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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

AUTONOMOUS LEARNING RESOURCES FOR EFL: WHAT LEARNERS THINK

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Resumen:

Este artículo trata sobre trabajo llevado a cabo por miembros del grupo de investigación ATLAS en el marco del proyecto SO-CALL-ME (*Social Ontology-driven Cognitively Augmented Language Learning Environment*). Una de las aplicaciones móviles creadas por el grupo es *Eating out*, un recurso educativo digital para el aprendizaje autónomo del inglés como lengua extranjera, desarrollado en Moodle. El artículo describe este recurso y pasa a continuación a explicar un experimento en el que un grupo de estudiantes universitarios de inglés trabajaron con él a lo largo de un semestre, algunos usando un ordenador y otros utilizando un dispositivo móvil. Al final del semestre los estudiantes respondieron un cuestionario sobre aspectos pedagógicos y técnicos de su experiencia con *Eating out*. En el artículo se comentan los contenidos del cuestionario así como los resultados del experimento. Al dar a los estudiantes la oportunidad de evaluar *Eating out* se buscó obtener información valor a la hora de mejorar este recurso educativo. Los resultados también nos permiten comparar la experiencia de los estudiantes que trabajaron en un ordenador con la de aquellos que lo hicieron con un dispositivo móvil y de esta manera comprobar si el mismo recurso educativo es tan válido –o no– para la enseñanza de lenguas asistidas por ordenador como para la enseñanza de lenguas asistida por dispositivos móviles.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza de lenguas asistidas por ordenador enseñanza de lenguas asistidas por dispositivos móviles, inglés como lengua extranjera, opinión de los estudiantes

Abstract:

This paper reports on work carried out by members of the ATLAS research group within the SO-CALL-ME (*Social Ontology-driven Cognitively Augmented Language Learning Environment*) project. One of the mobile applications created by the group is *Eating out*, an EFL autonomous learning digital resource developed on Moodle. The paper describes this resource and then moves on to explain an experiment in which a group of EFL university students worked with it during a semester, some of them using a PC, some using a mobile device. At the end of the semester they answered a questionnaire on pedagogical and technical aspects of their experience with *Eating out*. The contents of the questionnaire are discussed as are the survey results. By giving the students the chance to evaluate *Eating out*, we seek to obtain valuable information that may help us to improve this learning resource. Additionally, the results allow us to compare the experiences of students working on a computer and those using a mobile device and thus see whether the learning resource can be run on one as well as on the other.

Key Words: CALL, MALL, EFL, Student's feedback

1. Introduction

The development of technology has changed the face of education: its presence in the classroom affects teaching, learning and assessment (Otero *et al.* 2005). It is now unusual to find a language class which does not use some sort of technology to enhance, assist or support the learning process. Although the use of technology should not be the goal in itself, as any technological tool requires the knowledge and expertise of the teacher in order to engage the students, it can offer many advantages when effectively combined with sound instructional practices and activities.

The initial fact to take into account is that in order to learn a second language (L2) there are a number of hours that must be invested. Unfortunately, very few courses are able to provide the necessary amount for the students to progress from level to level, and technology can be the answer to bridge the gap between what is required and what can be offered in face-to-face time. University students spend around eight months, or 32 weeks in their L2 class at an average of three hours per week in an annual course. That estimate gives just under 100 hours, and as Archibald *et al.* point out: "learning a second language for 95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language" (2006: 3). As shown in Figure 1, Cambridge University Language Assessment[1] estimates the following number of hours of study of the English language in order to go from one level of achievement to the next.

Common European Framework	**Number of study hours**
A2	Approx. 180–200
B1	Approx. 350–400
B2	Approx. 500–600
C1	Approx. 700–800
C2	Approx.1.000–1.200

Figure 1: Number of hours of study per level.

They also explain that the number of approximate hours will depend on several other factors such as the previous experience in learning languages, the intensity of the study or interest on the part of the student and age. However, if the figures of what is necessary and what is provided in face-to-face classes are compared, it is clear that the former are always higher than the latter and this is an area where technologies can be of great help. It is possible to increase the number of hours dedicated to the study of the L2 and expose the learners to authentic language and culture by using some sort of e-learning platform, including portable devices. Moreover, learners can benefit from the integration of face-to-face and online learning and develop autonomy, which is "the ability to take charge of one's own learning [...] to have and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of learning" (Holec 1981: 3; see also Hamilton 2013 about how technology can help build autonomy in the L2 learner). It is a skill that is developed over time and is also very valuable for L2 as it adapts to the multiple intelligences theory (Gardner 2011). Little (2007: 15) explains that "the development of learner autonomy and the growth of target language proficiency are not mutually supporting but fully integrated with each other". Gadamer (2001) points out that education is self-education. Autonomous learning, also known as student-centred learning or flexible learning (Macaskill & Taylor 2010), highlights the change from a classroom where the teacher presents information to the students, to an environment where students construct their own knowledge based on previous experience (Kember 1997). It involves, therefore, a transfer of responsibilities from teacher to learner (Cotterall 2000). As Rogers (1994: 103) states:

[1] CEFR and ALTE Can DO Statements. Available at: http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/about-us/what-we-do/international-language-standards/

> The role of education, if we are going to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn, the man who has learned to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security.

Cotterall (1995) lists three important reasons for developing learner autonomy: philosophical, pedagogical and practical. Firstly, the philosophical reason has to do with the learners' right to make choices about their own learning. This characteristic is essential as learners must be able to adapt to a rapidly changing future (Knowles 1975). Secondly, the pedagogical reason is related to the fact that adults seem to learn more effectively when they are involved in making decisions about the pace, sequence, mode of instruction and the content of what they are studying (Candy 1988). Thirdly, the practical reason is that promoting learner autonomy compensates the shortage of learning time in class with autonomous study, as previously mentioned.

Another positive aspect that can be gained from the use of technology is the possibility of presenting language in context (Omaggio-Hadley 2001). A video can show a multitude of aspects that are important for the learner: speed of speech, intonation, pronunciation, hesitation, pauses, and even the correct distance between individuals when interacting.

Thus, a rich contextualised learning environment can be made available for learners to interact with at their own time and pace. It is therefore feasible to present students with gambits and formulaic expressions of language which are common phrases or multiword units found useful in developing fluency (Wood 2002). Situations that would be of great use for the learners in the future can also be introduced here. As claimed by Schema Theory (DiMaggio 1997), many communication problems that a speaker might have in the L2 are due not so much to the lack of linguistic knowledge but more to certain common situations for which they are unprepared. This is also avoidable if they are presented with information about features, such as turn-taking or the rhythm of interaction. All of those details reflect the difference between "narrow listening" or "narrow reading" (Krashen 1996, 2004), and "broad listening" or "broad reading". Learners benefit more from listening to small amounts of language repeatedly, than from listening to large amounts once, and this is something that a video can clearly offer. Therefore, technology cannot only increase the amount of language input that learners are exposed to; it can also enhance its intake, a difference first proposed by Corder (1967).

Finally, a deciding factor in learning is the learner's attitude. As Walker Tileston highlights, "emotion and cognitive learning are not separate entities; they work in tandem with one another" (2010: 1). Those benefits, as detailed above, are enhanced when ICT is involved, notably MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), as the number of mobile device users is rapidly increasing, as shown in Figure 2.

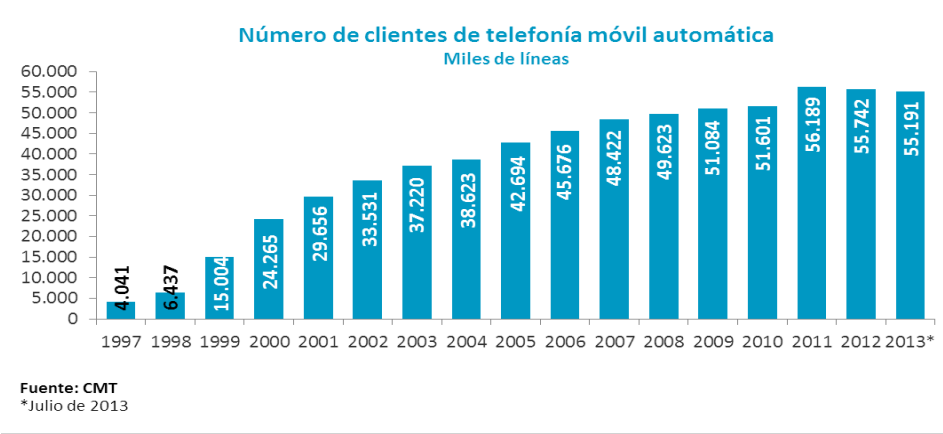

Figure 2: Number of mobile users in Spain. Available at http://www.4gmoviles.com/evolucion-del-numero-de-clientes-de-telefonia-movil-en-espana-abril-2013/

Portable devices have become an important component of young people's lives: as a means of communication and a source of entertainment. As statistics clearly show, 94% of people who access the Internet on a weekly basis are between 16 and 24 years of age. Furthermore, 70% of people who access the Internet do it when they are away from their homes or work places, by using a mobile device:[2] the majority (63.2%) use a mobile phone, followed by those who use a laptop, tablet or net-book (31.6%), or other devices such as PDAs or iPods (6.3%). It makes sense to try to take advantage of this use of technology, which is ubiquitous and can be used to fill the time travelling between classes or to/from work or university with autonomous learning resources that may reinforce what L2 learners do in their classes or simply allow them to increase the number of hours they spend practicing the L2.

This paper looks at the effectiveness of autonomous learning resources on both non-mobile and mobile devices, not so much in terms of academic results as in terms of user, i.e. learner, satisfaction. To that end, we report on an experiment carried out with EFL university students as part of the research work in which the ATLAS (http://atlas.uned.es/) group is involved within the SO-CALL-ME (***S**ocial **O**ntology-based **C**ognitively **A**ugmented **L**anguage **L**earning **M**obile **E**nvironment*) project. The paper is structured as follows: section 2 offers a general overview of SO-CALL-ME and the work so far done, of which the research here presented is a follow-up. Section 3 explains the methodology carried out in our experiment, while the results thereof are discussed in section 4. Finally, section 5 provides some concluding remarks and pointers to the future.

2. Background

SO-CALL-ME focuses on designing and developing a theoretical framework for computer assisted language learning tools that used handheld mobile devices such as smart-phones, tablets or PDAs, as they can take full advantage of all the positive characteristics that ICTs can provide and are readily available among students, as previously highlighted. Mobile tools are ubiquitous and enhance flexible, adaptive, interactive, practical learning, very much related to everyday communicative socio-cultural contexts and the use of foreign language (Rodríguez-Arancón *et al.* 2013: 1190). Another research focus within SO-CALL-ME is the design

[2] Data obtained from ONTSI (Observatorio Nacional de Telecomunicaciones y de la SI). Available at: http://www.ontsi.red.es/ontsi/es/estudios-informes/perfil-sociodemográfico-de-los-internautas-datos-ine-2013

and development of a linguistic ontology of visual learning objects to support foreign language learning in an efficient and pedagogically rigorous manner. To this end, the work has evolved in five phases so far: phase 1 encompassed an analysis of EFL apps and their categorization; phase 2 included the design of a rubric for the pedagogic and technical assessment of educational apps, notably EFL-related ones; phase 3 consisted in the creation of a rubric more narrowly geared to the assessment of EFL apps for listening skills; in phase 4 a higher number of apps was assessed taking advantage of the rubrics designed in phases 2 and 3. Finally, in phase 5, i.e. the current phase in our project, looks at both the creation of EFL apps and the feedback obtained from users of those apps. The following paragraphs explain each of these phases more in detail.

2.1 Phase 1. Analysis and categorization of EFL apps

The objective of this particular phase was to analyse some of the over 80,000[3] EFL applications for mobile devices already available in the market. This would represent a starting point from which to develop our own apps after gaining knowledge of the features that are effective and suitable for learners. These apps were evaluated from a pedagogic point of view without taking into account their technical specifications (Arús-Hita *et al*. 2013). The evaluation of apps was done with the use of two templates created for that purpose. In the first template the three evaluators could note each app assessed and its URL. The second template was an in-house created rubric with three criteria and a scale from one to five. The aim was to keep the rubric simple and significantly adjusted to our project's specific needs in order to evaluate as many apps as possible in a short period. The three criteria considered were: 1) the apps' cognitive value; 2) similarity of the apps with the pedagogic aims of SO-CALL-ME; and 3) complementarity with the pedagogic aims of SO-CALL-ME. At the end of each rubric, a concise description and a final conclusion of each of the 67 apps were given (Rodríguez-Arancón *et al.* 2013: 1192).

2.2 Phase 2. Design of an evaluation rubric for the pedagogic and technical assessment of EFL apps

In the second phase, a quality guide and a rubric were designed in order to evaluate apps. The guide was based on the one drawn by Fernández-Pampillón *et al.* (2012) for the creation of learning objects and encompasses the quality criteria for the evaluation and creation of new educational apps. The important feature of this guide is that it combines pedagogical aspects (Cognitive value and pedagogic coherence; Content quality; Capacity to generate learning; Interactivity and adaptability; and Motivation) with technical ones (Format and layout; Usability; Accessibility; Visibility; and Compatibility). It therefore highlights the combined importance of technology and a pedagogical perspective.

Derived from this guide, a new rubric was created to ease the app evaluation process carried out this time by two evaluators. Four of the 67 previously evaluated EFL apps, i.e. those that obtained the highest marks, were chosen for a preliminary evaluation: *Englishfeed, SpeakingPal English Tutor, Clear Speech* and *Learn English Audio and Video*.

2.3 Phase 3. Rubric for the evaluation of apps in language learning (REALL)

The contribution in this third phase was to present a rubric that included criteria that were both educational and linguistic. To that end, a template was created enabling app evaluators to focus on the specific dimensions of language teaching and learning, as defined by the *Common European Framework of*

[3] http://noticias.universia.es/ciencia-nn-tt/noticia/2014/04/07/1093782/ya-existen-mas-80-000-aplicaciones-educativas.html

Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment or CEFR (Council of Europe 2001): oral reception and production, written reception and production, interpretation and translation; and providing detailed descriptors for each of those categories. This task complemented the previous phases of research and represented an added value to the pedagogic assessments that had already been carried out.

All this culminated in REALL, a rubric which was used to evaluate the linguistic competence of EFL apps for listening. It followed the same criterion as the previous one: the information given in the cells took the quality guide as a reference. The categories considered were: level, types of texts, topics and delivery. The evaluating process was also similar to the one used in phase two: two evaluators analysed the five chosen apps (*Englishfeed, Speakingpal, Clear Speech, Learn English Audio & Video, Learn English Elementary Podcasts),* so as to assess their linguistic adequacy according to the CEFR. Although the number of apps studied was too small to reach definitive conclusions, it served the authors to pilot REALL and show the consistency between the two evaluators, since there were minimum discrepancies between them (Martín-Monje *et al.* 2013).

2.4 Phase 4. Evaluation of apps from a pedagogic and linguistic point of view

In this phase, the aim was to confirm the preliminary results obtained in phases 2 and 3 as a final stage before adopting the quality guide as a model to develop and create EFL applications. To this end, an additional number of apps were evaluated making use of the rubrics designed in the previous two phases (see Calle-Martínez *et al*. forthcoming). The entire number of evaluated apps was 9. The evaluating process was as usual: two testers undertook the evaluation of 4 more apps (*Learn English-Listening Skill, Headway Listening, English Conversation, TOEIC 700Q*).

2.5 Creation and evaluation of EFL apps

This is the current phase in our project. The apps so far designed and developed by the members of this research group are:

ANT (Audio News Trainer): useful application to improve oral comprehension through news that is updated daily.

BUSINESS APP: application implemented throughout the tool MIT App Inventor. It is aimed at professionals and business students who need to acquire oral skills in English and who might have to put them into practice in future professional situations, such as the presentation of a new product or working for a company.

FAN CLUB (Friends of the Audio Narrative Club): similar application to ANT as regards the aim they pursue, i.e. a constant use of the application on the basis of offering highly enjoyable and popular contents for apprentices and non-apprentices of a second language. The added value of this application consists in (1) the previous sequencing of content in difficulty levels and (2) methodological patterns for a maximum use in the improvement of the listening competence.

MARLUC: effective application to work on Phonetics through the production and comprehension of words.

VIOLIN and *VISP*: practical applications to improve oral and audiovisual comprehension through videos.

EATING OUT: online unit for both computers and mobile devices, convertible into an app. It provides oral comprehension practice as well as the lexico-grammar necessary to order and talk about food. This is the app that we describe in the next section and which was tested with actual users, as reported in the rest of this paper.

3. Methodology

As said above, one of the resources created by our group was *Eating out*, a listening comprehension and lexico-grammatical practice aimed at A2-B1 English learners. *Eating out* is not in itself a mobile application but rather an autonomous learning resource that can be run on a computer or a mobile device. It was designed on the e-learning platform Moodle 1.9 and consists of four main parts: 1) a recording of a situation in which three characters have to deal with ordering food in a cheesesteak restaurant, with listening comprehension questions; 2) exploitation of the recording's key vocabulary; 3) explanations and practice of the lexico-grammatical goals of the unit; and 4) more open-ended practice with the unit's lexico-grammar. Figure 3 shows the introductory screen, where the tabs for these four parts can be seen on top.

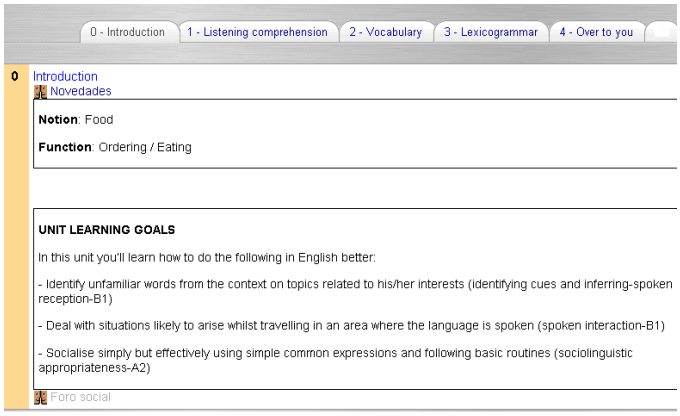

Figure 3. Introduction screen of *Eating out* with tabs for its four sections.

All resources in *Eating out* were designed to be autonomously run by learners and all activities are automatically corrected and graded by the program. When users perform poorly in one given activity, they are advised to reinforce their practice and perform a similar activity before moving on to the next stage, as shown in figure 4. No limit of attempts is established, as the idea is to have users repeat each section as many times as they need until the successfully complete the task at hand. Progress can be monitored by checking the grades section in the Moodle seminar used to run *Eating out* (see figure 5).

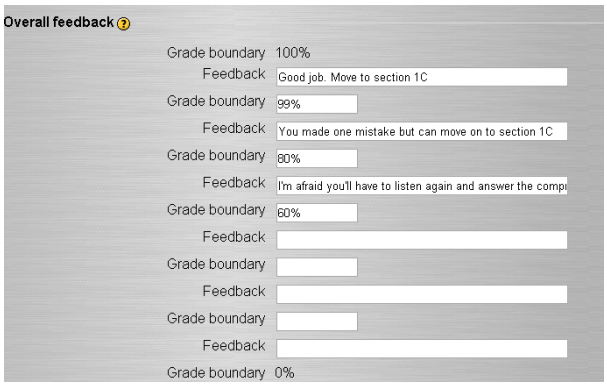

Figure 4. Feedback settings after activity completion.

Grade item	Grade	Range	Feedback
Eating Out			
Comprehension			
Comprehension questions (2)	6.00	0.00–10.00	
Category total	**-**	***0.00–10.00***	
Lexicogrammar			
Ex.1. They/you/bring me a sandwich: They want you to bring me a sandwich.	0.00	0.00–10.00	
Ex.3. I/you/behave better: I expect you to behave better.	10.00	0.00–10.00	
Ex.4. I/you/like ice-cream: I see you like ice-cream.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.5. I/you/like/her: I know you like her.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.6. I/you/say that: I'm glad that you said that. (Note the second part is in the past).	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.2. I/you/bring me a sandwich: I would like you to bring me a sandwich.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.1. They/you/bring me a sandwich: They want you to bring me a sandwich.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.2. I/you/bring me a sandwich: I would like you to bring me a sandwich.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.3. I/you/behave better: I expect you to behave better.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.4. I/you/like ice-cream: I see you like ice-cream.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.5. I/you/like/her: I know you like her.	-	0.00–10.00	
Ex.6. I/you/say that: I'm glad that you said that. (Note the second part is in the past).	-	0.00–10.00	
Category total	***0.83***	***0.00–10.00***	
Vocabulary			
Matching Activity	10.00	0.00–10.00	
Category total	***10.00***	***0.00–10.00***	
Over to you			
Jorge's diary	0.00	0.00–10.00	
Category total	***0.00***	***0.00–10.00***	
Course total	**-**	***0.00–10.00***	

Figure 5. Automatic grading of the different sections.

A key factor in choosing Moodle as the e-learning platform on which to implement *Eating out* was that it can be run and operated on mobile devices. Figure 6 shows a smartphone screenshot of an activity with some selections made.

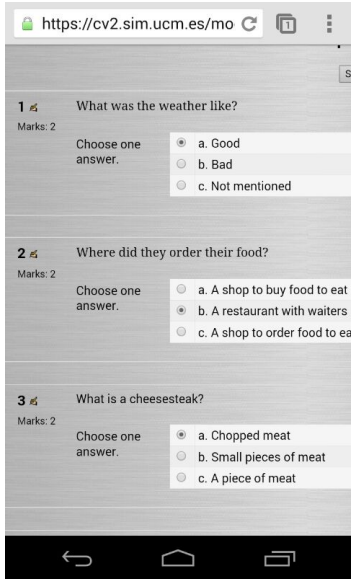

Figure 6. *Eating out* on a smartphone.

Once the resource was created, the time came to test it with learners. A total of 32 English students from the degree in Classical Philology at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (CEFR level B1) took part in the experiment. The application was to be used outside the classroom setting, as part of the self-study component of the course evaluation. The main purpose of the experiment was not at this stage to test the actual pedagogic effectiveness of *Eating out* in terms of the grades obtained by students[4] –they were in fact allowed an unlimited number of attempts to complete each activity. There was therefore no need for a control group, pre-tests or any of the requisites typically associated with experiments concerning teaching.

[4] Previous experiments looking at comparative grades between students using computers and those using mobile devices, such as the one by Stockwell, showed "no consistent difference" (2010: 105).

What we wanted from this experiment was to obtain feedback from actual EFL learners concerning their experience with *Eating out*. There exist several evaluation models and rubrics which are meant for evaluators, including our own rubrics, discussed in section 2 (see also, e.g., Vincent 2014; Walker 2010). Yet the opinion of teaching resources and/or app users is not so systematically gathered. That is why we thought there was a need for a pedagogically-based questionnaire adapted to learners, i.e. without the methodological jargon. Given that our previously created rubrics had proven to be quite reliable for EFL app assessment (as reported in Calle-Martínez *et al*. forthcoming), we decided to use them as the base from which to create the new questionnaire.

Figure 7 below shows the questions included in the student questionnaire. For all questions, students had the choice to answer 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) only partially agree, 4) agree, 5) strongly agree, except for the preliminary question, where the options were: 1) I don't like using mobile phones for learning, 2) I feel more confident using a computer, 3) I don't have a mobile phone, 4) I didn't know I could do it on a mobile phone, 5) I used a mobile phone or tablet. Questions 1 through 10 make up the general questionnaire, which can be used to obtain feedback for all sorts of education resources and apps. The preliminary question was specific to this experiment, as students had been given the choice to work with *Eating out* on a computer or on their mobile phones, and we were interested in knowing the reasons for their choice and then also compare results between those using a computer and those using mobile phones. Each of the points 1-10 is a simplification of the criteria in the general and EFL-specific rubrics. Question 1a and questions 2-10 stem from the general rubric, whereas questions 1b, 1c, 1d are based on REALL, the EFL-specific rubric.[5] Note that point 1 from the general rubric assesses the apps' 'Cognitive value and pedagogic coherence', which is intimately related to the specific criteria in REALL, hence the fact that all four make up the different parts of question 1 in the questionnaire. Also note that whereas question 1-5 address pedagogic issues, 6-10 target technical aspects, which makes the general rubric, and therefore the questionnaire, quite comprehensive.

Preliminary question: Why did you prefer to use a computer rather than a mobile phone? If you used a mobile phone or tablet, choose number 5.
1a: I knew from the beginning what I was going to learn, and the contents and sequencing allowed me to learn that.
1b: This experiment has contributed to the improvement of my listening comprehension competence
1c: My Grammar knowledge has improved
1d: My Vocabulary knowledge has improved
2: Contents are clearly presented and distributed and instructions are easy to follow and understand.
3: Contents helped me to learn autonomously and to relate new things to things I already knew.
4: I felt I could control my learning process.
5: I felt I was learning interesting things in an attractive manner.
6: Contents are clearly organized and audio-visual contents are good quality and can be well assimilated.

[5] We would like to thank our colleague Elena Martín-Monje for her suggestion to include EFL-specific questions in the questionnaire, i.e. questions 1b, 1c and 1d.

7: It was easy to use and links were reliable.
8: Contents were easy to access and I always knew where to go next.
9: Contents were clearly visible on my screen.
10: I had no incompatibility problems with operating systems.

Figure 7. Student questionnaire on *Eating out*.

To carry out the survey, the questions were uploaded on Moodle by means of the *choice* tool, which allows the customization of surveys. Students were given access to the questionnaire near the end of the term, once they had finished working with *Eating out*. When the survey was completed, it was exported as an Excel file and the answers were quantified. The next section looks at this quantification.

4. Results

Figure 8 below shows the figures for student responses to the different questions in the questionnaire. Rows refer to the questions and columns indicate choices made as specified in the previous section, i.e. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = only partially agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. The *total responses* column shows that some students did not answer all questions. Only the preliminary question was answered by all students. After that, we see numbers fluctuating between 26 and 29, probably indicating a perfunctory completion of the questionnaire (students knew they were not being graded on this task).

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Total responses**
Preliminary	9	17	0	0	6	32
1a	0	0	7	17	4	28
1b	1	1	9	13	4	28
1c	1	2	4	20	1	28
1d	0	1	3	17	6	27
2	0	1	4	10	14	29
3	0	0	2	21	3	26
4	0	0	7	17	3	27
5	1	0	8	10	9	28
6	0	1	3	16	8	28
7	0	2	7	9	10	28
8	0	3	5	10	10	28
9	0	2	2	12	12	28
10	2	0	6	7	13	28

Figure 8. *Eating out* survey results.

We were particularly interested in responses to the preliminary question, i.e. whether a computer or a mobile device had been used and, if the former, why. This could give us a realistic insight into the potential

of apps for pedagogic use rather than as pastimes, as well as shedding some light on something of which, according to Stockwell, "we still have little knowledge … [i.e.] how learners make decisions about using mobile phones" (2010: 95). Additionally, we expected to obtain relevant information on whether mobile versions of online resources can make good apps, at least as good as the original resource, since MALL activities which simply replicate those designed for other platforms run the risk of losing effectiveness (see Balance 2013). Thanks to this preliminary question we could then find out whether students working on mobile devices rated *Eating out* lower than those running it on a computer, and, if they did, whether it was an overall poorer rating or on specific points.

We see that only six students, i.e. under 20%, opted for a mobile device, and this in spite of the instructor's request for having as many people as possible using this kind of platform. We see in figure 8 that the main reason (17 out of 32, i.e. over 50%) for not using a mobile device was lower confidence when using mobiles than when using computers, which, combined with the 9 students choosing option 1, i.e. not liking mobile devices for learning, gives the impression that there still is a lot of work to be done to integrate MALL into curriculum-related CALL activities.

In order to facilitate the assessments of points 1 through 10 in the questionnaire, we assigned 1 point to each answer in column 1, 2 points to each answer in column 2, and so on, and then divided the resulting figure by the number of responses, to account for the different amount of responses on each case. Figure 9 below shows the average punctuation for each item in the questionnaire.

	1a	**1b**	**1c**	**1d**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Total**
Avg.	3.9	3.6	3.6	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.0

Figure 9. Average punctuations (out of 5) in the questionnaire on *Eating out* (rounded off to the nearest decimal point).

A general look at Figure 9 reveals that *Eating out* was overall considered a good teaching resource by students, with a total average punctuation of 4 out of 5. The most favourable results were obtained in points 2 and 9, the former pedagogic (as all points 1 through 5), the latter technical (as all points 6 through 10). Point 2 states that 'contents are clearly presented and distributed and instructions are easy to follow and understand', and in point 9 students agreed, or else, with the statement 'contents were clearly visible on my screen'. The other point with an average above the total 4.0 average was technical criterion 6, i.e. 'contents are clearly organized and audio-visual contents are good quality and can be well assimilated'. Conversely, the weakest points are all of them pedagogic, notably 1b and 1c, 'this experiment has contributed to the development of my oral comprehension competence', and 'my grammar knowledge has improved', respectively.

We see, therefore, that *Eating out* performs quite well overall and that in no single point in the questionnaire does it fare notoriously badly. The next step is to look at what lies underneath those results, i.e. the comparison of results among students working on *Eating out* on a computer, i.e. CALL users, and those using a mobile device, i.e. MALL users. One of the big issues in MALL is the adaptability of apps and other resources to the technical specificities of mobile devices, notably smartphones with their comparatively small screens and keyboards. We could therefore expect to find lower ratings among MALL users on technical aspects, i.e. questions 6-10 in the questionnaire. If these lower ratings are found, it will then be

worth looking at whether they also have an incidence on pedagogical aspects, i.e. questions 1-5. Figure 10 breaks down the results seen in figure 3 into the two different user types.

	1		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**Averages**	
	CALL	**MALL**	**CALL**	**MALL**	**CALL**	**MALL**	**CALL**	**MALL**	**CALL**	**MALL**	**CALL**	**MALL**
1a	0	0	0	0	7	0	13	4	3	1	3.8	4.2
1b	1	0	1	0	8	1	9	4	4	0	3.6	3.8
1c	1	0	1	1	1	3	19	1	1	0	3.8	3.0
1d	0	0	1	0	2	1	14	3	5	1	4.0	4.0
2	0	0	1	0	3	1	8	2	12	2	4.3	4.2
3	0	0	0	0	1	1	17	4	3	0	4.0	3.8
4	0	0	0	0	6	1	14	3	2	1	3.8	4.0
5	1	0	0	0	7	1	8	2	7	2	3.9	4.2
6	0	0	1	0	2	1	13	3	7	1	4.1	4.0
7	0	0	1	1	7	0	9	0	6	4	3.9	4.4
8	0	0	2	1	5	0	9	1	7	3	3.9	4.2
9	0	0	1	1	2	0	10	2	10	2	4.2	4.0
10	2	0	0	0	3	3	7	0	11	2	4.1	3.8
Total averages											4.0	4.0

Figure 10. *Eating out* survey results: CALL vs. MALL.

The first caveat to be noted when looking at figure 4 is that any comparison based on these figures has to be taken as rather tentative, given that the number of participants using portable devices and answering the questionnaire was as low as five (one of the students only answering the preliminary question turned out to be one of the six smartphone users). We will therefore not look at how CALL and MALL results contrast in specific points but rather at how they contrast in general, and whether any tendency can be identified concerning MALL results.

Bearing this proviso in mind, we can see in figure 4 that the average scores for CALL and MALL are the same, i.e. 4.0. Students seem therefore to be quite satisfied with *Eating out* regardless of the platform employed. Also, concerning our previous expectation that MALL users might encounter higher technical difficulties that those working on a computer, the results contradict this expectation; the lowest average score in MALL is actually found in point 1c, ‘‘my grammar knowledge has improved’, i.e. a pedagogical point. As said, however, more results are needed before trying to draw conclusions from specific points. The smaller population in the MALL sample in our experiment probably explains the fact that the most extreme average scores are found there: 3 for 1c and 4.4 for 7, vs. 3.6 for 1b and 4.2 for 2 in CALL. In any case, it is worth pointing out that the modes, i.e. the most repeated values, are slightly higher in MALL than in CALL (4 and 4.2 vs. 3.8 and 3.9, respectively), as is the median, i.e. the middle value (4.0 in MALL and 3.9 in CALL).

In conclusion, it seems that statistical measures point to a similar degree of satisfaction among students using computers and those using mobile devices for working on *Eating out* (as indicated by the averages), with an apparent yet still highly tentative tendency for MALL users to be more positive about their experience (as indicated by the modes and the medians).[6]

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have shown an example of the work carried out by the ATLAS group to develop autonomous learning resources. Although the group's main focus is on mobile apps, the resource here presented, *Eating out*, is intended for e-learning platforms, Moodle in this case, which can also be run online. After a number of experiments run and presented in previous publications from the perspective of evaluators, we set out in this paper to show the other side of the coin, i.e. the actual users' perspective. To that end, we have shared the questionnaire which students were asked to answer, and which is an adaptation of the pedagogical and technical rubric used for evaluations by experts.

We have seen that students rated *Eating out* quite high, with an average score of 4.0 out of 5 and no item in the questionnaire averaging below 3.6. Student satisfaction is constant across the board both in terms of the pedagogical/technical divide and the CALL/MALL one. The initial expectation that students using mobile devices might show higher dissatisfaction concerning technical aspect, reinforced by the fact that *Eating out* is not an app proper, was not fulfilled. Larger-scale surveys will confirm or refute this preliminary finding. In any case, and although there still is room for improvement, results in the pedagogical part of the questionnaire, i.e. 1-5, suggest that *Eating out* has a sound methodology, which is often a weak point in educational apps and autonomous learning resources in general, as discussed in previous research (e.g. Calle-Martínez *et al.* forthcoming).

Besides more extensive student surveys, and based on these, future work will focus on the improvement of *Eating out* so as to bring it closer to excellence, i.e. 5.0, as well as testing the resource on more recent versions of Moodle, since Moodle 2.4 and higher can be run on a Moodle app. As said in section 3, *Eating out* was developed and is currently running on Moodle 1.9, which means that, when accessed from a mobile device, users have to go through the same login procedures as on a computer. App-based access should, among other things, make the resource more user-friendly. As with the survey presented here, users will have the last word.

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[6] The differences between mean averages (without rounding off, i.e. 3.954 for CALL and 3.983 for MALL) are unsurprisingly non-significant at p=0.7963, with a 95% confidence interval from -0.263 to 0.204. The statistical comparison of the modes and medians, although with lower p values, also shows non-significant differences; that is why we can only speak of 'tendencies'.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

EL APRENDIZAJE COOPERATIVO PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA COMPETENCIA COMUNICATIVA ORAL EN LENGUA INGLESA EN EL AULA DE PRIMARIA

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Resumen

En este artículo se buscan fundamentos teóricos que sirvan de base a la propuesta de utilizar el aprendizaje cooperativo para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en lengua extranjera en los alumnos de educación primaria. Se analiza el concepto de competencia comunicativa y su aplicación en el aprendizaje de las lenguas en el contexto escolar. Se describen las metodologías más importantes de las últimas décadas para el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras y sus consideraciones en relación al contexto de comunicación que se debe crear en el aula para favorecer el uso de la lengua. Se propone el uso de las técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula de lengua inglesa para fomentar el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en su globalidad.

Palabras clave: Competencia comunicativa, contexto real de comunicación, aprendizaje cooperativo, lengua extranjera inglés, educación primaria.

Summary

This paper aims at providing theoretical foundations to support the use of cooperative learning to develop the communicative competence in the foreign language classroom in primary education. The concept of communicative competence is analyzed as well as its pedagogical application in the context of language learning at school. In addition, the most relevant methods to teach foreign languages, developed in the last decades, are under discussion to show concerns regarding the construction of a communication context in class to foster the use of the language. We propose the employment of cooperative learning techniques in the English classroom to promote the development of the communicative competence in its totality.

Key words: Communicative competence, real communicative context, cooperative learning, English as a foreign language, primary education.

1. Introducción

La sociedad actual exige el dominio de otras lenguas además de las lenguas maternas o lenguas de instrucción (lengua vehicular de la escuela que puede no ser la lengua madre de todos los alumnos). Así, la política lingüística europea aboga por el fomento del plurilingüismo. El Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas establece que es necesario intensificar el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de idiomas «en aras de una mayor movilidad, una comunicación internacional más eficaz combinada con el respeto por la identidad y la diversidad cultural, un mejor acceso a la información, una interacción personal más intensa, una mejora de las relaciones de trabajo y un entendimiento más profundo» (Consejo de Europa 2002:5).

La lengua extranjera (LE en adelante) que predomina en Europa, en países de habla no inglesa, es el inglés. No podemos negar que este se está convirtiendo en una lengua franca en la actualidad, una lengua para los estudios, los negocios y el comercio internacional. La escuela debe responder a estas demandas y dar al aprendizaje del inglés la importancia y prioridad necesaria. En este sentido, los métodos de enseñanza han

ido evolucionando priorizando la expresión oral o, de forma más amplia y global, la competencia comunicativa, entendida como el conjunto de conocimientos y habilidades que posibilitan el uso de una lengua, teniendo en cuenta aspectos psicológicos y socioculturales, es decir el contexto en el cual se produce el acto comunicativo. Estas metodologías destacan la importancia de que el estudiante se encuentre en situaciones comunicativas lo más próximas posible a la realidad, ya que de esta manera se garantiza el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en su globalidad.

El presente estudio parte de utilizar las distintas técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula de inglés para crear estas situaciones de comunicación deseadas. En este sentido, cuando hablamos de aprendizaje cooperativo nos referimos a las distintas formas de organizar el proceso de aprendizaje que tienen en común una interrelación interdependiente de los miembros de un grupo (Guix y Serra 2008). Esta construcción del aprendizaje, consensuada, discutida y dialogada requiere de muchas habilidades sociales y comunicativas que debemos aprender. La dinámica de trabajo en grupos del aprendizaje cooperativo facilita la práctica de estas habilidades. Por otra parte, el contexto que se crea en el aula cuando se está trabajando en grupos con estas técnicas, es muy próximo a las situaciones de comunicación reales con las que nos podemos encontrar fuera del ámbito escolar: la heterogeneidad de los grupos, la formulación de objetivos comunes, la necesidad del otro, la ayuda mutua, los acuerdos, el consenso, la comunicación de los resultados. Y en relación con la lengua, eje central en nuestro estudio, entran en juego aspectos tales como el uso de un lenguaje adecuado a la situación, la búsqueda de estrategias para facilitar la comprensión mutua, el aprendizaje de vocabulario específico y otros.

El objetivo general que nos hemos planteado en este estudio, es fundamentar y sentar las bases teóricas del uso de las técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo para el aumento de la competencia comunicativa oral en inglés, como LE, en educación primaria. Para ello, el trabajo trata de dar respuesta a varios aspectos: la definición del concepto de competencia comunicativa y su aplicación en la enseñanza de la LE en el contexto escolar, el estudio de cómo podemos aplicar el aprendizaje cooperativo al aprendizaje de las lenguas, y el análisis de las aportaciones y las dificultades de la aplicación de las técnicas de aprendizaje.

2. Competencia comunicativa: origen, evolución del concepto y consideración en los enfoques de enseñanza de lenguas

Desde los años 70 hasta la actualidad, se han desarrollado diversos modelos de competencia comunicativa. Estos modelos incluyen varias subcompetencias que en su conjunto configuran la competencia comunicativa del individuo. Celce-Murcia (2008) analiza la evolución de los modelos de competencia comunicativa y propone un modelo que recoger las diferentes subcompetencias y la relación entre ellas. Las primeras referencias al término *competencia* en relación a la lingüística las encontramos en Chomsky (1957, 1965) con un significado muy específico distinto al que después se arraigará en la pedagogía de las lenguas (Canale y Swain 1980). En Chomsky *competencia* se refiere al conocimiento del sistema lingüístico, la gramática. Cuando este autor habla del uso real de la lengua utiliza el término *actuación* como los factores psicológicos que están relacionados con la percepción y la producción del habla, que pueden ser temor, descuido, nerviosismo, cansancio, ruido ambiental y otros.

Hymes (1972) propone un concepto más amplio de competencia el cual denomina *competencia comunicativa* y engloba la *competencia lingüística* y la *competencia sociolingüística*, *sociocultural o de contexto*. Esta última no era considerada por Chomsky, quien entendía que la lengua la aprende o la genera el

individuo al margen del contexto. El término *competencia comunicativa* como lo usa Hymes, aunque no se refiere al aprendizaje de segundas lenguas, se aproxima y parece estar en la base del uso más común de estos términos en el contexto de la didáctica de las lenguas. Este considera que la competencia comunicativa ha de verse como el conjunto de habilidades y conocimientos que permiten que los hablantes de una comunidad lingüística puedan entenderse. La describe como la interacción de los aspectos formales de la lengua (gramaticales), psicolingüísticos (lo que es posible en términos de procesos mentales), socioculturales (el significado en un contexto) y probabilísticos (lo que realmente ocurre). Según Hymes, la competencia en el uso de la lengua se adquiere al mismo tiempo que la competencia gramatical. En este proceso el niño adquiere su habilidad para participar en la sociedad como miembro que habla y se comunica. Dentro de la competencia comunicativa distingue entre la *competencia lingüística*, que incluye el conocimiento de la fonética, la morfología, el léxico y la sintaxis, y la *competencia sociolingüística*, el conocimiento de la pragmática de la lengua, es decir el uso del lenguaje de acuerdo con el contexto.

Más tarde Canale y Swain (1980) elaboran un modelo de competencia comunicativa que se puede aplicar a la enseñanza de las lenguas y añaden la *competencia estratégica* a las competencias lingüística y sociolingüística de Hymes. Esta se refiere por un lado a la habilidad para compensar problemas o déficits de comunicación y por otro lado a las estrategias que el alumno puede utilizar para aprender. Canale (1983) añade a este modelo la *competencia discursiva*, como la habilidad de interpretar y producir lengua más allá del nivel de frase.

La complejidad del modelo fue aumentando cuando Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) definieron dentro de la competencia sociolingüística, la *competencia accional* (o *interaccional*). Esta se refiere en concreto a la capacidad de mantener conversaciones interpersonales: abrir y cerrar una conversación; establecer turnos de palabra; intercambiar información; expresar opiniones, esperanzas y deseos; conocer los elementos de la comunicación no verbal. Estos autores crean un modelo que relaciona los diversos componentes hasta ahora descritos de la competencia comunicativa.

Por otra parte, Celce-Murcia (1995), dentro de la competencia gramatical o lingüística, distingue la *competencia formulaica*, refiriéndose a los fragmentos de lengua que se utilizan con asiduidad, o a relaciones gramaticales fijas. En 2008 esta autora revisa el modelo y recoge todas las subcompetencias descritas: lingüística, sociolingüística o socio-cultural, estratégica, discursiva, interaccional, y formulaica; y muestra las relaciones entre estas. En este modelo la subcompetencia discursiva se sitúa en el centro de la competencia comunicativa y se muestra cómo interactúan todas las subcompetencias. Circundando estas, está la competencia estratégica. Como describe la autora la disponibilidad de estrategias comunicativas, cognitivas, y metacognitivas permite al docente negociar significados, resolver ambigüedades, y compensar las posibles deficiencias en cualquiera de las otras competencias. Este modelo de Celce-Murcia (2008) nos servirá de referencia para ver cómo podemos aplicar el concepto de competencia comunicativa en la enseñanza de la LE en el contexto escolar.

La revisión del contexto que se crea en el aula para que tenga lugar la comunicación oral, permite observar cómo ha evolucionado la competencia comunicativa en los métodos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la LE más destacados (Richard y Rodgers 1986; Bertrand 2004; Frost 2004; Pérez y Zayas 2007). Algunos de estos, tales como el *método directo,* el *audiolingual,* el *aprendizaje de lenguas en comunidad* o *aprendizaje comunitario de lenguas*, o el *enfoque natural*, son anteriores a la aparición del término competencia comunicativa, pero en todos ellos cuando se habla del lenguaje hablado se hace referencia a algún aspecto

que va más allá de un intercambio lingüístico e implica aspectos sociales, culturales y/o psicológicos. Otros como el *enfoque comunicativo*, o el más actual *Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua (AICLE)*, nacen al amparo de los estudios en relación a la competencia comunicativa. Todos ellos coinciden en la idea de que el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa requiere que el alumno se encuentre en situaciones comunicativas cercanas a la realidad, tal y como ya hemos apuntado.

En este sentido, actualmente cobra fuerza en el seno de la Unión Europea la utilización de la LE como herramienta y objeto de aprendizaje. Con este propósito AICLE (Coyle et al. 2010; Mehisto et al. 2008) está siendo utilizado cada vez más en el contexto escolar. El método introduce la LE como lengua de aprendizaje de otras materias apostando por una mayor inmersión. Sin embargo presenta algunas dificultades en este momento en las escuelas españolas, entre las cuales, las más importantes según Pérez y Roig (2004), se encuentran la falta de materiales preparados que den apoyo al profesorado y la falta de preparación del mismo. A través de este enfoque se aprende el inglés al utilizarse como procedimiento para el aprendizaje. La LE es la herramienta de comunicación dentro del aula por excelencia, y se crean por lo tanto situaciones de comunicación reales. La interacción se produce entre profesor y alumno y entre alumnos cuando se realizan actividades en grupo, el aprendizaje cooperativo cobra especial importancia.

Estas metodologías consideran la comunicación oral en la LE, pero hay una evolución donde la tendencia es dar cada vez más importancia a la interacción entre los alumnos, en la cual el objetivo principal es la comunicación, es decir el entendimiento mutuo, si bien con corrección, y a la creación de contextos próximos a la realidad para que el alumno se encuentre con una necesidad auténtica de comunicarse y utilice sus conocimientos y estrategias en un aprendizaje significativo.

3. La competencia comunicativa en lengua extranjera en el contexto escolar

Cuando en el aula de inglés creemos el contexto para fomentar la competencia comunicativa, debemos establecer en primer lugar los objetivos, los cuales estarán en función de las subcompetencias que podemos y queremos trabajar en cada momento. La competencia comunicativa, basada en Celce-Murcia (2008) y Ellis (1997), recoge algunos aspectos que, cuando realizamos actividades de expresión y comprensión oral, se trabajan en el aula en relación a las distintas subcompetencias del modelo de competencia comunicativa adoptado como referencia:

a) Subcompetencia lingüística: Corrección gramatical. Corrección en la pronunciación. Aumento del vocabulario.
b) Subcompetencia sociolingüística: Conocimiento general de la cultura ámbito de la lengua de aprendizaje. Conocimiento de la sociedad, formas de relación, formas de vida, fiestas y costumbres.
c) Subcompetencia estratégica: Práctica de estrategias que facilitan la comunicación. Análisis de las estrategias propias y la comparación de las propias con las de lo demás.
d) Subcompetencia discursiva: Creación de discursos en contextos próximos a la realidad y con significado para los alumnos.
e) Subcompetencia interaccional: Práctica en parejas o pequeños grupos de la conversación observando elementos de lenguaje no-verbal y convenciones sociales.
f) Subcompetencia formulaica: Conocimiento de expresiones o fragmentos de lengua que facilitan la producción oral y la interacción.

