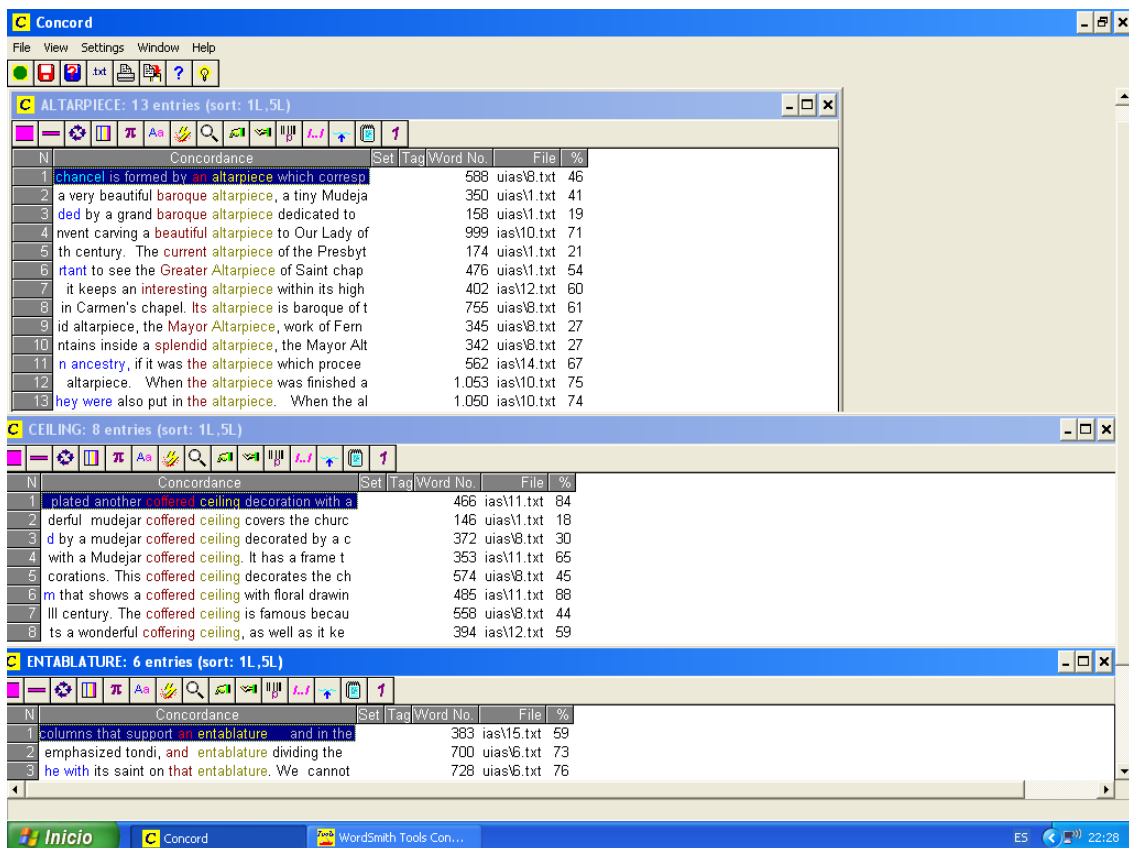


Figure 6. Use of specialised words in the tourist brochures

4. Oral presentation: being a tour guide

Finally, the buildings in the tourist brochures were organized in such a way that a walking tour could be completed in two mornings. However, it was impossible to do it in the city due to time constraints, and powerpoint presentations were prepared instead. During the 10-minute presentations, students were required to describe the building as if they were a tour guide, so they were not allowed to read any paper (only a hand-out was allowed) and they needed to establish eye contact with the audience, check the audience's attention, etc. which proved a difficult task.

5. Conclusion

Although this experience was highly rewarding to the students and the teacher, working with such specialised vocabulary in the foreign language proved a difficult task due to one main reason: the limited knowledge of art that these students have at this stage. In fact, using the appropriate terminology in the mother tongue was problematic, which resulted in an added difficulty in the foreign language. Although Dr. Almansa Moreno (the lecturer of *Patrimonio*

Histórico) was at their disposal in case they had any problem related to art, the students' descriptions proved to be vague in general, i.e. specialised terms were not used because students avoided describing the aspects of the buildings which required more specific terms.

In general terms, the tourist brochures produced by the students are not perfect examples of the genre at all, but they proved to be a first step to the students' awareness of the difficulty found in the use of English for specific purposes. As reported by the students in evaluation sheets, this activity has made them think of their future jobs and their limited knowledge of the foreign language, especially the vocabulary required, which will lead them to seek further input in English and enlarge their vocabulary in the near future.

Apart from the language awareness, another positive aspect highlighted by the students has been the opportunity that they have had to rehearse, in some way, two of the possible tasks that they may be required to do in their future jobs: writing a tourist brochure and be a tour guide. Even though students found many difficulties when writing the tourist brochure and became nervous when having to explain the building in front of an audience, both experiences were highly appreciated.

Finally, pedagogical conclusions can be drawn thanks to the vocabulary included in the glossaries and the analysis of the peripheral type of learner corpus. Since the words which students need to describe the buildings are now known (specialised and general ones) and the lexico-grammatical problems can be found in the learner corpus, appropriate activities can be devised for students in the degree English + Tourism. Similarly, the use of specialised dictionaries, apart from bilingual ones, may be dealt with in practice sessions of so that students become aware of their existence and the importance of their use in their future jobs.

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