

Micro-Paper 62: *Soundscaping*



J. Sebastián Ramírez

BA in English-Spanish Education

Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín | LSLP Teacher-Researcher

juan3596@hotmail.com

Defining the Term

We live in a [multimodal](#) world, in which we are constantly being exposed to different information through the media and the surroundings. Those messages appear before us in diverse ways: texts, images, sounds, colors, etc. That said, we must be able to interpret those messages and their different presentations in order to have a better and complete understanding of what is happening around us.

Non-visual aspects of the environment are still among the least considered sources of information when collecting data to analyze a space and its nature. This makes it harder to form a complete notion of the events and interactions that occur in a certain place and time, because we are only taking advantage of a few sources of information, thus overlooking their full potential.

In that sense, soundscaping refers to the collection of sounds that emanate from an environment, physical or virtual, and whose analysis reveals important information about the human and non-human events and interactions that occur in a defined place. Therefore, the consideration of these overlooked aspects will help us to complement the interpretation of the additional information (visual, textual, etc) presented that can be found in the environment and it will give us the opportunity to have a deeper and more meaningful understanding of a context and its characteristics.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we have been analyzing the role of [second languages](#), especially English, as a means for interaction in [urban](#) and [virtual](#) spaces. However, our data and analysis have been focused on [visual](#) and written sources and there has not been a significant use of sounds as a source for information yet.

In this order of ideas, soundscaping will serve as a new opportunity to broaden our understanding of the interaction processes that occur in those places and it will enrich our research with non-visual data that will complement our additional means for data collection from now on.

Expanding Second Language Research

Information appears in different kind of ways nowadays. We can communicate and interact with others through diverse means (text, sounds, images, colors, etc.). However, this does not mean that there is a certain way of communicating that is better than the others, maybe they are more effective, but all of them are means to express meaning and the information that we can get from them is relevant and it is important to analyze it.

In that sense, the relationship between the different means of communication is not hierarchical, but complementary and it helps us to have a more complete and meaningful understanding of the messages that we are receiving from the context and from others. In this regard, soundscaping will allow us to analyze the role of sounds (human and non-human) in relation to second language use, communication and learning within urban and virtual spaces.

References

- Gershon, W. S. (2011). Embodied knowledge Sounds as educational systems. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 27(2). 66-81.
- Southworth, M. F. (1967). *The sonic environment of cities* (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology).
- Kobayashi, M., & Schmandt, C. (1997). Dynamic Soundscape: mapping time to space for audio browsing. In *Proceedings of the ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human factors in computing systems* (pp. 194-201). ACM.