Como podemos ver, cualquier actividad de comunicación oral que planteemos servirá para trabajar varias de las subcompetencias mencionadas. Por ejemplo si la actividad consiste en que dos alumnos se hagan preguntas para completar una información que los dos tienen incompleta en distinta manera, estamos fomentando las subcompetencias lingüística (corrección gramatical: elaboración de preguntas y respuestas), estratégica (práctica de estrategias que facilitan la comunicación), interaccional (práctica en parejas observando elementos de lenguaje no-verbal y convenciones sociales) y formulaica (conocimiento de expresiones o fragmentos de lengua que facilitan la producción oral y la interacción). Debemos pues plantear actividades diversas para trabajar la competencia comunicativa en su globalidad.

Por otra parte, si prestamos atención al actual currículo básico de la Educación Primaria, Real Decreto 126/2014, uno de sus objetivos es "adquirir en, al menos, una lengua extranjera la competencia comunicativa básica que les permita expresar y comprender mensajes sencillos y desenvolverse en situaciones cotidianas." (p. 19353). No hay una descripción del concepto de competencia comunicativa al que atiende el decreto, y por tanto puede resultar interesante analizar en qué medida esta es considerada implícitamente en el currículo.

La revisión de los bloques 1 y 2, sobre comprensión y producción de textos orales respectivamente, en la primera lengua extranjera, en los estándares de aprendizaje evaluable utiliza expresiones como "temas cotidianos o de su interés", "su aficiones e intereses", "área de interés", "lo que le gusta y no le gusta", o "asuntos cotidianos" entre otros, que se pueden relacionar con la subcompetencia discursiva, ya que buscan contextos cercanos a la realidad y significativos para el alumno. La subcompetencia interaccional se pude ver fomentada cuando habla, también en los estándares, de participar en conversaciones, transacciones cotidianas o entrevistas; así como la referencia en los contenidos, dentro de las estrategias de producción, a tener en consideración aspectos lingüísticos, pero también paralingüísticos y paratextuales, y por tanto el lenguaje no verbal. La subcompetencia estratégica podría tener un reflejo en lo que es, dentro de las estrategias, la planificación, y también en la ejecución, al hacer referencia a reajustar y compensar. Los aspectos socioculturales y sociolingüísticos contemplados en los contenidos pueden tener una vinculación directa con la subcompetencia sociolingüística. Así como, dentro de las estrategias de producción, en la ejecución, se refiere a utilizar lenguaje "prefabricado" como ejemplo del apoyo en los conocimientos previos, lo cual podría asociarse a la subcompentencia formulaica. Finalmente, la subcompetencia lingüística tiene claramente un peso importante, como se describe en las estructuras sintáctico-discursivas en cuanto al léxico, pronunciación y otros contenidos, descritos con más detalle, e introducidos mayoritariamente como "expresiones de…" y que hacen referencia a la gramática.

Por otra parte, a diferencia de lo que ocurría en la anterior descripción de las enseñanzas mínima de la Educación Primaria (Real Decreto 1513/2006), aquí no se estable ningún objetivo en el área de la lengua extranjera en referencia a la utilización de los conocimientos y las experiencias previas con otras lenguas, un aspecto que consideramos necesario tener en cuenta en el camino hacia el multilingüismo, que la misma Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa (LOMCE) promulga como uno de sus pilares, siguiendo las directrices marcadas por la Unión Europea y el Consejo de Europea en materia educativa. Desde nuestro punto de vista, esta consideración sería interesante en el diseño de un Proyecto Lingüístico de centro que debería tener en cuenta los aprendizajes lingüísticos en todas las áreas.

4. Fundamentos del aprendizaje cooperativo

La LOMCE introduce en el currículo siete competencias clave, entre las cuales están la competencia social y cívica, la competencia para aprender a aprender y, la iniciativa y emprendimiento. Se trata de competencias transversales que buscan el desarrollo de habilidades tales como el saber comunicarse en distintos contextos, expresar las propias ideas y escuchar las ajenas, ser capaz de aprender toda la vida de manera eficaz y autónoma o tener criterio propio e iniciativa para transformar las ideas en acciones. Se trata de habilidades importantes para el trabajo en equipo. Es una de las demandas de la sociedad actual a la escuela, la capacitación de los alumnos para trabajar en equipo manteniendo unas relaciones positivas y fluidas con los demás. Esta competencia debe ser desarrollada ya en los primeros años de escolarización, en los cuales se realiza la primera socialización.

Sin embargo hay que distinguir entre diferentes formas de aprendizaje; siguiendo a Ferrerio y Calderón (2006), podemos hablar del aprendizaje individual, el competitivo y el cooperativo. El último contrasta con los otros en que, en el individual no se potencia la comunicación e intercambio entre los miembros de un grupo, los objetivos son individuales y se consiguen con el esfuerzo y trabajo individual; en el competitivo, además, se percibe que, para obtener un objetivo de enseñanza-aprendizaje no lo han de obtener los demás. En el aprendizaje cooperativo, por el contrario, un individuo logra los objetivos de enseñanza-aprendizaje si los demás compañeros alcanzan los suyos, y entre todos se construye el conocimiento aprendiendo unos de otros. Este aprendizaje contribuye así en buena medida al logro de las competencias básicas y los objetivos generales de la enseñanza en todos los niveles educativos. Es de especial interés el carácter social del aprendizaje cooperativo, aquí se aprende en grupo a partir de una interacción interdependiente que exige a todos los miembros asumir unas funciones para el logro de una meta. El principal procedimiento para el aprendizaje es la comunicación y por lo tanto el lenguaje.

Si planteamos una dinámica de aprendizaje cooperativo en lengua inglesa estamos potenciando de esta lengua sus posibilidades comunicativas y haciendo uso de ella en un contexto próximo a la realidad. A continuación vemos cómo el aprendizaje cooperativo crea en el aula un contexto de comunicación que favorece la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos. Analizamos los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo y su aportación al aprendizaje de las lenguas, y mostramos qué dificultades nos podemos encontrar si aplicamos estas técnicas de aprendizaje en el aula de LE y cómo las podemos tratar.

5. El aprendizaje cooperativo y el área de conocimiento de LE

La adquisición de una lengua es un proceso que requiere tiempo y dedicación. La realidad de la mayor parte de nuestros alumnos es que normalmente solo están expuestos a la LE 2 o 3 horas semanales en el colegio. La presencia de esta LE en la calle o en los medios de comunicación es escasa y poco significativa, aunque parece que va en aumento y ahora se pueden ver, por ejemplo, programas de televisión en inglés o películas en versión original. Pérez y Roig (2004) consideran que por ello debemos rentabilizar al máximo el tiempo del que se dispone utilizando una metodología adecuada y empezando cuanto antes el aprendizaje de la LE. Estos autores afirman que es fundamental desarrollar la producción oral desde el primer día. Si bien la base de desarrollo de la LE es el *input* comprensivo, el *output* comprensivo debe potenciarse desde un primer momento, ya que «no podemos esperar a que ésta (la producción) se produzca espontáneamente después de cierto tiempo de exposición a la lengua y práctica de la misma» (Pérez y Roig 2004: 31). Las respuestas

educativas que estos autores dan a estos planteamientos son: i) Crear un clima afectivo, lúdico, interesante, motivador. ii) Usar la lengua como vehículo de comunicación en el aula. iii) Partir de conocimientos y experiencias previas. iv) Coordinar los contenidos lingüísticos.

Todo ello contribuye a crear un contexto real de comunicación. En este punto consideramos importante determinar qué queremos decir cuando hablamos de contextos reales de comunicación. Willis (1996) hace una referencia clarificadora en este sentido al considerar que se crea una situación comunicativa real en el contexto escolar cuando hay una interacción entre los miembros de un grupo con un objetivo común de resolución de una tarea. Es pues cuando la lengua es una herramienta más para el aprendizaje y el alumno se ve con la necesidad de comunicarse para resolver la tarea que tenemos una situación en el aula próxima a la realidad. Nuestra propuesta es utilizar el aprendizaje cooperativo para crear estos contextos reales que favorezcan una comunicación oral efectiva.

Veamos ahora cómo los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo favorecen la creación de un contexto real de comunicación en LE. El aprendizaje cooperativo se basa en el trabajo en grupo, entendiendo el grupo como una comunidad de aprendizaje, «conjunto de personas que reunidas en un lugar y tiempos determinados se ocupan de una tarea que les exige asumir funciones e interactuar para el logro de una meta» (Ferreiro y Calderón 2006: 28). Al no ser una actividad individual aseguramos la necesidad de comunicación entre los miembros del grupo. La práctica en el discurso es importante para ser conscientes de lo que sabemos y lo que debemos aprender. Debido a que, como hemos mencionado, el aprendizaje se realiza a partir de la cooperación de todos los miembros del grupo, esta cooperación para la construcción del conocimiento amplía las necesidades comunicativas, un aspecto fundamental para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa.

Debemos tener en cuenta, sin embargo, que los grupos en el aprendizaje cooperativo son heterogéneos. Esto puede favorecer la cooperación, estableciendo relaciones de ayuda mutua que ayudan a las dos partes implicadas (Díaz-Aguado 2007). Además, Pérez y Roig (2004:115) afirman que «trabajar por proyectos en inglés permite atender a niños y niñas con un alto nivel de competencia lingüística (hijos de nativos, por ejemplo, que se aburren en las clases de inglés y suelen ser una pesadilla para los maestros) y niños con dificultades de aprendizaje generalizadas».

En este enfoque el profesor es mediador del aprendizaje, dinamiza, orienta y favorece la autonomía del alumno, quien no es un mero receptor, construye su propio aprendizaje a partir de la interacción positiva con los demás; esta interacción requiere habilidades comunicativas. Por tanto, el aprendizaje cooperativo aumenta las oportunidades de cada estudiante de poner en práctica su competencia comunicativa, y se basa en la suma de responsabilidades individuales, donde se debe asegurar la participación de todos. Así pues, se desarrollan habilidades interpersonales, en parte con la utilización de la lengua en situaciones muy próximas a la realidad cotidiana, como la práctica del diálogo y el consenso, que son claves en el desarrollo de la actividad.

Por lo que respecta al vocabulario, se activan los campos semánticos interiorizados por el alumno y en cuanto a la gramática, se produce la gramaticalización de los fragmentos de lengua aprendidos como unidades completas de significado; cuando los alumnos se ven en una situación de explorar todos sus recursos descomponen las unidades aprendidas y las vuelven a componer con un nuevo propósito (Cameron, 2001). También tiene lugar la negociación de significado, que es positiva para las dos partes, la que debe encontrar los recursos para hacerse entender y la que va incorporando nuevos significados (Willis, 1996).

El aprendizaje cooperativo se basa en las teorías de la psicología cognitiva del constructivismo y el aprendizaje significativo. Los alumnos construyen el aprendizaje a partir del conocimiento previo y en la medida en que se produce un conflicto cognitivo, entre lo que se sabe y lo que se propone como nuevo. En este tipo de aprendizaje se habla también de conflicto sociocognitivo cuando este proceso se da en el seno de un grupo heterogéneo, con distintas experiencias previas y puntos de vista distintos. La resolución de este conflicto requiere de habilidades sociales y comunicativas, como el respeto de turnos, la escucha atenta, entender, preguntar, saber discrepar, aceptar las opiniones de los demás (Brian et al., 1990), en este caso en la LE. Como afirman Sharan y Sharan (2004), en el aprendizaje cooperativo, el conocimiento se construye a partir de la comunicación entre iguales.

Por otra parte, este aprendizaje debe ser motivador para mantener el interés y la atención de los alumnos, y promover la motivación intrínseca, la cual lo será si se basa en la libre elección por parte de los alumnos, tanto del tema, como de los métodos de investigación. Esta motivación hará que los alumnos se esfuercen y utilicen todos sus recursos, también para la interacción (Sharan y Sharan 2004). En este sentido, la comunicación horizontal (profesor-alumno, alumno-alumno), entre iguales, fomenta utiliza todos los recursos y explora nuevas posibilidades. Además, la evaluación individual depende de la evaluación del grupo y a la inversa. Esta interdependencia fomenta también la necesidad de entendimiento en la LE.

Podemos concluir que tanto los elementos del aprendizaje cooperativo que promueven la interacción entre los estudiantes (trabajo en grupo, trabajo basado en la cooperación, comunicación horizontal, trabajo de habilidades interpersonales), como las claves del proceso de la enseñanza-aprendizaje que se describen (aprendizaje significativo, motivación intrínseca, grupos heterogéneos, el profesor como mediador) son elementos que favorecen el aprendizaje de las lenguas y el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa.

6. El aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula de LE: aportaciones y dificultades para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa

Teniendo en cuenta la incidencia que los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo tienen en el aprendizaje de las lenguas, podemos considerar aportaciones de este al aprendizaje de la LE tales como: i) Crea un marco de interacción positiva, estimulante y constructiva, ii) Da responsabilidades a todos los miembros del grupo, con lo cual se trabaja la diversidad, iii) La lengua es un procedimiento en el conjunto de la actividad por lo que se da un contexto real a su uso, iv) Se utiliza tanto la forma oral como escrita de la lengua, en sus registros formal e informal, v) Se utilizan distintos tipos de discurso: la conversación, la discusión, el debate, la argumentación, la exposición, vi) Fomenta la participación, vii) Fomenta el uso de estrategias de comunicación, viii) Aumenta el tiempo de exposición y producción de la lengua de cada alumno, y ix) Fomenta la interdisciplinariedad en el aula.

Sin embargo, la mayor dificultad con la que nos podemos encontrar utilizando el inglés en el trabajo en grupo es el nivel de competencia comunicativa inicial (Pérez y Roig 2004). Debemos por tanto fomentar el desarrollo de esta competencia antes y durante la realización de las actividades. Esta debe permitir una fluidez suficiente que no convierta el trabajo en algo por encima de las capacidades del alumno y que genere desmotivación y desinterés. Estos autores consideran que debemos trabajar sobre un repertorio de situaciones comunicativas que sirva a los niños como base para desarrollar la capacidad de comunicarse en situaciones

reales. Para el aprendizaje de este repertorio comunicativo podemos utilizar herramientas como las dramatizaciones, el *roleplaying*, las canciones, las rimas.

Hay otros aspectos en el uso del aprendizaje cooperativo para la enseñanza-aprendizaje de la LE que se pueden considerar dificultades, aunque no inconvenientes, y que también debemos tener en cuenta: i) La impredecibilidad del lenguaje que los estudiantes van a utilizar. Podemos enseñar previamente el vocabulario y expresiones que creemos pueden necesitar, pero el carácter abierto de este tipo de actividades hace que las necesidades puedan variar y debemos estar preparados para ello con herramientas de búsqueda de información al alcance. ii) La tendencia al uso de la L1 entre los alumnos. Debemos tener herramientas para fomentar el uso exclusivo del inglés durante la realización de la actividad entre los miembros del grupo, el profesor debe facilitar a los alumnos las expresiones que puedan necesitar, para ello debe ir desplazándose de grupo en grupo atendiendo a las conversaciones que los alumnos tengan, también puede colgarse en las paredes del aula fragmentos de lengua; y lo que Vygotsky denomina *hablar con uno mismo* (*talking to oneself*) (Cameron 2001). iii) Las dificultades en la preparación de la actividad para el profesor. Este debe hacer una selección de materiales con un nivel adecuado de lengua e información que sea relevante e interesante al mismo tiempo. En la actualidad contamos con muchos recursos en la red pero su selección requiere mucha dedicación. También es interesante que puedan manipular otro tipo de recursos como libros u otro material impreso, o que puedan utilizar una visita cultural. Por otra parte, el profesor debe mantener el nivel de motivación entre los alumnos que se encontrarán con dificultades comunicativas que pueden ser un obstáculo. En este sentido es muy importante seleccionar bien tanto el tema como los recursos. También la formación de los grupos y la técnica de trabajo que se va a utilizar son esenciales para crear un buen clima de trabajo. iv) La necesidad de unos espacios determinados y unas herramientas de trabajo como ordenadores y conexión a Internet. Debemos adaptarnos a los recursos del centro escolar y asegurar que el espacio con el que contamos, permite la movilidad de los alumnos y la fácil accesibilidad a los recursos o fuentes de información. v) La evaluación. En relación a la evaluación de los contenidos, consideramos que si la actividad se ha planificado en colaboración con otras áreas de conocimiento, se evalúen por separado los contenidos del área en cuestión y los del área de LE. Además de realizar una evaluación final en relación a los contenidos, es imprescindible la evaluación del proceso, esta debería hacerse a partir de las reflexiones de los mismos alumnos conjuntamente con el profesor. Debe ser una evaluación continua en todas las etapas del proceso, que permita detectar los problemas que vayan surgiendo y hacer las modificaciones que garanticen el éxito de la actividad. Sharan y Sharan (2004) proponen para la evaluación del proceso la creación de una lista de ítems que deben corresponderse con los objetivos que nos hemos planteado. A diario el profesor recoge datos con esta lista a partir de la observación, crearemos una lista específica para los objetivos del área de LE.

7. Propuesta de trabajo cooperativo para tercer ciclo de educación primaria: El jigsaw o rompecabezas.

Existe un amplio repertorio de técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo que se pueden usar en Educación Primaria. En la Figura 1 se describen brevemente algunas de las más utilizadas (Guix y Serra 2008; Ferreiro y Calderón 2006).

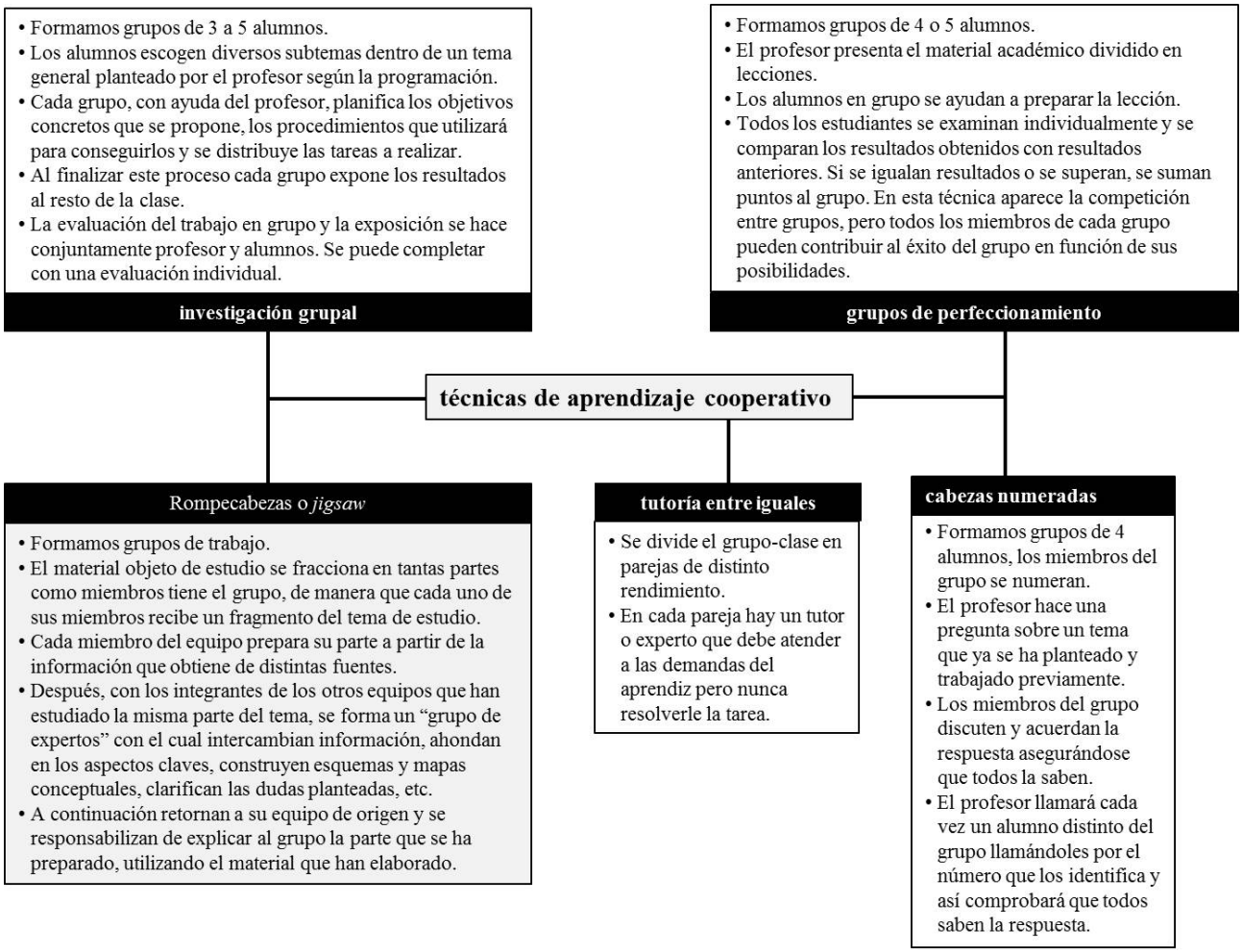

Figura 1. Tipo de técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo

En este estudio hemos tratado de revisar la literatura actual en lo concerniente a la competencia comunicativa y el aprendizaje cooperativo. A continuación se describen las bases de una propuesta educativa, para el tercer ciclo de educación primaria utilizando la técnica del *jigsaw* o rompecabezas, que aúna ambos aspectos para fomentar la expresión oral en lengua inglesa.

En primer lugar debemos tener en cuenta consideraciones referidas al contexto escolar. Si el aprendizaje cooperativo es una forma habitual de trabajo en las distintas áreas de conocimiento del centro, esto facilitará que algunas cuestiones de funcionamiento, como las descritas a continuación, ya estén interiorizadas por los alumnos (Sharan y Sharan 2004). Sin embargo, estamos en un contexto donde además se busca el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en la LE. En este sentido, la experiencia con la lengua del grupo, tanto en su aprendizaje formal como informal, es clave para el desarrollo del trabajo cooperativo.

- Establecimiento de normas y clima que promueva la comunicación oral entre los estudiantes.
- Tener interiorizado por parte de profesores y los mismos alumnos, que el habla entre los estudiantes es un elemento esencial para la construcción del conocimiento.
- Tener desarrolladas destrezas para el debate, la resolución conjunta de problemas, la toma de acuerdos, el consenso.
- En algunas ocasiones es de gran utilidad que los equipos de trabajo ya estén formados y sean fijos para un curso escolar. Estos grupos están habituados a trabajar conjuntamente, se han creado unos

lazos de colaboración que son esenciales y ayudan a la consecución de los objetivos (Díaz-Aguado, 2007). Otros autores consideran que el profesor puede elegir grupos para trabajar a largo plazo para unas áreas de conocimiento y grupos a corto plazo para otras. Con los grupos a corto plazo se da la oportunidad a todos los alumnos de trabajar con todos sus compañeros y ello refuerza al grupo-clase (Ferreiro y Calderón, 2006).

- Debemos contar con un aula preparada para el aprendizaje cooperativo. El aula debe tener los recursos necesarios, y fundamentalmente permitir el trabajo en grupo y la movilidad de los alumnos.

La dinámica de trabajo sería la siguiente, el profesor introduce el tema general que se va a investigar y anima a los estudiantes a que formulen preguntas sobre todo aquello que quieren saber en relación al tema. Estas formarán la base sobre la que se asentará el proyecto de investigación. En la técnica del *jigsaw* se deben delimitar tantos subtemas (preguntas a contestar) como miembros haya en el grupo. El acuerdo de los subtemas es tomado por el grupo-clase en conjunto, cada pequeño grupo deberá trabajar los mismos subtemas. Si trabajamos sobre el tema *Mediterranean forest*, relacionado con área de ciencias de la naturaleza (Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa), podríamos determinar, a modo de ejemplo, los siguientes subtemas para grupos de 4 miembros (si bien esto dependerá de los intereses de los alumnos): a) *The Mediterranean forest ecosystem*, b) *The dangers for the Mediterranean forest*, c) *Vegetal and animal species*, and d) *The importance of insects to protect this ecosystem*. A continuación los estudiantes planifican la investigación, deciden cómo se lleva a cabo, y cómo se reparten los subtemas. Se buscan las fuentes, y se lleva a cabo la investigación. Aunque cada tema es trabajado de forma individual por un miembro del grupo, todos colaboran en la búsqueda de información. Es fundamental la monitorización del docente para mantener el uso del inglés como herramienta para la comunicación, y garantizar el desarrollo de las diferentes sub-competencias comunicativas de la lengua que hacen los estudiantes.

Se elabora un primer texto provisional con la información más relevante, de forma conjunta, con la participación de todos miembros del grupo, siendo el "experto" de cada subtema el que determina qué información debe contener este. Este texto pueden ser 10 frases que resuman la información encontrada, también puede incluir imágenes y esquemas, o mapas conceptuales. A continuación, se realizará la reunión de expertos en una salida al bosque, para propiciar la observación directa de los datos que se han recogido a través de otros recursos dentro del aula. Tras esta observación, los distintos expertos de cada grupo se reúnen y ponen en común la información encontrada. Se elabora un nuevo texto producto de la puesta en común. En este punto, la consulta de diccionarios, a los compañeros y al docente, jugarán un papel relevante. Finalmente, se reúnen los equipos y cada experto pone en común el nuevo texto acordado. El conjunto de los textos forman el corpus del trabajo de investigación realizado.

Al realizar esta actividad de aprendizaje cooperativo, a nivel del uso oral de la lengua extranjera, las principales aportaciones serán: el uso del inglés en un contexto real de comunicación, el trabajo con distintas fuentes de información que facilitarán el vocabulario necesario, y la utilización de distintos tipos de discurso (conversación, discusión, argumentación y exposición). En cuanto a las dificultades podemos encontrar, por parte del profesor, la búsqueda de fuentes de información adecuadas, y por parte de los alumnos, el uso exclusivo del inglés durante todo el proceso de aprendizaje.

8. Conclusiones

Los métodos más tradicionales en el aprendizaje de una LE recurren a conversaciones ficticias para aprender los fragmentos de lengua necesarios para la comunicación oral. En nuestro planteamiento de utilizar el aprendizaje cooperativo para el fomento del uso oral de la LE, el recurso de crear situaciones ficticias (mediante las actividades de *roleplaying,* por ejemplo) nos va a servir para desarrollar una competencia comunicativa inicial que es imprescindible, pero una vez adquiridos los aspectos básicos de la lengua debemos dar un paso más y crear situaciones en las que la lengua se utilice para la comunicación real, esto es, para el intercambio de ideas, opiniones e información.

Como hemos visto al analizar el concepto de competencia comunicativa, comunicarse no es tan solo conocer la lengua en relación al sistema lingüístico, sino que también es dominar aspectos que tienen que ver con el contexto comunicativo y desarrollar estrategias que facilitan la comprensión mutua, más si nos referimos al uso de una lengua que no es la L1. La comunicación real se da cuando la lengua no es exclusivamente el objetivo del aprendizaje, sino también un procedimiento para el aprendizaje. Estas situaciones las proporciona, entre otras metodologías de enseñanza-aprendizaje, la metodología del aprendizaje cooperativo, ya que, en todas sus distintas técnicas, es fundamental la interacción, es decir la comunicación.

Conociendo las dificultades del aprendizaje de la LE en el contexto general de las escuelas españolas, y las dificultades si queremos aplicar el aprendizaje cooperativo en esta área de conocimiento, nuestro enfoque no es exigente a nivel económico, pero sí que lo es en relación al dominio que el profesor debe tener de la materia, es fundamental que el nivel de competencia oral del profesor sea el adecuado para ofrecer el apoyo lingüístico que los alumnos necesitarán a lo largo del desarrollo de las actividades. Nuestra propuesta también es exigente porque requiere una buena coordinación a nivel de centro y una buena planificación, puesto que es un proyecto que, para que tenga sentido, debe tener continuidad a lo largo de toda la etapa. Es conveniente que el aprendizaje cooperativo forme parte del proyecto global del centro para que su uso sea más efectivo en el área de LE.

Si retomamos el objetivo general que nos habíamos planteado al principio del trabajo, tenemos los argumentos que nos permiten afirmar que el aprendizaje cooperativo es de gran utilidad en el área de lengua extranjera, igual que lo es en las demás áreas de conocimiento, y que en esta área, una de sus principales aportaciones es el fomento del uso oral de la lengua en un contexto real de comunicación, cosa que facilita el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos en su globalidad. En relación a los objetivos específicos destacamos la definición de competencia comunicativa y el modelo de competencia comunicativa que hemos tomado de referencia con sus subcompetencias. Este concepto y este modelo nos sirven para plantear las distintas actividades para la expresión oral que debemos realizar en el aula, de manera que trabajemos todos los elementos de la competencia comunicativa según las necesidades previamente analizadas de los alumnos. El estudio de los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo nos ha dado las claves para entender como este crea un contexto adecuado en el aula para el fomento de la expresión oral. También nos ha permitido ver qué soluciones podemos plantear a las dificultades que genera cualquier cambio en la manera de trabajar de los alumnos y profesores.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE DIMENSIONS IN EFL TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

Textbooks are important tools to develop the lexical competence of English foreign language learners. However teachers and researchers have paid little attention to the language input contained in textbooks, particularly as far as the representation of knowledge dimensions in vocabulary activities is concerned. The present study pursued two objectives. Firstly, it aimed at the identification of the dimensions involved in the vocabulary activities included in two English textbooks used in the last year of Spanish compulsory education (4th year ESO). Secondly, it aimed at ascertaining whether there were differences in the distribution of vocabulary knowledge dimensions in two textbooks of the same level. Results show that the distribution of vocabulary knowledge dimensions is different in the two textbooks under examination, which may give rise to differences in learners' lexical acquisition and output.

Key words: *vocabulary knowledge dimensions, textbooks, EFL, lexical competence.*

Resumen

Los libros de texto son herramientas importantes para el desarrollo de la competencia léxica de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, no todos los libros de texto dan la misma importancia al vocabulario, especialmente a la representación de las dimensiones léxicas en cada actividad. Por ello, los objetivos de este estudio son identificar las dimensiones léxicas que aparecen en las actividades de dos libros de texto de inglés como lengua extranjera en 4º de ESO y encontrar las diferencias existentes entre estos dos libros del mismo nivel. Los resultados muestran que hay diferencias significativas entre los dos libros y que la distribución de las dimensiones léxicas es bastante heterogénea lo cual puede afectar el desarrollo de la competencia léxica de los aprendices de inglés.

Palabras clave: *dimensiones léxicas, libros de texto, inglés como lengua extranjera, competencia léxica.*

1. Introduction

Textbooks are considered as the main resource in English foreign language teaching. They are containers of information and guides to the study of the target language (Jiménez and Mancebo 2008). Textbooks are influential as the quantity and quality of the language input contained in them can have a positive or negative effect on learners' language acquisition and development. For instance, as far as vocabulary input is concerned, Donzelli (2007) showed the close relation between vocabulary input and vocabulary uptake.

Since Richards' 1976 seminal article in which he established eight dimensions of *what it means to know a word*, dimensions later extended by Nation (1990), many scholars have proposed taxonomies of vocabulary knowledge. They may differ in the number and the nature of the dimensions but basically, as Jiménez Catalán (2002) notes, most classifications can be grouped into grammar and semantics dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, other aspects such as the vocabulary retrieval and store in learners' mental lexicon and the pedagogy of vocabulary teaching or learning are neglected.

Many studies have analysed the vocabulary input in foreign language learners' textbooks from different perspectives, such as vocabulary selection and presentation, external and internal word frequency, rank

order, word distribution or the relation between input and uptake. Chart 1 displays a selection of studies distributed by focus, target language, language or educational level and method used in the analysis. As can be observed, most research on vocabulary in textbooks has focused on word frequency. Little attention has been paid to the analysis of dimensions of word knowledge underlying in vocabulary activities.

Chart 1 Perspectives on the analysis of vocabulary in textbooks

Study	Focus	language	Level	Method
López-Jiménez 2014	Vocabulary selection, organization and presentation	Spanish	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	Content analysis
Marmol 2011	Word frequency Word type Word density	English	Beginner 3rd Primary Education	RANGE
Criado and Sánchez 2009	Word frequency and distribution	English	Intermediate 2nd Baccalaureate	RANGE
Godev 2009	Word frequency Vocabulary selection Word lists	Spanish	College students	Frequency dictionary
Jiménez-Catalán and Mancebo 2008	Word type 50 Top frequent words Distribution of word categories Shared and non-shared vocabulary Vocabulary input increase	English	6th primary 10th secondary (4 ESO)	WordSmith Tools
Donzelli 2007	Word frequency Vocabulary input Vocabulary uptake	English	Children -course level not specified	Range

Given the role played by textbooks and vocabulary in foreign language education it is important for teachers and researchers to examine vocabulary input in learners' textbooks. The present study responds to this need. Likewise, it also aims to contribute to narrow the gap in the study of pedagogical dimensions, usually overlooked in vocabulary knowledge taxonomies. This is a preliminary step in this regard. Our objectives were twofold. The first one was to identify the main dimensions of vocabulary knowledge underlying in vocabulary activities in textbooks; the second one was to ascertain whether there were similarities or differences regarding the distribution of vocabulary knowledge dimensions in the targeted textbooks.

2. Method

This preliminary study was based on a content analysis of vocabulary activities drawn from two English textbooks aimed at the last year of Spanish Compulsory Education: *Challenge for ESO 4* (Burlington Books) and *Switch 4* (Oxford). As a framework for our analysis we followed Jiménez Catalán's (2002: 155) classification of vocabulary knowledge dimensions, our translation and adaption of this classification is included in the following chart.

Chart 2: Vocabulary knowledge dimensions (adapted from Jiménez Catalán (2002:155)

1	Know the grammar, pronunciation and orthography of a word
2	Know the morphology of a word
3	Know the collocability of a word
4	Know the syntactic restrictions of a word
5	Know the frequency in oral and written language of a word
6	Know the contexts where a word can be used
7	Know a word semantic and syntactic relations with other words
8	Recognise the word in its written and oral form
9	Recover the word when it is needed
10	Know the conceptual and referential meaning of a word
11	Know the meanings that the word connotes
12	Know the pragmatic sense of a word

As can be observed in chart 2, each lexical dimension has been given a number. For the sake of clarity we will use those numbers to refer to the vocabulary knowledge dimensions summarized in the Results and Discussion sections.

The steps adopted in the analysis were as follows. First, we identified the vocabulary activities and classified them according to the vocabulary knowledge dimensions displayed in Table 1. Second, we counted the vocabulary activities and the knowledge dimensions in each activity. This provided us with a basis for conducting a comparative analysis of the two textbooks under examination in the present study.

In the process of identification and classification we found some problems that need to be mentioned here. One was the lack of correspondence between some activities and the dimensions in Jiménez Catalán's (2002) framework. For instance, matching or translation did not seem to correspond with the dimensions in straightforward way. Our option was to introduce a new dimension: "Recognise the word in its visual form" (dimension 13). It could be argued that this is not different from "Recognise the word in its written and oral form" (dimension 8). However, in our view, the former includes pictures and words whereas the latter only refers to words. One example of vocabulary activity where learners are required to match words to pictures is the first exercise of *Challenge for ESO 4* introductory unit (Addison and Pamela 2006: 6). Here they are provided with a number of words related to jobs together with six pictures of people standing for the jobs. Similarly, the exercises where learners have to translate words into their mother tongue cover a dimension not contemplated in Jiménez Catalán's (2002) taxonomy. It is true that in order to translate a word the learner

has to know its "conceptual and referential meaning" (dimension 10), but translation involves different cognitive processes, among them word recognition and word equivalence between the source and target language. Because of this we included another new dimension: "translation knowledge" (dimension 14). An example is found in the first exercise of unit 7 (Addison and Pamela 2006: 61). Here learners are required to say what the words in the box (sound, voice, hit, clip, text message, answer a call, download, compose and broadcast) mean in in their first language. Apart from that, another problem is the similar representation of dimensions 6 and 12. In our opinion both stand for the same concept as pragmatic knowledge presupposes knowledge of how to use the word in context. An example is found in filling the gaps activities where learners have to insert the words provided in a box into the appropriate blank.

3. Descriptive analysis of vocabulary knowledge dimensions

3.1. Challenge for ESO 4

This textbook published by Burlington Books has an introductory unit (I), 10 content units; three extra units devoted to the review of vocabulary and grammar at the end of every three content units, with the exception of Review 2 that comprises the review of 4 units; and ten "Check your progress" sections devoted to the consolidation of the syllabus. Tables 1 and 2 below display the units of the book together with the resulting number of vocabulary activities per unit. For its part, Table 3 shows the number of vocabulary activities included in the introductory unit, the ten content units and the units that review the syllabus every each three/four content units. Finally, Table 4 provides a summary of the number of vocabulary activities included in the "Check your progress" units. The abbreviations in the first row should be read as follows: *I* stands for introductory unit, *U* for Unit, *R* for Review Unit, and *CYP* stands for the Check your progress units.

Table 1: Distribution of vocabulary activities per unit in *Challenge for ESO 4*

I	U1	U2	U3	R1	U4	U5	U6	U7	R2	U8	U9	U10	R3
5	7	6	6	1	6	5	5	6	1	5	5	6	1

Table 2: Distribution vocabulary activities per unit in *Challenge for ESO 4* "Check your progress" units

CYP 1	CYP 2	CYP 3	CYP 4	CYP 5	CYP 6	CYP 7	CYP 8	CYP 9	CYP 10
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

The total number of vocabulary activities included in this textbook is 85. As can be observed there is an even distribution throughout the units. The vocabulary knowledge dimensions together with the number of activities in which they appear are illustrated in Table 3. A close analysis of the data points to the absence of six vocabulary knowledge dimensions: dimensions number 4, 5, 8, 9, 11 and 12.

Table3: Vocabulary knowledge dimensions in the vocabulary activities of *Challenge for ESO 4*.

Vocabulary knowledge dimensions	**No of activities**
1. Know the grammar, pronunciation and orthography of a word	2
2. Know the morphology of a word	4
3. Know the collocability of a word	8
6. Know the contexts where a word can be used	30
7. Know a word semantic and syntactic relations with other words	45
10. Know the conceptual and referential meaning of a word	28
13. Recognise the word in its visual form	10
14. Translation knowledge of a word.	1

The figures indicate that the most frequent vocabulary knowledge dimension within *Challenge for ESO 4* is "knowledge of the semantic and syntactic relations between words" (Dimension 4); this is followed by "knowledge of the context where a word can be used" (Dimension 6) and "knowledge of a word conceptual and referential meaning" (Dimension 10). The rest of vocabulary knowledge dimensions are either infrequent (Dimensions 1, 2, 3, 13 and 14) or absent in the vocabulary activities (Dimensions 4, 5, 8, 9, 11 and 12). In light of the figures it seems as this textbook gave more importance to semantic and syntactic relations and context and conceptual and referential meaning than to morphology, word frequency, recovering a word when needed, or orthography.

3.2. Switch 4

This textbook, published by Oxford, comprises an introductory unit, nine content units and three review units. Although it has fewer units than *Challenge for ESO 4*, every unit contains more vocabulary activities than *Challenge for ESO 4*. Table 4 displays the distribution of the number of vocabulary activities per unit. The abbreviations in the first row should be read as follows: I stands for introductory unit, U for Unit, and R for Review Unit.

Table 4: Distribution of vocabulary activities per unit in *Switch 4*

Unit	I	U1	U 2	U3	R1	U4	U5	U6	R2	U7	U8	U9	R3
N	8	14	11	15	10	12	13	14	9	14	14	13	10

Therefore, the total number of vocabulary activities of *Switch 4* is 157, a higher number than *Challenge for ESO 4*. Table 5 shows the dimensions underlying in the vocabulary activities of *Switch 4*: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10. And as can observed the number of activities in which each dimension is involved is higher in this textbook than in *Challenge for ESO 4*. This is down to the fact that *Switch 4* contains a higher number of vocabulary activities. Furthermore there are two dimensions that did not appear in *Challenge for ESO 4* but now do appear in *Switch 4*: dimensions 4 and 8. Likewise, some dimensions are absent in this textbook: dimensions number 5, 9, 11 and 12.

Table 5: Knowledge dimensions in vocabulary activities within *Switch 4*

Vocabulary knowledge dimensions	**No activities**
1. Know the grammar, pronunciation and orthography of a word	12
2. Know the morphology of a word	17
3. Know the collocability of a word	21
4. Know the syntactic restrictions of a word	10
6. Know the contexts where a word can be used	41
7. Know a word semantic and syntactic relations with other words	58
8. Recognise the word in its written and oral form	26
10. Know the conceptual and referential meaning of a word	45
13. Recognise the word in its visual form	26
14. Translation knowledge of a word	2

As table 5 shows, the most frequent lexical dimensions within this textbook are, as in Challenge *for ESO 4,* dimensions number 7, 10 and 6. This coincidence suggests that vocabulary designers give more importance to the development of vocabulary skills related to dimensions, related to semantic and syntactic relations, conceptual and referential meaning and context than to morphology, the grammar of words, listening skills, etc. On the contrary, little attention is given to dimension 5 (know the frequency in oral and written language of a word), dimension 9 (recover the word when it is needed), dimension 11 (know the meanings that the word connotes) and dimension 12 (Know the pragmatic sense of a word).

3.3. Comparison of the two textbooks

In this section we will focus on the similarities and differences that exist between the two textbooks in terms of the knowledge dimensions involved in their vocabulary activities. Table 6 below shows the differences and similarities between the two textbooks. The first column includes vocabulary knowledge dimensions out of Jiménez Catalan's (2002) taxonomy plus the two included in this study (dimensions 13 and 14). The second and third columns display the distribution of vocabulary activities per textbook.

Table 6: Vocabulary knowledge dimension in *Challenge for ESO 4* and *Switch 4*

Vocabulary knowledge dimensions	*No of* activities in *Challenge for ESO 4*	*No* of activities in *Switch 4*
1.Know the grammar, pronunciation and orthography of a word	2	12
2. Know the morphology of a word	4	17
3. Know the collocability of a word	8	21
4. Know the syntactic restrictions of a word	-	10
5. Know the frequency in oral and written language of a word	-	-

6. Know the contexts where a word can be used	30	41
7. Know a word semantic and syntactic relations with other words	45	58
8. Recognise the word in its written and oral form	-	26
9. Recover the word when it is needed	-	-
10. Know the conceptual and referential meaning of a word	28	45
11. Know the meanings that the word connotes	-	-
12. Know the pragmatic sense of a word	-	-
13. Recognise the word in its visual form	10	26
14. Translation knowledge of a word	1	2

The most frequent dimensions coincide in *Challenge for ESO 4* and *Switch 4*: dimensions number 7 (Know a word semantic and syntactic relations with other words), 10 (Know the conceptual and referential meaning of a word) and 6 (Know the contexts where a word can be used). However, there are more differences than similarities between the two textbooks. The first difference is related to the quantity of vocabulary activities. Whereas *Challenge for ESO 4* contains 85 vocabulary activities, *Switch 4* comprises a total of 157 vocabulary activities. Consequently, the representation of vocabulary knowledge dimensions in the activities is bigger in *Switch 4* than in *Challenge for ESO 4*. As said earlier, this is down to the fact that the number of activities of *Switch 4* is much numerous than in *Challenge for ESO 4*. The second difference is that the range of dimensions represented in *Switch 4* is wider than in *Challenge for ESO 4*. *Switch 4* vocabulary activities involve the dimensions covered by *Challenge for ESO 4* and two more lexical dimensions: dimensions 4 (Know the syntactic restrictions of a word) and 8 (Recognise the word in its written and oral form). Finally, further differences are observed: Whereas *Challenge for ESO 4* gives no importance to the recognition of words in their written or oral form, *Switch 4* contains listening activities where the learner has to recognise words in their oral form. These differences suggest that vocabulary learning plays a more important role in *Switch 4* than in *Challenge for ESO* 4, as it has been demonstrated by the higher number of activities devoted to vocabulary and the wider range of vocabulary knowledge dimensions represented in the textbook. However, we should take into account the existing similarity as the most frequent dimension in both textbooks has to do with the syntactic and the semantic relations. From this stance, the distribution of knowledge dimensions in the vocabulary activities in the textbooks examined is rather poor and heterogeneous.

4. Conclusions

The present study set out to identify the vocabulary activities and vocabulary knowledge dimensions in two textbooks currently used in 4th year ESO, end of educational stage. Our analysis showed a high degree of similarity between both books regarding the representation of vocabulary knowledge dimensions. Basically they were the semantic and syntactic relations between words (Dimension 7), the conceptual and referential meaning of words (Dimension 10) and the context where words can be used (Dimension 6). Nevertheless,

differences could also be observed between *Challenge for ESO 4* and *Switch 4* in the number of vocabulary activities and in the range of dimensions. Although both textbooks are used at the same course level (4th year ESO), the close analysis of their vocabulary activities reveals differences. This finding has educational implications and requires further research.

In this preliminary study we have focused on the analysis of two textbooks used in the same year of secondary school. However, in order to have a round picture of the representation of vocabulary activities and dimensions the analysis should be expanded to more books from the same course. Similarly it would be convenient to expand the analysis to textbooks in lower and upper courses in order to see whether there is a gradation and an increase of vocabulary activities and dimensions. Furthermore, it would be also interesting to relate the vocabulary input in activities within textbooks to the vocabulary retrieved by students in a lexical availability task. This would provide us with information concerning the relation between vocabulary input, learners' available lexicons and vocabulary uptake.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

ENHANCING ORACY IN THE PRE-PRIMARY ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Over the last decades learning English as an additional/foreign language (EFL) at an early age has spread widely in many schools. The onset age has gone down, and the number of children who start EFL learning in pre-primary education has increased dramatically. In order to put into practice the best age-appropriate methodologies in pre-primary classrooms, teachers need to be aware of the manner in which children approach language learning at an early age. The aim of this article is to highlight the importance of the aural and oral skills for EFL learning in pre-primary contexts. The paper provides information on practices that engage very young children in active EFL learning.

Key words: oracy, pre-primary education, English, age, learning context, practices.

Resumen

En las últimas décadas, aprender inglés como lengua adicional/extranjera (ILE) a una edad temprana se ha generalizado en muchas escuelas. La edad de inicio ha descendido y el número de niños que comienzan ILE en pre-escolar ha aumentado considerablemente. Para poder poner en práctica las metodologías que mejor se adapten a la edad de los alumnos de pre-escolar, los profesores deben conocer cómo los niños de corta edad abordan el aprendizaje de lenguas. El objetivo de este artículo es destacar la importancia de las destrezas auditivas y orales para el aprendizaje de ILE en contextos de Pre-escolar. El documento proporciona información sobre prácticas que involucran a los niños pequeños en un aprendizaje activo de ILE.

Palabras clave: oralidad, educación de pre-escolar, inglés, edad, contexto de aprendizaje, prácticas.

1. Introduction

It is an uncontested fact that the ability to learn more than one language is unique to humans and that everyone can learn additional languages (L2) during their lifespan. Researchers on language acquisition agree that at an early age, language learning begins by listening, by understanding the messages and by speaking (O'Grady, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Kuhl, 2010; Cutler, 2012). To achieve this goal, children need to be exposed actively to the target language.

Even though the L2 learning processes differ from the first language acquisition process in many respects, there are close links between acquiring the mother tongue and learning a foreign language at an early age at school. Both processes have in common that the two are human language systems, and that the same implicit and subconscious mechanisms apply to the children's language learning for in both cases children 'absorb' knowledge or information from the environment (Winter & Reber, 1994). To become a proficient speaker of any mother tongue requires time (around 5 years), practice, and intensive amount of exposure to that language and these amounts increase when the objective is a foreign language (Cameron, 2001; Linse, 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Dunn, 2012). One way to increase the amount and intensity of input necessary for implicit and subconscious EFL learning in instructed contexts is to provide enough exposure for implicit

language learning, to increase the reception and the production skills and to provide with effective practices that give young learners clues of meaning.

Following on from this view on early language learning and based on my own teaching experience in pre-primary classrooms in Spain together with a reflection on how Spanish young learners approach English in pre-school years, this paper attempts to fill in the gap in the literature. The article delves deeper into the manner in which pre-primary teachers can take hints from first language acquisition for teaching oracy in pre-primary EFL settings. After framing the topic against the backdrop of L2 learning at school, the paper will go on to suggest practices to foster the listening and speaking skills. Finally, it will expound on the main implications for practitioners and for student teachers.

2. Language learning in the pre-primary classrooms

Long before infants become language productive, they spend a long time listening and paying attention to the continuous stream of speech sounds from the speakers around them. The hearing sense develops early in humans (Saffran *et al*., 2006), and babies have the capacity to process the speech sounds they hear much before they can understand the meaning of words (Kuhl, 2010). To process the speech sounds that make up the words, the sentences and the grammar of a language, children use the auditory learning channel (Cutler, 2012). Much in the same way, EFL learners in pre-primary classes are confronted with the speech sounds from their teachers in real time at school. As stressed by Dunn (2012: 64): "A young beginner is entirely dependent on his teacher for all English language learning in the initial stages" and the preschoolers' task is to process English by listening to the teacher and by discovering and by processing the L2 rules (Moon, 2000). In addition, despite the fact that listening in an L2 is harder than listening in the mother tongue (Cutler, 2012), listening is a fundamental skill needed to learn to speak because unless the message is clearly understood when it is heard, the learners will find difficult to process the information and store it in memory.

2.1. Starting age

Regarding the age factor, young learners are different from adult learners in their way of learning (Cameron, 2001). Children are language receptive and potentially equipped with the necessary skills that allow them to learn more than one language from birth. Cook (2002: 23) stresses that "Given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs". To learn an L2 in pre-school years, young EFL learners make use of their innate language learning capacities to extract and abstract information about the language and the degree of success to achieve the goal depends on the learning context, on the amounts of input, and also, on the opportunities for language use. Despite the fact that implicit acquisition processes require massive amounts of input, the subconscious learning may not include 'intentional monitoring' of language (Gomber, 1992) because children "…bring with them an already well-established set of instincts, skills and characteristics which will help them to learn another language" (Halliwell, 1992: 3). Seen in this light, one strong argument in favour of starting EFL in pre-primary is to take advantage of the biological predisposition that children bring with them to the task of language learning.

2.2. Learning context

Despite the fact that age is an important factor for language learning, an early start does not guarantee successful outcomes in an L2 unless it is accompanied by time for learning and quality teaching. Both, the amount of input and output, and the quality of teaching play an important role in the developmental language process because they lead up to greater or lesser opportunities for aural and for oral communicative interaction (Cameron, 2001).

When infants are born, they learn how to speak their mother tongue by being fully immersed in very highly contextualized language settings; and the one and only necessary requirement to learn to talk is the presence of other human beings to interact with (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). At an early age, children learn foreign languages being exposed to them in natural infant directed conversations, it is not the case if the information is presented to them through a television or audiotape (Kuhl, 2004). Experiments carried out with infants exposed to a language over a TV set, video or audio show that the children did not achieve any language learning whatsoever (O'Grady, 2005). Children absorb a huge amount of information about language during social interaction, not only by listening to the continuous stream of speech sounds from the speakers around them, but also by looking at their gestures, their faces and to the actions (Kuhl, 2010). Regarding research on language development, studies indicate that once the language faculty has been activated for the mother tongue, it remains available indefinitely for learning additional languages.

The European Commission (2011:17) recommendations for pre-primary language learning states that "Children should be exposed to the target language in meaningful and, if possible, authentic settings, in such a way that the language is spontaneously acquired rather than consciously learnt'. Thus, being immersed in the language, understanding the meaning of the messages and having opportunities for language use are necessary conditions for early L2 language learning. As highlighted by Lightbown & Spada (2006: 32): "Parents tend to respond to their children's language in terms of its meaning rather than in terms of its grammatical accuracy". Similarly, the learning context and the input data which seem appropriate for young monolingual learners is suitable for young L2 learners (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). While naturalistic language learning contexts are characterised by constant language immersion, non-immersion settings are characterised by restricted contact time. It is not surprising that in contexts where the exposure to EFL is limited to a few hours a week, the language growth might be affected (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

To learn English in pre-primary setting, children need to make sense of what their teachers say. As Gass & Selinker (2008: 309) point out: "It is a given that without understanding the language, no learning can take place. Although understanding alone does not guarantee that learning will occur, it does set the scene for learning to take place". Thus, as the teacher is the main and only model available for interaction and the opportunities for language use at school are less (Cameron, 2001; Dunn, 2013), teaching English in English to children becomes an invaluable tool for it creates a rich linguistic environment and helps to foster communicative interaction and understanding. The practices suggested in this paper are based on the idea that early EFL learning in pre-primary contexts runs in parallel with content learning, with the focus on meaning and on fluency, rather than on form and on accuracy.

3. Enhancing the aural skills

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2012: 7) establishes that the main early learning goals of all subject areas are listening, attention, understanding and speaking for it is precisely at this stage that the listening and speaking skills become the foundation on which literacy is built on. More precisely, the Department for Education and Skills document *Letters and Sounds* (DfES, 2007: 2) specifies that during Phase One, young children should be provided with speaking and listening activities to find easier learning to read and to write later on, because "listening underpins all language development " (Spooner & Woodcock, 2013: 4). Linse (2005: 25) stresses that the listening and the speaking skills are the foundation for reading and writing: "You need to hear a word before you can say it. You need to say a word before you can read it. You need to say a word before you can write it". Likewise, ear-training in the EFL pre-primary classrooms has effects on the other skills. On the basis of all this, it is reasonable to think that the earlier children start developing the aural and oral communication skills in English at school, the better. In this regard, it is never too soon to start training the children's ears to actively listen to and speak in English.

At an early age, the acquisition of knowledge is learner-centered and children take an active role in the process of language learning (Cameron, 2001; Moon, 2000). There are many senses and many skills involved in the language acquisition process; thus, the activities addressed to young learners should foster the different learning channels (Linse, 2005). Not only should they aim at developing the auditory and the oral capacities, but they should also focus on developing the gross-motor control skills (arm-eye coordination; body coordination; rhythm and general movement) and the fine skills (eye-hand coordination, finger strength and dexterity). As children learn holistically, some of the activities should encourage movement, touching objects or playing instruments; others should promote body movement, miming or actions; and others, should require silence and being still.

One way to teach children to listen and to pay attention to the teacher in the EFL pre-primary class is by fostering the auditory skills with multisensory and multimodal techniques. Dunn (2013: 126) points out that "Children acquire language by taking part in activities…, so from the first lesson activities should and can take place in English". In a communication friendly classroom, children should be fully involved in the listening process through a myriad of multisensory experiences, such as: seeing, listening, moving, touching, imitating, singing, playing, experimenting, investigating, manipulating and speaking. White and Evans (2006) stress that the good listening skills that help learners in the task of listening are closely linked to the students' holistic development: making eye-contact, no interrupting, facing the speaker, good body language, interested facial expressions, nodding, mirroring and asking and answering questions. The following practices can be embedded in all school subjects in the curriculum:

3.1. *Listening games and attention getters*

At an early age, children can be easily distracted as they have short attention span (Perry, 1995). To expand children's attention span and to help them concentrate and become more attentive in class, children can listen to sounds in and around the classroom, at school, or during school visits (e.g. the teacher in the classroom next door; children playing in the playground; wind blowing; traffic noise; ticking clock; birds singing, etc.). Then, children report orally to the teacher about the sounds. Moreover, to get children's attention and

organize their management strategies teachers can think of a rhyme, chant, song or a poem with or without actions; with or without visual aids or musical instruments (Palmer & Bayley, 2013).

3.2. *Handclapping games and body percussion*.

Children can experiment with sounds and sounds levels made with different parts of the body (clap hands, click fingers, tap knees, pop finger out of mouth, thump chest, rub hand up and down arm or leg, scratch head and slap arm or leg). Activities for phonological awareness development include activities such as discriminate the 'bits' within a word on children's names or other vocabulary words according to the number of syllables (Palmer & Bayley, 2013). Additionally, children can use their bodies to make music, they watch and listen to their teacher making a sound with a body part, and the children imitate the sound. After children have practiced with different sounds and know the dynamics of the game, one child can be chosen to be the leader. The sounds can be also made with objects (pots or plastic water bottles with peas, pasta, rice, cereals, sugar, beans, pebbles or sand); or with musical instruments (drums, triangles, tambourines).

3.3. *Games with sounds*.

Children can play games to develop the auditory awareness and the sound projection ability (growling, grunting, gargling, murmuring, mumbling, humming, and whispering); games to promote the social skills and turn taking like making animal sounds for auditory discrimination (bark, cheep, cluck, cuckoo, growl, hiss, meow, neigh, oink, purr, quack); games that involve materials development to make music together and help develop the sense of rhythm (rattles, rain sticks) (Palmer & Bayley, 2013) . The children sit in a circle, the teacher or one of the children make a sound with the mouth, imitate the sound of an animal or make a sound with an object, the next child in the circle passes the sound to the child next to him and this continues around the circle.

In this manner, by observing the presence or absence of sounds (auditory attention); by recognising the speech sounds from non-language/environmental sounds (sound discrimination); by attending to sounds (auditory awareness); by attaching meaning to sounds (sound recognition); by making sounds with parts of the body or with instruments (expressive communication skills); by singing, chanting or rhyming, children gradually learn to listen (Blarclay and Staples 2012).

4. Enhancing the oral skills

The previous headings have evidenced that teaching listening in the Early Years can support young learners during the first stages of EFL learning. In order to help children to make the best possible language progress, teachers can encourage children's talk by planning opportunities that engage them in speaking activities. One of the main teachers' aims at pre-primary level should be to ensure that the message is understood by the learners during the turn-by-turn dialogues during conversational interactions. Communicative interaction between teacher and children and input and output data can be achieved by means of a variety of techniques: asking questions, recasting, expansion, explicit corrections, elicitation, prompting, repetition and wait time (Mackey, 2012).

On the basis of the foregoing review, a selection of best practices that foster English oral language and promote the speaking skills are suggested.

4.1. Circle time

Role play, arts and crafts or indoors and outdoors play are among the best age-appropriate practices that facilitate the use of the language in pre-primary settings. However, circle time seems an ideal practice to engage children in conversations as with this age groups most of the input and output interactions take place with the whole class. Despite the fact that the sessions on the carpet are teacher-led, the learners play an active part in the interaction generated (Roskos *et al*., 2009). Circle time is a teaching practice that can be conducted at any time of the school day, from morning rituals (greetings, register, weather, calendar, sharing and helping hands), to story time, to singing time, or to dismissal. Children can talk about daily routines on the carpet and the language linked to these actions carried out with regularity help children understand the meaning and provide them with multiple benefits (Cameron, 2003). The language that goes with the daily routines, with transitional times, and also the cognates are of great help for teachers and for learners. Children rote-learn chunks of language that go with daily routines and transitional times, and these formulas allow them become productive in English in class from day one and intrinsically help them to develop the grammar (Moon, 2000). The cognates with the same or similar spelling, pronunciation and meaning in two languages (actor, doctor, animal, hospital) are of a great help for the children to comprehend meaning and for the teachers to explain the concepts (Cameron, 2005).

During circle time sessions, child learners develop oracy, learn turn-taking and improve the organization skills such as raising their hand to speak and to ask permission. In circle time, children can listen to stories, tell stories, narrate their experiences, listen to others and acquire vocabulary; thereby, children during circle time develop their thinking and their social and oracy skills.

4.2. *Musical activities*.

Musical activities are fundamental to oracy since the lyrics help to train the brain to the grammatical patterns and the melodies train the ears to the sounds and intonation. Children can learn to discriminate the speech sounds, intonation patterns and rhythm of English through songs, chants, finger plays and rhymes (Bruce & Spratt, 2011). In turn, songs, chants, finger plays and rhymes, with or without movement, help to tune the young learners' ears to the speech sounds of the new language. Musical activities are easily available in EFL books, they all integrate rhythm and they all build on phonological awareness and language learning. Musical activities provide children with opportunities to listen to the sounds and intonation of language, to detect grammatical patterns and to improve their attention as well as their short-term memory and long-term auditory memory (Palmer 2013). One of the intelligences that develops first in humans is the musical one and the brain seems to remember better language and expressions learnt with music and movement (Schön *et al*., 2008). Thus, singing and moving in the pre-primary classrooms has many advantages for child EFL learners and can be scheduled in any subject of the curriculum. Eventually, songs, rhymes and word play help to develop the young EFL young learners' phonological awareness. There is a chant, a rhyme or a song with or without movement that can be used at any time of the pre-school day, from arrivals to group time, to snack time, to dismissal. Besides, teachers can make up their own songs. First, they can decide on a language structure useful for the children at a specific time of the day. Then, on a familiar melody and some movements to go with it (Paterson & Willis, 2008).

4.3. *Storytelling*.

Stories are powerful tools to develop oracy in EFL. Listening to and telling stories are among the best practices that meet the expectations of oracy in the pre-primary classrooms. Stories can be used with different age and ability groups for developing the four skills as they contain all the ingredients necessary for language and for content learning (Wright, 2000). Children make indirect and unconscious language learning meaningful through picture books being read in class. To understand a story told by the teacher, children need to be active listeners (Roskos *et al*., 2009). When foreign language learners are read stories in class, they get the meaning of the words from the book illustrations and through the context (Cameron, 2005). Children who are read stories in class develop the listening skills by having access to sounds, intonation, vocabulary, grammatical structures and chunks of the target language within a context. During a story time session children can develop the speaking skills by reciting, choral reading, by guessing or answering questions and at a later stage by telling stories themselves. When teachers read stories to children in pre-primary classrooms, they are offering them opportunities for holistic learning.

Circle time, musical activities and storytelling are some of the building blocks for effective oracy instruction in pre-primary EFL settings. These practices can be included in all subjects of the curriculum and implemented and adapted in the pre-primary classroom from day one according to the age and language level of the young learners.

5. Implications for teacher development

Despite the fact that starting EFL learning early has spread widely in an increasing number of instructed contexts (Rixon, 2013), publications that propose age-appropriate EFL methodologies for pre-primary classrooms are scarce. The present article has explored the skills involved during the first stages of EFL learning in pre-primary classrooms, taking into consideration how children approach languages. The practices suggested for EFL teaching are closely related to the theoretical aspects around the aural and the oral skills and entail consequences for pre-primary teachers and student teachers.

Undoubtedly, the theory and the practice on communicative interaction suggest that there are a number of aspects to be considered for successful language learning with pre-primary children. These aspects include factors affecting the language development (starting age, learning context and amounts of input); the holistic learning (auditory and oral capacities, gross-motor control skills and fine skills); the teaching techniques (asking questions, recasting, expansion, explicit correction, elicitation, repetition and wait time) and the practices that foster the aural and oral skills (observing the presence or absence of sounds, recognising the speech sounds from non-language/environmental sounds, attending to sounds, attaching meaning to sounds, making sounds with parts of the body or with instruments, singing, chanting or rhyming, music, language and movement, daily routines, transitional times, formulaic language and circle time).

In spite of the fact that knowing all the aspects around early language learning may seem a hard task for practitioners, it is worth being aware of them. In order to create a conducive EFL learning context in pre-primary classrooms, curricular planning to support the aural and oral skills should be a priority. Firstly, because successful EFL learning at an early age is built upon the listening and speaking skills; and secondly,

because encouraging the listening and speaking skills early will benefit the reading and writing skills later on, and in turn, they will facilitate the access to other learning areas of the curriculum.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

LANGUAGE TEACHERS AS NATURAL RESEARCHERS OF THEIR PRACTICE AND POTENTIAL AGENTS OF CHANGE

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Abstract

Teachers reflect on their practice on a daily basis in a quite informal and instinctive way. With encouragement, time and the opportunity to make their reflection more systematic, teachers can become teacher researchers and be well placed to give insightful and valid accounts of pedagogical processes and practices in their classrooms. Such research is valuable professional development for teachers. Furthermore, research empowers teachers in having a voice in classroom-focused research and making a contribution to knowledge from an insider position.

I have taken four 'telling cases', two teachers in Spain researching aspects of their practice in their classrooms where they teach English as a foreign language amongst other subjects, and two teachers in England teaching Spanish as a foreign language. Each teacher carried out a small research project within the context of a Masters' programme. I analyse their narratives in terms of the teachers' 'felt need' to research, their research questions, their methodologies, their research findings and impact of their practice. I frame this analysis with reference to the extent of the transformation of the teachers' mind sets and their practices when they had completed their research. I conclude that teacher research, which could be part of school professional development, offers rich personal learning, creates professional identity and enables teachers to develop self- agency to question and change practices to improve student learning.

Key words: teacher research; critical reflexivity; student voice; empowerment; transformation; professional identity.

Resumen

Los docentes suelen reflexionar sobre su práctica diaria de manera bastante informal e intuitiva. Con el estímulo, el tiempo y la oportunidad de convertir su reflexión en algo más sistemático, el docente puede convertirse en docente-investigador y estar en disposición de ofrecer datos interesantes y válidos a cerca de los procesos y la práctica pedagógica en su aula. Se trata de un desarrollo profesional valioso para el profesorado. Además, la investigación ayuda al docente a tener voz en la investigación centrada en el aula, aportando su contribución al conocimiento desde una posición privilegiada.

Son cuatro los docentes que reflexionan en voz alta sobre sobre su investigación: En España, dos profesores que indagan sobre su práctica en el aula donde, entre otras asignaturas, imparten inglés como lengua extranjera, y otros dos profesores que enseñan español como lengua extranjera en Inglaterra. Cada docente lleva a cabo un pequeño proyecto de investigación en el contexto de un programa de máster. Se analizan aquí sus "narrativas" en relación con lo que el docente siente que debe ser investigado, sus preguntas de investigación, su metodología, los resultados de la investigación y el impacto de ésta en su práctica. El análisis describe la hasta qué punto cambia el modo de pensar del docente en relación a su práctica, una vez realizada la investigación, y concluye afirmando que la investigación docente, que podría ser parte del desarrollo profesional de la escuela, ofrece al docente un gran aprendizaje personal además de una identidad profesional y le capacita para modificar su práctica docente con el fin de mejorar el aprendizaje de sus estudiantes.

Palabras clave: docente investigador; reflexión crítica; voz del alumnado; empoderamiento; transformación; identidad profesional.

1. Introduction: towards the concept of teachers as teacher researchers

With the trend towards evidence-based practice, and in an era of accountability, teachers are increasingly called to give valid accounts of 'what works' and 'in what conditions' in their classrooms. Teachers are no strangers to data, being generators, collectors and receivers of substantial amounts of data in their daily practices. Indeed, Brighouse and Woods assert that: '*Teachers are natural researchers in the sense that all teaching is based on inquiry and the response of pupils provides ready evidence as to the effectiveness of various teaching and learning approaches'* (1999:42)'. Teacher research is not new (Elliott 1991; Stenhouse 1975) as teachers have been involved in curriculum development- type activities alongside experienced researchers for many years. However, the newer concept of the teacher researcher emphasises the agency of teachers in initiating and leading their own research and such research is considered emancipatory (Carr and Kemmis 1986). Sometimes, teachers are drawn to Masters courses as a means to engage with research and to deepen their knowledge, interrogate it and to challenge assumptions they make about their practice. It is incumbent on teachers as part of their professional practice to reflect critically on their practice in order to ensure the best possible learning conditions and outcomes for pupils. Whilst teaching experience provides a rich frame of reference of 'what has worked', teacher research provides a platform for professional development that can lead to changed, better, different practices that challenge the status quo. Many teachers settle into comfortable routines and mental habits and can benefit from the opportunity to reflect critically on these. A desire to research often springs from a sense of dissatisfaction, a felt need, a self-questioning, as Cochran-smith and Lytle put it: '*Teachers' questions often emerge from discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs*' (1993:14). Put simply, even experienced teachers will be aware that sometimes the old tried and tested 'does not work' in some contexts. A very natural response is to seek to understand this phenomenon in which case, as Cochran- Smith and Lytle suggest: '*Teacher research stems from or generates questions and reflects teachers' desires to make sense of their experience-to adapt a learning stance or openness toward classroom life*' (ibid: 25).

What I am interested to explore in this article is the experiences of language teachers who have developed their professional identity of 'teacher researcher' to make sense of their classroom life and the dynamics and discrepancies therein. The teachers who are the focus of this article have undertaken classroom research in the light of their own questions that arose from their classroom realities. To summarise how research is being understood in this context:

- The definition of research is of 'systematic self-critical inquiry' (Stenhouse 1981:103)
- Such research is done **by** teachers, often **with** other teachers, **not on** teachers
- The research is driven by personal interest and a felt need.

In the cases of the four teacher researchers featuring in this article, I show how they have been motivated to research their practice and been transformed by it. Their research was undertaken as part of Masters' level study that ensured structure, rigour and validity in the teachers' research. The teachers' research was concurrent with their roles as full time classroom teachers. As such, the teachers came to inhabit a hybrid persona of teacher researcher, looking both inwards and outwards to reflect critically on their practice (Kincheloe 2003).

2. Teacher research as critically reflective practice

The shift from the common perception of the teacher as reflective practitioner (Schön 1987) to the construction of the teacher researcher persona seems to me a question of a changed teacher mind set, from a largely reactive evaluation of practice to a critical interrogation and re-evaluation of personal pedagogical spaces. Larrivee (2000:294) suggests that critical reflexivity is the distinguishing feature of reflective practitioners and that it is this that gives teachers '*the necessary sense of self-efficacy to create personal solutions to problems*'. Teachers already inhabit a natural research habitus and are surrounded by and work constantly with data, thus making them '*ipso facto researchers into their own practice*' (Bryant, 1996:115). One problem is that teachers are often wary of what they perceive as research and do not see themselves as part of research activity. Arguing for a more proactive stance on the part of teachers, rather than passively reacting to or negating the value of research, Burke and Kirton (2006:1) locate teachers undertaking small scale research '*at the centre of knowledge production in the professional context of the classroom' ,*arguing that reflexivity *'helps to illuminate their own positions in educational processes*'. These, I suggest, are positions that the teachers may want to change. Adults enjoy learning in solitary fashion according to Huberman (2001), although they need the time and space to do so. However, when teachers become involved in a more participatory, collaborative kind of reflection, involving colleagues as co –researchers, listening to the student voice and engaging with outside contacts such as academics, teacher trainers or critical friends, the results can be very powerful. This kind of collaboration can create a strong voice in urging change and innovation and in influencing educational policy-making and implementation in a 'bottom- up' activist way. As such, teacher researchers can legitimately question existing agendas and begin to set their own according to Pring (2000).

3. A conceptual framing of the development of teacher researchers

A crucial consideration in this article is the impact of the research on each teacher in terms of potential transformation. For this purpose, I refer to Kennedy (2005) who has proposed a scale that classifies organised activities in formal learning contexts and which in the case of these teachers, is a Masters' course. At the lowest level on the scale is the **transmissive** level, where teachers receive information from tutors, mentors (experienced teachers guiding newer teachers), peers and self-study. The next level is the **translational** level where teachers try out ideas and activities in their classrooms and begin to become aware of strategies that work and that support learning as well as the constraints. At the **transformational** level, teachers undertake reflection and start to analyse and evaluate their practice with a view to understanding and resolving tensions. Kennedy's levels are helpful in reflecting on each of the teacher's point of arrival as teacher researchers. All four teachers had had substantial transmission of knowledge, both during and prior to the Masters. The four teachers had varying experiences at the transactional level and were all experienced practitioners, albeit at different stages of their career. The opportunity for structured research with a Masters with training in research methodologies and skills, gave a platform for potentially transformational activity. It is evidence of the transformational process that provides a framework for my analysis and reflections on the research carried out by the four teachers discussed in the next section.

4. The context of the teacher researchers

The four teachers whose research is presented, two from England and two from Spain, have several features in common. The teachers are all committed teachers of languages in primary and /or secondary schools. The Spanish are teachers of English as a foreign language, and the teachers in England are teachers of Spanish as a foreign language. Their contexts of teaching are, of course, different although there are important commonalities. The Universities where the Masters courses are run, for example, are both well- established institutions with strong traditions in the fields of Modern Foreign Languages Education. All four teachers were taking a Masters course in their respective Universities that focused on aspects of classroom language teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers took several taught modules that explored theoretical concerns and sought to link these to practice. They also had to engage in some small- scale school-based research. In both cases, the teachers did a small piece of research for a research-based module assessment then a larger piece of action research as a final assignment. The teachers were all required to undertake school-based teacher research in school and arrived at a similar end point through a slightly different contextual route in their Masters' study.

The teachers have been chosen as 'telling cases' (Mitchell 1984:239) to provide insights when the teachers 'tell' of their understanding and interpretation of their chosen research topic as they researched, reflected upon and theorised their research in their particular classroom contexts. They did their 'telling' in research diaries, in oral and email discussions about their research and, finally, in detailed accounts of their research in their final scholarly- written assignments. The teachers were supported throughout the research to help them design their research and carry it out competently and ethically. They were also tutored in how to collect and analyse data. Their challenge was to observe, reflect and evaluate with a critical eye to: '*stand back and examine the underlying beliefs and values which are informing decision-making and actions in classroom situations*' (Wilson 2009:17)

For each case, drawing on the teachers' accounts using their own words, I provide a context, the research questions, the purpose of the research, a description of the methods, the outcomes of the research and an insight into the teacher's critical reflexivity. I also highlight impact on practice and the potential sustainability of such change. I do this by showing evidence of their reflexivity in term of their questions, their decisions and the concerns they raised. I end by showing how the teachers empowered themselves through their research.

Telling Case 1: James

Tell me who you are and what you do

'*I work in a mixed private school in England with an intake of children aged 3 -13, and teach French and Spanish. For the research, I worked with pupils aged 10 to 13. I have been teaching for 16 years. I am Head of Department, responsible for the languages provision in my school*'.

What did you want to research and why?

'*I think that there is a lot of confusion regarding what can be achieved in a modern foreign languages classroom in a school hence the importance of self-directed learning strategies. I was interested to explore how Assessment for Learning ['the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and teachers to decide where they need to go, and how best to get there' Mansell et al., 2009:10] might promote better pupil self-regulation. One 9 year old pupil commented: 'I'm not very good at trying*

other things. I tried it once and flunked [failed] the test. So I stick to the normal way'. I found this rather limiting.
So, I designed the following research questions:

- *Whether the use of learning strategies leads to a higher level of self-regulation and therefore increased positive learning experiences*
- *How feedback helps pupils adopt these learning strategies and therefore gain automaticity in their use of the foreign language*

How did you do the research and why in this way?

'*I undertook an in-depth review of the current literature on AfL and self-regulation, which allowed me to reflect on the main issues which needed to be investigated. Following this, empirical data were collected through questionnaires, to ascertain pupil perceptions about their learning, three focus groups with between 8 and 10 pupils to explore issues arising from the questionnaire, the writing of learning journals by 10 and 11 year old pupils to see how they recorded their learning strategies, and two peer lesson observations where a colleague and I compared our teaching routines. I wanted this research to be of benefit to all concerned'.*

What were the findings?

'I found signs of pupils becoming more self-regulated where there were clear goals, feedback, strategies and motivation. Pupils need more of these and feedback action plans. Children need to be rewarded for trying to learn independently. They also need time to be able to process feedback to create action plans. With reference to the earlier pupil comment, they need to be encouraged to try new experiences. Sometimes people need to be encouraged to try new experiences before they see the enjoyment in it for themselves. The same could be said for teacher research'.

What has changed as a result of the research?

'It has greatly influenced my teaching. I would say that I have made giving feedback an absolute priority as a department and also helping students to reflect on translating that into action thus leading to gaining greater rewards. Next half term I am reviewing the departmental reward policy to reflect the need for greater emphasis on independent learning. Also the knowledge vs skill question really has made me think about the type of learning strategies we teach. I am absolutely determined to help kids proceduralize their knowledge effectively through focusing on learning strategies. I would say that is the biggest paradigm shift'.

Comment

James set himself quite ambitious research questions all focused on the promotion of better pupil independent learning. It was his belief that formative assessment as embedded in AfL approaches to teaching are crucial. In line with the research findings in the field on AfL (Black and William, 1998), Jamie's findings concurred with these and the theoretical concepts that he had grappled with became more relevant in the classroom. The involvement of pupils in this research gave credibility to the research in terms of student voice regarding what works best for pupils. James was worried about the pupil dependency and lack of adventurousness in their learning. His modest contribution to knowledge is that feedback per se is not very useful; pupils need time to process it and make sense of it. James' own practice has been transformed as he has learnt to encourage and reward innovation and risk in learning. Pupils have thus been encouraged to go down a different learning route. James' position power has enabled him bring about a culture change and to prompt colleagues to examine their practice.

Telling Case 2

Tell me who you are and what you do

'I'm Tulsi and I teach Spanish and French in a boys' comprehensive school in north London. I have been for teaching 3 and a half years. I did two pieces of school-based research during my initial teacher training, one of which inspired the Masters' research-based dissertation'.

What did you want to research and why?

'I felt that, more often than not, generally in languages classrooms, teachers talk more than the pupils and that pupil- with -pupil talk is inadequate. My research had a particular focus on speaking skills with the aim of understanding how to achieve more spontaneous Target Language (TL) from pupils during language lessons. It pays attention to the literature on skills, strategies, use of TL and self-regulation with regard to what occurs in a fairly typical secondary school language classroom. The research question was: how can speaking skills, especially pupil to pupil, be encouraged with Year 8 Classes (aged 12-13)'

How did you do the research and why in this way?

'I wanted to involve my colleagues in this research and wanted also to hear and give value to the pupil voice. I observed lessons of my colleagues then I interviewed them. I also organised a focus group of eight students who were openly invited to give their opinions and ideas on their learnings with a particular emphasis on speaking skills. The approach was thus entirely qualitative and designed to explore and gain insights into the way speaking skills were developed and valued in the classroom'.

What were the findings?

'*From the data it was found that there were effective strategies being used within the language classroom and a considerable amount of TL used in the case of the teachers. However, the observations indicated that there is not quite enough on the part of the students. Even when asking for a translation or how to say a particular word in Spanish, they are asking one another in English:*
Pupil A: Hey how do you say eleven again?
Pupil B: Once
Pupil A: Thanks, I forgot
Change would be beneficial within these particular classrooms. Such change would involve the creation of more opportunities for TL to occur not only between teacher and student but amongst students themselves. In addition, a narrow focus on attainment rather than the learning of a language in a communicative way is seen as a hindrance to more spontaneous speaking. Even small changes with regards to the promotion of and exposure to speaking skills such as encouraging more spontaneous answers to questions rather than set ready answers which have been memorised and more collaborative pupil working have the potential to give speaking skills more of a central role in the languages classroom'.

What has changed as a result of the research?

'*The changes I have made to my teaching since my research are noticeable. I have adopted the 'TL lifestyle' (using the TL by default cf. Christie, 2013) with many of my groups encouraging them to join in and feel immersed in language learning. My colleagues have also put this practice into place and have seen already, in the first half of this term, some positive outcomes. With the adopted changes, the students in my school are slowly but surely finding the increased use of TL by not only the teacher but themselves, a normal habit during the lessons'.*

Comment

In her first research-focused assignment, Tulsi argued that using the target language was time-consuming, not always justifiable and ineffective. However, that first research sowed seeds of doubt as she saw that pupils did not actually talk to each other enough in the TL. As a result, she revisited the topic on a bigger scale, reflected more deeply in the light of a wider range of data and completely changed her views from initially scepticism to the adoption of a new 'lifestyle' in the classroom. Tulsi invited colleagues to be involved in co-researching and she listened attentively to pupils who influenced her thinking. She has

transformed her mind set and practice and, using the power of her data and her personal influence, is beginning to have an impact on practice beyond her own classroom and in colleagues' classrooms.

Telling Case 3

Tell me who you are and what you do

'Rut, and I have been teaching English in a secondary school for 6 years. I did my research in my 4th year of teaching with adult learners from age 17 to 67 in an adults' school'.

What did you want to research and why?

'*I wanted to try to measure the motivational influence of the use of different materials in the ESL classroom. Overall, the focus of this study was to ascertain insights into how intrinsic motivation can be modified by the use of varied materials. There is a big difference between those students who choose to learn English, and those for whom English is a compulsory curriculum subject. The big challenge for every ESL teacher is to enhance our students' desire to learn English'.*

How did you do the research and why in this way?

'In order to develop this study, these questions were posed:
1: Does the use of entertaining materials encourage our students to take an active part in the classroom?
2: How does the use of different materials improve students' self-confidence and students' desire for learning?
An extensive reading on language learning motivation theories was carried out at the beginning of the research, and a review of research in the field of materials and motivation. A wide range of materials were introduced in two completely different ESL classrooms within an adults' school. These teaching materials were examined through a deep observation process, questionnaires and interviews. I developed my research observing two different groups. The secondary education for adults class had 20 students aged 17 to 34, with varied motivation and effort. The second group was an unaccredited studies class with 24 students aged 33 to 67. They were learning English for the pleasure of learning, with no end certificate.
I paid special attention to creating materials which made learning stimulating and enjoyable, presenting tasks in a motivating way protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence allowing learners to maintain a positive social image, promoting cooperation among learners and creating learners' autonomy by means of learner- centred activities. Two questionnaires were given out. The first one, "Assessing my teacher performance" was introduced to my students in November and a second one in January on learning strategies and materials. A one-to-one interview was done with five students from each group according to different profiles. I also kept a research diary'.

What were your findings?

'In the 1st questionnaire, they said that I speak too much. I used to try to explain everything in depth, giving examples and asking for queries. Now, I try to speak less, make shorter overall explanations – which grab my students' attention – and focus more on personal questions and misunderstandings.
I found that when we are working in groups, the students like speaking in English, they see how grammar can be used in context, or it suddenly makes sense to them, and their creativity arises and their imagination is able to fly. I was also amazed about how competitive games and contests bring my students into the class, even the most demotivated ones'.

What has changed as a result of the research?

'I speak less! I can also state that students take a more active part in the classroom if they are given entertaining materials. Dynamic and varied classes raise students' desire for learning, or at least, for attending the lesson. I always hear the question "what are we gonna do today?" which means they are expecting something different. Games and pair work seems to be the key elements of my teaching practice.
It was definitely one of the best modules from the Masters and I really learnt a lot about myself as a teacher and as a learner, since that was my first research and large piece of academic writing, which has been very useful afterwards. I am always analysing my teaching practice, and I am still worried about students' motivation so, I am still working on the same lines and offering different activities to motivate

them. Unfortunately, what concerns me the most is that students do not study at home, and I am afraid it is not a matter of motivation, but of responsibility and personal maturity but it is my task to go beyond that and keep on working hard'.

Comment

With her chosen aim of exploring motivational materials, Rut's research context enabled her to compare two different groups where it was evident that some learners were more motivated than others. Her findings showed that there were issues common to both groups, namely their need for active learning and variety. Rut's reflections show evidence of personal learning as a teacher- researcher- learner. As a teacher of many years of experience, she has transformed her teaching, providing engaging materials and activities and ensuring variety. In direct response to student feedback and acknowledging their views, she talks less and allows the students more space to talk, having empowered herself to trust students more. Interestingly, Rut does not see the research project as having reached an entirely satisfactory conclusion. Instead, the initial concern remains but she feels empowered to confront ongoing student needs and to give the students a voice about meeting their needs.

Telling Case 4

Tell me who you are and what you do

'I am Maricruz, and I have been a primary teacher for 4 years, teaching Spanish, Science and Maths as well as English. My school is a state primary school in a city in Spain with a high level of children with special educational needs'.

What did you want to research and why?

'When introducing oral activities in class, we must know how to teach speaking in class and we have to be aware of the different strategies that can be used to encourage students to speak in a foreign language. I was doubtful about which activities I should include and how I could implement them in class. I felt that also I did not use these activities to gather data useful for their assessment. This led to my research question: How can I improve the way I prepare oral and open-ended activities?'

How did you do the research and why in this way?

'This research was carried out in a Year 1 Primary class with six-year-old pupils. They are highly motivated students, always eager to learn, like using English and they help the teacher in her development of the lesson. They have very few opportunities to use English outside the school, but they make the most of the time in the two lessons per week in the school. A trainee teacher acted as my "critical friend". He remarked that when I prepared teacher-fronted materials, the students tended to get bored and that in activities in which only one of two pupils participated, the others got distracted and did not pay attention.

In the literature review, I was deep in thought with all the notions surrounding the implementation of oral activities in the classroom, their place in the Communicative Approach, and the kind of activities and its assessment. I devoted some time to analyse my teaching style and I realised that the way I learn is reflected in the way I teach. I am a visual learner so my lessons are full of visual stimuli and colours when writing on the board; This reflection was a turning point since I discovered that I needed to include more movement and audio materials in the lessons to cope with kinaesthetic and auditory learners. I kept a research journal with comments by my pupils, and transcripts of their performance'.

What were your findings and reflections on the findings?

'With only one day of observation, I realised how deep I could reach in the direction of getting insights into what is going on in the class. I saw how pupils were reluctant to participate because they were unsure about the language and pronunciation, but also because they did not understand the dynamic of the activity. I discovered that written prompts were really useful and gave motivation to my students and it is much better going step by step and creating activities focused on one structure and then, combining it with prior knowledge. I found out that open-ended activities were incredibly useful because the learners

can add personal information as we do in real life but I did not know how to fully integrate them in my classes. The second discovery points to learning to make the most of the time. Instead of wandering around the class, I moved from one pupil to another with a purpose (correcting and helping them, checking their progress, taking notes for evaluation...) moving to the next task, since I had evidence of what my learners had been doing'.

What has changed as a result of the research?

'In order to improve oral and open-ended activities in class, I detail the steps that the activity involves and give clearer explanations to make my students feel more secure in class. I have also learnt to guess their needs as nowadays, I provide them with more practice of the linguistic structures before asking them to work in pairs or small groups and know that choral repetition, written prompts and rehearsal are crucial for them. My vision of time and assessment has wholly changed since they were sort of obstacles for me and now they are two factors to consider under my control and that permit me to establish a specific duration for the activities and to check my pupils' progress for their assessment.

At a personal level, I feel that I have advanced a long way in the teaching of English, reassuring myself in the direction that everything done in class has a theoretical backup in which I can also find answers to my doubts or problems. Secondly, this has been a great reflective experience. It has forced me to reflect upon what had happened in class and not to just falling into routine and pre-established techniques for teaching. Action research has contributed to my professional development in the sense that I had never heard that teachers could also be researchers and that this experience was going to be so fruitful and rewarding. Researching my teaching allows me to look for solutions to problems, I do things because I believe in them and it something doesn't work, I feel competent to find a solution and new ways of teaching'.

Comment

The challenge Mariacruz set for herself strikes at the very heart of current language teaching orthodoxy, the demands of communicative teaching approaches. Dissatisfied, she felt a desire to move away from her regular classroom practices and mere 'checking of pupils' books' to reflect more deeply on her teaching with a view to improving oral activities in particular. In an interesting reversal of roles, a trainee teacher acting as 'critical friend' in her classroom, noted how pupils switched off when they were not actively engaged. Her research enabled to find reasons for the disengagement i.e. the children needed more graded support. Her findings led to a substantial change in her teaching style, focusing more on the learners' needs. She also completely transformed her assessment practice towards a purposeful engagement with children (rather than the usual teacher's wandering around), using and giving feedback to support practical progress. Framing her work with substantial reading around the topics, Mariacruz developed the confidence and assumed the power to make decisions about trying out alternative practices.

Overview: teacher self-agency and transformative professionalism

There are several overarching themes emerging from the teachers' 'tellings' about their research. First, research, so often eschewed by teachers as not relevant to them ('*unimaginable for me*' as one teacher said), has, in these cases, enabled the teachers to observe, frame, re-frame, challenge, debate, hear alternatives, problematize and theory-make. This has resulted in, as Wajnryb (1992:8-9) writes: '*the bottom-up recognition of theory emanating from practice [as] a means of forging personally meaningful links between theoretical knowledge about teaching and experience of the classroom'*. The teachers have fully embraced the theoretical dimensions of their research as well as implementing practitioner research.

Second, there is a sense of great personal achievement in what was clearly a challenging assignment. The amount of time needed for the resourcing, planning, implementation and analysis of the research was

considerable. The rewards, however, have also proved to be considerable, first, in terms of the depth of learning –Mariacruz used an image of '*diving into a thinking pool*'- and, second, in terms of a new found confidence: '*As a consequence, I have seen myself with enough courage to face challenges and difficult situations instead of looking at another direction and continuing with the same mistakes and weak points'*. It is this confidence that underpinned the teachers' self- agency to make bold decisions in seeking solutions for problems in context. This reflects Gardner's definition (2010:134) of self-agency as: '… *unambiguous; the teachers themselves derive the impetus for change from their own professional reading, reflection and collegial interaction'*.

Finally, the teacher researchers were encouraged to listen to student views (for this is not automatic on the part of teachers), with sometimes surprising results. The teachers, in hearing and acknowledging the student voice, have acted as 'professional activists' to create a better deal for the learners in developing a more inclusive and participatory pedagogy (Sachs 2003). Indeed, the learners have in all cases been given a more active role in their learning and a measure of self-agency. Emphasising the value of the student voice, Flutter and Rudduck (2004:7) write that: '*Pupils of all ages can show a remarkable capacity to discuss their learning in a considered and insightful way….There is also evidence to suggest that it may also have a beneficial effect on pupils' performance*'. Ultimately, the learners' interest was at the heart of and generated these researches that show powerful evidence of transformative professionalism.

5. Conclusion

The small scale research undertaken and enjoyed by teachers themselves discussed in this article testify to the power of such small scale investigations and to the developing agency of such teachers. As the sample is drawn entirely from Masters' cohorts of students, motivation was very high and the teachers had training, time and support for their endeavours. Although these teachers undertook their research principally for themselves, they involved colleagues and the pupils, sometimes the head teacher and parents in a much more collaborative activity enabling more sustainable practice. Sustainability requires creative, reflexive and participative learning processes such as those described.

Teachers like talking about their work and doing research creates a shift from what Hopkins and Lagerweij refer to as the 'anecdotal evidence and perceptual data collected unsystematically' (1996:88) to the posing of important questions that can seed a more systematic type of teacher research of wider educational value. As Burke and Kirton write: '*The significance of insider research should not be underestimated. Methodologies that support knowledge production from an insider perspective and at the localised level are of great value in developing more nuanced and complex understandings of educational experiences, identities, processes, practices and relations*' (2000:2). Such activity, I would suggest, with time, resources and support, is replicable and could be structured into the daily business of schools within their Professional Development framework and become a driving force for school improvement. In this way, the small scale activity of one teacher could have considerable impact on the whole school, some way beyond the original intentions. A whole school embracing of more personalised teacher research would also enable the outcomes of teacher research to be disseminated more widely and the learning shared.

The teachers found doing study and research on top of their normal jobs something of a challenge, but also personally enriching and a recognisable if modest contribution to enhancing learning in their schools. Such enhancement is only sustainable when it is believed in and actioned by teachers in their classrooms, as echoed in the cases of these teachers in their accounts of their research and transformation of their practices. Ultimately, the teachers have re-framed their practice more in alignment with their values and beliefs in the context of their use (McNiffe and Whitehead 2000; Eraut 1994). As such, the research was not just a 'one-off' experience for these teachers but the continuing development and reshaping of their professional identity and practice.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

APRENDIZAJE COLABORATIVO Y CO-CORRECCIÓN DE LA PRODUCCIÓN ESCRITA EN EL AULA DE ALEMÁN COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Lucrecia Keim Cubas
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RESUMEN
En el marco de un estudio de caso en aulas universitarias de alemán como lengua C (Traducción e Interpretación) se ha estudiado si el uso sistemático de herramientas que potencian la reflexión metacognitiva (guías reflexivas, pautas de auto y co-corrección, comentarios reflexivos) insertadas en secuencias didácticas es percibido de forma positiva por los estudiantes y si una percepción positiva conlleva la apropiación de estrategias que potencien la autorregulación. El artículo presenta los resultados del estudio e incide en la inserción de las herramientas en la secuencia didáctica. En las conclusiones se destaca que la negociación con los estudiantes de la tipología y la forma de las herramientas es una pieza clave para su aceptación.

Palabras clave: Co-corrección**,** autorregulación y producción escrita, competencia estratégica, alemán como lengua extranjera

ABSTRACT
To study if the systematic use of instruments promoting metacognitive reflection in didactic sequences (reflective guides, self and peer correction grids, reflective comments) was perceived in a positive way by the students, and if this positive perception led to students' use of strategies that promote self-regulation was the aim of a case study in university classrooms of German as C language (Translation and Interpretation). This article presents the teaching design, as well as the results of the study. The conclusions highlight that explicitly discussing the design of instruments with students is key to their acceptance.

Keywords: peer correction, self-regulation and writing, strategic competence, German as Foreign Language

1. Introducción

En clases de segunda lengua extranjera en estudios universitarios de Traducción e Interpretación (lengua C)[1] adquiere especial importancia el desarrollo y la adquisición de competencias en los ámbitos del análisis textual y de la concienciación lingüística desde niveles iniciales. Por ello, nos planteamos hace ya unos años y acogiéndonos a modelos didácticos de carácter cognitivo con enfoque funcional (cf. Quintero/Hernández 2002: 5) dar especial importancia a la capacidad de redactar textos a partir de modelos textuales y de aprender a revisar la propia producción partiendo de las características de dichos modelos.

Tras un tiempo trabajando en esta línea detectamos de forma intuitiva que a pesar de un cuidado trabajo docente en el ámbito de estrategias metacognitivas aplicadas a la producción escrita, en el ámbito del análisis de modelos textuales y en la redacción de las indicaciones para las tareas de producción escrita, los estudiantes mostraban déficits importantes en el momento de aplicar de forma sistemática y autónoma los

[1] En el Grado de Traducción e Interpretación en la Universidad de Vic se puede comenzar el estudio de la denominada lengua C, en este caso el alemán, sin disponer de conocimientos previos. En el ámbito de comprensión lectora y de producción escrita tras un total de 30 ECTS equivalentes a aproximadamente 750 horas de trabajo del estudiante se deben haber adquirido las competencias relacionadas con el nivel B1.1 del MCERL.

pasos clave en todo proceso de escritura en lengua materna o en lengua extranjera: planificar, organizar, textualizar, revisar y evaluar. Parece que una parte considerable de los estudiantes universitarios no se han *apropiado* estas estrategias de forma que no son capaces de activarlas cuando se enfrentan como adultos al aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera adicional.

Por todo lo expuesto, iniciamos un proyecto en las aulas de lenguas C con el objetivo de fomentar el uso sistemático de herramientas de revisión, reflexión y co-corrección de la producción escrita insertadas en secuencias didácticas. En esta publicación se presenta el desarrollo y resultados del estudio de caso que se llevó a cabo en el aula de segundo curso de alemán y en la cual se partió de los siguientes presupuestos pedagógicos.

Conciencia lingüística y tareas significativas

De acuerdo con van Lier (2004) o Cots et al (2007) entendemos que una mayor capacidad de reflexión sobre la lengua, sus usos y funciones puede favorecer los procesos de aprendizaje de destrezas de producción. De acuerdo con van Lier (2004:162) y Esteve (2003) consideramos de especial relevancia que la reflexión lingüística se produzca ligada a la resolución de tareas facilitando la consecución de objetivos comunicativos y no de forma independiente. Por ello se planificó la intervención en el aula imbricando los momentos de reflexión en una secuencia didáctica que contemplaba tanto el proceso como el producto final de escritura.

Fomento de la activación y uso (consciente) de estrategias cognitivas (metalingüísticas), socioafectivas y metacognitivas de forma integrada en la tarea

Según Oxford (2004) parece ser que tanto los estudiantes de niveles bajos como aquellos con niveles más altos son más capaces de reflexionar sobre el uso de estrategias si se les pregunta por su uso en el marco de la resolución de una tarea concreta. Otras investigaciones recientes (Cañada y Arumí 2012, Keim 2012) apuntan hacia resultados similares. Optamos por todo ello por relacionar el trabajo explícito sobre estrategias con tareas insertadas en una secuencia para cuya resolución los estudiantes recibieran cada vez menos andamiaje (Aljaafreh y Lantolf 1994) y que implicara tener que aplicar estrategias ya conocidas a la resolución de tareas nuevas.

Creación de espacios de interacción y negociación sobre el uso de estrategias y sobre el uso de herramientas de reflexión

Es bien sabido que desde el punto de vista de las teorías socioculturales se considera que la interacción en todas sus formas es una vía de considerable importancia para el aprendizaje. Esta interacción puede quedar vehiculada a través de herramientas de reflexión que han ido recibiendo diferentes denominaciones como son guías para la interrogación metacognitiva, pautas de evaluación, pautas metacognitivas, entre otros (Wenden 2001, Arumi 2006, Cañada y Arumi 2012). En nuestro proyecto nos interesó especialmente ofrecer a los estudiantes tanto determinadas herramientas de reflexión como la posibilidad de negociar la forma que podrían tener las mismas (Dam 1995). Partíamos de la hipótesis que el diálogo y la negociación sobre la forma de las herramientas podía llevar a la apropiación de las mismas por parte de los estudiantes y de aquí a un aumento de la capacidad de autorregulación y motivación en el ámbito que nos ocupaba.

Evaluación del aprendizaje compartida entre docentes y alumnos

Entendemos la evaluación como parte integrante del proceso de aprendizaje (Lantolf 2002 y Monereo 1997). La co-corrección entre aprendices y entre aprendices y docente contribuye desde este punto de vista al

fomento de la responsabilidad compartida y en nuestro caso crea un espacio de negociación y diálogo sobre las tareas y el proceso de aprendizaje potenciando la autorregulación y la autonomía. En nuestro caso, la participación en las actividades de co-corrección formó parte de la evaluación continuada y tuvo incidencia en la nota final.

2. Secuenciación de la acción didáctica

La acción didáctica se llevó a cabo en la asignatura de segundo curso de lengua C alemán durante dos semestres y se dividió en tres fases de más a menos control por parte de la docente. Se trabajó con textos descriptivos, narrativos y argumentativos[2].

1. Fase inicial (cinco primeras semanas del curso):
   a) Lectura de un modelo textual de texto descriptivo, trabajo sobre recursos lingüísticos y presentación de una guía de preguntas para orientar durante la producción de textos escritos ("Guía reflexiva para textos escritos", Fig. 1) y de parrillas con ítems de auto y co-corrección (ver anexo).
   b) Producción de un primer texto de forma individual en casa, cumplimentación de la parrilla de autocorrección y respuesta al cuestionario vinculado a la guía para textos escritos. Retorno del texto por parte de la docente con marcas de corrección pedagógica. El proceso de corrección vinculado a este primer texto debe servir como modelo para el siguiente paso.
   c) Producción de un segundo texto en grupos de tres estudiantes y co-corrección del texto escrito por otro grupo con ayuda de la parrilla en sesiones de trabajo dirigido en el aula. Respuesta individual al cuestionario vinculado a la guía para textos escritos.
   d) Producción de un tercer texto de forma individual en casa, cumplimentación de la parrilla de autocorrección y entrega del cuestionario, revisión del texto por parte de la docente con marcas de corrección pedagógica y evaluación de la docente.

Escribir textos – guía de trabajo
Cuando hay que escribir un texto en lengua extranjera es conveniente adquirir un hábito de trabajo que contemple la planificación, la revisión mientras escribimos y la revisión final. Nosotros te recomendamos que te hagas las siguientes preguntas:

Antes:
¿Tengo claro cuál es el objetivo comunicativo de este texto?
¿Me he hecho un esquema o una "lluvia de ideas" sobre el tema antes de empezar a escribir?
¿Tengo el documento "Parrilla de evaluación de textos..." a mano?
¿Tengo a mano todos los recursos necesarios (apuntes, textos modelo, diccionario, gramática…)?
¿He hecho un listado del léxico mínimo que quiero usar?

Mientras:
¿Voy releyendo lo que escribo?
¿Me estoy concentrando primero en los contenidos que quiero expresar?
¿Cuándo encuentro dificultades, consulto mis recursos o pido ayuda?
¿Intento respetar los aspectos formales indicados en la parrilla de evaluación?

Después:
¿He revisado el texto teniendo en cuenta las propuestas de la parrilla de autoevaluación? ¿Pienso que realmente se entiende lo que quiero decir?
¿Quiero añadir algo más?

[2] Las tipologías textuales "texto descriptivo», "texto narrativo» y "texto argumentativo» naturalmente son muy amplias. Sabemos también que difícilmente se encuentran modelos textuales puros. En el proyecto se usaron como modelos de texto descriptivo anuncios de ofertas de pisos compartidos destinados a un público lector estudiantil que incluyeran una descripción de la vivienda. Como texto narrativo se trabajó con biografías cortas de personajes famosos o históricos. Como texto argumentativo se trabajó con cartas al director.

¿Quiero intentar variar el léxico? ¿He pasado el texto por el corrector de ortografía? ¿He revisado la presentación del texto (márgenes, espacios, tabulaciones, etc.)?

Fig. 1 Guía reflexiva para textos escritos (Traducción del original catalán en Delgar/Keim 2010)

Tras el trabajo en este primer bloque se comenta en el aula el sistema de trabajo y la usabilidad de las parrillas. Se acuerda a propuesta de los estudiantes que tras la primera y última redacción se substituirá la cumplimentación de la parrilla de autocorrección por un comentario al final del texto a partir de las preguntas "¿Qué valoración hago? ¿Qué me ha costado más? ¿Qué acciones concretas me propongo para intentar superar las dificultades?".

2. Fase intermedia (bloque de 3 semanas de duración): con la producción de textos narrativos se sigue el mismo esquema que en la producción de textos descriptivos. Se distribuye asimismo una parrilla de auto y co-corrección. A propuesta de los alumnos estos utilizan adicionalmente la función de comentarios del procesador de textos para revisar el texto de los compañeros. Además, realizan la autocorrección individual de los textos escritos en forma de comentario reflexivo.

3. Fase final: Trabajo en un proyecto de escritura colaborativa en pequeño grupo utilizando el espacio de un Wiki. El modelo textual en este caso es el de un texto argumentativo. El objetivo didáctico es que los alumnos trabajen de forma autónoma en la producción de un texto disminuyendo al máximo la intervención de la docente.

Antes de comenzar el trabajo se dedica una sesión a intercambiar impresiones sobre el trabajo colaborativo. En las dos sesiones siguientes se trabaja con el grupo clase las convenciones textuales de textos argumentativos. La docente determina el marco temporal general que deben respetar todos los grupos. Paralelamente, los estudiantes deciden por sí mismos en sesiones de trabajo dirigido la composición de su mini grupo, el tema del texto y la distribución de las tareas de documentación. Además desarrollan criterios de evaluación para el texto que quedan publicados en el campus. En sesiones de trabajo dirigido y de forma autónoma en casa se trabaja el texto en el espacio Wiki. Una vez acabado, otro grupo de estudiantes debe realizar una revisión en el mismo espacio acompañada de comentarios. Finalmente los autores vuelven a revisar el texto y publican la versión final.

3. Objetivo y metodología del estudio de caso

De forma paralela a la acción pedagógica se llevó a cabo un estudio de caso cuyo objetivo era analizar si el uso sistemático de herramientas que potencian la reflexión metacognitiva (guías reflexivas, pautas de auto y co-corrección, comentarios reflexivos) insertadas en secuencias didácticas es percibido de forma positiva por los estudiantes y si una percepción positiva podía conllevar la apropiación de estrategias que potenciaran la autorregulación.

El estudio se concibió como proyecto de investigación-acción de carácter intervencionista (van Lier 2004, Esteve et al. 2008, Madrid 2001). En consecuencia, el diseño de la intervención didáctica descrita arriba y su imbricación con el objetivo de la investigación formó parte sustancial del mismo. Es más, una parte de las herramientas pedagógicas destinadas a sustentar la interacción alumno-alumno y alumno-docente sobre el uso de estrategias también se utilizó como instrumento de investigación. Se recogieron datos desde la perspectiva de la docente y desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes durante dos semestres así como de la

acción ejecutada. Se ha pretendido así "acceder a las relaciones que se establecen entre cada uno de los sistemas para llegar a una comprensión holística de la acción investigada" (Esteve et al. 2008: 142). Los datos procedentes de los cuestionarios pasados a los estudiantes recogen su percepción sobre la acción ejecutada y proporcionan la información referente a sus conductas y reflexiones por lo que se refiere a estrategias de autorregulación en el ámbito de la producción escrita y su valoración del trabajo en colaboración en este ámbito. Estos datos quedan complementados con reflexiones de carácter abierto recogidas en tutorías y en las valoraciones finales incluidas en el cuestionario final. El diario de la docente y las observaciones y anotaciones de aula han sido piezas indispensables para reconstruir la acción pedagógica descrita arriba y así poder describir el entorno en el cual se llevó a cabo el estudio. En concreto las observaciones y anotaciones de aula se han utilizado para recoger y poder analizar los momentos de diálogo con los estudiantes sobre la forma de las herramientas. Finalmente las entradas de los estudiantes en las guías de reflexión, sus comentarios reflexivos y las entradas en las parrillas permiten acceso al producto visible del proceso metacognitivo de los estudiantes y complementan así la información recogida en los cuestionarios. En el estudio intervinieron 10 estudiantes de los cuales finalmente se han analizado datos de 7 de los cuales se habían podido recoger evidencias en todas las fases del mismo.

Al conjunto de los datos se ha aplicado una metodología de análisis diferente en función de su forma. Los cuestionarios semiestructurados inicial y final disponían de dos grandes apartados. En uno de ellos se incluyeron preguntas en las cuales se pedía que se marcara el grado de aceptación de afirmaciones sobre aprendizaje colaborativo y las preferencias de trabajo en el aula y en el otro se incluyeron ítems relacionados con tres tipos de estrategias metacognitivas - de planificación, de monitorización y de autoevaluación - en el cual se debía marcar el grado de utilización. Además, en el cuestionario final se añadió un apartado con preguntas abiertas orientadas a recoger la percepción sobre el desarrollo del proyecto durante todo el curso y sobre la eficacia de las herramientas utilizadas. Las respuestas a las preguntas cerradas han quedado cuantificadas y se han establecido comparativas entre los resultados del cuestionario inicial y final. Las preguntas abiertas y las transcripciones de las tutorías realizadas se han analizado utilizando el análisis de contenido semántico (Delgado y del Villar 1994) y teniendo en cuenta indicadores de discurso que han llevado a la creación de categorías. En primer lugar se han creado unidades de análisis correspondientes a las respuestas a las diferentes preguntas del cuestionario o bien a aquellos fragmentos de las transcripciones de las tutorías en las que los estudiantes reflexionaran sobre el proceso de la producción y posterior revisión de textos. Una vez identificados los fragmentos a analizar, se pasó a crear categorías de análisis bien basándose en ítems predeterminados a priori por las afirmaciones que contenían las preguntas cerradas de los cuestionarios, bien teniendo en cuenta listados ya existentes de estrategias cognitivas y metacognitivas detectadas en estudios previos (O'Malley y Chamot 1990) o bien se crearon categorías emergentes de los mismos datos. Una vez creados los códigos se pasó a la codificación de esta parte de los datos. Los comentarios reflexivos y las entradas en las parrillas correspondientes al análisis de la acción ejecutada también se han analizado haciendo un análisis de contenido y partiendo de indicadores de discurso si bien en este caso las categorías se han creado partiendo de niveles de reflexión metacognitiva (van Lier 1998 y Arumí y Cañada 2012). Entraremos a describir este último proceso más adelante en el apartado 4.3.

4. Resultados

4.1. Perspectiva de los estudiantes

Tal y como se especifica más arriba a fin de poder recoger datos sobre la percepción que tenían los estudiantes en referencia al grado de activación de estrategias se pasó un cuestionario inicial y uno final. El análisis de las preguntas cerradas de los cuestionarios permite detectar que los estudiantes valoran y conocen sobre todo las estrategias de planificación y de monitorización. Además, hacia el final del proyecto hay un aumento de los estudiantes que afirma que planifica bastante cómo debe proceder para solucionar un problema relacionado con una tarea o realizar una actividad y los estudiantes matizan en las respuestas relacionadas con la capacidad de autoevaluación mostrando que son más conscientes de la necesidad de revisión. En la tabla se recogen de los 12 ítems de este apartado aquellos que se valoran de forma positiva[3] y en los que se aprecia un cierto cambio entre el principio y el final en cada uno de los grupos.

Estrategias	**Cuestionario inicial**	**Cuestionario final**
Planifico cómo debo proceder para solucionar un problema relacionado con una tarea o para realizar una actividad.	57%	85%
Mientras estoy realizando una actividad reviso lo que estoy haciendo.	71%	100%
Cuando me retornan un examen o un trabajo me fijo en los errores o comentarios.	71%	100%

Por lo que se refiere a la valoración de la actividad de co-corrección un 57% valora que en el grupo se contrastan perspectivas, se pone en práctica la lengua y se aprende compartiendo conocimientos y comparando los errores. Un aspecto que emerge del análisis de las respuestas abiertas es que al final del proyecto se percibe el valor de las competencias interpersonales. En respuesta a la pregunta "¿qué recomendaciones darías a estudiantes de otros cursos para que funcione bien un proyecto de escritura en grupo?" un 71% de los estudiantes recomendaría que se diera importancia a la valoración y respeto por las aportaciones y las opiniones de los compañeros. Del análisis podemos extraer de forma cautelar que al final del proyecto los estudiantes son más conscientes de que en el marco del trabajo colaborativo en el ámbito de la producción escrita se desencadenan procesos de aprendizaje relacionados con estrategias de monitorización y que es preciso que se activen competencias interpersonales para poder realizar con éxito la tarea.

Para complementar el análisis de la percepción de los estudiantes, se ha utilizado el análisis de las entrevistas intermedias que se realizaron cuando las alumnas llevaban unos 3 meses trabajando en la asignatura.

- En los tres casos se confirma que una parte de la atención se centra en el proceso de planificación y de activación de recursos (diccionarios y gramáticas).
- Se verbaliza explícitamente la importancia de la revisión del texto pero no se concreta exactamente qué se cambia durante el proceso de revisión. El estudiante con menos nivel constata que necesita el andamiaje de la profesora ("*són més les teves correccions el que em fa veure els errors (...)*").
- De escribir textos en pequeño grupo se valora que cada uno puede aportar ideas diferentes y contribuir con sus puntos fuertes a que el producto final sea de mayor calidad.

[3] Se agrupan las respuestas que indican que se está muy y bastante de acuerdo con la afirmación.

El análisis de los datos que reflejan la perspectiva de los estudiantes muestra así que el trabajo sistemático sobre la revisión y co-corrección insertado en una secuencia didáctica de producción de textos escritos del tipo que se ha utilizado en el estudio llevó a un aumento de la concienciación de los estudiantes sobre la necesidad de planificar y revisar la producción escrita. Sin embargo, los resultados no permiten afirmar que se produjera un claro aumento de las estrategias metacognitivas relacionadas con los procesos de autoevaluación como pueden ser evaluar los resultados obtenidos en función de los objetivos iniciales o seleccionar determinadas estrategias para usarlas en la resolución de tareas futuras. Tan sólo se constató un ligero cambio en la percepción del uso de la estrategia de fijarse en los errores o comentarios una vez corregido el texto por los compañeros o la docente.

Tal y como se ha expuesto en el apartado 3, interesaba también conocer el grado de aceptación y, por tanto de apropiación, de las herramientas por parte de los estudiantes. Para dar respuesta a esta pregunta se ha utilizado el análisis de las respuestas abiertas a las siguientes preguntas en el cuestionario final:

- ¿Piensas que el hecho de escribir en grupo te ha resultado útil para tu aprendizaje? ¿En qué sentido?
- ¿Qué piensas sobre las guías y las parrillas de corrección y reflexión que has utilizado durante los ejercicios de escritura en grupo? ¿Te han ayudado? ¿Cómo? ¿Tienes sugerencias al respecto?
- ¿Cómo valoras la orientación y el grado de intervención de la docente?

Se presentan a continuación las categorías extraídas de las respuestas para el análisis:

Escribir en grupo favorece el aprendizaje porque se produce intercambio de conocimientos.	71%
Escribir en grupo favorece el aprendizaje porque se contrastan puntos de vista.	28&
Escribir en grupo favorece el aprendizaje porque se aprende a trabajar en equipo.	14%
Las guías y parrillas favorecen la estructuración.	28%
Las guías y parrillas sirven para fijarse en aspectos que sin ellas no se tendrían en cuenta.	28%
Las guías y parrillas sirven para revisar y corregir el texto.	28%
Las guías y parrillas son poco útiles porque hay que dedicarles demasiado tiempo.	42%
Las guías y parrillas son poco útiles porque son demasiado rígidas.	42%
Las guías y parrillas son poco útiles porque ya se dispone de estrategias propias para revisar la producción escrita.	42%
Los comentarios reflexivos al final del texto son más útiles.	28%
La docente orienta bien.	40%
La docente ayuda y explica.	40%

De las respuestas de los estudiantes se puede deducir que de las herramientas utilizadas se valora sobre todo los momentos de escritura grupal en el marco de la secuencia didáctica. En cambio, sólo algunos de los estudiantes consideran que las guías les hayan ayudado en los procesos de revisión y corrección. Ya que de la docente se valora la función de orientadora y de organizadora durante el proceso de trabajo colaborativo, se puede deducir que los estudiantes valoran la reflexión si va acompañada por andamiaje o tutorización.

4.2. Perspectiva de la docente

Del diario de la docente se desprende que al comienzo del proyecto los estudiantes se resisten a usar la *Guía reflexiva para textos escritos* y la parrilla de autocorrección. La docente anota que se les indica que la guía es una orientación y que pueden rellenar el formulario indicando los procedimientos que ellos utilizan o añadiendo las reflexiones que vayan surgiendo. A medida que evoluciona el curso el diario recoge que se va modificando y negociando con los estudiantes la forma que puede adoptar la reflexión escrita que cada vez va adoptando una forma más abierta. Además, se constata interés por la reflexión (*"29 de febrero: Observo que me preguntan por las parrillas o me dicen sin yo decir nada que esto de hacer los comentarios los*

cuesta mucho. Algún estudiante ha empezado a hacer comentarios en otro formato (por ejemplo, tras hacer ejercicios). Cuando corregimos en clase, preguntan y se muestran interesados al hacer las correcciones").

De las anotaciones se desprende, además, que se produce una evolución en la capacidad de plantear preguntas y dudas. La docente recoge momentos de tutorías con los alumnos durante las cuales se produce diálogo y con ayuda de andamiaje se llegan a proponer buenas soluciones para revisar el texto.

4.3 Análisis de la acción ejecutada - Reflexión sobre el proceso de producción escrita

Finalmente se procede a presentar los resultados del análisis de las entradas de los estudiantes en las parrillas de auto y de coevaluación así como de los comentarios reflexivos introducidos al final de los textos. Además se han tenido en cuenta las respuestas al cuestionario del instrumento *Guía reflexiva para textos escritos*. De todas las entradas y comentarios se han seleccionado aquellos que incluyeran algún tipo de razonamiento. El conjunto de segmentos así obtenido alcanza la cantidad de 67.

Los comentarios se han analizado con la metodología de análisis de contenido y buscando indicadores de discurso que permitieran crear categorías en torno a la capacidad de reflexión metacognitiva. Partiendo de los estudios de van Lier (1998), Cañada y Arumí (2012) y Bräuer (2009), se pueden establecer diferentes niveles de reflexión metacognitiva que van desde un nivel puramente descriptivo resultado de fijar la atención sobre un tema en concreto a un nivel de evaluación que implica ofrecer alternativas de actuación y proponer acciones concretas de futuro que pueden contribuir a avanzar en el proceso de aprendizaje. En el análisis de nuestros datos se han establecido tres niveles:

Nivel 1: se describe la forma de actuación, se detectan errores, se constata que se han aplicado los parámetros correctos en el momento de realizar la producción escrita.

Nivel 2: se analiza o interpreta la propia actuación, se intenta encontrar motivos para la realización de errores.

Nivel 3: se ofrecen alternativas de actuación o se proponen acciones concretas de futuro, se proponen cambios en el uso de técnicas o estrategias.

Los segmentos se han analizado diferenciando el momento en el que se produjeron a fin de poder determinar si la variable de tiempo tiene alguna incidencia. La hipótesis en nuestro estudio es que el trabajo sistemático durante un tiempo continuado puede provocar cambios en la concienciación y en la capacidad de autorregulación de los estudiantes.

Niveles	**1ª intervención**	**2ª intervención**	**3ª intervención**
Nivel 1	18	14	6
Nivel 2	3	16	6
Nivel 3	1	1	1

Si partimos de los niveles arriba descritos, vemos que los comentarios están centrados en los niveles de descripción y de análisis. Al menos a nivel explícito no se produce una reflexión metacognitiva que lleve a una activación autónoma de procesos complejos de autoevaluación. Sin embargo, sí que se detectan indicios de que los estudiantes saben resumir y detectar sus puntos débiles. Hay algunas tendencias que queremos destacar.

Así como en las guías se indica sobre todo que se planifica y se revisa el texto releyéndolo mientras y después de escribirlo ("*He releído y revisado el texto un par de veces y pienso que así se entiende qué*

quiero decir y cuál es mi objetivo. He pasado el corrector y he revisado la presentación del texto [Traducción de la autora del original en catalán]"), los comentarios reflexivos al final de la producción escrita incluyen también información sobre aspectos emocionales relacionados con el proceso de escritura:

> *No quedé del todo satisfecho con esta redacción. Tenía la sensación de que debía decir muchas cosas y que no sabía la manera de hacerlo. No obstante, hice lo que pude y, a juzgar por la corrección, el resultado fue bastante digno. Me molestó tener errores de concordancia sujeto-verbo y con el léxico, que son, más que errores graves, la prueba que soy demasiado despistado. También tuve algunos problemas con el orden de la oración, pero nada fuera de lo normal. (Traducción de la autora del original en catalán)*

En cuanto a comentarios escritos por todo el grupo al finalizar la producción escrita en el aula, los estudiantes los utilizan para fijar comentarios o sugerencias hechas por el docente mientras escribían. Cumplen por tanto una función de diario reflexivo (*"Aquest exercici ha servit, un cop més, per practicar amb les estructures que hem fet a classe. Creiem que hauríem de vigilar més amb els casos. D'altra banda, hem après que adverbis com ara außerdem o trotzdem ocupen un lloc en la oració. Creiem que la descripció està prou bé en general"*[4]).

Cabe señalar que los comentarios autoevaluativos que hacen referencia a acciones de futuro son poco precisos tales como *"me fijaré más*" o *"intentaré en el futuro usar los conectores vistos en clase"* y tan sólo en 3 de los comentarios que se hacen a los compañeros se propone una alternativa que se centra en el aumento del uso de conectores ("*en general el texto está bien pero faltan algunos conectores*").

Finalmente, vale la pena centrar nuestra atención en los criterios de corrección elaborados por los estudiantes antes de redactar los textos argumentativos. Cada grupo desarrolló su propio listado, después se comentaron en el grupo clase y dado que se complementaban se decidió utilizar una síntesis de los listados en el momento de revisar el texto de los compañeros y de hacer la coevaluación.

Propuesta de criterios de corrección y evaluación de la calidad del texto
El principal criterio que tenemos que respetar al escribir el texto es que debe quedar una redacción uniforme, que no parezca que son tres partes enganchadas (ya que cada uno escribirá un apartado). Este sería un aspecto general que tendríamos en cuenta. Otras características que creemos que se deberán cumplir: - Que no sea una simple enumeración de ideas objetivas, puesto que se trata de un texto argumentativo. Los autores deben posicionarse sobre el tema. - Con respecto a la redacción, es importante el uso de conectores que clarifiquen la exposición de ideas. Un texto ha de exponer las ideas claramente. - El título debe captar la atención del lector. - Haría falta intentar no fallar en cosas demasiada obvias, como, por ejemplo, errores de concordancia entre sujeto-verbo y revisar además tiempos verbales, posición correcta de los verbos, géneros, declinaciones, formas de singular y plural, preposiciones y léxico adecuado al tema

Fig.2 Listado de criterios de corrección y evaluación redactado por los estudiantes

El listado muestra que hacia el final del curso (3ª intervención) hay conciencia de la importancia de planificar el texto y fijar unos objetivos de redacción en función de la tipología textual. En los comentarios reflexivos se aprecia el valor que dan los estudiantes a esta última actividad de producción escrita para su aprendizaje:

[4] Este ejercicio ha servido, una vez más, para practicar con las estructuras que hemos hecho en clase. Creemos que deberíamos vigilar más con los casos. Por otro lado, hemos aprendido que adverbios como außerdem o trotzdem ocupan lugar en la oración. Creemos que la descripción está bastante bien en general.

A més, penso que en aquesta unitat he après també a crear un bon text argumentatiu en el qual realment es demostra el progrés en comparació als primers textos. I també he comprovat que el treball en grup ben organitzat pot donar molt bons resultats. Penso que la redacció del *projekt* final ha estat una molt bona manera de culminar aquest curs, ja que, encara que no individualment, ens hem demostrat a nosaltres mateixos que hem après i que amb molt d'esforç podem redactar un text argumentatiu comprensible en una llengua que no és la nostra, i amb la que jo, personalment, em sentia molt insegura. [5]

Sin embargo, durante el proceso de escritura, y teniendo en cuenta las anotaciones de la docente, no siempre se tuvo en cuenta el catálogo de criterios que se había desarrollado. La presión de tiempo en las últimas semanas de curso hizo que dos de los grupos publicaran en el Wiki una primera versión del texto en la que no se había tenido en cuenta los aspectos macrotextuales de un texto argumentativo. Por otro lado, los compañeros no hicieron comentarios valorativos sobre esto en el momento de hacer la corrección y se centraron tan sólo en la revisión de errores morfosintácticos. Preguntados sobre el motivo, arguyeron que su inseguridad al leer textos en alemán les había llevado a pensar que no entendían la argumentación debido a sus limitaciones de léxico.

5. Conclusiones

De la triangulación de los datos recogidos en el proyecto presentado en este artículo queremos destacar las siguientes conclusiones:

- El trabajo sistemático sobre la reflexión en torno a procesos de producción escrita aumenta el nivel de concienciación sobre los beneficios de dicha reflexión para el progreso en el aprendizaje.
- La práctica sistemática de la coevaluación fomenta la lectura de las producciones de los compañeros, la apropiación de ideas y modelos así como el trabajo cooperativo.
- La reflexión sobre el proceso de aprendizaje en este ámbito, que incluye el trabajo con modelos de texto y la comparación entre los primeros productos del curso y los finales, resulta satisfactoria para los estudiantes y les hace fijar la atención sobre sus puntos fuertes y débiles.
- El uso de las herramientas digitales para escribir de forma conjunta y para revisar la propia producción es aceptado como forma de trabajo efectiva por los estudiantes.
- Se favorece claramente un formato de explicitación de la reflexión que tenga un carácter abierto y que sea flexible y no repetitivo. La combinación de corrección, reflexión y tutoría se vive como el formato más positivo.
- Si a los estudiantes se les da el espacio y el tiempo necesario para revisar los textos en el aula y tienen la oportunidad de interaccionar con los compañeros o recibir el andamiaje de la docente, la actividad de reflexión y revisión se percibe como algo positivo. Según Stork (2011) los aprendices adultos se encuentran más cómodos con un andamiaje en formato de tutorías o comentarios abiertos en el momento de reflexionar sobre su proceso de aprendizaje mientras que las parrillas de carácter más cerrado son más aceptadas por los aprendices a nivel de primaria. También en Bräuer (2009), Delgar (2012) y Keim (2012) se llega a esta conclusión.

[5] Además, pienso que en esta unidad he aprendido también a crear un buen texto argumentativo en el cual realmente se demuestra el progreso en comparación a los primeros textos. Y también he comprobado que el trabajo en grupo muy organizado puede dar muy buenos resultados. Pienso que la redacción del *projekt* final ha sido una muy buena manera de culminar este curso, puesto que, aunque no individualmente, nos hemos demostrado a nosotros mismos que hemos aprendido y que con mucho esfuerzo podemos redactar un texto argumentativo comprensible en una lengua que no es la nuestra, y con la que yo, personalmente, me sentía muy insegura.

El análisis de los datos del proyecto nos ha llevado a detectar limitaciones sobre las cuales habrá que seguir avanzando. Queremos destacar en este apartado final las dificultades de los estudiantes para verbalizar objetivos **concretos** de trabajo y de estudio que comporten un cambio de hábitos o una activación de nuevas estrategias o en todo caso se constata una evolución muy inestable. Así, por ejemplo, al final del proceso se demuestra la capacidad de redactar criterios de corrección para la producción escrita propia y de otros pero finalmente no se utilizan estos criterios de forma **sistemática** y **autónoma** en el momento de revisar los textos escritos propios y ajenos al final del proyecto. Se hace necesaria la intervención de la docente sobre todo por lo que se refiere a la revisión de la macroestructura. Desde nuestro punto de vista, la aplicación consciente y sistemática de los criterios hubiera demostrado una apropiación de una estrategia de evaluación nueva. La aplicación parcial (dos de los siete estudiantes) nos lleva a pensar que seguramente se activan tan sólo aquellas estrategias ya conocidas y rutinarias que forman parte de los hábitos adquiridos y que llevan a los estudiantes a centrarse en la revisión del nivel morfosintáctico. Habría que tener en cuenta también en proyectos futuros si una valoración del producto escrito de los compañeros que ponga en tela de juicio una parte sustancial del mismo no llega a poderse plantear dado que podría representar una fisura en la solidaridad de grupo. Una vía que conviene estudiar es cómo incentivarlos para que desarrollen la capacidad de aplicar de forma sistemática y crítica al análisis de textos propios y de los compañeros los criterios de revisión que hacen referencia a la macroestructura.

Un segundo aspecto a destacar es que la reflexión sobre el proceso de aprendizaje no supera el nivel de análisis. Tan sólo con un andamiaje bastante dirigido y en el contexto de la tutoría se consigue que se active lo ya trabajado para mirarlo con otra perspectiva desde un ahora más avanzado. En proyectos futuros será pues importante desarrollar la capacidad de que los estudiantes anclen sus objetivos de aprendizaje utilizando como punto de partida la síntesis del análisis de los resultados y del proceso de aprendizaje previos a fin de avanzar en la capacidad de autorregulación.

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Anexo

Ejemplo de parrilla de auto y coevaluación para textos descriptivos

Criterios	Autoevaluación	Evaluación de otros	Acciones de futuro
Aspectos textuales			
¿ El texto es coherente y se sigue con facilidad el hilo conductor?			
¿Se respetan en el texto las convenciones textuales propias de textos descriptivos?: - Introducción general de			

la persona o del lugar que se quieren describir - Descripción del aspecto físico de la persona o del lugar - Valoración de la personalidad o bien del ambiente - Expresión del deseo de relacionarse con esta persona o de conocer el lugar o no			
¿Se utilizan conectores y se puntúa correctamente?			
¿Se utilizan recursos léxicos variados y característicos de este tipo de texto?			
Nivel morfosintáctico			
¿Se respeta la posición del verbo en la oración?			
¿Se respeta la normativa sintáctica en general?			
Conjugación:			
¿Concordancia verbo – sujeto?			
¿Verbo auxiliar correcto en los tiempos verbales compuestos?			
¿Se ha escogido la forma correcta?			
¿Se ha escogido el tiempo verbal correcto?			
¿Declinación y plurales de nombres y artículos?			
¿Declinación de adjetivos ?			
¿Preposición y caso correctos?			
Valoración global de la creatividad y del estilo del texto			

Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

A FOUR-STAGE ASSESSMENT OF AUL (AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES) TEACHERS' ABILITIES TO ADAPT INNOVATIVE TEACHING APPROACHES

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate the best teacher evaluation method that can reveal English language teachers' abilities to adapt to modern teaching approaches under the conditions of innovative and progressive language teaching trends. It is also extremely important to find out the general problems that prevent some of the teachers from using innovative ELT approaches and techniques. Thus, within the general area of teachers' assessment, twenty teachers from Azerbaijan University of Languages with the work experience of over fifteen years have been selected for a four-stage evaluation process that consisted of general English language knowledge testing, class management observation, teachers' self-evaluation, and evaluation of the selected teachers done by their students. The analysis of the completed assessment demonstrates that the best method of teachers' evaluation is class management observation, since three other assessment methods seem to be subjective and often groundless. When it comes to the problems preventing the use of innovative approaches, the most outstanding reasons are the inability of teachers to use technology, and their unwillingness to adapt to innovations, considering old methods to be the most prominent ones.

Key words: assessment, English language teaching, evaluation, innovations, teachers, testing

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es encontrar un método de evaluación del profesorado adecuado que permita identificar las habilidades de los docentes de inglés para adaptarse a enfoques de enseñanza modernos de acuerdo con las tendencias más innovadoras y progresistas de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. También es muy importante conocer los problemas generales que impiden a algunos profesores utilizar enfoques y técnicas innovadoras de enseñanza del inglés. Los datos aquí estudiados se obtuvieron mediante un proceso de evaluación realizado en cuatro fases en la Universidad de Lenguas de Azerbaiyán. Este proceso incluyó la evaluación de conocimientos generales de inglés, la observación de aula, la auto-evaluación y la evaluación de la gestión de las clases por parte del alumnado. El análisis de la evaluación realizada demuestra que el mejor método de evaluación de los profesores es la observación de la clase, ya que los otros tres métodos de la evaluación resultan subjetivos y, con frecuencia, sin base científica. En cuanto a los problemas que previenen el uso de enfoques innovadores, los motivos principales son la incapacidad de los profesores para el uso de la tecnología y su falta de interés para adaptarse a la innovación y el cambio, considerando los métodos tradicionales como los más adecuados..

Palabras clave: valoración, enseñanza de inglés, evaluación, innovación, profesorado, testing

1. Introduction

There has been a recent interest in the question of evaluation in second language teaching (SLT). The interest has also been evoked in the Post Soviet Union Countries as there was a considerable need to move from the Soviet system of language teaching where the most predominant way of presenting the language was the grammar-translation method to Western orientated (Richards, 2010) methodology with the hegemony of a communicative approach to language teaching as well. If we turn back to the English language classes thirty

or even twenty years before, we will see that the lessons were all very similar. They mainly consisted of a reading text to be translated, several grammar exercises, and presumably finished by the teacher presenting grammar from the textbook that was given in the form of tables, exercises or written explanations in mother tongue. The teachers looked like robots whose mission was to skip from one exercise to another until the textbook was completely finished. The program itself is that:

> *teaching should aim at giving the students a thorough theoretical knowledge of the language rather than helping him simply to memorize it through repeated practice. Tremendous emphasis is put on the necessity of the students' understanding and being able to explain clearly the particularities of the foreign language whether of vocabulary, grammar, or phonetics.* (Marcelle, 1959:77)

Today, new methods of teaching have come into being. Medgyes (1990:104) places emphasis on the communicative approach and introduces the notion 'Communicative Teachers'. According to him, "Communicative Teachers" must pay attention to meaning and form simultaneously. With past methods, teachers were not expected to listen closely to what the learners had to say as to how they said it, i.e. by what linguistic means the message manifested itself. (Medgyes, 1990:105) However, in this work, talking about present day teachers and their teaching and methodological approaches, I would not use such a specific term as "Communicative Teachers" but "Present day Teachers".

In the recent literature, it is common to find attempts to emphasize the teachers' indisputable role in providing innovative teaching method alongside with other technological, methodological and integration advance (Richards, 2001; Nunan, 1989; Romain 1992). Unfortunately, "when we are exposed to new methodological proposals, our first reaction is often a feeling that what is being suggested would not work in our teaching situation" (Nolasco, 1990:189). Such a pessimistic approach to innovations brings fossilization to teaching. That is why the need for integration to innovative teaching methodology brings us to the evaluation of teachers. Thus Rea-Dickins & Germaine (1992:5) write that "evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning" and they emphasize one of the two reasons about innovation and change.

Different scholars propose various techniques of teacher evaluation (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Alderson, 1995; Lynch, 1996). The most frequent are questionnaires, observation sheets, checklists/inventories, interviews and diaries (Rea-Dickins & Kevin Germaine, 1992:89). In any case, all of them have two main perspectives: i.e. associated with evaluation of teachers, primarily for the purpose of appraisal where evaluation is used as a means to examine teachers, and the formative nature of evaluation where evaluation is used as a means to develop teachers' skills. (Rea-Dickins & Kevin Germaine, 1992:91) In this work I will use both perspectives considering the second one as a consequence of the results of the first one.

The objective of this paper is to present the comparative results of four evaluation methods (general English language testing, class management observation, teacher self-evaluation and class management evaluation done by students) obtained at Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL) during the academic year 2011-2012 and to find the most reliable one that can reveal the present day teachers' shortcomings in order to later find the ways of their further development to achieve innovative approaches in teaching. The first part of this work starts by considering the importance of innovation with an emphasis on present-day language teaching which is followed by the main reasons for teacher evaluation revealing the purposes of evaluation of this work. It then gives an account of the survey which passes four stages each giving the

results on different aspects of English language teaching. The paper concludes with a discussion of the results and suggestions on further investigations in this direction.

2. On the importance of innovation

As we live in a rapidly changing world, the notion of innovation surrounds us every single minute. Innovation generally refers to renewing, changing or creating more effective processes, products or ways of doing things. However, being innovative does not mean inventing something, it will simple urge you to adapt to changes. Thus, innovations in teaching a foreign language means to be in pace with the present-day demands of the learner, i.e. to be able to provide him/her with fresh information by using modern technology, or merely, by finding a new teaching approach which will allow you to accelerate the steps of language learning. Rea-Dickins (1992:63) touches upon the lack of clarity in innovations pointing out its two forms: *false clarity* and *painful unclarity* noting that the first one happens when people think that they have changed but they have only assimilated the superficial trapping of the new practice, whereas *unclarity* is a form of non-change whereby teachers are completely confused and unclear about the principles and practical implications of the innovation and eventually reject or misimplement the innovations.

Talking about language teachers it should be admitted that most of them in Azerbaijan are people of the generation when the dominant approach to language teaching was the grammar-translation method, where the teacher had nothing to do but deal with translation of the written texts. Apart from that, teachers of older generations are often reluctant to make an effective use of technological devices. So, it would be hard for many of them to easily adapt to such interactive innovations like on-line classes, virtual boards, video lessons, and for some of them, even, to rewind the listening CD track. That is to say, even if the institution will do its best to pass to innovative methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language, "not all the members of organization will immediately adopt the innovation and some of them may never do so" (Anderson 1998:159) However, whether the teachers appreciate it or not, innovations are inevitable, and sooner or later teachers will have to adapt to these changes.

As previously stated, this work is based on the research conducted at Azerbaijan University of Languages. However, before talking about the situation in the language teaching domain in general, and particularly the reasons for this research, it would be more valuable to highlight the present day importance of English language and its teaching in the country itself.

Under the condition of its existence in the structure of the former Soviet Union, the subject of English language in Azerbaijan was seen as one of the technical subjects such as mathematics, physics or even chemistry, i.e. English language looked as a set of grammatical formulae and the only case that it was supposed to be used for was for translation of the written texts that frequently appeared in the old EFL textbooks. For this reason, there was very little need for learning and teaching English and particularly for applying any other teaching approach but grammar-translation. However, today, due to the fact that Azerbaijan has acquired its independence and has been strengthening its partnership in many fields worldwide, the need for English speaking specialists has greatly increased. More and more people consider English language as the main means to obtain a good job and even to have the opportunity to study at the

best Universities of the world. However, in order to reach these goals, it is not sufficient to learn the structure and vocabulary of the language but to be able to use it in communication as well. Hence, the deficiency of communicative approach to language teaching comes into being.

Concerning this, Huseynzadeh (2001:5) writes:

It is pity to say that today we feel lack of those language teachers who possess high language qualification and abilities to create the atmosphere that prompts the development of speaking skills in students. However, many teachers feel safer while using old methods and even outdated materials for language teaching… All in all, the existing system of foreign language teaching does not fit the present day demands the main factor of which is lack of communicative approach to English language teaching which gives way to written drillings, text reading, etc.

Unfortunately, the statement is very correct, as we really lack those teachers who can easily adapt to new teaching trends, changing their old teaching views into the new ones where communicative language teaching approach, i.e. communication in general, plays a crucial role for present day language presentation.

Thus, old language teaching methods have taken such deep roots that it requires considerable efforts to direct EFL teachers to new and more innovative methods of language teaching, which not only presume the use of communication abilities, but also the ability to use technology, fresh EFL materials and other means used for interactive language teaching.

Thus, being one of the country's biggest universities that trains English language specialists both for secondary and high schools, Azerbaijan University of Languages was not randomly chosen for this research.

3. Common reasons for teachers' evaluation

Evaluations are requested for a variety of reasons, and the most important question that has to be addressed at this stage is: Why is this evaluation required? (Alderson, 1992:275) Depending on what we are going to evaluate, the scope of reasons may vary from several to dozens. One reason may be explaining and confirming existing procedures (Rea-Dickins, 1998:8), where the purpose of the evaluator is to learn why something is working well, or another reason may be obtaining the information that can bring to innovation or change.

Legutke and Thomas (1991) propose three reasons for evaluation in EFL teaching: 1) an educational reason linking capacity to communicate in the target language with growth in self-confidence and self-determination, 2) an experimental learning reason, linking reflection on experience to enhanced learning capacity and 3) a language acquisition reason – developing the classroom as a context for real communication. Brown and Rodgers (2002:247) consider that one of the reasons of doing evaluation is of general importance in education studies in terms of money and energy invested on them over the years. Based on Duke and Stiggin's ideas concerning the adaptation of a similar view of professionally developing teachers as producers and users of evaluative information (Darling-Hammond, 1990), several important reasons can give impetus to present day teacher evaluation:

1. Instructional development emphasizes the development of skills involving instructional technology, microteaching, media, courses and curricula
2. Professional development emphasizes growth of individual faculty in the professional roles
3. Organizational development emphasizes the needs, priorities and organization of the institution

4. Career development emphasizes preparation for career advancement
5. Personal development emphasizes life planning, interpersonal skills and the growth of faculty as individuals (Darling-Hammond, 1990)

Meanwhile, other researchers point out some other reasons for teacher evaluation such as:
a) Accountability – to ensure that the only effective teachers continue in the class room (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Iwanicki 1990; Rea-Dickins & Kevin Germaine, 1992)
b) Professional growth or self-development to foster the professional growth of new continuing teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1990)
c) School improvement or curriculum development and betterment (Iwanicki 1990; Rea-Dickins & Kevin Germaine, 1992)
d) Selection- to ensure that the best qualified teachers are hired. (Darling-Hammond, 1990)

In this work, as we deal with the matter of innovative teaching methods and new approaches to language teaching in general, only 3 of the abovementioned reasons are considered as the most appropriate ones. See figure 1:

Figure 1: Three interrelated reasons for teacher evaluation

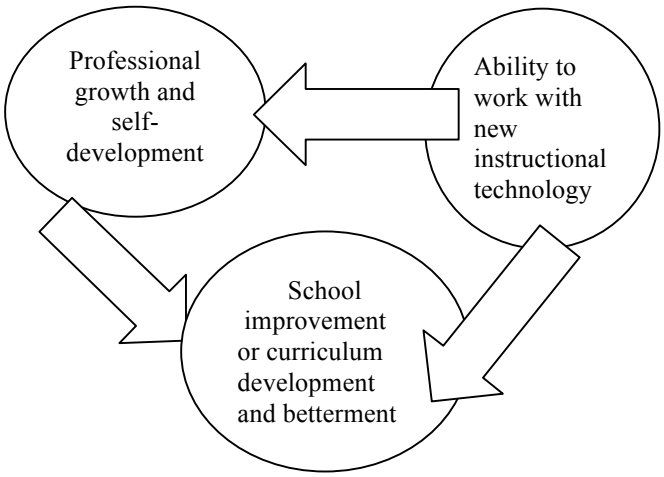


Figure 1 shows that professional growth and self-evaluation are the key components that first bring the ability to work with new technology which consequently contributes to curriculum development and improvement as well. Thus, these 3 reasons will be taken as the principle ones.

Moreover, today, many specialists agree that apart from teaching skills that teachers should possess, the importance of life skills is gaining more and more recognition in the field of education. For this reason, a degree and qualification alone are not sufficient to enable a teacher to be effective in class. Hence, the evaluation should elicit teachers' strong and weak points, and later on to find the ways to eliminate those weaknesses that impede the process of contemporary language teaching.

Huseynzadeh (2001:163) states that one of the main reasons for not being able to bring innovations into language teaching is inherent in teachers themselves. According to her, the unwillingness of teachers to adapt to new teaching methods, and also teachers' fears of changes in curriculum and in new teaching approaches

as well, normally paralyze the whole process of English language teaching in general. Thus, Huseynzadeh suggests that teachers in Azerbaijan should first of all be given some training courses which will enable them to change their views concerning the modifications needed in their language teaching. However, there cannot be any 'cure' unless we know the 'diagnoses. Thus, before starting any training session with teachers, we should know for sure their strengths and weaknesses in language teaching in general. Due to this reason, the research firstly suggests teachers' evaluation and only after the final results can we further think about appropriate trainings for teachers.

4. The study

4.1 Objectives

Even today, when there have been so many changes in the curriculum of Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL), alongside with other majors, the subject of general English language still plays a tremendous role. As was previously mentioned, during the last decades, the teaching methodology and especially English language teaching (ELT) has changed greatly. Old textbooks were substituted by new ones and consequently, the objectives and the targets of ELT acquired a new frame. However, after some analysis of students' exam results, the suspicions about teachers' capability to catch up with those changes came into being. General language testing happened to be compulsory for teachers, but the results obtained were very vague and unclear in the function of reveling teachers' strengths and weaknesses in classroom management. Consequently, the disclosure of a reasonable method of evaluation of teachers' skills and knowledge that could be used in further research such as the modes of teacher training, teacher qualification increase, etc. became the main purpose of this work.

4.2 Method

4.2.1. Participants

In 2011, in order to find out the most objective type of evaluation that could reveal the ability of teachers to keep their teaching up-to-date, using a qualitative method of investigation, twenty teachers with an experience of over fifteen years were asked to undergo a four-stage assessment program. All these twenty EFL teachers were of different age and of both sexes; generally teaching the students of first, second and third years. Darling-Hammond (1990:17) writes that: 'until recently, less attention has been paid to combined outcomes of their interaction as a total system of evaluation'); i.e. it was for the first time when teachers were assessed according to stages that presumed not only the revealing of teachers' language competence but their ability to use new language teaching approaches, technology and new EFL materials as well. Thus, such a multi-stage evaluation process seemed to be the most rational way to compare the results.

4.2.2. Materials

Apart from the General IELTS test which included academic reading, writing, listening and speaking sections, three main instruments were used: a classroom observation checklist (see table 3 in appendix), teachers self-rating form (see table 4 in appendix), and student's questionnaire (see table 5 in appendix). The points in the classroom observation checklist cover such important aspects as general teaching skills, the

ability of teacher to use classroom technology, a correct selection and use of teaching materials and students' participation in the class. Teacher self-rating form targeted the same aspects as a classroom observation checklist but from the perspective of teachers themselves, i.e. to see how they evaluate their class performance. Finally, student questionnaire covered such aspects as the process of the lesson, the behavior of the teacher during the lesson, the possibility to use the mother tongue in class, and their general feeling about the lesson.

4.2.3 Procedures

Being non-native teachers, the first target was to check their general English language knowledge and the ability to react in the four main language skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking in a short period of time. Not less important was teachers' classroom management observation with the special assessment list that contained the most general and important questions that revealed the ability of flexible adaptation to new teaching trends. Teachers' self-evaluation was the third step that shed light on teachers' beliefs and their understanding of the fact that nowadays language teaching approach differs from what they used in their early career development. Barber (1990) defines self-assessment as an increased instructional improvement that results from a greater insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses. Finally, students that were taught by this group of teachers put their assessment marks on a class management evaluation checklist. The main goal was to classify the teachers according to the level of English language knowledge and then, compare the results obtained from other evaluation steps. It should be pointed out that the students were not told about the reasons and targets of the evaluation and were kindly asked to assess the checklist according to the five scale band regarding 5 points as the strongest one and 1 point as a weakest one. The research was explained to be the general desire of the university to evaluate the level of education in order to provide better teaching facilities to students. If the real target of the research had been revealed to the students, it would have reflected on teachers' reputation, which could later tell on the lessons and also on the students' attitude towards the teachers. In contrast, the teachers were totally aware of the fact of being researched upon; however, the exact goals of the investigation were not unveiled since it could bring to indignation of the teachers and at the same time make them perform unusual.

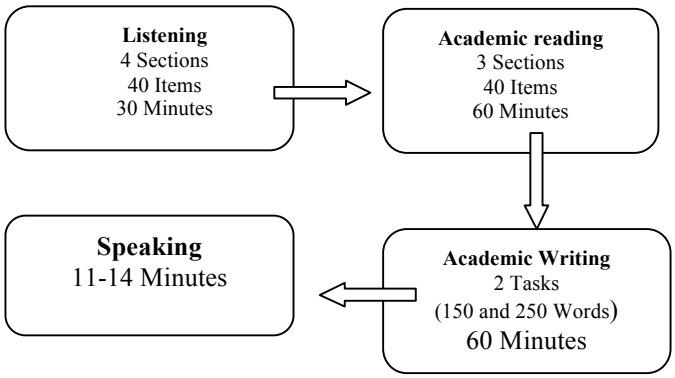
International English Language Testing System

The first step of the teachers' assessment was to test 'only one component of the evaluation process'. (Rea-Dickins & Kevin Germaine, 1992:27) As we dealt with non-native teachers of English, it made more sense to follow the principle of measuring the amount of language possessed by them. Thus, putting forward the question like 'how much of the language does one need to know to be able to teach effectively', Richards (2001:46) and some other scholars (Bailey, 2006; Kamhi-Stin, 2009, etc.) suggest that a teacher's confidence also depends on his/her own level of language proficiency. Consequently, it is obvious that the less language knowledge the teachers possess, the more they depend on old and weary materials and the more they ignore any kinds of innovations.

Conducting a pilot study as a starting point to come up with the general results of English Language competence evaluation, the teachers were assessed according to the International Language Testing System

(IELTS). The academic version of the test was proposed during 2 hours and 45 minutes to get the results on *reading*, *listening*, *speaking* and *writing* models.

Figure 2: General structure of IELTS exam



The results are presented in the form of nine band scores, on a scale of 0-9 (See table 1 in appendix). The test was administered without any previous preparation to the IELTS program which provoked some agitation in teachers. The most exciting point was *speaking* section which was an uncommon way of teacher evaluation that brought nervousness and anxiety. The final grading was done according to the provisionally divided points, i.e. in IELTS, points from 4 to 6 were considered as a low grade, from 6 to 7 as an average grade, and the points from 7.5 to 9 were taken as high grade points. Regarding the rest of the assessment steps, the points were also divided into three grades (low, average and high) initially calculated from the point of view of the percentage. That means that the teachers who obtained high grade should have obtained 80 percent and more from the total 100%; teachers who obtained average grade should have obtained more than 60 percent from the total 100%; and low-graded teachers scored under 60 percent of total 100. Later on, the percentage was conversed into points that can be observed on table 2 in appendix.

Examination results were intended to reveal general language proficiency without any detailed information on particular knowledge.

Classroom Observation

According to Dickens and Germaine (1992:34), testing knowledge of theory is not enough to judge effective teaching. We need to observe teachers in action using their knowledge in the real setting of the classroom. So, 'if one wants to know how a teacher behaves with a group of youngsters during the lesson, observation may be a very good way to gather information.' (Stodolsky, 1990:180) However, even if observation plays a central role in practice teaching (Richards, 2005), we should not forget about its nature and limitations (Richards: 2005; Stodolsky, 1990; Darling-Hammond 1990). For this reason, as our main purpose in this work was finding out the teachers' classroom attitude towards implementation of innovative teaching approach, we used a checklist with the following questions that were initially prepared: (See Table 3). Normally, after an observation session, the observer wants to meet the teacher to provide feed-back. However, in our case, the observation checklist was simply completed in order to compare the results got from testing and other evaluation checklists.

The purpose of observation was not disclosed to the teachers, so everything went naturally and unstaged, as Slimani (1992:212) says, the observation of the language classes shows that the discourse is not something prepared beforehand by the teacher and simply implemented by the student.

Teachers' self-assessment

As mentioned above, observation is useful for looking at the teacher's behavior or actions; however it would be quite an inadequate approach to know how a person felt about the lesson while it was in progress, or when it was completed. (Stodolsky, 1990:180) Here, self-evaluation is of greater value for understanding and instructional improvement (Carroll, 198:183). In order to know the direction in which to develop teachers must engage in the evaluation of their own performance (Anderson, 1995:161). For this reason, the teachers were given a ten minute self-evaluation rating form where they could assess themselves according to a five-scaled band. Due to this written instrument (Barber, 1990:219) each teacher could rank himself/herself on a variety of teaching skills listed in the form. The objective was to determine the feasibility of implementing the system for the evaluation of teaching qualities. As Dickens and Germaine (1992) define it, self-evaluation is simply the practice of teachers reflecting on what has taken place in the lesson with a view to improving their self-performance. In our case, alongside with self-improvement, we wanted to learn the teachers' views and beliefs concerning their ability to progress in order to compare these results with others. (see Table 4)

Evaluation of classroom management done by students

Classroom management evaluation done by students was the last stage in this research. The students were given the main questions that could give a clue to the process that took place from lesson to lesson. The questions in this checklist are nearly of the same origin as those given in the observation checklist and the teacher evaluation checklist. This is done in order to compare the course of the class from three different perspectives, i.e. evaluator, teacher and the students. Table 4 (see appendix) contains the questions that were given to students for ten minutes, which mostly evaluates the teacher's classroom management and the facilities he/she uses during the lesson.

4.3 Analysis and discussion of results

The main intention in this work was to compare the results obtained from the four stage teacher evaluation. Firstly, the teachers took a test; later on, the researchers were observing the class performance of the same teachers grading them according to the main questions enlightened in the classroom observation checklist. At the same time, the teachers had to undertake the teacher self-rating form and finally, the students taught by the very teachers were to complete a checklist on a 1 to 5 point scale. The three checklists were deliberately designed in the way that they contained nearly the same questions. This was done in order to see how three parties, i.e. teachers, students and the observers, look at one and the same process. Thus, the actual data collection was divided into 2 main aspects, i.e. the first one is to see the attitude of the parties to the given questions basing on the results obtained, and second, taking the results of the IELTS test, and to compare the general English language knowledge of the teachers with the general points got from each checklist. Hence, the recently appeared principle of triangulation was applied to the research work which does not treat

evaluation as a one-sided process, but a mutually depended one, where everyone's opinion (teacher's, students, observer's) is taken into account.

As already mentioned, the first checklist was completed by the researcher and covered such important issues as the teachers' personal teaching skills, their ability to use classroom technology, their ability to choose correct materials and teaching methodology that can be applied to lesson. According to the results, out of 20 teachers 13 had shown the result higher than 60 points from the maximum 75. Only 3 teachers were lowly-evaluated. It was very interesting to learn what teachers themselves thought on this matter and it happened that many of them probably wanted to appear objective, by this neither underestimating nor overestimating themselves which, however, seemed somewhat unnatural and preplanned. According to the students' opinions, none of the teachers obtained the highest results, which shows that students are not satisfied with teachers' class performance (for further details see table 6).

Table 6: General results of the 4-stage assessment

Teachers		IELTS	Class observation	Teachers' Self-Assessment	Class Evaluation by Students
a		7	64	52	33
b		6,5	60	58	38
c		5,5	29	54	18
d		8	60	63	49
e		8,5	58	49	50
f		8,5	60	57	32
g		6	59	61	42
h		6,5	63	60	39
i		7,5	68	65	34
j		7	66	53	36
k		8	73	58	43
l		8,5	61	74	41
m		5,5	43	59	29
n		4	19	46	12
o		7	61	54	46
p		7	72	62	30
q		6,5	62	60	34
r		8,5	49	52	44
s		8,5	58	57	39
t		8	60	64	46

Taking IELTS as the key test that determines teachers' level of general English language knowledge the teachers with the low grade of English language knowledge were marked in dark grey color; with average English language knowledge in white; and with high grade knowledge of English in grey. Even if the table

does not give the highest results, it is important to point out that the number of teachers with high grade exceeds the number of teachers with low and average grades.

It should also be pointed out that, speaking about teachers' class performance, we do not go into particular details but take into account their common peculiarities to successfully teach a class.

The most important step in this work was to obtain the general language test results and then to compare them to three other results obtained from the three already mentioned parties. Here, we wanted to see if the general English language knowledge level could give an indication of the success of teaching performance. For this purpose, we made some general calculations to present the results in the figures, by this making the results more comprehensible. Consequently, in order to obtain equivalent numbers for further comparison of the results, each point previously presented in Table 6 was calculated in percentage. Analysing each grade, we came to unexpected results that are demonstrated by three different graphs. (See appendix 2). The figures express the relativity among 4 stages and are divided according to three grades, i.e. high, average and low, taking the IELTS grading as the main one.

Three grades by IELTS

The study of the first graph (see figure 1 in appendix 2) has shown that teachers with high level of English language knowledge (which was determined by IELTS test), have an average grade in class observation. This shows that excellent language knowledge is not enough for competent teaching. An interesting fact is that these teachers themselves do not highly asses their own teaching abilities, by this demonstrating that they still have aspiration for further development. Meanwhile, students give high rates to these teachers. Teachers with average English language knowledge (see figure 2) seem to be fairly competent in classroom management, however, they do not overestimate themselves. It is also important to point out that in this case the students do not seem to be very objective by grading the teachers according to their teaching abilities, but by their language level. Finally, those teachers who have a very low knowledge of English seem to be unsuccessful in classroom management. Consequently, based on the previous comments that students estimate the teachers mostly by their English language knowledge but not by their teaching skills, these teachers did not get positive feedback from their students and were negatively evaluated by them. The most surprising point to us was that these teachers themselves give the highest grade in the teacher self-assessment checklist. (see figure 3)

5. Conclusions and suggestions for further research

In this section I will present several considerations for further study.

-First of all, a project like this might be considered a comprehensive way of determining the most important teaching skills such as language competence, innovation approaches, material selection, method selection, and also general teaching abilities which are so important in present-day language teaching.

-It is also very important to survey the students' attitudes and views on teachers' performance and teaching practice in general. This does not mean that teachers should be directed by students' views and opinions but we cannot totally exclude the students' views either. Students' class participation, their

interest to lesson and motivation should normally increase the involvement and responsibility of the teachers; and since the teaching and learning processes are mutually depended, the students' voice is as important as the teachers' voice in education process. Hence, in such a triangular research the voice of the students cannot be excluded under any conditions.

-A survey like this may be considered an important attempt to try out different methods of teacher evaluation. It gives ground to try different evaluation approaches in particular to see which one may be more reliable in future surveys.

-Further on, the research like this may reveal some possible weaknesses in EFL teaching that some teachers did not pay attention on. Thus, in this way, some English language teachers should ones again analyse their teaching methodology and try to eliminate all possible drawbacks from their teaching experience.

The results obtained in this research should be regarded as tentative and preliminary as the number of teachers evaluated was small. It is also possible that the questions in the questionnaires were very superficial and brief and touched upon just general parameters of present-day language teaching. However, these questionnaires could be regarded as a spring board in future checklist- compiling.

Although this research cannot be considered sufficient for drawing any definite conclusions, it does provide some insights about teacher and student perceptions in particular and could serve to promote further investigation drawing variably on these four types of evaluation in different combinations in order to determine teachers' shortcomings in present day English language teaching and to enable them to think about self-improvement and training needs.

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Appendix:

Table 1

Bandscore	Skill level	Description
Band 9	Expert user	You have a full operational command of the language. Your use of English is appropriate, accurate and fluent, and you show complete understanding.
Band 8	Very good user	You have a fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriate usage. You may misunderstand some things in unfamiliar situations. You handle complex detailed argumentation well.
Band 7	Good user	You have an operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriate usage and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally you handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning.
Band 6	Competent user	Generally you have an effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriate usage and misunderstandings. You can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
Band 5	Modest user	You have a partial command of the language, and cope with overall meaning in most situations, although you are likely to make many mistakes. You should be able to handle basic communication in your own field.
Band 4	Limited user	Your basic competence is limited to familiar situations. You frequently show problems in understanding and expression. You are not able to use complex language
Band 3	Extremely limited user	You convey and understand only general meaning in very familiar situations. There are frequent breakdowns in communication.
Band 2	Intermittent user	You have great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
Band 1	Non-user	You have no ability to use the language except a few isolated words.
Band 0	Did not attempt the test	You did not answer the questions.

Table 2

Evaluation Type	Low grade	Average grade	High grade
IELTS	4-6 points	6-7 points	7,5-9 points
Class observation	0-45 points	46-60 points	61-75 points
Self-assessment	0-45 points	46-60 points	61-75 points
Students assessment of the class	0-30 points	31-40 points	41-50 points

Table 3

Classroom observation checklist

Name_____ Date: _____

Department ……..

I have taught English for _____ year(s) in _____

Mark the point taking 5 as a maximum grade	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The teacher clearly states session objective and significance of the objective with class.					
2. Language is understandable according to the students' level.					
3. The teacher is confident and enthusiastic.					
4. The students are interested and enthusiastic. Students are actively involved in all the activities and take an active part in class discussions.					
5. The teacher uses class time effectively.					
6. The teacher appears well-prepared for the class.					
7. Films, websites and other audiovisual materials have a clear purpose.					
8. The teacher incorporates various instructional supports like slides, films, handouts, etc.					
9. The teacher selects teaching methods appropriate for the content by using textbooks and authentic materials as well.					
10. Students' questions are responded to as individuals.					
11. The teacher integrates text materials into class presentation.					
12. The teacher relates current course content to students' general education and their real world.					
13. The teacher presents up-to-day development in the field.					
14. The target language only is used in the class.					
15. The teacher seems totally aware of the present day technological devices.					

Table 4

Teacher Self-Rating Form

Name_____ Date: _____

Department ……..

I have taught English for _____ year(s) in _____

Put a check according to the most suitable point	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1. I understand program mission and try to direct my class to the goal.					
2. I design activities to encourage my students' skills.					
3. I use different teaching approaches to avoid monotonousness.					
4. During the class, I prefer my students to speak more and participate actively in discussions.					
5. I identify and respond to learners' individual and group needs and interests.					
6. I try to use more authentic materials than I used to.					
7. Alongside with the textbooks, I employ a variety of strategies, resources and materials to facilitate and promote learner interaction.					
8. In case of lack of interest to a coursebook material, I substitute it with the materials taken from learning internet sites.					
9. I try to use the newest technology to keep the class up-to-date.					
10. I often make use of laboratory work to provide my students direct contact with computer software.					
11. I always incorporate new skills and knowledge gained through professional development to enhance the quality of instructions.					
12. I continuously re-examine my beliefs about my job.					
13. I keep pace with new knowledge and technological development.					
14. It is very important to develop four main skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in students.					
15. I frequently attend teacher training courses.					

Table 5

Student Questionnaire

Name..... Date: .....

Group № ……..

Academic Year

Put a check according to the most suitable point	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. During the class, alongside with the main coursebook we use different supplementary material.					
2. The teacher often takes us to laboratory room to work on computers.					
3. During the class, we speak English as much as possible and actively take part in all discussions.					
4. A lot of authentic materials are often used in the lesson.					
5. Alongside reading and writing skills, speaking and listening skills are developing as well.					
6. The teacher tries to find an individual approach to all students in the class.					

7. It seems that the teacher does not stop evolving her/his teaching and language skills all the time.					
8. During the class, we are not allowed to speak any other language but English.					
9. The teacher tries to use newest technology in the class.					
10. We never feel bored in the class because the teacher always tries to motivate us by giving useful and interesting activities.					

Figure 1: High Grade IELTS results

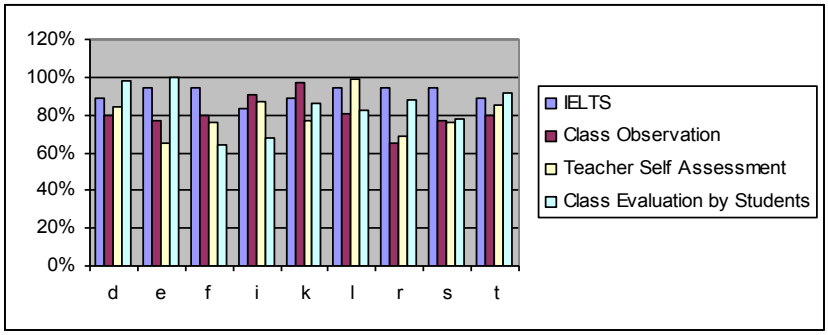


Figure 2: Average Grade

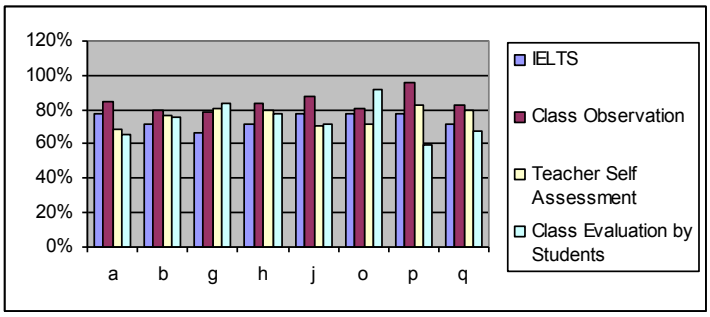
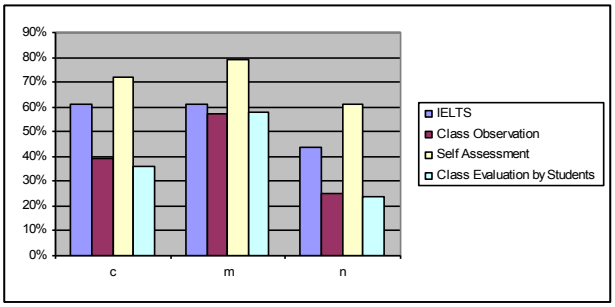


Figure 3: Low Grade



Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

PROPUESTA DE ENSEÑANZA MULTIMODAL EN UNA ASIGNATURA DE LENGUA INGLESA

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Resumen

La sociedad del siglo XXI se caracteriza por su naturaleza multimodal y por lo tanto se habla de la era 2.0. en la que el uso de las TICs es fundamental. Esto implica que la educación superior ha de adaptarse a este contexto, de ahí que sea necesario potenciar la enseñanza multimodal en las aulas universitarias gracias a presentaciones de *Power Point* o *Prezi*, el uso de videos o de redes sociales como *Facebook* o *Twitter*, el empleo de las herramientas de *google*, etc. En este artículo se presentan algunas actividades que fomentan la multimodalidad empleadas en la asignatura Lengua Inglesa V del grado de Estudios Ingleses en la Universidad de Alicante. La selección de estas actividades viene determinada no sólo por su naturaleza multimodal sino también porque contribuyen a la adquisición de competencias fundamentales para el mercado laboral. Además se preparó una encuesta con el fin de conocer la opinión del alumnado sobre una propuesta de enseñanza basada en la multimodalidad.

Palabras clave: Multimodalidad, sociedad 2.0. , proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, competencias, TICs.

Abstract

XXI century society has a multimodal nature and it is referred as 2.0 era, in which the use of NTIC is essential. This implies that tertiary education needs to be adapted to this context and, therefore it is necessary to highlight multimodal teaching in University classrooms thanks to *Power Point* or *Prezi* presentations, the use of videos or social networks such as *Facebook* or *Twitter*, the use of *google* tools, etc. This article describes some activities that promote multimodality used in the subject English Language V of the degree in English Studies at the University of Alicante. The selection of activities is determined not only for its multimodal nature but also because they contribute to the acquisition of competences that are essential for the labour market. In addition, a survey was prepared in order to know students' opinions about a teaching proposal based on multimodality.

Key words: Multimodality, society 2.0, teaching-learning process, competences, NTIC.

1. Introducción

Es bien sabido que la enseñanza universitaria ha vivido una profunda renovación en los últimos años que ha venido marcada por los principios propuestos por el Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (EEES). Estos cambios han afectado a la metodología, la evaluación, una renovación de los contenidos, los papeles desempeñados por el profesorado y el alumnado en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje, la enseñanza basada en competencias, entre otros (Benito y Cruz 2005; Bueno González y Nieto García 2009; López Noguero 2005; Martínez Lirola 2007; Pereyra-García et al. 2006; Sánchez 2006). Concurrimos con Zabalza (2011:86) en que la metodología es el componente curricular que tiene más impacto en la enseñanza.

En general, la enseñanza tradicional se ha centrado en la lengua escrita y el resto de los modos de comunicación (imagen, música, etc.) han ocupado un papel secundario en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje (Coffin 2012). En este sentido, se requiere una nueva pedagogía que incorpore las herramientas que ofrece la sociedad 2.0 con el fin de que exista una relación estrecha entre lo que se enseña en las aulas

universitarias y los avances que tienen lugar en la sociedad por su estrecha relación con el mercado laboral. Por esta razón es preciso potenciar el uso de plataformas virtuales, el empleo de las TICs y cualquier herramienta que potencie una enseñanza multimodal con el fin de que la enseñanza sea lo más efectiva posible y se adapte a los cambios que requiere la sociedad del siglo XXI.

Los cambios llevados a cabo en la sociedad actual y en la Universidad gracias a las demandas del EEES no hacen viable que la enseñanza sea monomodal, es decir, centrada en un solo modo de comunicación, y esté centrada en el profesorado, tal y como era habitual en la enseñanza tradicional que consistía fundamentalmente en que el profesorado dictaba apuntes mientras que el alumnado asumía un papel pasivo que consistía fundamentalmente en la toma de apuntes de manera pasiva.

Los principales objetivos de este artículo son los siguientes: tomar conciencia de la importancia de la enseñanza multimodal en las aulas universitarias, describir algunas actividades empleadas con el fin de fomentar la multimodalidad en una asignatura de lengua inglesa prestando atención a las competencias que con ellas se adquieren y conocer la opinión del alumnado sobre este tipo de enseñanza. Las principales preguntas que trataremos de responder con este artículo son: ¿Influye la enseñanza multimodal en el modo en que el alumnado aprende? y ¿facilita este tipo de aprendizaje el aprendizaje del alumnado y fomenta su motivación?

Tras esta introducción, este artículo consta de las siguientes secciones: el apartado que sigue ofrece el marco teórico de este trabajo centrado en la multimodalidad; el apartado tercero nos describe el contexto, los participantes y la metodología empleados para llevar a cabo este estudio. La sección cuarta presenta algunas actividades multimodales; seguidamente se ofrecen los resultados de una encuesta preparada con el fin de conocer la opinión del alumnado universitario sobre la enseñanza multimodal (vid. anexo 1). Finalmente, el artículo acaba con unas conclusiones basadas en el estudio llevado a cabo.

2. Marco teórico

Una de las características fundamentales del siglo XXI es la naturaleza multimodal de las sociedades actuales (Lemke 2012). Nos encontramos rodeados de textos multimodales en los que la imagen tiene cada vez más relevancia a la hora de comunicar significados. Un texto multimodal es el que combina diferentes modos de comunicación (escrito, imagen, diagramas, etc.) para expresar sus significados, en palabras de Baldry y Thibault (2006: 21): "[…] multimodality refers to the diverse ways in which a number of distinct semiotic resource systems are both codeployed and co-contextualised in the making of a text-specific meaning".

La teoría de la multimodalidad se ha desarrollado en los últimos años gracias a los trabajos de Kress y van Leeuwen (2001, 2006), además de los de otros autores (Baldry y Thibault 2006; Bezemer y Jewett 2010; Bowcher 2012; Jewitt 2009; Royce y Bowcher 2007, entre otros). Los diferentes elementos que componen los textos multimodales tienen un propósito determinado, una función (Baldry and Thibault 2006; Martínez Lirola 2010), es decir, están diseñados de ese modo y no de otro con el fin de conseguir un objetivo determinado que puede ser persuadir, convencer, dar a conocer información, etc. Cada modo de comunicación es un recurso semiótico que contribuye al desarrollo del significado. En este sentido, la imagen juega un papel fundamental en la comunicación multimodal debido a que su papel es fundamental a la hora de captar la atención de la audiencia (Kress y van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010; Unsworth 2010).

La aplicación de las herramientas que ofrece la multimodalidad a las prácticas docentes no es algo totalmente novedoso sin embargo, la era 2.0 ofrece una gran variedad de posibilidades para que la enseñanza multimodal adquiera protagonismo gracias a presentaciones de *Power Point*, *Prezi*, el uso de videos o de redes sociales como *Facebook* o *Twitter* en la enseñanza o el empleo de las herramientas de *google*, entre otros. En palabras de Simpson y Walsh (2010: 37): "Now with interactive, multiple authoring and social networking facilities provided by Web 2.0 technologies, new pedagogic possibilities can be utilised in the classrooms".

En este sentido, en las últimas décadas ha habido profesorado de idiomas y de otras disciplinas con ganas de ser creativo y de innovar que ha incorporado a la enseñanza prácticas o materiales multimodales con el fin de aumentar la creatividad del alumnado, en palabras de Knox (2008: 140): "Multimodal perspectives on language and language education have only recently appeared in the literature on L2 teaching and learning. A brief consideration of the classroom practices of teachers and students shows very quickly, though, that multimodality is something that language teachers have understood intuitively for a long time".

Entendemos la clase de cualquier nivel educativo como un contexto multimodal en el que emplear distintos modos de comunicación hace que el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje sea dinámico, creativo y facilitador del aprendizaje del alumnado (Martínez Lirola 2013a), en palabras de Martínez Lirola (2013b: 198): "[W]e understand the classroom as a multimodal learning environment in which modes of communication, different to language, are present to facilitate the teaching-learning process". En este sentido adquieren protagonismo dentro del aula modos de comunicación distintos de los textos escritos tradicionales (Bearne et al. 2007; Knox 2008; Walsh 2009; Yelland et al. 2009).

Optar por una enseñanza multimodal requiere el desarrollo de nuevas destrezas que permitan sacar el máximo partido de las herramientas multimodales empleadas en el aula así como leer y estudiar los textos multimodales empleados en las prácticas docentes con el fin de que el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje sea efectivo y el alumnado saque el máximo partido del mismo a la vez que desarrolla al máximo sus capacidades (Livingstone 2008; Merchant 2009).

Emplear una enseñanza multimodal requiere que se desarrollen distintas *literacies* de modo que se pueda hablar de *multiliteracies* en las aulas universitarias. Simpson y Walsh (2010: 26), ponen de manifiesto que este término no es nuevo: "Evolving from the theorising on the New London Group (Cope y Kalantzis 2000), the term 'multiliteracies' was concerned with the many types of communication hended in new and different social and cultural contexts, and for both print and electronic texts". Unsworth (2001, 2008a, 2008b, 2010) lleva más de una década prestando atención al modo en que los distintos modos de comunicación elegidos expresan sus significados en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

3. Contexto, participantes y metodología

Nuestro estudio se centra en la Universidad de Alicante, específicamente en la asignatura obligatoria Lengua Inglesa V impartida en tercer curso, en concreto en el primer cuatrimestre del grado en Estudios Ingleses del curso académico 2013-2014. La mayoría del alumnado encuestado tiene entre 20 y 21 años. El 85% del alumnado matriculado son mujeres frente al 15% que son hombres. La mayor parte de las/os alumnas/os encuestadas/os quiere trabajar como profesorado de secundaria en el futuro, de ahí que dicha asignatura se diseñara no sólo con el fin de que el alumnado adquiriera el nivel C1 sino también como una asignatura que

permitiera al alumnado adquirir destrezas como docentes por medio de actividades multimodales (véase sección 4).

Dicha asignatura es de seis créditos, es decir, el alumnado ha de recibir 60 horas de clases presenciales en el aula y han de completar su formación con 90 horas de trabajo individual y grupal fuera de la clase. Los principales objetivos de Lengua Inglesa V consisten en que el alumnado afiance sus destrezas en lectura, escritura, escucha, habla e interacción con el fin de adquirir el nivel de inglés C1. La asignatura contaba con cuatro horas de clase semanales: una estaba dedicada a mejorar la escritura de modo que se trabajaba con distintos tipos de texto para ver su estructura, su propósito social y las estructuras gramaticales y sintácticas que hacen que dichos textos sean efectivos (vid. sección 4.1); la siguiente hora tenía como finalidad que el alumnado mejorara sus destrezas orales, para ello tenía que preparar una presentación oral cooperativa sobre un tema de su elección. La tercera hora estaba dedicada a la gramática y en ella se corregían los ejercicios del libro de texto obligatorio para la asignatura. La cuarta hora consistía en desarrollar un debate multimodal cooperativo preparado por el mismo grupo que había expuesto una presentación oral en la clase anterior (vid. sección 4.2).

La metodología que se potenció en el aula durante todo el cuatrimestre fue interactiva con el fin de que el alumnado asumiera un total protagonismo durante todo el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. En este sentido, partimos siempre de la experiencia directa del aula y de las opiniones de los estudiantes con el fin potenciar una metodología activa en la que el alumnado sea protagonista activo. Al principio del cuatrimestre se pidió a las personas matriculadas en la asignatura que se organizaran en grupos de seis personas con el fin de llevar a cabo distintas actividades cooperativas que potenciaran la multimodalidad. Durante las tres primeras semanas del cuatrimestre la profesora explicó cómo preparar las presentaciones orales y los debates incorporando elementos multimodales. Para ello se trabajaba con ejercicios de escucha del libro de texto o con fragmentos de videos seleccionados por la profesora sobre los que había que responder a unas preguntas, se preparaban posibles preguntas para entrevistas de trabajo o se analizaban textos multimodales sobre temas de actualidad.

A partir de la cuarta semana del cuatrimestre, cada semana un grupo presentaba delante de toda la clase una presentación oral cooperativa sobre un tema de actualidad. En la siguiente clase práctica de la misma semana, el mismo grupo tenía que encargarse de organizar un debate sobre el mismo tema de la presentación oral con el fin de que todo el alumnado participara y pudiera desarrollar las destrezas orales. Debido a las limitaciones de espacio en este artículo nos vamos a centrar en describir el debate multimodal cooperativo (vid. sección 4.2) y nos centraremos en la presentación oral en futuras investigaciones.

Con respecto a la metodología llevada a cabo para el análisis de textos multimodales, una vez explicados los principales aspectos relacionados con la multimodalidad y la gramática visual, la profesora distribuyó entre el alumnado textos con imágenes con el fin de que el alumnado los analizara siguiendo el marco teórico propuesto. Se seleccionaron textos de la publicidad en los que aparecían mujeres representadas. En primer lugar el alumnado tenía que describir las principales características visuales y lingüísticas de los textos objeto de análisis. A continuación se pedía a las/os alumnas/os que expresaran su opinión sobre el modo en que se representaba a las mujeres en los textos con el fin de trabajar la capacidad crítica (vid sección 4.1).

Después de que el alumnado tuviera experiencia en enseñanza multimodal al haber llevado a cabo algunas actividades que la fomentaban tal y como se expone en la sección que sigue, se preparó una encuesta (véase

anexo 1) con el fin de preguntar al alumnado sobre determinados aspectos relacionados con la enseñanza multimodal de manera anónima. Concurrimos con Herrera y Enrique (2008: 13) en que la encuesta es un método adecuado para conocer la opinión del alumnado universitario sobre determinados aspectos relacionados con su formación pues el hecho de ser anónima hace posible que la información que se obtiene a través de las encuestas sea veraz.

Tal como se puede ver en el anexo 1, dicha encuesta consta de 11 preguntas de diferente tipología (abiertas, dicotómicas y de elección múltiple). El número de alumnas/os que respondieron dicha encuesta es de 79; el total de personas matriculadas en Lengua Inglesa V durante el curso 2013-2014 fue de 90 personas pero 11 obtuvieron una beca Erasmus y estudiaron en distintas universidades europeas. Antes de ofrecer los resultados de dicha encuesta en la sección 5, presentamos algunas de las actividades multimodales llevadas a cabo en las asignaturas objeto de estudio.

Tras lo expuesto en los párrafos anteriores, podemos observar que nuestra metodología de trabajo pasa por distintos estadios:

- Fase de toma de decisiones y preparación de las actividades: teniendo en cuenta el carácter práctico de la asignatura Lengua Inglesa V, decidimos potenciar el empleo de recursos multimodales con el fin de aumentar la motivación del alumnado y establecer relaciones entre la asignatura y la vida real. Para ello, se prepararon las actividades a las que nos referiremos con detalle en la sección que sigue.

- Fase de preparación de la encuesta: con el fin de conocer la opinión del alumnado sobre las actividades llevadas a cabo con el fin de fomentar la multimodalidad en la enseñanza universitaria, la profesora procedió a elaborar una batería de preguntas para dar forma a la encuesta que se presenta en el anexo 1. Una vez preparada la encuesta, se pidió al alumnado matriculado en la asignatura Lengua Inglesa V que la completara. A continuación, la profesora analizó los resultados con el fin de observar si la propuesta de enseñanza multimodal llevada a cabo tenía buena acogida entre el alumnado.

4. Propuesta de actividades multimodales

Debido a las limitaciones de extensión de este artículo en este apartado vamos a limitarnos a presentar con detalle dos de las actividades multimodales llevadas a cabo en las la asignatura objeto de estudio (vid. Martínez Lirola 2013a y 2013b para la descripción de otras actividades).

4.1 Análisis de textos multimodales: introducción a la gramática visual

Tal y como se ha señalado en la sección anterior, una de las horas estaba dedicada a trabajar con textos con el fin de que el alumnado mejorara su nivel de escritura en inglés. El alumnado estaba acostumbrado a analizar textos en los que sólo hubiera texto escrito, es decir, textos monomodales en los que se prestaba atención a fundamentalmente las distintas partes del mismo, a la lengua empleada según el tipo de texto del que se tratase y a la función del texto en la sociedad. La profesora dedicó una sesión a presentar los principales aspectos de la gramática visual (Kress y van Leeuwen 2006) para que el alumnado pudiera analizar y trabajar con textos multimodales por ser éstos muy comunes en la sociedad actual.

Los principios que se explicaron relacionados con la composición de los textos eran los siguientes: a) el valor de la información, es decir, el lugar en el que han sido ubicados los distintos elementos en el texto (de

izquierda a derecha, de arriba abajo o de manera centrada); b) la prominencia que presta atención a los elementos más destacados de una página, aquellos que pretenden captar la atención del receptor y c) los marcos que son importantes pues se encargan de conectar o separar los diversos elementos de la página. Pueden unir elementos dentro de una composición visual y dentro de un texto escrito. Cada uno de los principios se observó en distintos textos con el fin de que el alumnado pudiera ver la composición de distintos textos y como la disposición de los distintos elementos hace que el significado de los textos varíe.

En este sentido, los principios presentados en el apartado anterior se enseñan por medio de ejemplos en los que se puedan observar su presencia o ausencia y el modo en que la combinación de marcos, elementos prominentes y el valor de la información hace que se destaquen determinados elementos dependiendo de la función comunicativa de los textos.

Seguidamente, el alumnado tenía que poner en práctica lo aprendido por lo que la profesora seleccionó varios textos multimodales, en concreto se eligieron textos en los que aparecían representadas mujeres en anuncios de publicidad, con el fin de observar las principales características lingüísticas y visuales de dichos textos. De este modo se introducía en la asignatura un tema transversal relacionado con el género y el alumnado podía desarrollar su capacidad crítica al observar el modo en que se representaban las mujeres en la muestra de anuncios publicitarios objeto de estudio: mujeres con poca ropa, mostrando la mayor parte de su cuerpo; además, en estos textos la fotografía de la mujer suele ser el elemento más destacado y se emplea como reclamo publicitario.

Los pasos que el alumnado tenía que seguir a la hora de analizar los textos multimodales consistían en observar el lugar en que aparecían los principales elementos, es decir, arriba, abajo, en el centro, a la derecha o a la izquierda, si había o no marcos conectando los distintos elementos encontrados. Además tenían que localizar el elemento más relevante en la composición y explicar su función en el significado total del texto. Además, las/os alumnas/os tenían que comentar si el texto era efectivo y si la distribución de los distintos elementos se podría mejorar con el fin de que el texto fuera más efectivo.

Tras practicar con los textos seleccionados por la profesora, se pidió al alumnado que se organizara en grupos de unas cinco o seis personas y seleccionaran dos textos multimodales sobre un tema de su elección. Dichos textos tenían que ser analizados siguiendo los principios de la gramática visual presentados en clase. Una vez analizados en los grupos, se elegían dos personas en cada grupo para presentar el análisis delante de toda la clase además el grupo que presentaba sus textos tenía que preparar algunas preguntas sobre los mismos con el fin de fomentar la capacidad crítica.

Esta actividad resultó muy útil y enriquecedora debido a la variedad de la temática de los textos elegidos: ecología, viajes, educación, marketing, banca, salud, enfermedades, entre otros. Además, esta actividad permitía trabajar por un lado las destrezas escritas de manera grupal al tener que analizar los textos elegidos; por otro lado, se trabajaban las destrezas orales al tener que presentar los textos delante de toda la clase y tener que fomentar el debate. El hecho de que el alumnado tuviera que seleccionar los textos libremente fomentaba distintas competencias entre las que destaca el trabajo autónomo y la toma de decisiones, además de tener que consensuar qué dos textos de entre los distintos recopilados por cada miembro del grupo se analizaban y se presentaban.

4.2 El debate multimodal cooperativo

El debate multimodal cooperativo estaba basado en la presentación oral realizada en la clase anterior. Esta actividad contrasta con dicha presentación que tiene como finalidad que el alumnado haga un uso formal de la lengua mientras que el debate tiene como propósito principal que el alumnado sea capaz de promover la interacción con el resto de la clase y se exprese con fluidez sobre el tema elegido. De este modo, todas las personas que vienen a clase tienen la oportunidad de expresar su opinión sobre el tema desarrollado en el debate.

Además, otro de los objetivos del debate era ofrecer al alumnado la posibilidad de trabajar como profesorado al tener que prestar atención a aspectos como el control de la clase, promover la interacción con el fin de hacer posible que participaran todas/os las alumnas/os, dividir la clase en grupos, pedir al alumnado que exprese su opinión delante de toda la clase, estar en desacuerdo de forma respetuosa, aprender de la opinión de otras personas, etc.

Por otro lado, el debate cooperativo fue elegido como técnica didáctica por el hecho de ser muy útil para potenciar la creatividad. Al principio del cuatrimestre la profesora explicó al alumnado que los debates no debían consistir sólo en hacer preguntas sobre el tema objeto de debate esa semana sino que el propósito del debate era que todo el alumnado pudiera interactuar y desarrollar el pensamiento crítico. Por esta razón se explicaron distintas técnicas cooperativas que podían usarse con el fin de que los debates tuvieran un resultado positivo y cumplieran los objetivos propuestos.

Por ejemplo, algunas técnicas que fomentan la cooperación, la capacidad crítica y la interacción, entre otras competencias son las siguientes: la mitad de la clase podía estar a favor y la mitad en contra del tema sobre el que se discutía; la clase se podía dividir en grupos de cinco o seis personas con el fin de ofrecer distintas definiciones, responder algunas preguntas, etc. Cada pequeño grupo tenía que nombrar un líder o coordinador de grupo con el fin de trabajar también el liderazgo; dicho líder podría ir cambiando con cada pregunta con el fin de que cada miembro del grupo asumiera dicho papel y tomara conciencia de la importancia de tener un buen líder para que los grupos funcionen bien y alcancen los objetivos propuestos. Además, se podían usar algunos juegos en la clase de modo que además de hablar en inglés la clase resultara divertida, como por ejemplo, el grupo que obtuviera el mayor número de respuestas acertadas obtendría un premio (de este modo además de la cooperación se fomenta la competición, competencia que también es necesaria en el mercado laboral)

Esta actividad contribuye a que la enseñanza sea multimodal porque el alumnado emplea las TICs para que el debate sea efectivo: uso de videos para situar al resto de la clase en el tema del debate, empleo de presentaciones *Power Point* o *Prezi* para plantear las preguntas del debate; se utiliza internet en el aula con el fin de acceder a distintos textos, usar videos de *youtube* o emplear diccionarios electrónicos. En muchas ocasiones el alumnado trae objetos reales a la clase con el fin de promover la interacción a partir de ellos; algunas veces se han empleado distintos textos multimodales en papel en los que la imagen era el elemento más sobresaliente con el fin de que los distintos grupos en los que se había dividido la clase pudieran desarrollar el pensamiento crítico al expresar sus ideas sobre los textos objeto de análisis de manera oral.

5. Resultados

Las actividades presentadas en la sección anterior ponen de manifiesto el fomento de la multimodalidad en la asignatura Lengua Inglesa V. Por un lado, trabajar desde el comienzo del cuatrimestre con textos que presentan distintos modos de comunicación entre los que destaca la imagen ayuda al alumnado a tomar conciencia de la importancia que tiene saber leer estos textos en la sociedad actual donde este tipo de textos son cada vez más comunes. En este sentido, es importante que el alumnado sea consciente de que la imagen y el texto escrito han de entenderse como una unidad. Además, durante el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje se pide el alumnado que reflexione sobre cómo se construyen los significados en los textos y sobre la importancia de la imagen en el significado global de los mismos.

Por otro lado, hacer que el alumnado participe activamente en clase mediante la organización de un debate también contribuye a potenciar la multimodalidad pues en muchas ocasiones el alumnado comienza presentando un video sobre el tema elegido y después comienza la discusión. Hay grupos que decoran la clase con textos multimodales sobre el tema elegido para debatir, por ejemplo, se emplearon frases pronunciadas por Martin Luther King y Nelson Mandela con imágenes de ellos en el debate sobre el racismo en nuestra sociedad. De igual modo, en el debate sobre la situación de la educación en distintos países se emplearon imágenes de personas de distintas culturas acompañadas por afirmaciones sobre algunas de las características del sistema educativo en sus países de origen.

Optar por una enseñanza multimodal que incorpora actividades como las presentadas en los párrafos anteriores hace que se potencie no sólo el uso de distintas herramientas durante el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje sino que también se contribuye a fomentar la creatividad al conceder al alumnado libertad para usar distintos recursos multimodales según su personalidad y las características de la actividad a desarrollar (videos, música, imágenes, entre otras). De igual modo, se contribuye a aumentar la motivación de las/os alumnas/os por poder tomar sus propias decisiones y ser protagonistas a la hora de desarrollar todas las actividades propuestas.

Además de los aspectos mencionados en los párrafos anteriores sobre el modo en que Lengua Inglesa V fomenta la multimodalidad, nos pareció importante conocer la opinión del alumnado matriculado en dicha asignatura sobre las actividades llevadas a cabo. Por esta razón, se preparó una encuesta para que al final del cuatrimestre el alumnado expresara su opinión sobre la enseñanza multimodal de manera anónima. Los resultados de dicha encuesta son los que se presentan en los párrafos que siguen. Las preguntas de la encuesta iban orientadas a conocer, por una parte, la valoración que el alumnado realiza sobre el empleo de herramientas multimodales en el aula y, por otra, sobre la valoración que le suscita aprender a leer textos multimodales, susceptibles de traer elementos culturales a las aulas universitarias.

El 100% del alumnado encuestado responde positivamente a la primera pregunta pues considera que la enseñanza multimodal facilita su aprendizaje. Las principales razones que ofrecen para justificar su respuesta son las siguientes: es más fácil aprender y memorizar con herramientas multimodales, este tipo de enseñanza está unido a la vida real y facilita que se capte y se mantenga la atención en los temas objeto de estudio.

El 91,93% responde de manera positiva a la pregunta dos pues consideran que la enseñanza multimodal influye en tu motivación para aprender frente a un 8,06% que responde de manera negativa. Sus respuestas se justifican explicando que de este modo les cuesta menos aprender, es un método de trabajo más dinámico y ameno y les ayuda a retener más la información.

El mismo porcentaje, es decir, la gran mayoría de las/os alumnas/os responde de manera positiva al preguntarles si les resulta más fácil adquirir sus conocimientos si el profesorado emplea presentaciones *Power Point*, presentaciones *Prezi*, videos o imágenes, entre otros, en las clases. Señalan que estas herramientas multimodales refuerzan el mensaje del profesorado y sirven para esquematizar la información y presentarla de manera clara y organizada.

Es interesante que de nuevo el 91,93% pone de manifiesto que enseñar con textos multimodales contribuye a incorporar componentes culturales en las clases porque les ayuda a conocer aspectos relacionados con otras culturas a través de los textos y desarrollar el pensamiento crítico, una competencia fundamental en nuestra sociedad con el fin de que nuestro alumnado forme parte de una ciudadanía activa y crítica.

Al tratarse la pregunta número cinco de una pregunta abierta las respuestas son variadas pero dichas respuestas pueden englobarse en las siguientes afirmaciones: los textos multimodales ayudan a tomar conciencia de la composición de los mismos, a fomentar la creatividad y la participación activa del alumnado universitario en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, a potenciar el aprendizaje autónomo, a contrastar con el modo de trabajar que se potencia en la enseñanza tradicional, a tomar conciencia de la importancia de la interdisciplinariedad en la actualidad y a ver la relación entre lo que se aprende por medio de texto multimodales desde una perspectiva lingüística y lo que se aprendería estudiando otras carreras como por ejemplo Publicidad. Finalmente, más de la mitad del alumnado encuestado pone de manifiesto que trabajar con este tipo de textos ayuda a potenciar la capacidad crítica.

En la pregunta número seis, el 80,64% de nuestro alumnado señala que las imágenes comunican tanto como el texto escrito frente a un 19,35% que ofrece una respuesta negativa. De nuevo la inmensa mayoría, el 91,93% responde que sí les gustaría aprender más contenidos con carácter multimodal en otras asignaturas frente a un 8,06% que considera que es suficiente con el planteamiento multimodal que se ofrece en la asignatura Lengua Inglesa V.

Al preguntarles sobre otros posibles temas, además de género (vid. actividad presentada en la sección 4.1), que les gustaría analizar desde una perspectiva multimodal, el 50% del alumnado señala que cualquier tema, un 20% especifica que le gustaría tratar temas políticos, otro 20% se centra en los temas sociales como el racismo o la pobreza y el último 10% enumera temas variados como la educación, los medios de comunicación y la sociedad, la ecología o la salud.

La pregunta nueve pretende hacer reflexionar al alumnado sobre el modo en que se pueden emplear las TICs para que la enseñanza sea multimodal con el fin de que hagan un repaso de las principales TICs empleadas en la asignatura y las respuestas son muy claras: la gran mayoría, el 93% responden haciendo referencia a las presentaciones en *Power Point* o *Prezi* y el uso de videos por ser éstas las TICs más utilizadas en Lengua Inglesa V. Un 7% del alumnado hace referencia a la pizarra digital, la música o el uso de un *blog* con contenidos relacionados con la asignatura.

Al preguntar al alumnado si le gustaría incorporar más herramientas de *e-learning* en su proceso de aprendizaje, un 72,58% responde que sí frente a un 27,41% que responde lo contrario. Las personas que ofrecen una respuesta positiva mencionan que usar *e-learning* es mejor que aprender de manera teórica pues se fomenta la interacción y el entretenimiento. Las personas que ofrecen una respuesta negativa ponen de

manifiesto que no consideran adecuado que sea internet quien les eduque o que consideran fundamental el aula para resolver sus dudas.

Finalmente, la pregunta número once tiene como objetivo que el alumnado reflexione sobre las competencias que se trabajan más cuando el aprendizaje es multimodal. Hay alumnado que marca varias competencias por lo que se ofrece un porcentaje por competencia: capacidad crítica (80,64%), toma de decisiones (40,32%), liderazgo (30,64%), trabajo en equipo (46,77%), aprendizaje autónomo (43,54%) y en otras competencias, una persona considera que ha adquirido la competencia de hablar en público.

Los resultados de la encuesta ponen de manifiesto que el alumnado considera útil aprender a leer textos multimodales y ha mostrado una actitud receptiva a la hora de utilizar este tipo de textos en el aula. Se valora el hecho de que los textos empleados tengan contenido social y ha despertado mucho interés el hecho de profundizar en los mensajes ocultos detrás de determinadas imágenes o de combinación de elementos de modo que se ha potenciado el pensamiento crítico y la capacidad de análisis.Por esta razón, consideramos de vital importancia seguir haciendo hincapié en la enseñanza de los textos multimodales, ya que vivimos en un entorno fundamentalmente multimodal, lleno de posibilidades para desarrollar nuestra capacidad crítica y para ser más consciente del peso que poseen los diferentes discursos.

6. Conclusiones

Las aulas de cualquier nivel educativo son un escenario multimodal que permite llevar a cabo prácticas docentes en las que la multimodalidad adquiera protagonismo de diversos modos: empleando las TICs en diferentes momentos del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, utilizando textos multimodales en la docencia (videos, páginas web, textos que combinen imagen con texto escrito, presentaciones multimedia, diccionarios electrónicos, etc.).

En este sentido, las distintas actividades propuestas ofrecen al alumnado la oportunidad de aprender haciendo. Esto lleva consigo que el alumnado asume la responsabilidad de su proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje debido a que se le concede un papel activo. Las actividades seleccionadas llevan consigo que el alumnado tenga que tomar decisiones durante todo el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. De este modo se potencia que el alumnado desarrolle su capacidad para liderar y decidir, aspectos fundamentales a la hora de incorporarse al mercado laboral.

Tal y como se puede ver en la sección cuarta, si estas actividades se preparan por grupos además de potenciar el uso de las TICs, competencia fundamental en la sociedad del siglo XXI, se potencia el trabajo cooperativo que es otra competencia importante y necesaria en el mercado laboral. De este modo, el alumnado será consciente de que lo que aprende en el aula universitaria tiene una relación directa con su futuro como profesional y con las demandas del mercado laboral.

El hecho de optar por una enseñanza multimodal hace posible que el alumnado desarrolle diferentes destrezas al tener que estar familiarizado con distintos modos de comunicación, puede fomentar el desarrollo del aprendizaje autónomo además de contribuir a la adquisición de competencias mencionadas en el párrafo anterior. En este sentido nos parece importante hacer explícitas las competencias que se están trabajando en cada momento del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje así como su relación con las demandas que nos plantea la sociedad 2.0.

El análisis de las encuestas pone de manifiesto que el alumnado encuestado es consciente de la importancia de la enseñanza multimodal para que la enseñanza sea efectiva y afirma que este tipo de enseñanza influye de manera directa en su motivación para aprender, de ahí que señalen que les gustaría aprender de esta manera en otras asignaturas con el fin de adquirir competencias fundamentales para el mercado laboral como el liderazgo, la capacidad crítica o el trabajo en equipo.

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Anexo 1. ENCUESTA SOBRE MULTIMODALIDAD EN EL AULA

1. ¿Consideras que la enseñanza multimodal, es decir, aquélla que incorpora diferentes modos de comunicación (escrito, visual, musical, etc.) facilita tu aprendizaje?

Sí No

¿Por qué?

2. ¿Influye la enseñanza multimodal en tu motivación para aprender?

Sí No

¿Por qué?

3. ¿Es más fácil adquirir tus conocimientos si el profesorado emplea presentaciones *Power Point*, presentaciones *Prezi*, videos o imágenes entre otros en las clases?

Sí No

¿Por qué?

4. ¿En tu opinión, consideras que enseñar con textos multimodales contribuye a incorporar componentes culturales en las clases?

Sí No

¿Por qué?

5. ¿A qué más puede contribuir?

6. ¿Piensas que las imágenes comunican tanto como el texto escrito?

Sí No

7. ¿Te gustaría aprender más contenidos con carácter multimodal (en otras asignaturas que quizás están un poco obsoletas)?

8. ¿Qué temas además de género te gustaría analizar desde una perspectiva multimodal?

9. ¿De qué modo se pueden emplear las TICs para que la enseñanza sea multimodal?

10. ¿Te gustaría incorporar más herramientas de *e-learning* en tu proceso de aprendizaje?

Sí No

¿Por qué?

11. ¿Qué competencias son las que se trabajan más cuando el aprendizaje es multimodal?

- Capacidad crítica
- Toma de decisiones
- Liderazgo
- Trabajar en equipo
- Aprendizaje autónomo
- Otras (especificar)

Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

EL TRATAMIENTO DE LA PRONUNCIACIÓN EN LOS LIBROS DE TEXTO DE NIVEL B1 Y SU VALORACIÓN DE ACUERDO CON LOS PRINCIPIOS ESTABLECIDOS POR EL MCERL

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Resumen:

En este artículo se pretende analizar cómo se trata la enseñanza de la pronunciación en los libros de texto de nivel B1/B1+ para, a partir de ese análisis, establecer una serie de conclusiones sobre cómo se debería enseñar de acuerdo con los principios establecidos por el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas MCERL (Consejo de Europa, 2001). Nos centraremos en definir y describir el papel asignado a la pronunciación en el MCERL prestando atención al nivel B1 o B1+, nivel de los contenidos de inglés de Bachillerato y nivel que se le exige a los alumnos universitarios para la obtención de un título universitario en el estado español. Así, valoraremos la forma en la que distintos libros de texto han encauzado la enseñanza de la pronunciación y si presumiblemente las actividades propuestas resultan útiles para alcanzar un determinado nivel en este campo.

Palabras claves: competencias, libros de texto, adquisición fonológica de la LE, rasgos segmentales y suprasegmentales

Abstract:

In this article we propose to analise how pronunciation teaching is dealt with in B1 level textbooks in order to establish conclusions about how we should teach according to the principles established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). This paper seeks to define and describe the role given to pronunciation in the CEFR paying attention to the B1 or B1+ level, level of the Bachillerato English content and level, which university students are required to obtain the university degree in Spain. Thus, we will value how different textbooks have channelled pronunciation teaching and if, in practical terms, the proposed activities are useful for reaching a specific level in this field.

Key words: competencies, textbooks, FL phonological acquisition, segmental and suprasegmental features

Introducción

La enseñanza de una lengua extranjera debe incluir una atención particular al desarrollo de la comprensión y la expresión oral, y al desarrollo de la comprensión y la expresión escrita. Sin embargo, la pronunciación, que debe ser un aspecto crucial a tratar en los manuales, en muchos casos no recibe la importancia que en realidad tiene. Autores como Llisterri (2003), Bartolí (2005) y Giralt (2006) alertan que "en la enseñanza de LE la pronunciación sigue estando desatendida y no recibe el tratamiento adecuado que merece". En la prueba oral de los exámenes de Cambridge ESOL (nivel B1), los aprendices deben realizar 4 actividades de comprensión oral y 4 de expresión oral, por lo tanto deben comprender la información ofrecida en contextos diferentes prestando atención a los aspectos de pronunciación. De la misma manera, los aprendices deben producir oraciones en la lengua inglesa y cuanto mejor sea la pronunciación que consigan, mejor serán los resultados obtenidos en esta parte de la prueba. Puesto que existe una manifiesta necesidad de cuidar la

pronunciación para abordar este tipo de pruebas, ello nos lleva a considerar la necesidad de mejorar los aspectos de pronunciación en los manuales de enseñanza de la LE, que presumiblemente deben contar con más actividades de pronunciación tanto a nivel segmental[1] como a nivel suprasegmental[2] para poder lograr el éxito en la realización de estas pruebas.

Según la metodología tradicional tanto en España como fuera de ella los libros de texto han prestado atención a los sonidos aislados por medio de actividades mecánicas en un contexto formal. Sin embargo, en las últimas dos décadas se ha producido un cambio hacia una nueva enseñanza de la pronunciación centrada en la competencia comunicativa por medio de actividades significativas (Burguess y Spencer 2000; Derwing y Rossiter 2003; Lozano 2005; Mclaren, Madrid y Bueno 2005; Usó 2008; Walker 2010; Cauldwell 2013). No obstante, los diferentes libros de texto utilizados para la enseñanza del inglés en este periodo tanto en Europa como en el continente americano no han dedicado mucho tiempo al estudio de la adquisición del sistema fonológico, y en consecuencia, explica Verdía (2002), no se han encontrado soluciones satisfactorias para enfrentarse a su enseñanza. De hecho, esos libros de texto, como algunos analizados aquí, que presentan muchas deficiencias en cuanto a lo que a pronunciación se refiere, son un inconveniente para los profesores que están preparando a los aprendices a aprobar el examen de B1. Por lo tanto estos profesores deben emplear otros materiales para compensar las deficiencias de los manuales que utilizan (Llisteri 2003; Gladys 2010; Celce-Murcia, Brinton y Snow 2013).

De acuerdo con Pavón (2000:91), a través de la historia la instrucción formal en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la pronunciación ha sido tratada de varias formas, desde la simple indiferencia de aquellos métodos basados en la lectura y la traducción, como el método de Gramática-Traducción (*Grammar Translation*), hasta el método denominado Método Directo (*Direct Method*), el cual operaba bajo el supuesto de que los errores en la pronunciación (y otros errores) eran parte del proceso de adquisición natural y desaparecerían conforme los estudiantes aumentaran su competencia comunicativa. Con la llegada del Enfoque Comunicativo en la década de los años 80, la comunicación se convierte en el primer objetivo de la enseñanza de lenguas. Para enseñar la lengua de forma comunicativa, los esfuerzos comenzaron a dirigirse hacia la enseñanza de los aspectos suprasegmentales de la lengua (e.g. ritmo, acento y entonación) en un contexto discursivo (McNerney y Mendelsohn 1992:186). De hecho, la aceptación del enfoque comunicativo para la enseñanza de lenguas trajo consigo una atención renovada a la enseñanza de la pronunciación, ya que se entendía que uno de los objetivos primarios era conseguir que los aprendices consiguieran un nivel mínimo de inteligibilidad en el uso de la pronunciación para ser capaces de comunicarse oralmente (Brown 1992:3; Morley 1994:76; Kenworthy 1997:13; Munro y Derwing 1999:289; Gimson 2001:276; Hancock y Pavón 2005:22).

En este artículo expondremos las características del MCERL (Consejo de Europa 2001) que se encuentran particularmente relacionadas con la enseñanza de la pronunciación, revisión que será completada con un análisis de cómo se ve tratado este ámbito en materiales destinados para cubrir los niveles B1/B1+. Estos dos

[1] Los rasgos segmentales son unidades sonoras tales como los sonidos vocálicos y los consonánticos.
[2] Los rasgos suprasegmentales son rasgos del habla que se aplican a los fonemas. Estos lo conforman el acento, el ritmo y la entonación.

niveles se corresponderían con el nivel de competencia lingüística en LE que se les exige a los alumnos universitarios para obtener el título.

1. El tratamiento de la pronunciación dentro del MCERL

Debido a que la pronunciación es uno de los aspectos más descuidados en la enseñanza de LE y sobre el que más confusión existe en cuanto a objetivos y metodología, resulta necesario establecer algunas orientaciones referentes a esta cuestión partiendo de las directrices dictadas por el MCERL

El Consejo de Europa, en el MCERL, presenta la "competencia fonológica" como:

> "El conocimiento y la destreza productiva y perceptiva de una serie de categorías y funciones fónicas tales como: fonemas, realizaciones sonoras de esos fonemas o alófonos, rasgos distintivos, agrupación de sonidos en sílabas, y prosodia: acento, ritmo y entonación y casos de reducción fonética" (MCERL 2001: 5.2.1.4)

La competencia fonológica se enmarca dentro de la competencia lingüística, la cual a su vez es uno de los tres elementos que conforman la competencia comunicativa:

> "(…) comprende varios componentes: el lingüístico, el sociolingüístico y el pragmático. Se asume que cada uno de estos componentes comprende, en concreto, conocimientos, destrezas y habilidades. Las competencias lingüísticas incluyen los conocimientos y las destrezas léxicas, fonológicas y sintácticas, y otras dimensiones de la lengua como sistema, independientemente del valor sociolingüístico de sus variantes y de las funciones pragmáticas de sus realizaciones" (2001: 2.1.2. La competencia comunicativa).

Por lo tanto, en la competencia lingüística comunicativa se distinguen seis subcompetencias - léxica, gramatical, semántica, fonológica, ortográfica y ortoépica, y el progreso que el estudiante va realizando en cada una de ellas se clasifica por escalas. Sin embargo, el desarrollo de la subcompetencia fonológica no puede considerarse de manera aislada de las otras subcompetencias lingüísticas sino que entendemos la competencia fonológica como una interfaz entre todos los subdominios de la competencia comunicativa.

Pese a su carácter transversal, el MCERL no se detiene en presentar las interrelaciones existentes entre la competencia fonológica y el resto de competencias comunicativas no lingüísticas, siendo, por ejemplo, la competencia sociolingüística o pragmática de especial importancia a la hora de entender un discurso. Lograr que el alumno desarrolle una buena competencia fonológica significa que este será capaz de percibir y producir de manera adecuada el sistema lingüístico en su manifestación más externa, y esto influye directamente sobre aspectos específicos de otras competencias (léxica, gramatical, ortográfica y ortoépica) (Iruela [2007], en Villaescusa 2009:130).

Resulta determinante a la hora de otorgarle a la didáctica de la pronunciación la importancia que se merece, tal y como señala Mellado (2012:23), el hecho de que la competencia fonológica interviene de manera decisiva en la consecución de otras competencias, tanto en la competencia general denominada existencial ("saber ser") como en las diferentes competencias comunicativas, cuando estas se expresan a través del canal oral-auditivo.

El MCERL expone una serie de contenidos de pronunciación para la clase de LE. En la sección 5.2.1.4. *La competencia fonológica del MCERL* (2001) se detallan contenidos bastante precisos de pronunciación descritos de la siguiente manera: La competencia fonológica supone el conocimiento y la destreza en la percepción y producción de:

1. Las unidades de sonidos (fonemas) de la lengua y su realización en contextos concretos (alófonos).

2. Los rasgos fonéticos que distinguen fonemas (rasgos distintivos; por ejemplo sonoridad, nasalidad, oclusión, labialidad, etc.).

3. La composición fonética de las palabras (estructura silábica, secuencia acentual de las palabras, etc.).

4. Fonética de las oraciones ("prosodia"): a) acento y ritmo de las oraciones; b) entonación.

5. Reducción fonética: a) reducción vocálica; b) formas fuertes y débiles; c) asimilación; d) elisión.

El Marco estipula que el conocimiento del sistema fonológico (incluyendo rasgos segmentales y suprasegmentales) y la destreza en su uso es parte de los conocimientos de la lengua necesarios para poder establecer una comunicación fluida, precisa y compleja.

Como conclusión a este epígrafe somos de la opinión de Bartolí (2005:10), quien afirma que el MCERL no describe claramente aplicaciones didácticas en relación con la pronunciación: "aunque el Marco recoge un contenido de pronunciación bastante completo, no incluye propuestas de integración de la pronunciación en la clase comunicativa". El problema más relevante, a mi parecer y de acuerdo con Bartolí (2005:14), es concebir el aprendizaje de la pronunciación a partir de la lengua escrita, cuando el objetivo es el dominio de la lengua oral. Para que se desencadene un proceso de adquisición del componente fonológico, el aprendizaje ha de apoyarse en la lengua oral porque si no existe contacto continuado con la lengua oral, éste es mínimo o está mediatizado por la lengua escrita, difícilmente podrá adquirirse una competencia del componente fonológico.

2. Investigación

2.1. Objetivos

El objetivo principal de este estudio es analizar cómo la enseñanza de la pronunciación es abordada por los libros de texto de nivel B1 o B1+ para, a partir de ese análisis, establecer una serie de conclusiones sobre cómo se debería enseñar de acuerdo con los principios establecidos por el Marco. Nos centraremos en describir la enseñanza de la pronunciación en una serie de manuales prestando especial atención a los aspectos suprasegmentales que se encuentren más íntimamente ligados a la consecución de la inteligibilidad. Como objetivos específicos, nos hemos propuesto los siguientes:

1) ¿Qué aspectos de la pronunciación son tratados?
   a) Aspectos segmentales: sonidos vocálicos y consonánticos.
   b) Aspectos suprasegmentales: i. acento léxico; ii. acento en la oración/prominencia; iii. habla conexa: formas débiles.
2) ¿Las actividades de comprensión oral prestan atención a estos aspectos de la pronunciación?
3) ¿Está la pronunciación integrada plenamente o es añadida adicionalmente al final de la unidad o incluso al final del libro de texto?
4) ¿Está explícitamente expuesta la pronunciación en la tabla de contenidos?
5) ¿Se encuentra la pronunciación mencionada explícitamente en la guía del profesor o en la introducción?

2.2. Materiales analizados

Las razones por las que han sido escogidos estos libros de texto son las siguientes: 1) algunos de los manuales seleccionados se utilizan en el contexto de las clases de Bachillerato como recursos didácticos para la preparación de contenidos de inglés a nivel de Bachillerato y como antesala a la Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad (PAU) y 2) otros manuales que se han seleccionado están orientados a la preparación de la prueba de nivel B1, una prueba demandada por las universidades españolas al final de la carrera para alcanzar la cualificación universitaria correspondiente. Esta prueba se impone de acuerdo con los principios marcados por el MCERL que divide a los aprendices en tres grupos y que a su vez pueden ser divididos en seis niveles: A Hablante Básico (A1, A2), B Hablante Independiente (B1, B2), C Hablante Competente (C1, C2). Aquí nuestros estudios están centrados en el nivel B1/B1+.

Los manuales seleccionados para su análisis son los siguientes:

Burke, K. y Rowdon, B. 2001. *Wavelength.* Londres: Longman.

Cotton, D., Favey, D. y Kent, S. 2008. *Language Leader Coursebook.* Londres: Pearson Longman.

Downie, M., Gray, D. y Jiménez, J.M. 2008. *Tune In 2.* España: Richmond Publishing.

Dubicka, I. y O'Keefe, M. 2010. *Lifestyle: English for work, socializing and travel.* Londres: Pearson Longman.

Fidalgo, A. 2001. *Made Easy.* Londres: Richmond.

Heyderman, E y May, P. 2010. *Complete Pet.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, J. 2008. *Language Leader Workbook*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Maggs, P. y Quintana, J. 2006. *Move*. Oxford: Macmillan.

Mann, M. 2008. *Laser B1.* Oxford: Macmillan.

Oxenden, C. y Lathan-Koening. C. 1997. *New English File.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rea, D. y Clementson, T. 2001. *English Unlimited. English for Spanish Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Redston, C. y Cunninham, G. 2006. *Face to Face: Intermediate.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. 2001. *New Interchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2.3. Protocolo de análisis

Para realizar el análisis de los diferentes libros de texto, hemos adoptado el procedimiento recomendado por Dalton y Seidlhofer (2000:153), que se caracteriza por seguir el estudio de la pronunciación de acuerdo con la percepción y producción de los sonidos y del acento. Asimismo, hemos añadido aspectos de procedimientos sugeridos por Burgess y Spencer (2000:214) quienes apuestan por prestar más importancia a los aspectos suprasegmentales que a los segmentales. Hemos revisado los libros de texto citados más arriba de acuerdo con los siguientes aspectos: la frecuencia de aparición de actividades relacionadas con la enseñanza de la pronunciación; los elementos de la pronunciación tratados (sonidos: vocales y consonantes, acento léxico, el acento en la oración y las formas débiles); las actividades de pronunciación particularmente relacionadas con la comprensión oral; la integración de la actividades de pronunciación en la secuencia general de actividades por unidad o lección; la especificación de las actividades de pronunciación en la tabla de contenidos junto a la gramática y el léxico; y por último, si la pronunciación se presenta de manera explícita en la guía del profesor o en la introducción del propio manual. Una vez analicemos todos estos aspectos en los manuales sometidos a revisión, se procederá a su identificación y evaluación de forma específica.

2.4. Presentación y análisis de los datos

De acuerdo con los objetivos y protocolo de análisis marcados, procedemos a presentar y analizar los datos que aparecen en los libros de texto seleccionados. Estos datos se han recogido a partir de las anotaciones que se han realizado sobre lo que se ha ido encontrando.

En la tabla 1 se muestra el número de actividades de pronunciación que se presentan en cada manual según los aspectos segmentales relacionados con los sonidos vocálicos y los sonidos consonánticos:

Tabla 1. Número de actividades según el rasgo vocálico y consonántico

Título del Manual	Sonidos vocálicos	Sonidos consonánticos	Total
Move	0	3	3
English Unlimited	10	7	17
Complete Pet	0	0	0
New English File	3	6	9
Face to Face	8	8	16
Tune In 2	0	2	2
Made Easy	3	8	11
Laser B1	11	6	17
Lifestyle	0	0	0
Wavelength	0	0	0
New Interchange	0	0	0
Language Leader Coursebook	0	2	2
Language Leader Workbook	4	2	6
Total	39	44	83

Podemos observar que si prestamos atención al tratamiento que se le ha dado a los sonidos vocálicos y sonidos consonánticos en los libros de texto seleccionados, encontramos 7 libros de texto que no presentan ninguna actividad relacionada con el rasgo vocálico y 4 que no presentan ninguna actividad relacionada con el rasgo consonántico. El tratamiento que se le otorga a los sonidos consonánticos en los manuales es más regular que el tratamiento que se le otorga a los sonidos vocálicos. No obstante, la atención mostrada a los aspectos segmentales es escasa.

En la tabla 2 se muestra el número de actividades de pronunciación que se presentan en cada manual y la proporción de actividades segmentales en comparación con las suprasegmentales:

Tabla 2. Número de actividades segmentales y suprasegmentales en cada manual

Título del Manual	Número de actividades segmentales	Número de actividades suprasegmentales	Total
Move	3	4	7
English Unlimited	17	7	24
Complete Pet	0	5	5
New English File	9	12	21
Face to Face	16	19	35
Tune In 2	2	5	7
Made Easy	11	5	16
Laser B1	17	3	20
Lifestyle	0	0	0
Wavelength	0	14	14
New Interchange	0	18	18
Language Leader Coursebook	2	9	11
Language Leader Workbook	6	15	21
Total	83	116	199

Según la distribución de las actividades segmentales y suprasegmentales, existe un mayor número de manuales que presentan un enfoque suprasegmental. De los 13 manuales, se observan 8 que presentan un enfoque suprasegmental a través de actividades que principalmente trabajan con la acentuación en la palabra y en la oración. 3 de los 13 manuales otorgan más importancia a las actividades segmentales teniendo en cuenta los sonidos vocálicos y consonánticos. Y finalmente, 1 manual no presenta ninguna actividad segmental ni suprasegmental, por lo tanto, este no trabaja la pronunciación.

El hecho de que encontremos más actividades de aspecto suprasegmental que segmental es algo muy positivo, pues la metodología actual que apuesta por un enfoque comunicativo aboga por una atención creciente a los aspectos suprasegmentales en detrimento de los segmentales (Derwing y Munro 2005; Setter y Jenkins 2005). De acuerdo con Lozano (2005:9): "el acento, el ritmo y la entonación constituyen la personalidad de la lengua, más allá de la mera pronunciación de los segmentos, porque se identifican como aquellos que permiten producir discursos orales coherentes y llenos de sentido".

Una vez revisados los manuales de Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria y los manuales de nivel B1 aprobados por el MCERL prestando atención a los aspectos segmentales y suprasegmentales, el siguiente paso consistirá en analizar el tratamiento que estos manuales dan a la acentuación de forma más pormenorizada. Prestaremos atención al tratamiento que se le da al acento tanto en contextos aislados como en contextos más amplios y al tratamiento de las formas débiles como la reducción vocálica a *schwa* y acortamiento de la vocal no acentuada (Kenworthy 1997; Pavón 2000; Gimson 2001; Barrera 2003).

La tabla 3 reúne el conjunto de actividades dedicadas al acento léxico, al acento en la oración y a las formas débiles en cada manual.

Tabla 3. Número de actividades según el tipo de acento y formas débiles en cada manual

Título del manual	Número de actividades de acento léxico	Número de actividades de prominencia	Número de actividades de formas débiles	Total
Move	1	0	3	4
English Unlimited	1	5	1	7
Complete Pet	3	0	2	5
New English File	3	8	1	12
Face to Face	4	6	9	19
Tune In 2	2	1	2	5
Made Easy	1	1	3	5
Laser B1	3	0	0	3
Lifestyle	0	0	0	0
Wavelength	0	13	1	14
New Interchange	2	7	9	18
Language Leader Coursebook	5	0	4	9
Language Leader Workbook	5	6	4	15
Total	30	47	39	116

Excepto un manual que no contiene ninguna actividad relacionada con el acento o con cualquier aspecto de pronunciación, el resto de los manuales se encuentran clasificados en dos grupos. Por un lado, observamos 6 manuales que contienen actividades de acentuación en contextos aislados de la palabra. Por

otro lado, otros 6 manuales contienen un gran número de actividades relacionadas con la prominencia en el contexto de la oración y en el contexto del diálogo o de la conversación.

Asimismo, el tratamiento que se le da a las formas débiles es reducido, tan solo en 2 manuales se le otorga un mayor tratamiento con 9 actividades en cada uno de ellos. Los manuales que muestran actividades relacionadas con las formas débiles sólo prestan atención al fenómeno de la reducción vocálica que consiste en el hecho de que el sonido vocálico central, *schwa,* aparece en la mayoría de las sílabas reducidas y no acentuadas en inglés y por lo tanto aparecen en contextos más amplios como pueden ser la oración, diálogo o conversación. De este modo, se presta atención al acortamiento vocálico de palabras monosilábicas en aquellas actividades donde un número de palabras funcionales como pueden ser *and*, *does* o *can*: a) se muestran tanto en su forma fuerte como reducida de forma aislada y b) se analizan dentro de un contexto más amplio como es la oración valorando si existe una reducción vocálica en estas palabras.

Cuando describimos y analizamos las formas débiles, estamos tratando uno de los rasgos más importantes de la pronunciación del inglés, el proceso de "gradación" (Gimson 2001:252), que se considera uno de los aspectos que más problemas puede llegar a presentar a los hablantes de español. La gradación es un fenómeno que consiste en la existencia de dos o más pronunciaciones diferentes de las palabras denominadas "funcionales" (artículos, demostrativos, preposiciones, verbos auxiliares, pronombres, etc.) del inglés. Estas palabras pueden presentar una forma fuerte y una o más formas débiles (e.g. *and* presenta la forma fuerte /ænd/ y las formas débiles /ənd/, /ən/, /n/).

El tratamiento que se da en los manuales analizados a las formas fuertes y formas débiles se encuentra ligado a dos aspectos que son esenciales en la enseñanza de la pronunciación en general: a) la necesidad de aportar una contextualización apropiada en las actividades y b) la necesidad de relacionar las actividades sobre las formas fuertes y débiles con la enseñanza de la acentuación.

Del análisis global de las actividades segmentales y suprasegmentales se deprenden los datos contenidos en la siguiente tabla.

Tabla 4. Total de actividades segmentales y suprasegmentales

	Número total de actividades de pronunciación	Número total de actividades segmentales	Número total de actividades suprasegmentales
Nivel B1	199	83	116

En la tabla que acabamos de mostrar (tabla 4) el número de actividades suprasegmentales sobrepasa al número de actividades segmentales. Sin embargo, en nuestra opinión, la metodología propuesta para enseñar y practicar los aspectos suprasegmentales no es la apropiada puesto que las actividades que tratan estos aspectos no van más allá de las etapas de presentación y de práctica mecánica, de ahí que la esencia del empleo de los aspectos suprasegmentales se pierda pues no se practican de forma realista.

De los manuales analizados, los que siguen los patrones establecidos por el MCERL son aquellos que presentan más actividades de pronunciación, mientras que en el otro extremo se encuentra un manual que no

sigue de manera fiel sus recomendaciones. Como ejemplo de esta diferente forma de abordar la pronunciación destaca por un lado el manual *Face to Face,* que sigue los patrones establecidos por los exámenes de la universidad de Cambridge ESOL y que presenta 35 actividades de pronunciación, precisamente 19 actividades suprasegmentales y 16 actividades segmentales. Mientras que en el otro extremo se encuentra el manual *Lifestyle* que aunque sigue los parámetros del MCERL, no presenta ninguna actividad de pronunciación, ni de tipo segmental ni suprasegmental.

2.5. Discusión de los datos

Una vez que hemos analizado los diferentes manuales, podemos decir que la mayor parte de las críticas que estimamos necesario realizar se encuentran relacionadas con el diseño de las actividades y la metodología utilizada. Excepto en uno de los libros de texto, las actividades dedicadas a la pronunciación, tanto de cualquier rasgo segmental como de cualquier rasgo suprasegmental, no han sido bien diseñadas si lo que se pretende es un objetivo comunicativo. Como hemos mencionado anteriormente, la mayoría de las actividades han sido diseñadas para presentar el rasgo fonológico y su práctica repetitiva y mecánica. En muy pocas ocasiones las actividades van más allá e integran este nuevo concepto de una forma más realista para simular una situación comunicativa auténtica. En realidad destacamos que un libro de texto de nivel B1 o de Bachillerato tiene que prestar atención a muchos aspectos lingüísticos y que, por lo tanto, no se puede pretender que las actividades de pronunciación tengan la misma calidad en términos del diseño y metodología que en libros de texto específicos de enseñanza de la pronunciación. No obstante, debería ser posible relacionar más aquellos rasgos fonológicos presentados en actividades específicas con el estudio de la comprensión oral (*listening*) y la expresión oral *(speaking)* establecida en cada unidad de cada manual.

En nuestra opinión, los aprendices necesitan instrucción seria y constante respecto a las preocupaciones relacionadas con el acento léxico, con la identificación de las sílabas fuertes y débiles, con la identificación de las sílabas prominentes y, así mismo, con la acentuación en la oración. De hecho, cuando observamos que las actividades relacionadas con las formas fuertes y débiles no están enmarcadas dentro de contextos más amplios, pensamos que estas actividades son ineficaces porque las formas fuertes y las débiles son tratadas de tal manera que no tienen una relación con la comprensión oral. Creemos asimismo que las formas fuertes y débiles no pueden ser enseñadas de forma aislada como se presentan en la mayoría de los manuales revisados, pues una vez que los aprendices han realizado las actividades en cuestión, entonces olvidan este fenómeno y no le prestan atención una vez que estos proceden en el proceso de aprendizaje (Mclaren, Madrid y Bueno 2005).

Estimamos fundamental, de acuerdo con Taylor (1993), que los aprendices trabajen las formas fuertes y débiles ya que estos fenómenos facilitan en gran medida la comprensión oral por parte de los aprendices. Estos fenómenos son desconcertantes para un aprendiz no instruido y pueden distraer su atención hasta el punto de que no entienda el mensaje. La dimensión suprasegmental de la acentuación es uno de los aspectos que junto al ritmo y la entonación se encuentra directamente relacionado con la expresión del significado y, por tanto, con la inteligibilidad, y por ello no debe ser soslayado en nuestra práctica diaria en las aulas, sino más bien al contrario, darle la importancia que merece puesto que constituye la base de una expresión natural y fluida (Hancock y Pavón 2005:22).

Los manuales deberían tratar las formas débiles y las fuertes desde las primeras etapas del aprendizaje y siempre que aparezcan una vez que procedamos a enseñar otros aspectos lingüísticos que estén integrados dentro del currículo de la lengua inglesa en el nivel B1. De acuerdo con el análisis realizado, creemos que en estos manuales no se ha trabajado las formas fuertes y débiles como es debido. De hecho, para trabajar explícitamente con las formas débiles es conveniente que los aprendices identifiquen qué palabras son léxicas y qué palabras son funcionales, ya que éstas últimas son las que contienen formas débiles en el habla conexa. Aunque puede que se haya trabajado este problema cuando se trata la acentuación, resulta conveniente que se tenga esta distinción bien clara (Gómez 2009; Cauldwell 2013).

Una vez analizado el tratamiento conferido a la pronunciación en estos manuales, resulta destacable la poca atención que se le ha prestado en la mayoría de ellos en comparación con la atención prestada a los otros aspectos de la lengua como pueden ser la gramática y el léxico. Esto es evidente debido a la ausencia de actividades específicas dedicadas a este aspecto lingüístico. 7 manuales de los 13 presentan menos de 20 actividades en su totalidad y 1 no trata el aspecto de pronunciación en absoluto. Los otros 5 manuales presentan 20 o más actividades. También llegamos a la conclusión de que el tratamiento otorgado a la pronunciación en estos 13 libros de texto presenta deficiencias según la calidad de este trabajo. Las actividades de pronunciación en estos libros de texto no van más allá de su mera presentación, pues no se establece ninguna conexión entre las actividades de pronunciación y las actividades de comprensión oral, ni tampoco existe relación de los conceptos presentados en las actividades de pronunciación con el trabajo sobre la expresión oral. Incluso ni siquiera ningún libro de texto analizado desarrolla estos conceptos en una actividad más realista de seguimiento (*follow-up)* como es el diálogo, las dramatizaciones, que podrían relacionar la práctica controlada llevada a cabo en la clase con las posibles ocasiones de comunicación en la vida real.

3. Conclusiones

En este epígrafe procedemos a dar respuesta a las cuestiones planteadas de acuerdo con los objetivos propuestos.

1) ¿Qué aspectos de la pronunciación son tratados?

De los 13 manuales escogidos, podemos establecer que 3 de ellos otorgan más importancia a las actividades segmentales teniendo en cuenta los sonidos vocálicos y consonánticos, 8 presentan un enfoque suprasegmental, 1 no trata la pronunciación en absoluto y 1 presenta un enfoque "mixto" con un número aproximado de actividades segmentales y suprasegmentales.

El análisis de estos manuales prueba la necesidad de que los profesores hagan mayores esfuerzos en lo que concierne a la enseñanza de la pronunciación. Debido al hecho de que estos manuales aquí tratados no son suficientes, debemos ofrecer a los aprendices material adicional una vez que estemos utilizando un libro de texto. Con el empleo de todos los materiales el profesor pretende conseguir que los aprendices sean inteligibles para entender y ser entendidos por otros. El empleo de las actividades de pronunciación resulta crucial para que los aprendices lleguen a interiorizar la imagen almacenada de los sonidos y sean capaces de

entender y producir sonidos de forma inteligible en el habla conexa prestando especial atención a los aspectos suprasegmentales (Morley, 1991: 493).

2) ¿Las actividades de comprensión oral prestan atención a estos aspectos de la pronunciación? En algunos manuales, las actividades de comprensión oral no están relacionadas con las actividades específicas de pronunciación y la mayoría de ellas, especialmente aquellas actividades que tratan los aspectos segmentales, se caracterizan por su ausencia de contextualización. En lo que respecta a los aspectos suprasegmentales, los manuales tratan los aspectos de pronunciación de forma aislada, en muy pocas ocasiones las actividades de pronunciación se contextualizan dentro del contexto de la oración o del diálogo. Este aspecto es crucial puesto que el aprendiz debe tratar el acento y la ausencia de acento no sólo en las palabras de forma aislada sino también en el habla conexa, lo que definitivamente ayuda a los aprendices a ser más inteligibles (McNervey y Mendelsohn 1992; Walker 2010; Cauldwell 2013).

3) ¿Está la pronunciación integrada plenamente o es añadida adicionalmente al final de la unidad o incluso al final del libro de texto?

La pronunciación se encuentra integrada en cada unidad de forma regular en 7 manuales, mientras que en 5 de estos manuales, la pronunciación no está integrada de forma regular en cada unidad. En estos 5 manuales los aspectos de pronunciación pueden aparecer cada dos unidades, o presentan actividades de pronunciación con un formato diferente al resto de las actividades. Por ejemplo, en el caso del manual *Tune In 2* las actividades de pronunciación se incluyen en un CD audio, pero no aparecen dentro de las distintas unidades del manual.

4) ¿Está explícitamente expuesta la pronunciación en la tabla de contenidos?

Exceptuando los manuales *Lifestyle* y *Tune In 2*, los demás manuales sí presentan un currículo de pronunciación en la tabla de contenidos junto a la gramática y al léxico. No obstante, como hemos observado, el número de actividades dedicadas a la pronunciación, en comparación con el total de actividades que presenta cualquier manual, es inferior a las actividades que trabajan los otros aspectos de la lengua, como pueden ser la gramática o el léxico. Podemos concluir, de acuerdo con ello, que para que la pronunciación no esté en clara desventaja debemos integrar más actividades de pronunciación procedentes de otros recursos y materiales adicionales en los libros de texto dentro de la programación de nuestra clase de LE.

5) ¿Se encuentra la pronunciación mencionada explícitamente en la guía del profesor o en la introducción?

La mayoría de las guías del profesor que acompañan los manuales hacen referencia a este aspecto de la lengua inglesa, sin embargo se trata siempre de una referencia breve y no muy específica.

Resulta evidente la importancia de la pronunciación para una buena comunicación oral, pero tanto los rasgos segmentales como los suprasegmentales no son tratados apropiadamente en los materiales didácticos porque no son enseñados de forma sistemática, y por lo tanto continúan pasando desapercibidos tanto para los profesores como para los aprendices. Esto significa que los aprendices no mejoran ni su pronunciación ni su competencia oral comunicativa. Según Gladys (2010:9), teniendo en cuenta que la pronunciación es la materialización de la lengua, la práctica de las destrezas orales debería realizarse con un apoyo exclusivamente oral, tal y como propone Bartolí (2005). Con ello lograríamos que los aprendices no se

fijaran en la ortografía y, en cambio, centraran su atención en los sonidos. Además, se trata de que nuestros alumnos aprendan a hablar, y para ello no podemos basarnos en la lengua escrita: la lengua oral y la lengua escrita son dos sistemas diferentes, con unas características y funciones también diferentes.

Finalmente, la impresión que obtenemos del análisis de los manuales seleccionados es que, en la mayoría de ellos, la pronunciación en el aula de LE se encuentra desvinculada de los planteamientos comunicativos, tan reivindicados en los diseños curriculares, y se halla, en cambio, más cercana a los métodos estructurales clásicos. Una de las deducciones de Llisterri (2003) al respecto es que este hecho ocurre porque entre los autores de los manuales, salvo escasas excepciones, existe una escasa presencia de profesionales en fonética y fonología y en pronunciación, así como la curiosa falta de coincidencia entre los autores de publicaciones sobre la enseñanza de la pronunciación en LE y los autores de manuales. Por eso resulta fundamental que los profesores evalúen los manuales y materiales existentes, para comprobar si están al nivel de sus necesidades y de su metodología, o bien que creen su propio material.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF CLIL: MAKING THE BEST OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND CONTENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

Success in CLIL depends on making students able to understand and express academic material. In theory, a high linguistic competence will enable students to smoothly deal with the content, although there might be occasions in which the students are not equipped with a solid command of the basic linguistic skills. The idea posited in this article is that, in parallel with other procedures and measures brought up to promote a correct employment of the language, the construction of a structure of collaboration between the language and the content teachers could contribute to attain positive results in CLIL, and may help mitigate the consequences of a possible linguistic deficit. In particular, the collaboration between the language and content teachers, the collaboration between the content teachers themselves, and the collaboration between all the languages present in the curriculum (mother tongue, language of instruction/foreign language, and any other languages) may result in a better ability to work with academic material on the part of the students, and may provide them with the necessary linguistic support to understand and express this content. We will discuss the theoretical foundations behind this proposal, and we will put forward a series of recommendations aiming at establishing and carrying out this structure of collaboration and coordination.

Key words: CLIL, curricular organisation, teacher collaboration, methodology.

Resumen

El éxito de AICLE depende en gran medida de si el alumnado es capaz de comprender y expresar el material académico. Así, en teoría una competencia lingüística alta asegura fluidez en el tratamiento de los contenidos, aunque en algunos casos el alumnado puede no llegar a contar con unas capacidades lingüísticas adecuadas. En este artículo propondremos que, junto con algunas de las medidas tradicionales encaminadas a promover un uso correcto de la lengua, el diseño de una estructura de colaboración entre el profesorado de lenguas y el de contenidos puede contribuir a la mejora de los resultados en AICLE, e incluso a mitigar un posible problema de insuficiente dominio lingüístico. En particular, la colaboración entre el profesorado de lengua y de contenidos, la colaboración entre el profesorado de contenidos y la colaboración entre el profesorado de las lenguas implicadas en el programa (lengua materna, lengua de instrucción y otras lenguas, si las hubiere) redundará en un aumento en la facilidad para trabajar con el material académico y le proporcionará al alumnado un necesario apoyo lingüístico para facilitar su comprensión y su expresión. Analizaremos los fundamentos teóricos que se encuentran detrás de esta propuesta y ofreceremos una serie de indicaciones para llevar a cabo esta estructura de colaboración.

Palabras clave: AICLE, organización curricular, colaboración del profesorado, metodología.

1. Introduction

In the European and the Spanish context, one of the most frequent approaches adopted to implement bilingual education is content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a wide term that covers different models based on the teaching of academic content through a foreign language (Wolff, 2005:11; Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010:6). Among its potential benefits (Mehisto and Marsh 2012), CLIL is traditionally seen as an

educational proposal that "seeks to promote the use of the foreign language in the schools" (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008:61), due to "the direct influence that teaching in CLIL may have in language learning" (Llinares, Morton and Whittaker, 2012:53). However, its potential benefits are not only associated with an increase of the linguistic competence of students: linguistic awareness, wider vocabulary, morphological creativity and morpho-syntactic production (Admiral, Westhoff and de Bot, 2006; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Lasagabaster, 2008; Lorenzo, Casal and Moore, 2009; Lo and Murphy, 2010; Navés, 2011; Brevick and Moe, 2012); but also to the amelioration of cognitive development and to the learning of content itself: greater creativity, semantic scaffolding, divergent and convergent thinking, metalinguistic awareness, abstract and symbolic reasoning, and context understanding (Genesee, 2002; Moore, 2006; Marsh, 2007; van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt, 2007; Meyer, 2010). The linguistic output is the dimension that is normally proclaimed as the main objective of CLIL, although there are also important academic and psycho-affective benefits that have to be highlighted: greater interest and motivation, higher self-confidence, more positive attitude towards the foreign language, greater spontaneity, and the promotion of intercultural learning (Merisuo-Strom, 2007; Seikkula-Leino, 2007; Lasagabaster, 2011; Coonan, 2012; Hütner, Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2013; Méndez, 2013).

In order to achieve positive results in CLIL, consideration of the language is not the only area that deserves specific attention. Therefore, it is necessary that a series of influential elements be organised correctly so that the integration of content and language can be tackled appropriately (Mehisto, 2012a). Curricular organisation, the selection of subjects, the methodology and materials, the evaluation procedures, etc., are factors that will determine the success and the quality of CLIL (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013). But among all of them, the linguistic competence of teachers and students and the use of the language of instruction will inevitably affect the learning of content, which forces educators to cast about for initiatives and actions that may benefit the access to the language required to process academic information, and may also counterbalance the possible negative effects of a limited use of the language of instruction.

One of the most remarkable differences between CLIL and immersion programmes is that in CLIL "the English language is taught as a subject" (García, 2009:127). This is a fact that is particularly relevant for the purpose of this article since the inclusion of the English language in the curriculum "provides the conditions for the establishment of a network of collaboration between language and content teachers" (García, 2009:210). The possibility to set up a connection between the language students learn as a vehicle of communication with the content they are learning paves the way for the construction of a bi-directional relationship between the academic knowledge and the language needed to understand and express this knowledge. Moreover, this collaboration could also be extended to other areas (Pavón *et al.*, 2014), and include the coordinated work of content teachers, and even comprise the coordination between the English teacher with the teacher of the mother tongue and the teacher of any other language present in the curriculum (French, German, etc.). In this article we would like to proffer the benefits of establishing a three-level collaboration, a multi-faceted type of coordination that aims at facilitating the processing and assimilation of academic content, and at providing students with effective linguist support to help them comprehend, process, manipulate and verbalise this content.

2. Analysing the CLIL context: conditions for the establishment of a network of collaboration

In general, the efficacy of a given educational proposal requires the existence of a structure of connection, coordination and collaboration between all the stakeholders (Mehisto, 2009; Viebrock, 2012). In CLIL, this proposition is even more important because there are decisions that have to be taken by the school management team that "will be crucial for the organisation of the teaching and for the achievement of subsequent outputs" (Baetens Beardsmore, 2009:210). The implementation of CLIL requires a careful screening of the linguistic and methodological competence of the human resources available. It should clearly state the timing of the programme (initiation and time-span), and also the number and type of the subjects must be chosen taking into consideration the degree of difficulty and cognitive demands. Additionally, the schools may also make provision for a programme of language assistants; offer an incentive programme for teachers; create an accurate programme for the evaluation of the language and the content acquired by students, and for the evaluation of the students' cognitive, psychological and emotional development; provide didactic resources and materials specific for CLIL; and set up a programme of extra-curricular activities to foment the use of the foreign language in non-instructional settings (Pavón, 2014:9). But along with all these initiatives, there are measures that could be taken up based on the creation of a network of collaboration for teachers. They are mainly aimed at facilitating coordinated work between teachers, for example, by elaborating adequate schedules in order to provide the teachers with the necessary slots to allow them to share, discuss and plan their teaching together.

Another initiative associated with the creation of a network of collaboration between language and content teachers is the elaboration of a school linguistic project (see for example the Andalusian proposal in Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Andalucía, 2010). Good intentions about the establishment of this coordinated work have to be packed up in a series of normative decisions agreed by all the school agents (Mehisto, 2009, 2012a), because if they are not supported 'officially' they would probably come to nothing in the long term. The school linguistic project serves as the adequate instrument to connect curricular organisation and methodology by grouping together the objectives, the sequencing of contents, and the methodological approach chosen (Casal, 2007). In sum, the school linguistic project includes some of the most relevant decisions about the CLIL programme: organisation of subjects, pedagogical strategies and use of resources, and the utilisation of a homogeneous procedure for the evaluation of language and content. And above all, it may become a decisive instrument to support the collaboration between language and content teachers by indicating the actions to be adopted in order to ensure their coordinated work.

In this context, the figure of the CLIL coordinator becomes a key element, in particular to assist the construction of sound teacher collaboration (Coyle, 2007 –especially table on p. 551). From a general perspective, the main role of the CLIL coordinator is to guarantee that the programme is being implemented in a correct way, and to define the actions that have to be adopted in order to monitor the achievement of positive results in the areas of language and content (Julián, 2007). More precisely, his/her activity is essential for the organisation of a structure of collaboration between language and content teachers. He/she will be in charge of arranging the work and responsibilities of the teachers: conducting the coordination meetings where language and content teachers gather to reach agreements on the collaborative strategies; helping content teachers to search for common elements in their programmes; assisting language teachers to look for common linguistic functions; advising teachers on the application of common methodological

strategies and on the employment of appropriate materials and activities for the characteristics of the different subjects; guiding them through the use of homogeneous criteria and instruments for the evaluation of language and content; and organising the responsibilities and activities of the language assistants (see for this last dimension Ministerio de Educación, 2011).

One of the reasons that motivate the search for initiatives that may come to the aid of correct implementation of CLIL may also be the necessity to complement a possible shortage of linguistic proficiency, not only in students, but also in some teachers. In fact, the profile of the content teacher is another area that deserves closer attention because in the end it is the teacher who has to conduct the lessons and lead the students into the learning of the content material (Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff and Frigols, 2010:5; Pavón and Ellison, 2013:70). Content teachers must be prepared to juggle three distinct competences: knowledge of the discipline; a competent use of the foreign language; and the utilisation of appropriate methodological strategies (Pavón, 2014:14). Hence, deciding who are prepared to carry out the teaching is a very important decision. It has to be noted, though, that there is no instant recipe for the implementation of CLIL programmes, as the analysis of the context, necessities and human resources will finally dictate the choice of the model; and the non-existence of a fixed model also extends to the selection of the content teachers (Pavón, 2010:34). Some programmes may opt for choosing foreign language teachers with a solid knowledge of the disciplines, in this case it is the foreign language teachers who bring content to their classes as in 'content-based instruction (CBI) models. Another option would be to choose experts in the different disciplines with a high command of the foreign language, as in 'language-sensitive instruction' models, these being the most frequent ones adopted in CLIL.

However, some content teachers may not feel comfortable with their command of the foreign language. In the case of existing lack of proficiency on the part of the content teachers, this handicap can be overcome by establishing a solid collaboration with the foreign language teachers, who will provide students with valuable linguistic support. But also, content teachers must understand that, beyond the possession of a high command of the foreign language, the factor that definitely guarantees the quality of their teaching practices is the capacity to use the language they have to facilitate the assimilation of content, and their ability to use "particular strategies to support comprehension and to activate production" (Wolff, 2012:112). Therefore, the necessary command of the foreign language must be complemented with specific knowledge of the strategies required to make their foreign language work effectively: for example, making teachers move from the traditional teacher-student interaction to the promotion of student-student interaction (Della Puppa, 2008; Guazzieri, 2008), especially by means of fostering cooperative and collaborative work between students (Berton, 2008; Coonan, 2012). The objective would be to redirect their knowledge and use of the foreign language to a more academic dimension and to learn to use resources and materials more effectively (Mehisto, 2012b), which at the same time will help teachers deal with mixed abilities and to accommodate the different students' learning styles.

3. Expanding language and content teachers' collaboration: establishing a 3-level collaboration

As stated in the previous pages, the objective of this article is to highlight the relevance of establishing a network of collaboration between language and content teachers as a way to increase positive results in CLIL. In line with Tan (2011), Meyer (2012), Bonnet (2012), and Graaf, Koopman and Tanner (2012), we believe

that success in CLIL also depends on the correct relationship established between the content and the language. In general, in contexts of partial immersion, and especially when the students' linguistic competences is not very high, the setting-up of an organisational model based on the coordination between subjects, the collaboration between teachers and team work, may contribute to raise the standards in two different dimensions: the learning and consolidation of academic content, and the improvement of the linguistic capacity of the students (Lorenzo, Trujillo and Vez, 2011:301). However, this structure of collaboration may not be limited to the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher. Thus, the collaboration between the teachers of the content subjects involved, and the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the teachers of the mother tongue and of any other foreign language present in the curriculum, may contribute to make the most of the coordination between subjects and the most of the collaboration between teachers in CLIL.

3.1. Collaboration between language and content teachers

The foreign language subject plays a pivotal role in CLIL, helping students garner the linguistic competence necessary to assimilate academic content. As a proper way to support the learning of content, the foreign language teacher should stimulate fluency, paying attention to linguistic errors, and stressing the importance of putting across meaning as well as taking care of the form. He/she should also try to limit the use of metalinguistic information and, in general, "to favour strategies for the transmission of academic content" (Lorenzo and Moore, 2010:24). As a starting point, the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher could include the fulfilment of a preliminary planning to identify the linguistic needs for the content subjects (Van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt, 2007). It would not be sufficient that foreign language classes are orientated to teach general instrumental and everyday use of the language (BICS, *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills*), since the necessities of the students to deal with academic material require that the language they are learning in the foreign language class is connected to the content (CALP, *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency*) (Cummins, 1984, 2000).

How to carry out this coordination and collaboration may be a source of controversy, mainly due to the difficulty of making some foreign teachers understand that it is necessary to move from BICS into CALP in their classes to support the reaching of content. The simplest procedure could be that the foreign language teacher in his/her class deals with the linguistic functions, grammar structures and specific vocabulary previously agreed so that the students can suitably use them in the class of content (Deller and Price, 2007:9). Consequently, a possible option to carry out this proposition is that language teachers deal with the language connected to the content subject in advance, in this way equipping students with the necessary knowledge of the use of the language required for participation in the class of content. This proposal may also bring out a restructuring of the content sequencing for the foreign language subject, and on occasions it would be necessary to anticipate a given linguist element with respect to its position. For example, in coursebooks, if it is convenient that the students possess this knowledge in order to understand and work with what is being treated in the content subject. It has to be reckoned that the amount of effort that this kind of collaboration entails is surely quite high because content and language teachers should give a detailed plan of the contributions in their own classes and should carefully define the timing of their respective actions. However, even though the time and effort that should be invested in preparing this collaboration may discourage some teachers, especially if the school management team does not offer the necessary help, the promised reward

may entice teachers into thinking that it is worth establishing this particular collaboration since the expected positive outcomes are high too.

Finally, the coordination between subjects and the collaboration between teachers must also comprise other areas beyond the planning of teaching and actual practices and should include evaluation (Serra, 2007; Quartapelle, 2012). This is a complex area because if a student has problems understanding or verbalising a particular piece of academic information, the content teacher needs to confirm that the problems are caused by the complexity of the idea or by inappropriate language use (Barbero and Maggi, 2012). In order to address the evaluation of content and language correctly, content and language teachers should collaborate closely, since both must use similar procedures to assess the students' linguistic production (Kiely, 2009). Teachers could develop a type of collaboration where the content teachers become responsible for the assessment of the language in his/her classes, an option that is advisable in contexts where the content teacher exhibits a high command of the foreign language and knowledge of resources in order to assess correct use of the language. On the other hand, the decision could also remain that the language teacher is mainly in charge of assessing language accuracy, an option more adaptable to contexts where the students' linguistic skills are not very high and the content teachers cannot spend a lot of time dealing with linguistic correction as this would impede suitable attention to the teaching of content. All in all, it will be the characteristics of the context that will determine the choice of one model or another. In general, the implementation of a structure of collaboration in CLIL is mainly subjected to the characteristics of the teachers and the linguistic competence of students.

3.2. Collaboration between content teachers

It could be argued that establishing proper collaboration between content and language teachers is the only strategy required to ensure positive results in CLIL. However, as Coyle, Holmes and King (2009:17) point out, "different levels of success in CLIL mostly depend on the collaboration between content teachers", too. We also believe that this type of collaboration is not secondary but may be a complementary strategy to increase the positive results of CLIL. The main objective of the collaboration between the teachers of the content subjects is to foster a more effective assimilation and consolidation of content, trying to diminish the negative effects of teaching academic information through a foreign language. It is based on the parallel treatment of similar and related thematic areas, concepts, ideas and notions in the different content subjects with the purpose of "familiarising students with complex academic information" (Dale, Van der Es and Tanner, 2010:75). Working with common objectives and contents may be a suitable starting point to find the elements of thematic cohesion between subjects, and it seems to be especially recommended in contexts where students' linguistic competence may seriously hinder the acquisition of content material. Paying more attention to work with shared vocabulary and concepts in the content subjects will result in "establishing connections between new and previously learnt concepts" in the different subjects, and will enable students to understand and assimilate complex information in a better way (Coyle, 2007:51).

It has to be noted that this collaboration also exceeds the thematic dimension and should encompass the methodological aspect. Content teachers should understand that CLIL does not entail a simple change of the language in teacher-fronted classes, but it implies a serious shift into participative classes where students do not simply learn things but learn to understand and use content material. In order to make students able to deal with academic content properly, teachers should direct their attention to upgrading the students'

performance with regards to essential macro-strategies: comprehension (identify, interpret and assimilate), expression of previously learnt material, and critical thinking (analyse, compare, decide) (Anderson and Krathwolh, 2001). Also, there should be a firm commitment to the promotion of content and language scaffolding techniques, and use of materials in order to promote a constructivist model of learning, as CLIL "favours a learner-centred, constructivist and motivating type of teaching" (Ting, 2010:14). Thus, the use of general scaffolding techniques (Hammond, 2001; Gibbons, 2002; Walqui, 2006) should be encouraged, and especially those specifically designed to be applied in CLIL contexts (Hansen-Pauly *et al.*, 2009; Meyer, 2010; Mehisto and Lucietto, 2011). Additionally, CLIL is particularly suitable for the application of a task-based approach (Cendoya and di Bin, 2010; Toscano, 2011; Poisel, 2012; Tardieu and Dolitsky, 2012; Pavón, Prieto and Ávila, 2015). As Berton (2008:146) and Meyer (2010:19) note, CLIL involves the learning of "authentic and meaningful content" through the realisation of motivating and challenging tasks, which results in an amelioration of their learning capacities. Following Berton (2008) and Escobar and Sánchez (2009), in terms of the strategies and techniques to be applied there are three actions that can contribute to enrich and facilitate the learning of content: first of all, teachers should avoid traditional strategies of reception of content as they just put in passive activities that severely cut down possibilities of interaction and use of the language; secondly, there should be an emphasis on the use of activities aiming at searching for information with the purpose of training students to discover; and finally, teachers should support the understanding of content by maximising redundancy through the use of good visual aids.

Finally, it would be convenient to favour a sense of homogeneity in the different content subjects with respect to the use of common pedagogical strategies, and with respect to "the utilization of mutual criteria and instruments for the evaluation of learning" (Pavón and Ellison, 2013:72-74). The application of common methodological strategies by the content teachers is certainly relevant because students need to perceive that there is a shared pedagogy, that content teachers use the same techniques and resources to deal with written and oral material, and that they administrate common assessment techniques. The utilisation of different pedagogical approaches by content teachers would be, at the least, distracting for students, and would be detrimental to the achievement of agreed learning objectives. It would also be advisable that the focus on the language is not excessive during the teaching of content, and that the attention to linguistic objectives within the content subjects shifts to the use of appropriate language and content scaffolding techniques. We should be careful with the attention paid to the language used by students because, for example, the inclusion of grammar elements as linguistic objectives in the content class may distract the attention from the general linguistic functions (understanding, referencing, hypothesising, deducing, etc.), will reduce the time that should be allotted the teaching of content, and may imperil "the accomplishment of the learning objectives" (Mehisto and Marsh, 2009:4).

3.3. Collaboration between language teachers

Traditionally, when describing and analysing the potential positive outputs deriving from the coordination and collaboration between content and language teachers (Graaf, Koopmant and Tanner, 2012), the relationship between all the languages participating has not generated appreciable interest. The common assumption has been that the possibility of this collaboration is a step too far for teachers, that it might create some kind of anxiety because of the extra amount or work added, or that language teachers might be reluctant to participate in a project that they do not consider as "theirs". It is assumed that the promotion of

the language of instruction is one of the most decisive factors for the success of CLIL, and some may think that only making content and language teachers collaborate can help achieve this objective. However, our view is that the role of the other languages involved in CLIL could also be taken into consideration as a way to support and consolidate a better use of the foreign language. In essence, CLIL implies a great flexibility in the use of the language as opposed to all kinds of immersion and subtractive bilingual education programmes, where the objective is always to overcome the use of the L1 as soon as possible. In this sense, CLIL advocates for the recognition of the role that the mother tongue may play as a forceful learning tool (Dobson, Pérez and Johnson, 2010; Ibarrola and García-Mayo, 2012; Laupenmülen, 2012, Lázaro and García-Mayo, 2012; Méndez and Pavón, 2012). In line with this idea, it seems reasonable that similar benefits can be reaped from the coordination with the other foreign language or languages present in the curriculum, which may also put in some notable contributions to "the formation of a common linguistic capacity" (Pavón, *et al.* 2014:4).

The coordinated work in the different language subjects may bring about important benefits and play a significant part in facilitating the understanding and expression of academic content, some advantages that may be helped with the design and implementation of a *languages across the curriculum* model (see, as an example of this approach, Consejería de Educación-Junta de Andalucía, 2008). In this model, agreed and common treatment of objectives and contents, of linguistic strategies and structures, and of textual genres in the foreign language (English), mother tongue and another foreign language (French, German) classes, are proposed in order to foment similar uses of the languages and, ultimately, strengthen linguistic competence in all the languages. The rationale of this proposal is connected to Cummins' iceberg model of language independence and the existence of what he calls "a common underlying proficiency" (Cummins, 2000). The idea is that knowledge transfers across languages, what has been learnt in one language does not need to be learnt again, and students just need to find the words that best label this common knowledge. In this context, attention to the cognate connection (Costa, Caramazza and Sebastian-Galles, 2000; Scheletter, 2002; Sherkina, 2003), i.e. the use of similar vocabulary to help understanding (e.g. velocity-velocidad, evaporation-evaporación, omnivore-omnívoro) may turn into a fruitful pedagogical tool. English and Spanish are quite different languages in the conversational domain but they get closer in the academic area because a great deal of technical and scientific vocabulary has a Greek or Latin origin in both languages. Interconnected work between the languages also aids the increase of language awareness (Marsh, 2007), helping students compare the strategies and forms in the verbalisation of content, which in turn helps them understand the differences between the languages and allows them to obtain profitable conclusions. Also, in terms of the manipulation of this comparative information to increase linguistic proficiency, the learning of students is maximised when they are allowed and enabled to draw from all their existing language skills (Hornberger, 2005). Even in the same class, the use of linguistic connections, which may take the form of application of code-switching and translanguaging techniques, may reinforce the underlying linguist processes.

Finally, it has to be said, as highlighted by Irujo (1998) and Tucker (2008), that the use of two languages is not a factor for failure in bilingual classes. Some teachers, and many parents, may think that the instruction by means of different languages is an obstacle for the development of the mother tongue and of the language of instruction itself. However, language strengths, not limitations, come from the combination of both languages under appropriate pedagogic conditions (Edelsky, 1986); and in the case of unsatisfactory results,

these are due to inadequate use of teaching resources and methods (Pavón and Rubio, 2010). All in all, it seems reasonable to think that the collaboration between language teachers has a value to offer in CLIL settings. Planning shared and common work with the linguistic functions beseems the cognitive development connected to the operation of interlinguistic processes, thus contributing to accelerate positive transference and to consolidate communication strategies between all the languages.

4. Conclusion

Attention to the use and development of the foreign language is of paramount importance in CLIL as in any other bilingual education programme, which means that one of the objectives should be to make the understanding of content easier to students and to provide them with the linguistic tools required to manipulate it. In general, attaining positive results in CLIL is contingent on the correct application of measures and initiatives related to different important aspects: the choice of subjects and model; the selection of teachers with suitable linguistic and methodological competences; the combined efforts of all the stakeholders (school management team, teachers and students) involved in the programme; drafting a series of normative decisions concerning the objectives and the organisation of the programme; and putting forward effective, homogeneous methodology and evaluation procedures. But beyond these considerations, there are decisions that could also be taken in order to enhance the quality of CLIL, in our view, particularly those associated with the establishment of a three-level collaboration between the foreign language teachers and the content teachers, between the different content teachers, and between the teachers of the language subjects present in the curriculum.

The collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher, traditionally the most frequently adopted kind of collaboration, generates positive results as it contributes to encouraging the utilisation of linguistic skills associated with the manipulation of academic content (CALP), promotes fluency and attention to meaning in the use of the language, fosters the micro and macro linguistic strategies required for the transmission of content, allows language teachers to advise content teachers on the strategies and techniques needed to develop the different linguistic skills, and provides the possibility of agreeing on the decisions and on the activities that would put a correct evaluation of content and language into practice. With regards to the collaboration between content teachers, the most salient result deriving from connecting the different subjects through the work with similar thematic areas is that this will inevitably produce ease in the assimilation of content. In parallel, embracing common methodological strategies such as language and content scaffolding, the adoption of a task-based approach, the gamble on the promotion of interaction, cooperative and collaborative learning, and the adoption, too, of common assessment criteria and instruments, may decisively contribute to enrich the quality of the content classes. Finally, the collaboration between the language teachers has also something to offer. Thus, selecting common linguistic objectives and contents, designing activities that require similar use of the language, and in general working with linguistic elements and communication strategies, may benefit the comprehension and verbalisation of content and, consequently, may strengthen the processing and consolidation of the academic material in the content subjects.

It has to be noted that these three different types of teacher collaboration do not pursue to complicate the implementation of CLIL, but simply aim at providing the conditions for an easier and more profitable use of

the foreign language. Each one separately adds a positive element in CLIL by providing necessary linguistic support to students, facilitation in the learning of content, and consolidation of the linguistic structures of the language of instruction and of other languages. As a whole, they may become a powerful set of strategies that may enrich the implementation and the quality of CLIL.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

COMMON ERRORS MADE BY SPANISH GRADUATE STUDENTS TO BE AVOIDED AT B1 ENGLISH ORAL EXAMS

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Abstract

The European Higher Education Area requires graduate students to reach B1 level under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to obtain any university degree. This forces them to take official English exams, both written and oral, which presents difficulties for Spaniards, as many of them claim not to have taken any oral exam before. It is also challenging for teachers, who must combine the acquisition of communicative results, perceived as more demanding, with the traditional *use of English* aspects and provide a more creative and pragmatic use for all of them.

Considering the above, we have compiled a list of common pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical errors made by Spaniards to be avoided at B1 oral exams, based on teachers' notes from the three official B1 oral examination sessions at the university in the academic year 2013-2014. It aims to detect errors, mistakes and weaknesses so as to guide the teaching-learning process in future B1 intensive programmes.

Keywords: pronunciation errors, grammatical errors, B1 oral exams, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Resumen

El Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior requiere a los alumnos universitarios acreditar un nivel B1 o de usuario independiente según el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas para obtener cualquier grado universitario, lo cual implica la realización de exámenes oficiales. Esto supone un reto tanto para los estudiantes españoles, no acostumbrados a los exámenes orales, como para los profesores, que han de combinar la adquisición de resultados comunicativos, considerados más difíciles, con los aspectos gramaticales, más tradicionales, así como ofrecer un enfoque más pragmático y creativo.

A continuación ofrecemos una lista de errores de pronunciación, vocabulario y gramaticales registrados en los exámenes orales de las tres convocatorias oficiales de B1 del curso académico universitario 2013-2014. El documento pretende detectar errores, confusiones y áreas de mejora para servir de guía en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en futuros cursos intensivos de este nivel.

Palabras clave: errores de pronunciación, errores gramaticales, exámenes orales de B1, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

1. Introduction

Internationalisation has become a priority at every stage of the educational system in Spain. The new LOMCE –Organic Law on the Improvement of the Quality of Education– (Jefatura del Estado 2013: 97864) provides three reference points to transform the education system in this country: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the modernisation of vocational training and the *promotion of plurilingualism*. Mastering a second –and even a third– language is considered a priority within education as a result of globalization. Thus, the European Union promotes plurilingualism as a goal towards the European project, where students mastering a foreign language –including both oral and reading comprehension and oral and written expression– have more opportunities to get a job and achieve professional goals; thence the addition of a second foreign language to the Spanish curriculum (Jefatura del Estado 2013: 97865). Moreover, the teaching-learning process of a foreign language, where –as the education regulations state–

oral comprehension and expression are prioritised, must be in that language, and Spanish or any other co-official language in Spain could just be used as support in Primary and Secondary Education or Bachillerato –Spanish Baccalaureate– (Jefatura del Estado 2013: 97871, 97876, 97880).

The Regional Order 07/02/2005 implemented the European Sections Programme in Castilla-La Mancha and was later modified by the Order 23/04/2007, Order 13/03/2008, Law 7/2010 and Order 23/10/2013. Former European Sections are now called Bilingual Sections. Within this programme, a foreign language and non-linguistic subjects are taught through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) [Comunidad Autónoma de Castilla-La Mancha 2010: 86405]. Later, this importance given to languages was translated into the Royal Decree 7/2014, of 22nd January 2014, which establishes plurilingualism in non-university studies in Castilla-La Mancha [2014/897]. The main purpose of this document is to ensure students learn one or several foreign languages –especially those spoken in the European Union– as they are a necessary tool for the personal and professional development of any citizen in a pluralistic society, since languages are a basic feature of cultural identity and constitute a fundamental value of community cohesion (Consejería de Educación, Cultura y Deportes 2014: 1657). This is put into practice through the Plurilingualism Promotion Plan, which is divided into three programmes: a) Language Initiation Programme, b) Language Development Programme and c) Language Excellence Programme.

Apart from the national and regional curricula, the European Union has implemented a new programme, the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2010 (Erasmus+), whose aim is to boost skills and employability as well as modernising and supporting transnational partnerships among Education, Training and Youth work.

All this has also produced a deep impact on the adaptation to the European Higher Education Area, which established the requirement of achieving B1 level either to obtain an Academic Degree at the University or to access to Master's Degrees (Consejo de Gobierno de la UCLM 2013). This forces university students to take official English exams, both written and oral, which present several difficulties for them especially due to their lack of practice in oral exams.

2. Methodology

This paper offers a qualitative study aimed to improve the results of examinations. It is based on a list of common pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical errors made by Spanish graduate students to be avoided at B1 oral exams. This list was compiled with the teachers' notes and completed with a second listening of the student recordings from the three examination sessions of B1 official exams in 2013-2014 at the university. These notes were based on a rubric containing the criteria which will be specified in Table 1. Moreover, oral exams were recorded both for later revisions and readjustments of marks. Regarding the population studied, when students take this exam, they are studying either a Degree or a Master's Degree in fields that range from Arts and Humanities, to Science, Health Science, Social and Legal Sciences, Engineering and Architecture. They are usually aged from eighteen to twenty-one or twenty-two years old if they are enrolled in a Degree and from twenty-one to twenty-four in the case of a Master's Degree. However, these exams can also be done by external candidates, such as some non-English teachers, both from within and outside university, and administrative staff.

Examination sessions, which are held three times a year, are composed of a written paper and an oral part. On the one hand, in the written exam there are three different sections: listening, composed of two comprehension activities; reading, which consists of two comprehension activities; and writing, which includes use of English, that is, a cloze text, rephrasing and two compositions. On the other hand, the oral exam is done in pairs and has three parts: in the first one, the interview, ice-breaking questions are asked and students have to talk for about two minutes (monologue or speaking) individually; in the second one, the individual task, each candidate has to describe two different pictures and make guesses about them for about four minutes (monologue or speaking) individually; in the third one, the joint task, both candidates have to discuss on one proposed topic for about six minutes (dialogue or oral interaction) in pairs. On the whole, oral exams last for about ten minutes per pair and are done by two teachers with the aim of providing objectivity.

In these exams, students have to prove that they are *independent users in B1* or have achieved the *threshold level* according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Language Policy Division, Council of Europe 2001: 24), which means that they must be able to

> understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.; […] deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken; […] produce simple connected texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest; […] and describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Consequently, in these exams, learners must comply with the qualitative aspects of spoken language taken from the CEFR for this level (Language Policy Division, Council of Europe 2001: 86, 87, 110, 114, 117, 129) explained in Table 1. In this table, the assessment criteria –which might be condensed in pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary and grammar, and interaction– are correlated to the already-mentioned three parts of the examinations.

Assessment criteria	**Descriptors**	**Section**
Taking the floor (*turntaking*)	-Intervene in discussions on day-to-day topics -Initiate, maintain and close face-to-face conversations	Part 3
Co-operating	-Exploit a basic repertoire of language and strategies -Invite others into discussions -Summarise points reached in discussions -Confirm mutual understanding and keep the development of ideas	Part 3
General linguistic range *Vocabulary range and* *Control*	-Describe unpredictable situations -Explain the main points in ideas or problems with reasonable precision -Express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics -Get by, with sufficient vocabulary, with some hesitation and circumlocutions, on familiar topics	Part 1 Part 2 Part 3
Grammatical accuracy	-Communicate with accuracy in familiar contexts -Accurate repertoire of frequently used routines and patterns	Part 1 Part 2 Part 3
Asking for clarification		Part 1 Part 3
Phonological control	-Intelligible pronunciation even if a foreign language accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur	Part 1 Part 2 Part 3
Spoken fluency	-Express with ease despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses -Keep going without help and comprehensibly	Part 1 Part 2 Part 3

Table 1. Assessment rubric based on the qualitative aspects of spoken language of the CEFR

Moreover, students must pass both the written paper and the oral exam –which constitute 50% of the final mark each– to obtain the certification; so even though oral communication prevails, grammar is a key point both in the final mark and during their training. Despite this and the fact that the CEFR states that, at B1 level, students have to communicate with a reasonable degree of accuracy, grammatical errors persist. Thus, in the following section we explain the most common weaknesses regarding pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar as well as giving the right option and some tips to avoid these weaknesses.

It must also be noted that in the studied academic course, 204 students took the written exam, 84 students passed the written exam and took the oral exam and 32 students passed the oral exam, which means that approximately 15.69% passed both exams. They can both prepare the final exam on their own or attend intensive programmes which get them ready for the official examination. Bearing that in mind, our aim is to improve the planning of future B1 intensive programmes, so this compilation will be disseminated at the beginning of this type of course and will help students to detect their own errors, mistakes and weaknesses so as to successfully pass this type of official exam. This list might also be taken into account by those students who choose private academies, private tutoring or simply self-study to prepare for B1 exams.

3. Analysis

In this section, errors are classified according to two parameters: first, according to the assessment criteria (pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary and grammar, and interaction) of the oral exam established by the university and teachers; and second, according to the assessment criteria and descriptors set by the CEFR. As mentioned above, all the examples provided in this paper were taken from the teachers' notes and transcripts of the oral exam.

3.1. Pronunciation

The *phonological control* mentioned by the CEFR implies that students' pronunciation has to be clearly intelligible even if their foreign language accent might be evident on particular occasions and infrequent mispronunciations occur. Pronunciation includes both segmental and suprasegmental phonemes. Segmental phonemes are vowels, consonants, diphthongs, triphthongs, semivowels and semiconsonants, whereas suprasegmental phonemes are rhythm, stress and intonation (Alcaraz and Moody 1999: 20).

Without going into detail, students must be aware that not only do they have to pronounce and choose the appropriate vowel, consonant, etc. but also consider rhythm, stress and intonation. Suprasegmental phonemes are difficult for Spaniards, especially stress and intonation, as they do not coincide with Spanish. Students should note that the stress in similar words does not have to be the same in both languages. Common stress mispronunciations occur in words like *interesting* or *comfortable*, since in Spanish the stress would be on the third syllable while in English is on the first syllable. Regarding intonation, English distinguishes between low rise and high rise intonation patterns (Hirst 1998: 63). However, "the intonation system of the Spanish sentence is mainly characterised by the different patterns and distribution of stressed syllables of the sentence"; thus, it is a syllabic language or a 'trailer-timed language' (Alcoba and Murillo 1998: 156, 163). Therefore, to imitate English pronunciation, students' pitch must move up and down. It is important to make students realise that incorrect intonation can result in misunderstandings, speakers' loss of interest or even rudeness or offence.

What can students do to improve their pronunciation of suprasegmental phonemes? First of all, they have to check the pronunciation of new words in a dictionary; focusing both on segmental phonemes and stress. It does not matter if they do not know or cannot read phonetic symbols as online dictionaries offer the opportunity to listen to the word. Learning new words implies learning their spelling as well as their pronunciation separately and at the same time; otherwise the learner cannot use the word correctly. Moreover, it is recommendable for students to learn weak and strong forms and which parts of speech are stressed and which not. Listening improves speaking and oral interaction as it helps to fix the pronunciation of words and recognising them. Thus, a very good way to practise the first two skills simultaneously is recording one's own voice –exaggerating intonation and stress, or any other pronunciation aspect– and listening to it afterwards to check precision, accuracy and detect any error to be sorted out or avoided in the future.

On the other hand, it is easier to pronounce segmental phonemes appropriately as long as students check their pronunciation in a dictionary and fix them in their minds. It must be noted that sometimes connected speech and other features of speech change the pronunciation of specific words –thence the difference between phonetics and phonology (Clark, Yallop and Fletcher 2007)–, but at least it would be advisable for students to know the general rules. Some basic and common words, usually mispronounced at the B1 oral exams analysed, are classified into different groups and explained below. When some words fit several categories, they were just written down in one single column to avoid overlapping and confusion due to excessive information. They are either very frequent words to talk about familiar topics at this communicative stage or their pronunciation hampers understanding to the extent that they contradict the CEFR descriptors on phonological control as there would be constant mispronunciation and, on the whole, pronunciation would be unclear.

It must be noted that "European Spanish speakers, in particular, find English pronunciation harder than speakers of most other European languages" mainly because of the differences between the Spanish and English vowel systems and sentence stress (Coe 2001: 90-91). For this same author, some common features of the pronunciation typical of Spanish speakers of English are:

- Difficulty in recognising and using English vowels.
- Strong devoicing of final voiced consonants.
- Even sentence rhythm, without the typical prominence of English, making understanding difficult for English listeners.
- Narrower range of pitch (in European speakers), producing a bored effect (Coe 2001: 91).

One other aspect that students often seem not to realise is English *silent letters*. These are graphemes that, despite being contained in the spelling of words, are not pronounced for several reasons, such as having kept the original spelling of borrowed words; having kept the old spelling of some words; representing sounds for which there are no letters in English by creating new combinations; or to distinguish words that sound similar, among others (Peters 2012: 2-3). Some of the most common mispronounced words in the mentioned official examinations which contain silent letters are illustrated in Table 2[1]:

[1] After each word, the right phonetic transcription is provided for each category in the standard set of Unicode phonetic symbols for English; that is, for Received Pronunciation or similar accents.

Word (W)	Pronunciation (P)	W	P	W	P	W	P
answer	/ˈɑːnsəʳ/	could	/kʊd/ or /kəd/	know	/nəʊ/	who	/huː/
biscuit	/ˈbɪskɪt/	friend	/frend/	suit	/suːt/	whole	/həʊl/
bomb	/bɒm/	fruit	/fruːt/	talk	/tɔːk/	write	/raɪt/
build	/bɪld/	half	/hɑːf/	walk	/wɔːk/	wrong	/rɒŋ/
castle	/ˈkɑːsl/	juice	/dʒuːs/	Wednesday	/ˈwenzdeɪ/	would	/wʊd/

Table 2. Correct pronunciation of words including silent letters

As Lizdas (2010: 10) states, "Spanish is a phonological language, often called a constant and regular language"; that is why Spaniards tend to read as they write. This is also why this author also affirms that Spanish is usually called a ""clear" or "transparent" language, because 98% of the graphonics is phonemic. (…) English, on the other hand, is called an "opaque" language, because one letter can have many sounds". This might be the reason why Spanish students equate English pronunciation with Spanish pronunciation, which results in reading or uttering words as they are written. Table 3 shows some of the most common words which are pronounced as they are written:

Word (W)	Pronunciation (P)	W	P	W	P
also	/ˈɔːlsəʊ/	eye	/aɪ/	option	/ˈɒpʃn/
ball	/bɔːl/	favourite	/ˈfeɪvərɪt/	orange	/ˈɒrɪndʒ/
because	/bɪˈkɒz/ /bɪˈkəz/	fireman	/ˈfaɪəmən/	parent	/ˈpeərənt/
breakfast	/ˈbrekfəst/	first	/fɜːst/	picture	/ˈpɪktʃəʳ/
boat	/bəʊt/	fountain	/ˈfaʊntən/	pineapple	/ˈpaɪnæpl/
bus	/bʌs/	Friday	/ˈfraɪdeɪ/	really	/ˈriːəli/ /ˈrɪəli/
buy	/baɪ/	future	/ˈfjuːtʃəʳ/	resource	/rɪˈsɔːs/ /rɪˈzɔːs/
call	/kɔːl/	hair	/heəʳ/	sailing	/ˈseɪlɪŋ/
came	/keɪm/	idea	/aɪˈdɪə/	saw	/sɔː/
Chinese	/ˌtʃaɪˈniːz/	improve	/ɪmˈpruːv/	seemed[2]	/siːmd/
church	/tʃɜːtʃ/	July	/dʒuˈlaɪ/	series	/ˈsɪəriːz/
cold	/kəʊld/	library	/ˈlaɪbrəri/	shoes	/ʃuːz/
come	/kʌm/	live	/lɪv/	skirt	/skɜːt/
country	/ˈkʌntri/	luxurious	/lʌgˈʒʊəriəs/	thought	/θɔːt/
course	/kɔːs/	management	/ˈmænɪdʒmənt/	tired	/ˈtaɪəd/
cousin	/ˈkʌzn/	minute	/ˈmɪnɪt/	titled	/ˈtaɪtld/
crisis	/ˈkraɪsɪs/	Monday	/ˈmʌndeɪ/	treat	/triːt/
culture	/ˈkʌltʃəʳ/	money	/ˈmʌni/	Tuesday	/ˈtjuːzdeɪ/
cupcakes	/ˈkʌpkeɪk/	month	/mʌnθ/	Thursday	/ˈθɜːzdeɪ/
dangerous	/ˈdeɪndʒərəs/	mountain	/ˈmaʊntən/	unemployed	/ˌʌnɪmˈplɔɪd/
die	/daɪ/	nature	/ˈneɪtʃəʳ/	vegetable	/ˈvedʒtəbl/
done	/dʌn/	nose	/nəʊz/	village	/ˈvɪlɪdʒ/
example	/ɪgˈzɑːmpl/	nurse	/nɜːs/	work	/wɜːk/

Table 3. Correct pronunciation of words usually pronounced as they are written

[2] This usually happens with regular past or the addition of the –(e)d morpheme in general.

Another similar problem to the previous one is trying to pronounce English sounds as they would be in Spanish, especially when they are quite similar. The typical ones are the /h/ usually pronounced as the Spanish /χ/, especially at the beginning of words (e.g. have), and /s/ at the beginning of words usually pronounced as /es/ due to the lack of its existence in Spanish (e.g. special). Sometimes particular mispronunciations "originate" new words by adding letters that exist in the Spanish word but not in the English one; for instance, *nervous* /ˈnɜːvəs/ becomes #*nervious* and, consequently, is mispronounced as /ˈnɜːvɪʊs/ or /ˈnervɪʊs/. Other examples of the like are shown in Table 4:

Word (W)	**Pronunciation (P)**	**W**	**P**	**W**	**P**
bag	/bæg/	have	/həv, /əv/ /hæv/	OK	/əʊˈkeɪ/
city	/ˈsɪti/			small	/smɔːl/
concert	/ˈkɒnsət/	kilometers	/ˈkɪləmiːtəʳ/ /kɪˈlɒmɪtəʳ/	year	/jɪəʳ/or /jɜːʳ/
engineering	/ˌendʒɪˈnɪərɪŋ/			your	/jɔːʳ/ or/jəʳ/

Table 4. Correct pronunciation of words assimilated to Spanish pronunciation

English has a wide range of phonetic possibilities, so students easily mix and get confused by the different pronunciations of the same words in each dialect or accent. This causes the opposite "phenomenon" of what has been just described; that is, students try to pronounce some words with *their* "English accent" instead of the real one. This happens with words such as character /ˈkærəktəʳ/, chemistry /ˈkemɪstri/, practise /ˈpræktɪs/, since /sɪns/ and weather /ˈweðəʳ/.

On the other hand, as Peters (2012: 3) claimed, some sounds in English are not represented by a single letter, but by some combinations. For instance, 'th' represents the sound /θ/. This leads to two different types of mispronunciations: first, confusing the pronunciation of some phonemes due to the order of the letters, e.g. daughter /ˈdɔːtəʳ/, or to the appearance of two different phonemes represented by the same letter in a single word, e.g. theatre /ˈθɪətəʳ/. Second, ignoring the combination and uttering the word considering just one of its letters, e.g. athlete /ˈæθliːt/ or both /bəʊθ/.

Some mispronunciations simply arise when confusing some words with others which are usually minimal pairs. Common cases are provided in Table 5:

Pair (word + pronunciation)		
beer /bɪəʳ/ - bear /beəʳ/	flaw /flɔː/ - flew /fluː/	read /riːd/ - ride /raɪd/
birth /bɜːθ/ - bird /bɜːd/	give /gɪv/ - gift /gɪft/	see /siː/ - say /seɪ/
cheer /tʃɪəʳ/ - chair /tʃeəʳ/	great /greɪt/ - greet /griːt/	she /ʃiː/ or /ʃi/ - six /sɪks/
clothes /kləʊðz/ or /kləʊz/ - clouds /klaʊdz/	her /ʰɜːʳ/ or /ʰəʳ/ - here /hɪəʳ/	some /sʌm/ or /səm/ - sun /sʌn/
eat /iːt/ - heat /hiːt/	laugh /lɑːf/ - loud /laʊd/	son /sʌn/ - soon /suːn/
eaten /ˈiːtn/ - eighteen /ˌeɪˈtiːn/	now /naʊ/ - know /nəʊ/	three /θriː/ - trees /triː/
eight /eɪt/ - age /eɪdʒ/	plan /plæn/ - plane /pleɪn/	tip /tɪp/ - tie /taɪ/ - types /taɪp/

Table 5. Correct pronunciation of words usually confused or mixed

3.2. Grammar and vocabulary

At B1 level, students must have *general linguistic range* as well as *vocabulary range and control*. In short, this means, according to the CEFR, to have "a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics" as well as to have sufficient vocabulary on a wide range of familiar topics. At this point, *grammatical accuracy* is also needed, which means to communicate "with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts" even if some mother-tongue influence remains and to convey clear meaning by accurately employing "a repertoire of frequently used routines and patterns associated with more predictable situations". Thus, there are some basic errors that should not be made at this communicative level and which are described as in the following paragraphs.

Adjectives in Spanish are placed after the noun and need the agreement in number with the noun, whereas adjectives and nouns in English typically post-modify head nouns. This and noun phrases are challenging for Spanish learners because "for them the elements of the phrase would more naturally be expressed in the reverse order" (Coe 2001: 99). By way of illustration take the following common errors: "a differents article", "they look like happies", "class English" or "the chocolate is a cake favourite".

Another frequent error with adjectives is not distinguishing between –ed and –ing adjectives or between adjectives and nouns, as in the following phrases or sentences: "I like being relaxing", "I'm interesting in lesson 3", "a sun day", "my sister is professional player football" or "the girl is dark hair". Regarding adjectives, the comparative and superlative structures are also difficult for Spaniards as in Spanish *más* (more) is added to the adjective in all cases unlike in English. This results in phrases like: "it's more cheaper", "it's most crowd", "other place more big".

Singular and plural agreement is also problematic for several reasons: a) as said before, students tend to add an –s to adjectives by analogy with Spanish. So it is an error to say: "two reds houses". b) Some nouns are always plural. Therefore, phrases like "a glasses", "a sweets" or "a trousers" or "people is" are an error. c) On the contrary, some words always end in –s but are singular (e.g. news) or either singular or plural (e.g. series). Finally, d) some words are countable in Spanish whereas they are uncountable in English (e.g. bread, cheese or health, among others). It must be noted here that, although verb inflection in English is not as in Spanish since many verb forms are the same for different persons, there is a difference between the third person singular and the other persons. Thus, phrases like "the flat have", "my father live" or "there are a lot of grass" are serious errors.

It is commonly said that once one masters the usage of prepositions in a foreign language, then one masters the language. For Spaniards, as observed in the analysis, typical errors involving prepositions are: selecting the incorrect preposition (e.g. "from I was born", "depend of", "think in" or "I'm good in football); using a preposition in a context where it is prohibited, including employing wrong double prepositions (e.g. "for on holiday", "for to visit", "tell with them" or "I've lived in Albacete for four years ago"); and failing to use a preposition in a context where it is obligatory (e.g. "can you say me", "I want pass" or "go this city"). Moreover, as Chodorow *et al.* (2007: 26) remark, English has hundreds of phrasal verbs, that is, a verb and a particle that sometimes is a preposition; what is more, some phrasal verbs are also and often used with prepositions (i.e. "give up on someone"). Therefore, this makes phrasal verbs particularly intricated for

foreigners to master due to their non-compositionality of meaning, which forces the learner to learn long lists of phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs and adjectives by heart.

Owing to Spanish verb inflections, in this language it is not necessary to use a subject, especially in the case of pronouns, as the recipient knows who the speaker is referring to just because of the verb. However, in English every conjugated verb needs a subject. This causes two types of mistakes: on the one hand, omitting a necessary subject (e.g. "because is very beautiful", "I think that is a mark" or "is depend"); and on the other hand, using double subjects, especially in relative clauses (e.g. "my first job it wasn't as a teacher" or "I know a friend who he is a nurse").

Despite not having inflections, English verbs are difficult for Spaniards for several reasons apart from the ones mentioned before. On the one hand, auxiliary verbs, which make students omit the main or the auxiliary verb (e.g. "do you other activity?" or "we can a lot of money") or even use an "extra" auxiliary verb when it is prohibited, especially in questions like "what do about you?". And on the other hand, contractions, especially regarding their pronunciation (e.g. "I from Albacete" or "I 24 years old"). Verb patterns are also hard, since students have to learn those verbs followed by infinitive, gerund or bare infinitive by heart. In relation to this matter, common errors include: selecting the wrong pattern (e.g. "I could teaching", "we can to celebrate" or "I prefer don't have a pet"); or, otherwise, omitting it (e.g. "I hope go to the beach" or "I like play computer").

In this same vein, tenses are also an obstacle for Spaniards, since "the same" tenses are not used in similar contexts (e.g. Present Continuous or future) or anisomorphism occurs, for example when there are two or more different tenses in Spanish which correspond to a single one in English (e.g. Past Perfect and *pretérito perfecto compuesto* or *pretérito pluscuamperfecto* in the indicative mood). However, there are times when students simply select the wrong tense, for instance, for habits (e.g. "I hardly ever going shopping") or for past actions (e.g. "I meet with my friends last month"). Moreover, students sometimes forget to conjugate verbs, especially 'to be' (e.g. "I always be here) or conjugate them wrong (e.g. "they looks funny"); they also forget to use the –(e)s morpheme in the third person singular (e.g. "it seem a holiday"); or, as said before, omit the auxiliary or main verbs or, on the contrary, add them when it is prohibited (e.g. "are you agree?"); or simply choose the wrong verb form (e.g. "I have working", "I'm study" or "she's go to the supermarket").

Other common grammatical errors are: not using the appropriate pronoun, including relatives and frequent references to the second singular person (e.g. "I don't see she well", "the photo who was taken", "with ours", "baby animals are your favourite" or "you and me have"); not making the difference between *a* and *an* (e.g. "a English certificate" or "an university"); choosing wrong collocations (e.g. "do a cake"), even if they imply great differences in meaning (e.g. *black* vs. *dark* eyes, *fun* vs. *funny*, or *career* vs. *degree*); confusing parts of speech, especially nouns and adjectives (e.g. *health* vs. *healthy*); wrong word order, mainly in reported questions (e.g. I don't know where are you going); double negatives (e.g. "I don't like football nothing"); adding the –(e)s morpheme to irregular plurals ("two childrens" or "three mens"); mixing some easily confused verbs or pairs (e.g. *wear* and *carry* or *weather* and *time*); and literal translations, including the usage of *false friends* ("put music", *signature* vs. *subject*, *target* vs. *card*).

A solution to this problem lies in grammar and vocabulary exercises. However, they might also be the origin of it, since traditionally materials and resources aimed at teaching English did not usually connect this kind of practice with free production; that is, exercises usually consisted in matching or filling in the gaps. A

possibility to tackle this problem, which has already been included in new materials, is to prioritise free-production activities and link grammar and vocabulary practice or exercises to guided or free production progressively more extensive.

3.3. Fluency and oral interaction

As explained before, the last and longest part of the oral exam, the joint task, is devoted to the oral interaction skill via a 6-minute pair discussion. This is done through a proposed mock situation which usually implies decision-making as a means to boost conversation, such as planning a holiday, a night out or a birthday party.

A correct performance implies *taking the floor* (*turntaking*) by taking the initiative and starting a conversation framing the context, by reaching conclusions and by closing it at the end; *co-operating*, or easing interaction by paving the way for the partner to intervene, and to make sure they understand, and *asking for clarification*, or asking for explanations when needed.

A repeated complaint when reviewing the exams refers to comparisons with their partners, usually regarded as a disadvantage. Some of them who perceived the other candidate as having superior oral skills tended to consider them as opponents undermining their possibilities of success, while those who felt more proficient claimed their counterparts hampered communication, even when their cooperation techniques were assessed individually.

This inability when having to produce a day-to-day dialogue in an examination context reflects that pair work, normally included in every lesson of ESL, is not producing the desirable effects. It may also point to the long tradition of master classes in Spain in non-linguistic subjects, together with the lack of practice in any kind of oral exam. It would be therefore desirable in future research to compare the impact of cooperative learning or group work in contrast with more individualistic or competitive learning approaches.

Moreover, English is a practical field, which means that practising is the only way that leads to improvement. Likewise, the authors can affirm from their experience and analysis that people usually make the same mistakes, so detecting them individually is the only solution to avoid them.

At the same time, spoken fluency at the threshold stage is defined by the CEFR as the ability to express oneself "with relative ease despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses" as well as to "keep going effectively without help". Furthermore, this aspect includes being able to "keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production". Length of speech run and frequency and distribution of silent pauses become just one more aspect to be considered besides appropriate speech rate (Rossiter *et al.* 2010: 584-585). These pauses are therefore acceptable, as they are still needed to find the formulations they need in L2 (Hincks 2010). The ability to deal with them efficiently becomes a key point to succeed in the exam, since it is considered in all its three parts.

One frequent measure to avoid gaps in conversation is the inclusion of words or expressions in their L1, Spanish. This kind of mismanagement implies students generally perceive interrupted speech as more inappropriate than making use of another language, even when the content may not be easily guessed by an English speaker unless they could speak Spanish. Often students found this *illicit* use of the common language satisfactory and usually reinforce it with non-linguistic communication to ensure the resource is

accepted by the teachers. They did not seem to make the effort to find the right expressions in English as they decided to use their native language when necessary to keep acceptable fluency, therefore producing quite awkward Spanglish results revealing vocabulary and grammar deficiencies. This is considered as a strong indicator of nonfluent speech (Mora 2006: 78) and may well be solved with adequate use of gambits, discourse markers and non-lexical fillers such as "um" or "uh". It would be also advisable to encourage students to say some formulas to gain for some time to think when necessary (e.g. "What could I say about this?", "just let me think for a moment").

The examples excerpted from the transcripts of the examinations are exposed in Table 6:

Awkward word / expression	Correct expression
…drink *a copa* on Saturday	Going for a drink on Saturday
It's *ciencia ficción*	It's science fiction
…make *trampas*[3]	Cheat (on a game)
...*salud* centre	Health centre
The *guion* is good	The script is good
Torre Eiffel	Eiffel Tower

Table 6. Insertion of Spanish words in the speech

This situation is more frequent in the introduction, which is seemingly not perceived as a part of the exam itself, even when the beginning of the recording would make its length clear. This can be observed in some of the examples excerpted from the transcript at the beginning of the exam and shown in Table 7:

Word / expression in Spanish	English word / expression
Buenas	Good morning
Giménez con G	Giménez starting with a G
Vale	OK

Table 7. Preliminary interaction in English

Many students make use of Spanish through the whole examination in order to communicate with their exam partners. The interaction with the examiners is often done in Spanish as a kind of parallel speech to make sure instructions were correctly understood, to justify mistakes or even to ask for explicit help in their listening or speaking or to show despair in a kind of inner speech.

Words / expression in Spanish	Word / expression in Spanish
Used to interact with their exam partners	
¿Cuál quieres?	Which one do you want?
Me da igual	I don't care
No lo sé	I don't know
Interaction with the examiners	
¿Empiezo yo?	Shall I start?
¿Seguimos?	Shall we continue?
Es que estoy un poco nervioso	It's just that I'm a little nervous
Pensaba que…	I thought…

[3] Moreover, in cases like this, the word wrongly used (*trampas*) could be related to the word "tramp" as a false friend, conveying a totally distorted meaning instead of the idea of tricking or cheating.

Perdón	Sorry
¿Cómo se dice?	I can't remember right now a word to express that thing…
[Who do you live with?] *¿Que dónde quiero vivir?*	Are you asking me about where I would like to live?
Internal monologue	
Joder	Oh, no
Madre mía	Oh, dear

Table 8. Other interactions in Spanish

Therefore, communication strategies should be emphasised in training programmes. Furthermore, this use of Spanish shows either that English-only classroom policies are not generalised or that many students have rarely interacted with their teachers before. Fluency could be also improved by the generalisation of free communication activities of increasing duration and complexity.

4. Conclusions

Considering the above, we could claim that general results in B1 oral examinations are not satisfactory, especially for students who have been learning English at least since they were six years old, as used to be established in the Spanish educational system. The errors and mistakes observed in our analysis cover all seven qualitative aspects of spoken language described by the CEFR. However, the main difficulties seem to concentrate on pronunciation, grammar, fluency and the persistence of L1 as a means of communication.

The reasons may be various and their analyses go beyond this paper. However, some assumptions can be made for future training programmes:

1. Regardless of the method chosen for their preparation for the exam, English-only policies should be adopted so as to ensure the acquisition of classroom language that may solve any possible situation that may arise in the exam.
2. Guided and monitored pair work should be promoted, supervised by the teacher and exposed to the class on a regular basis.
3. Listening may be linked to oral production so as to guarantee the imitation of English pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation.

Thus, students have to make the effort to communicate only in English during their preparation period by becoming aware of the importance of oral skills and assuming errors as a part of the learning process. Teachers or exam trainers should find a method of their own that encourages oral production –in English only and without stopping them– and create fun methods to let students confront their mistakes and errors in a friendly and safe classroom environment.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

HIGHLY ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC TITLES IN THE FIELD OF READING PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

The immediate need of non-English speaking advanced university students, young fellows and young researchers to read literature in English urges the teaching of selective reading of a variety of academic and highly-advanced scientific texts within the framework of English as a foreign language, particularly English for Specific and Academic Purposes. The aim of this work is to analyze one possible operationalization of an expeditious reading strategy through the reading of highly advanced scientific titles of research papers in terms of cause-effect relationships, as this is as important and necessary as reading abstracts for fast tracking relevant data. Because of the scarce literature available on this topic, our analysis is prudently restricted to a small set of title samples. Still, the strength of our observations lie in that scientific titles demonstrate to be very useful authentic sample material in the field of reading pedagogy, this being an issue neither fully explored nor exploited to date.

Keywords: Titles, Scientific Discourse, Reading

Resumen

Frente a la necesidad de lectura de textos especializados en inglés que tienen los alumnos universitarios avanzados, becarios e investigadores jóvenes no hablantes de dicha lengua, la enseñanza de lectura selectiva de material académico y científico en el marco del Inglés con Fines Específicos y Académicos debe ser prioridad en dicho campo. El objetivo de este trabajo es reflexionar sobre una estrategia innovadora de lectura expeditiva de títulos científicos muy especializados en términos de relaciones causa-efecto para ayudar a identificar datos relevantes de un trabajo científico. Debido a los pocos estudios realizados hasta ahora sobre este tema, nuestras reflexiones se restringen a un reducido número de títulos y aspiran a servir de punto de partida para estudios posteriores. El principal valor de este trabajo radica en mostrar que los títulos científicos son material auténtico muy útil para el campo de la pedagogía de la lectura.

Keywords: Titles, Scientific Discourse, Reading

1. Introduction

Learning through reading is subject to extensive research on the ways in which readers acquire knowledge from written material. In scientific and academic settings, in particular, reading comprehension and learning science have mutual influence. On the other hand, in addition to making science, it is a general truth that scientists should devote long hours to reading (Huckin 1987; Bazerman 1988; Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995). This is an obvious observation which, irrespective of its obviousness, clearly reveals at present how the amount to be read is growing at an alarming rate under the pressure of the "publish or perish" imperative that prevails in scientific contexts. Furthermore, to be informed and up-dated at present –even in a narrow field– is difficult due, in part, to the quantity of material that is published. Scientists must be able to sort through large amounts of published research, understand it and evaluate its relevance and validity. Non-

English speaking advanced university students, Ph. D. fellows and researchers are therefore confronted to the pressure of consuming knowledge that is communicated in English, the language of science. This was confirmed in a needs analysis conducted within scientific settings which showed that one of the most serious problems for non-English speaking advanced university students, Ph. D. fellows and researchers is the alarmingly high volume of reading in English that is expected from them (Weir 1983). Expeditious reading of academic and scientific literature therefore becomes a very useful tool to cope with this difficulty as selectivity in reading "is essential so that readers have sufficient time to read the truly important papers in detail" (Burden 2003:1).

Within the hectic world of science, titles demonstrate to be crucial for the communication of knowledge. They have gained increasing importance as the amount of published research has also increased at an alarming rate. Therefore, resorting to title scanning through the table of contents of journals operates as a suitable strategy to select titles on issues that are of interest to scientists who select their readings on the basis of the information contained in them. Statistics showed that readers of titles outnumber those of other sections of scientific papers (Hills 1997) and research on scientists´ reading habits also confirmed that they scan the table of contents looking for key words and noting names of authors (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995). This, in turn, has led to raising awareness about appropriate and intelligent title writing as non-factual and unsubstantial titles may make potential readers discard the reading of either specific sections of papers or the paper as a whole. Therefore, sensitizing readers to the importance of titles secures the identification of whether or not the accomplishment of their two main goals is attained: to provide a compact summary of the content of a scientific paper and to invite readers to read it. They are also central to the organization and retrieval of scholarly information and in this sense, title-reading is a regular activity among trained readers (i.e. scientists) who search for titles in references, tables of contents of journals and edited books, catalogues, periodical indexes, bibliographies, reports, and proceedings.

The focus of attention of research on reading has been comprehension ability, particularly the reading product or the individual variables of the reading process (Bell 2008). Extensive reading has been also studied in detail (Hafiz and Tudoe 1989; Green 2005; Tanaka and Stapleton 2007; Day and Bamford 2002; Mason and Krashen 1997; Waring 1997) and the same observation applies to intensive reading (Morris 1972; Brown 2001; Nation 2004; Yang Dai and Gao 2012; Carrell and Carson 1997). The overriding attention paid to careful reading in theoretical literature indicates that expeditious reading, i.e. the processing of a text by readers quickly, selectively and efficiently to access needed text information, has been somehow ignored. In expeditious reading, the linearity of texts is not necessarily followed and readers try to sample texts to extract data necessary to answer specific questions (Urquhart and Weir 1998). This type of reading can be conducted at a global level (search reading and skimming) or at a local level (scanning). Thus, while in skimming, readers are expected to process texts to identify their essence trying to avoid details by means of a thorough selection of as few text details as possible (Weir 2005), in scanning, readers process texts selectively in an attempt to disregard parts that do not contain useful information for answering specific text questions (Weir and Khalifa 2008). Search reading, scanning and skimming are therefore selective-reading processes, this being the main attribute upon which the differences between expeditious and careful reading lie. They also reflect the real life reading habits in academic and scientific contexts as scientists find themselves having to read and learn from a whole text as well as integrate information from various texts particularly for the preparation of specific assignments. Therefore, taking into account the importance of scientific titles as

instruments that help scientists quickly consume knowledge, the purpose of the present exploratory work is to test one possible operationalization of an expeditious reading strategy through the reading of highly advanced scientific titles of research papers (RP) in terms of cause-effect relationships.

The reasons why titles were experimentally chosen in particular for the present work as sample texts to read lie in: i) the need to continue our studies on this particular section of scientific papers (Soler 2007, 2009, 2011a,b), and ii) our attempt to fuse the development of reading skills and highly advanced scientific title decodification in terms of cause-effect relationships through reading, a niche not fully explored to date except for isolated studies (Nahl-Jakobovits and Jakobovits 1987; Azabache Puente 1996). The present work has therefore been designed on an empirical and exploratory basis.

2. Reading titles

Experimental investigation, which is considered the standard of research, is designed in terms of cause-effect relationships which are reported by means of independent variables (IV) and dependent variables (DV), respectively. In line with this, a high percentage of titles of experimental research operate as mirrors of IVs and DVs. The former, also known as manipulated or controlled variables (Dodge 2003), are those that vary on their own, are not affected by other variables and are expected to have an effect on other variables or measurements (DV). In contrast, DVs, also known as response or responding or outcome variables (Dodge 2003), name what is measured in an experiment and what is affected while an experiment is carried out. An IV does not merely predict a DV but also shapes it so while a DV indicates an outcome or effect, an IV, which is manipulated by the researcher, is the cause of the outcome or effect. Although a high percentage of highly advanced scientific titles convey this information, untrained readers may not immediately identify it. Still, on the basis of carefully guided activities different reading skills can be developed as they involve natural language abilities. For example, if we analyze the following title:

> Role of glycogen synthase kinase-3 in neuronal apoptosis induced by trophic withdrawal, M. Hetman, J.E. Cavanaugh, D. Kimelman and Z. XIA (2000). *Journal of Neuroscience 20*(7):2567-2574 (RP in Biochemistry)

in terms of a cause-effect relationship it could be read as: "The role of IV in DV". Furthermore, if [the role of] were removed from this title, its meaning would still remain implicit. Thus, [the role of] can be considered optional and the title can be interpreted as the announcer of a study on the cause-effect relationship between glycogen synthase kinase-3 and a consequence in neuronal apoptosis induced by trophic withdrawal.

Decoding underlying cause-effect relationships in titles may sometimes be problematic as a result of the variety of stylistic ways of expressing such relationships. To simplify this, Nahl-Jakobovits and Jakobovits (1987) proposed a variety of possible frames for titles of experimental studies, some of which were confirmed (as shown in the examples listed below) from the title database we constructed for our previous studies on highly advanced scientific titles (for details on how this database was constructed please see Soler 2011a), namely:

1) The effect of IV on DV:

> The effects of generation on conceptual implicit memory, N.W. Mulligan (2002). *Journal of Memory and Language 47*(2):327-342 (RP in Linguistics)

In this title, [generation] is the IV, i.e. the variable manipulated by the researcher by means of generation tasks, such as letter-transposition and word-fragment generation, and [conceptual implicit memory] is the DV. Thus, this title announces the relationship between [generation tasks] and [conceptual implicit memory] in terms of the effects these tasks have on [conceptual implicit memory].

Other examples from our database that fit this title frame are:

1.a) Effects of *atorvastatin* on fasting and postprandial lipoprotein subclasses in coronary heart disease patients versus control subjects, E.J. Schaefer, J.R. McNamara, T. Tayler, J.A. Daly, J.A. Gleason, L.J. Seman, A. Ferrari and J.J. Rubenstein (2002).*The American Journal of Cardiology 90*(7):689-696 (RP in Cardiology)

1.b) Relating print and speech: The effects of letter names and word position on reading and spelling performance, M. Bowman and R. Treiman (2002). *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology 82*(4):305-340 (RP in Psychology)

1.c) Effects of D2-dopamine and alpha-adrenoceptor antagonists in stress induced changes on immune responsiveness of mice, A. Fierová, M. Starec, M. Kuldová, H. Ková, M. Páv, L. Vanucci and M. Pospíil (2002). *Journal of Neuroimmunology 130*:55-65 (RP in Biochemistry)

1.d) Rater agreement on IQ and achievement tests: Effect on evaluations of learning disabilities, R.G. Van Noord and F.F. Prevatt (2002). *Journal of School Psychology 40*(2):167-176 (RP in Psychology)

2) The role of IV in DV:

The role of collaborative planning in children´s source-monitoring errors and learning. H.H. Ratner, M.A. Foley and N. Gimpert (2002). *Journal of Experimental Psychology 82*(1):44-73 (RP in Psychology)

In this particular case, the distinction between surface structure and deep structure (Chomsky 1965) is very useful to make readers see that "the role of IV in DV format" shows the way in which the content of the paper to which this title belongs is encoded in its external or surface structure. Chomsky´s distinction also helps to infer the underlying meaning at the deep structure which reveals that this title is nothing but an abbreviated sentence reading: "[Collaborative planning] (IV) has an effect on [children´s source-monitoring errors and learning] (DV)".

Other examples that fit this title frame are:

2.a) Role of heparan sulfate as a tissue-specific regulator of FGF-4 and FGF receptor recognition, B.L. Allen, M.S. Filla and A.C. Rapraeger (2001). *Journal of Cell Biology 155*:845-858 (RP in Biology)

2.b) Auditory thalamus, dorsal hipocampus, basolateral amygdala and perirhinal cortex role in the consolidation of conditioned freezing to context and to acoustic conditioned stimulus in the rat, B. Scchaetti, C.A. Lorenzini, E. Baldi, G. Tassoni and C. Bucherelli (1999). *The Journal of Neuroscience 19* (21):9570-9578 (RP in Biochemistry)

2.c) Role of tyrosine, DOPA and decarboxylase enzymes in the synthesis of monoamines in the brain of the locust, L. Nagy and L. Hiripi (2002). *Neurochemistry International 41*(2):9-16 (RP in Biochemistry)

2.d) Proteolytic release of CD44 intracellular domain and its role in the CD44 signaling pathway, I. Okamoto, Y. Kawano, D. Murakami, T. Sasayama, N. Araki, T. Miki, A.J. Wong and H. Saya (2001). *Journal of Cell Biology* 155:755-762, 2001 (RP in Biology)

From Nahl-Jakobovits and Jakobovits´ (1987) list of other cause-effect title formats, the following ones were also confirmed from our title database:

3) IV1 and IV2 as determinants of DV or IV1 and IV2 in DV:

3.a) Risk and invention in human technological evolution. B. Fitzhugh (2002), *Journal of Anthropological Archaelogy 20*(2):125-167 (RP in Anthropology)

3.b) The influence of animacy on relative clause processing, W.M. Mak, W. Vonk and H. Schriefers (2002). *Journal of Memory and Language 47*(1):50-68 (RP in Linguistics)

3.c) Coronary flow reserve and myocardial diastolic dysfunction in arterial hypertension, M. Galderisi, S. Cicala, P. Caso, L. De Simone, A. D'Errico, A. Petrocelli and O. de Divitiis (2002). *The American Journal of Cardiology 90*(8):860-864 (RP in Medicine)

3.d) Pairwise difference analysis in modern human origins research, M. Collard and N. Franchino (2002). *Journal of Human Evolution 43*(3):23-352 (RP in Anthropology).

4) IV and DV:

4.a) The coastal skeleton of Shanidar 3 and a reappraisal of Neandertal thoracic morphology, R.G. Franciscus and S.E. Churchill (2002). *Journal of Human Evolution 42*(3):303-356 (RP in Anthropology)

4.b) Content and cognitive science, H. Clapin (2002). *Language and Communication 22*(3):231-242 (RP in Linguistics)

4.c) CTLA4 dimorphisms and the multiple sclerosis phenotype, T. Masterman, A. Ligers, Z. Zhang, D. Hellgren, H. Salter, M. Anvret and J. Hillert (2001). *Journal of Neuroimmunology 131*:208-212 (RP in Biochemistry)

A further difficulty apart from that deriving from the rich variety of stylistic ways of expressing cause-effect relationships in terms of IV and DV in titles, concerns appropriately inferring which elements in titles are indicators of DVs and which are indicators of IVs. This is particularly the case of titles of studies that either are not designed on an experimental study basis or that belong to studies that are characterized by their non-experimental nature. In the latter respect, it is the nature of the object of study what does not make an experimental study possible. Thus, which could be the reading frame for a title (extracted from our title database), such as *Pragmatics and word meaning*, A. Lascarides and A. Copestake (1998), *Journal of Linguistics 131*:147-159? (RP in Linguistics)?

IV and DV?, DV and IV? Or, why not IV and IV? In this particular case, restricting reading to expeditious title reading will be naturally misleading and therefore expeditious title reading complemented with abstract extensive reading becomes a useful reading strategy. By following this strategy it becomes clear that in the proposed title, the reading frame is IV and DV, i.e. [word meaning] is affected if [pragmatics] is taken into account.

3. Proposed title reading activities

Because deciphering cause-effect relationships is the core of science, framing titles to fit these relationships appears to operate as a logical rationale and making title IV-DV formats explicit to untrained readers of highly advanced scientific papers secures the appropriate reconstruction of the scientific information contained in the whole article. Thus, in order to test the operationalization of expeditious title reading in terms of cause-effect relationships, activities within the scheme below could be proposed:

- Identification of keywords and other components in RP titles
- Identification of IV and DV which can be confirmed through abstract reading
- Identification of title surface structure and elucidation of title deep structure by paraphrasing
- Analysis of authentic titles to check which are designed on a IV-DV basis and which are not
- Title paraphrasing

Within the framework of this preliminary scheme, the following practical activities could be carried out:

1. Differentiation between cause-effect title constructions and other title constructions

1.a) Say whether the following titles are constructed under a cause-effect format or not. Give support to your answer.

1.a.1) Acute effects of caffeine on heart rate variability. H.P. Sondermeijer, A.G. J. van Marle, P. Kamen and H. Krum (2002). *The American Journal of Cardiology 90*(8):906-907.

1.a.2) Role of heparan sulfate as a tissue-specific regulator of FGF-4 and FGF receptor recognition. B.L. Allen, M.S. Filla and A.C. Rapraeger (2001). *Journal of Cell Biology 155*:845-858.

1.a.3) Amygdala neurons mediate acquisition but not maintenance of instrumental avoidance behavior in rabbits, A. Poremba and M. Gabriel (1999). *The Journal of Neuroscience 19*(21):9635-9641.

1.a.4) Stress, glucocorticoids, and damage to the nervous system: The current state of confusion, R.M. Sapolsky (1996). *STRESS 1*:1-19.

1.a.5) Energy metabolism, stress hormones and neural recovery from cerebral ischemia/hypoxia, A. Schurr (2002). *Neurochemistry International 41*(2):1-8.

1.a.6) Mast cells: new targets for multiple sclerosis therapy?, J.P. Zappulla, M. Arock, L.T. Mars and R.S. Liblau (2001). *Journal of Neuroimmunology 131*:5-20.

1.a.7) Effect of *Lactobacillus johnsonii* La1 and antioxidants on intestinal flora and bacterial translocation in rats with experimental cirrhosis, M. Chiva, G. Soriano, I. Rochat, C. Peralta, F. Rochat, T. Llovet, B. Mirelis, E.J. Schiffrin, C. Guarner and J. Balanzó (2002). *Journal of Hepatology 37*(4):456-462.

1.a.8) Neurotrophins: from enthusiastic expectations through sobering experiences to rational therapeutic approaches, H. Thoenen and M. Sendtner (2002). *Nature Neuroscience 5*:1046-1054.

1.a.9) Tenascin-C aptamers are generated using tumor cells and purified protein, B.J. Hicke, Ch. Marion, Y.-F. Chang, T. Gould, C.K. Lynott, D. Parma, P.G. Schmidt and S. Warren (2001). *Journal of Biological Chemistry 276*(52):48644-48654.

1.a.10) Molecular analysis of the interaction of LCMV with its cellular receptor –dystroglycan, S. Kunz, N. Sevilla, D.B. McGavern, K.P. Campbell and M.B.A. Oldstone (2001). *Journal of Cell Biology 155*:301-310.

2. Title Constituency

2.a) *Identification of IV and DV*

2.a.1) In the titles that you have labeled as cause-effect titles, which is the IV and which is the DV?

2.a.2) Give support to your answers.

2.b) *Identification of title components*

2.b.1) Indicate the words and their corresponding grammatical category through which the relationship between DV and IV is accomplished.

2.b.2) What type of words are they?

2.b.3) Which are the most frequent content words in the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a)? Say why do you think this is so.

2.b.4) Are there any verbs in the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a)?

2.b.4.1) Which are they?

2.b.4.2) Which is the verb tense that prevails in the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a)?

2.b.4.3) Why do you think this is so?

2.b.5) Are key words present in those that are cause-effect titles?

2.b.6) Say in what way the key words you identified contribute to establishing a cause-effect relationship.

3. Title paraphrasing

3.1) Turn all the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a) into full sentence titles.

3.2) Turn all the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a) into compound titles.

3.3) Say whether semantic differences arise as a result of such conversions.

4. *Title and abstract reading*

4.1) Choose three of the cause-effect titles you have identified in 1.a) and read their corresponding abstracts.

4.2) Do these abstracts make the cause-effect relationship they present effective? Give support to your answer.

5. Title and full-paper reading

5. Through cause-effect titles in science, readers are promised to be informed on this relationship. Do the full papers chosen in 4.1) successfully accomplish this promise?

6. Title reading and genre

6.1) Are the conversions you propose in 3.1 and 3.2 crucial to the genre of the papers to which they belong? Give support to your answer.

6.2) Decide whether the cause-effect titles you identified in 1.a) belong to a RP or to a review paper and discuss whether or not there is a relationship between the title construction and the genre of the titles selected.

The rationale for the order of the above-listed activities derives from an equilibrated distribution of increasing difficulties which are carefully graded from the title microstructure (activities 1-3) to the title macrostructure (activities 4-6). In parallel, grammar and syntax issues are not taught explicitly as points out of context but analyzed by the students themselves through *a priori* planned activities and under the guidance of the teacher. In the stage of title microstructure work, drilling exercises, specially drills around content and function words to report cause-effect relationships, are useful supplementary tools as they secure internalization of concepts and of grammatical resources to convey such concepts. On the other hand, in agreement with Urquhart and Weir (1998), our proposed activities show i) that the linearity of all the texts that form part of a paper is not followed, ii) that readers are guided to sample texts to extract data necessary to answer specific questions to help them see cause-effect relationships, iii) that reading, which can be done both at a local level and a global level, is in all instances a selective process, and iv) that this selective process –if carefully guided by the teacher– is crucial to plan reading activities whose purpose is to make students see cause-effect relationships in titles.

Results on students´response to the above-listed set of activities are preliminary and at present they are locally restricted to experimental teaching work at the Instituto de Investigaciones Bioquímicas de Bahía Blanca (INIBIBB), Argentina, whose young non-English speaking researchers, fellows and Ph. D. students must read highly advanced scientific literature written in English on a daily basis. The INIBIBB is a non-profit research body depending on the Universidad Nacional del Sur (UNS), our local university, and the National Scientific Research Council (CONICET). Research at the INIBIBB covers the disciplines of molecular neurobiology, lipid biochemistry, neurochemistry, biophysics of cell membranes and neurotransmitter receptors, and some aspects of biotechnology and molecular genetics. As linguistic expertise in English is a must especially within the academic community, its non-English speaking members have, in fact, serious problems varying from poor competence in English to difficulties in appropriately decoding and encoding academic rhetorics. The presence of a teacher and translator of English as a staff member at the INIBIBB is therefore a privileged condition with respect to other research centers in Argentina which do not have a specialist in this field. The INIBIBB is therefore not an ordinary teaching classroom context but a sui-generis environment within which experimental English teaching can be perfectly accomplished.

A major result derived from our proposed activities concerns students´ raising awareness not only of proper title reading in terms of cause-effect relationships but also of proper title writing. Interestingly, the proposed activities yielded very positive outcomes particularly on title writing thanks to previous work on cause-effect title reading. In parallel, title reading and title writing awareness among the young scientific community was not restricted to cause-effect title structures but was extended to other title structures that convey other meanings apart from those related to cause-effect relationships. The dual effect observed (i.e. on title reading and title writing), which is mediated by activities like the ones proposed, merits further research between test and control groups in the field of ESP.

4. Conclusion

That reading science is a must to members of the research community irrespective of their lines of investigation has been a general truth for long and still is. The main obstacle nowadays falls on the pressure to read (i.e. consume knowledge) fast to be able to be up-dated and to respond to the "publish or perish" imperative that prevails in scientific settings. Therefore, clever expeditious title reading organization demonstrates to be a very useful tool to fastly cope with this imperative.

The limited scope of our present work restricted to a set of a low number of examples from our title database has been a prudent deliberate choice because of the scarce available literature on title cause-effect structures and their implications for appropriate title reading (Nahl-Jakobovits and Jakobovits 1987; Azabache Puente 1996). In spite of this limitation, our research note paves the way towards a planned academic and scientific reading pedagogy and could contribute to:

- considering titles as perfect authentic sample texts for reading activities as, in spite of their brevity compared to other sections of scientific papers, they can be exploited for a very rich variety of reading activities;
- showing that making cause-effect relationships in scientific titles explicit is a useful reading strategy to untrained non-English speaking readers;
- carrying out in a short time the compulsory reading demanded in scientific settings; and
- identifying discourse conventions that secure substantial titles, which, in turn, attract readers.

It can also be concluded that in order to address non-English speaking advanced university students´, Ph. D. fellows´ and researchers´ needs as readers of highly advanced scientific papers, a comprehensive reading pedagogy must be strategically planned to include titles.

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Encuentro
Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas

QUELQUES ASPECTS D'INFLUENCE TRANSLINGUISTIQUE DANS LA PRODUCTION ORALE D'APPRENANTS TAIWANAIS DE FLE : L'ANGLAIS COMME POSSIBLE LANGUE DE RÉFÉRENCE ?

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Résumé

Le mandarin est la langue officielle de Taiwan, cependant, l'anglais est très prisé et occupe un statut particulier. Les tendances actuelles des orientations éducatives, sur le plan international, favorisent de plus en plus l'intercompréhension, alors que le mandarin et les langues romanes sont des langues non apparentées génétiquement. On étudie donc, dans cette contribution, l'intérêt potentiel de s'appuyer, dans cet environnement, sur l'apprentissage antérieur de l'anglais comme médiation vers l'apprentissage du français, à partir d'une observation et d'une analyse de productions issues des interlangues d'apprenants de français. Des données transversales et longitudinales ont été recueillies chez 40 apprenants âgés de 18 à 21 ans, de niveau A, dans différents contextes d'acquisition. On s'intéresse notamment à l'impact néfaste de la connaissance de l' anglais, aux représentations des participants vis-à-vis du degré de parenté entre les langues en présence, pour s'interroger sur la manière dont certaines orientations du CECR pourraient contribuer, en les contextualisant, à redynamiser l'enseignement/apprentissage du FLE dans ce pays.

Mots-clés : influence translinguistique, multilinguisme, apprentissage de langues étrangères, analyse d'erreurs, contextualisation.

Abstract

Mandarin is the official language of Taiwan; however, English is very popular and occupies a special status. The current trends in educational policy, internationally, promote more mutual comprehension, while Mandarin and the Romance languages are genetically unrelated. This study focus on the potential interest to lean, in this environment, on the previous learning of English as mediation for learning French, from an observation and analysis of production resulting from the interlanguage of learners of French. Transverse and longitudinal data were collected from 40 learners, aged from 18 to 21 years; level A, in different contexts of acquisition. We are interested in particular on the harmful impact of knowledge of English, representation of the participants with respect to the degree of kinship between the languages involved, to wonder about the way in which some of the CEFR guidelines may contribute, by contextualizing them, revitalizing the teaching and learning French as a Foreign Language (FFL) in this country.

Keywords: cross-linguistic influence, multilingualism, learning of foreign languages, errors analysis, contextualization.

Resumen

El mandarín es la lengua oficial de Taiwán; sin embargo, el inglés es muy popular y tiene un estatuto especial. Las tendencias actuales en las políticas educativas, a nivel internacional, promueven la intercomprensión, mientras que el mandarín y las lenguas romances no están relacionados genéticamente. Por ello, se estudia en este trabajo, el beneficio potencial de apoyarse, en este entorno, en el aprendizaje previo de inglés como mediación para el aprendizaje del francés, a partir de la observación y el análisis de interlengua de producciones orales de estudiantes sinohablantes de francés. Los datos transversales y longitudinales se recogieron a partir de 40 estudiantes de entre 18 y 21 años, de nivel A, en diferentes contextos de adquisición. Se interesa particularmente en el impacto adverso del conocimiento de inglés, las representaciones de los participantes sobre el grado de parentesco entre las lenguas implicadas, y analizar cómo ciertas orientaciones del MCER podía contribuir, contextualizándolas, a revitalizar la enseñanza / aprendizaje de FLE en este país.

Palabras clave: Influencia translingüística, multilingüismo, aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, análisis de errores, contextualización.

1. Introduction

Plus personne de correctement informé ne nie, de nos jours, la nécessité d'apprendre des langues non maternelles, dans un monde de plus en plus global et globalisant. L'intérêt d'être polyglotte est évident dans tous les secteurs d'activité, notamment le commerce, le tourisme, les relations internationales, etc. Pour ce faire, les propositions didactiques pour l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues se multiplient et fusent de toutes parts. L'engouement pour les langues occidentales de grande diffusion comme l'anglais, l'espagnol, le français, l'allemand, dans le monde n'est plus une anecdote, et elles font partie intégrante des programmes scolaires des pays asiatiques, comme Taiwan. Force est de remarquer, cependant, que les tendances actuelles de la pratique éducative encouragent de plus en plus l'intercompréhension entre les langues. Nous en prenons pour preuve les nouvelles politiques éducatives de l'Union européenne et la diversification des approches pour intégrer le multilinguisme dans les pratiques éducatives (apprentissage précoce des langues, intercompréhension, etc.). Alors que le chinois mandarin est très différente des langues romanes, voire germaniques.

L'objectif de ce travail est de déterminer les langues qui feront l'objet d'influence translinguistique dans l'apprentissage du français langue étrangère (FLE), en vue d'affiner les compétences langagières des apprenants sinophones, ainsi que leur autonomie. Mais étant donné le contexte d'apprentissage, nous postulons que le chinois mandarin est une source de transferts défavorisée vers la langue française, et que, la langue anglaise va avoir une forte influence sur la langue française. Mentionnons, entre autres, que cette première phase de notre recherche ne traitera pas de l'influence positive de la connaissance de l'anglais dans les pratiques langagières en français parlé par nos apprenants-informateurs.

Après avoir brossé les grandes lignes du contexte de notre travail, nous allons aborder brièvement le concept d'influence translinguistique. Ensuite, il sera présenté la méthode de recherche appliquée, où nous tenterons de parler des informateurs, des matériaux et de la procédure utilisée. Nous envisagerons enfin les résultats observés, les commentaires et les implications qui en découlent.

2. Quelques éléments d'ancrage théorique

Afin d'interpréter correctement les résultats de notre étude, dans cette section, nous tenterons de donner un bref aperçu de la situation linguistique de Taiwan, ainsi qu'un regard sur l'influence translinguistique.

2.1. La mise en contexte: les langues pratiquées à Taiwan

Taiwan est une nation multilingue, multiethnique où plusieurs langues se côtoient avec des statuts différents (Lin 2007:18). On peut les classer en trois grandes catégories: la langue officielle, les langues premières (L1s) et les langues étrangères. Le chinois mandarin est la langue officielle du pays. C'est la langue la plus utilisée par l'immense majorité des Taiwanais et elle est évidente dans tous les services officiels, voire informels. Elle est présente de la maternelle à l'université. La plupart des radios et télévisions émettent leurs émissions en chinois, ainsi que les films étrangers sont sous titrés en chinois. Bref, le chinois est présent partout et jouit d'un statut supérieur.

Les langues premières sont le chinois mandarin, le taïwanais ou le holo, le hakka et les langues aborigènes. Les trois premières langues appartiennent à la famille des langues sino-tibétaines alors que les langues aborigènes sont des langues pro-austronésiennes. Le taïwanais a un statut moyen mais un poids important dans la société taïwanaise, étant donné qu'il est parlé par l'élite économique et sociale (Lin 2007:19). Le hakka est parlé par environ 15 % des Taïwanais, mais il perd de plus en plus de locuteurs au profit du mandarin ou du taiwanais. Les langues aborigènes regroupent les différentes langues parlées par les quatorze groupes d'indigènes (officiellement reconnus par l'État taiwanais), tels que l'atayal, le saisiyat, le bunun, le tsou, le rukai, le paiwan, le pinuyumayan, l'ami, le yami, le thao, le kavalan, le sakizaya, le sediq et le truku.

En dehors du mandarin, on enseigne aussi dans les écoles des langues étrangères, comme l'anglais, le japonais, le français, l'espagnol et l'allemand, entres autres[1]. Les deux premières langues sont les plus prisées. On peut évoquer plusieurs raisons à cela : d'une part, l'hégémonie de l'anglais dans le monde ; il est considéré comme la première langue internationale, indispensable à l'école, voire dans la vie active, et en plus, il permet aux Taïwanais de s'intégrer dans la diplomatie et l'économie mondiale (Huang 2005:48). D'autre part, c'est l'une des matières fondamentales des concours d'entrée dans les lycées, dans les universités, voire dans la fonction publique. Il est enseigné depuis l'école primaire jusqu'à l'université, et même il est inclus dans le programme de certaines écoles maternelles privées. Des écoles privées de langue anglaise pullulent dans toutes les rues des grandes villes taïwanaises, comme Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung pour dispenser des cours d'anglais ou pour préparer les apprenants aux tests, comme notamment le TOEFL (*Test of English as Foreign Language*), le TOEIC (*Test of English for International Communication*), l'IELTS (*International English Language Testing System*), et ainsi de suite. Les passeports, les documents administratifs, etc. sont bilingues chinois –anglais. L'anglais figure aussi sur les étiquettes et modes d'emploi. La télévision par câble, par Internet ou la télévision ADSL permet de regarder une grande variété de programmes en anglais des chaînes américaines, anglaises, australiennes, etc. La majorité des films projetés dans les salles de cinéma sont en anglais sous titrés chinois. Bref, la langue anglaise est une réalité omniprésente partout dans la société et le système éducatif taïwanais (cf. Executive Yuan 2003). Elle a un statut particulier de facto, une sorte de deuxième langue officielle tacite dans le pays.

Pour ce qui est de la langue japonaise, elle jouit également d'un grand prestige auprès des Taïwanais pour des raisons d'ordre géographique, historique[2] ou économique ; sans oublier que le Japon est la deuxième puissance économique du continent asiatique. Parmi les autres langues européennes, l'allemand et le français sont les deux langues les plus populaires, les plus étudiées (Huang 2005:47; Lin 2007:29). Au total, à Taiwan, des langues d'origines diverses coexistent.

À la lumière de ce qui précède, on peut dire que les apprenants taïwanais peuvent mieux maîtriser la langue anglaise que les autres langues européennes, voire avoir un niveau de langue anglaise avancé, et qu'ils pourront même se baser sur celle-ci pour apprendre les autres langues européennes. Mais avant d'en arriver là, essayons de définir sommairement l'influence translinguistique.

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[1] Depuis 2005, on enseigne de nouvelles langues étrangères comme le coréen, le vietnamien et l'indonésien.
[2] cf. l'occupation japonaise pendant plus de 50 ans (1895-1945).

2.2. Qu'est-ce que l'influence translinguistique?

La notion d'influence translinguistique a connu une vogue particulière avec ce qu'on a appelé « transfert ». Elle est complexe et supporte de multiples interprétations depuis la fin du XIX è siècle jusqu'à nos jours. Nous entendons par influence translinguistique ou transfert, ce phénomène linguistique qui consiste à employer dans une langue des éléments propres à d'autre(s) langue(s), communément la langue première (L1) ou une autre langue du répertoire langagier de l'apprenant. En effet, tout individu qui apprend une nouvelle langue essaie de lier les nouvelles informations à ses connaissances préalables, en vue de se faciliter le processus d'acquisition et de communication. Cette stratégie d'apprentissage ou de communication, qui consiste à mettre à profit son répertoire plurilingue, dénote une certaine insuffisance dans la langue cible ou une manifestation de la culture linguistique du milieu comme au Bénin et en Afrique subsaharienne en général.

Le concept de transfert tient ses origines de la théorie conductiste et de la croyance que les habitudes de la L1 influencent l'acquisition des habitudes de la langue non maternelle (LNM) (Ellis 1995:20). Partant de ce constat, l'analyse contrastive associe le concept de transfert aux notions de similitude et de divergence entre la L1 et la langue seconde (L2), c'est -à- dire les structures identiques aux deux langues sont sources de facilité dans l'apprentissage de la LNM, alors que les structures divergentes conduisent à des difficultés et à la persistance d'erreurs. Odlin (1989:27) récapitule la nature de ce processus cognitif en ces termes : «Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired».

L'analyse contrastive distingue le transfert positif du transfert négatif. Le premier est celui qui facilite l'apprentissage et se produit dans les champs ou les deux langues sont similaires. Le transfert négatif ou interférence consiste à utiliser les traits phonétiques, morphologiques, syntactiques ou lexicaux propres à la L1 qui induisent en erreur dans la langue cible.

Les processus de transfert peuvent embrasser les niveaux phonique, lexical, sémantique, morphosyntaxique, socioculturel, sociolinguistique, pragmatique, conceptuel, etc., voire les compétences linguistiques, à savoir la compréhension à la lecture, la compréhension à l'audition, l'expression orale et l'expression écrite. Bien qu'on rencontre dans la littérature une kyrielle de termes pour désigner le même phénomène, nous avons préféré celui d'influence translinguistique suggéré par Sharwood Smith et Kellerman (1986:1), puisqu'il semble plus générique, plus neutre.

3. Méthode

Dans la section précédente, nous avons abordé brièvement la situation sociolinguistique dans lequel se déroule l'apprentissage du FLE, et parlé sommairement de l'influence translinguistique. La présente section porte sur la description de la méthodologie de notre travail. Elle s'efforce de cerner les caractéristiques des participants et présente les matériaux utilisés pour recueillir les données, ainsi que le déroulement de la recherche.

3.1.Le public soumis à l'enquête

Afin de vérifier notre hypothèse, une enquête a été menée auprès de quarante étudiants universitaires taïwanais de FLE, de niveau A1-A2 (première et deuxième année d'université) du CECRL (Conseil de l'Europe 2001). Ils ont entre 18 et 21 ans, leur L1 est le chinois mandarin et ils ont précédemment acquis des connaissances langagières dans la langue anglaise, considérée comme leur première langue étrangère (LE1). Ils sont en contact régulier avec celle-ci d'Internet aux étiquettes des produits de consommation. Ils ont commencé l'apprentissage du FLE en tant que vrai débutant et ont peu de chance de la pratiquer en dehors des salles de classe. Ils n'avaient jamais séjourné en France ni dans aucun pays francophone. Par contre, quatre d'entre eux ont passé quelques semaines dans des pays anglophones afin d'apprendre la langue ou pour y passer les vacances. Mentionnons également que parmi eux, il y avait deux étudiants du département d'anglais (deuxième année), qui avaient séjourné trois ou quatre fois dans des pays anglophones. Selon les renseignements qu'ils nous ont fournis, ils sont motivés pour apprendre la langue française. En résumé, les langues parlées par nos sujets appartiennent à différentes familles linguistiques : le chinois mandarin est une langue sino-tibétaine ; l'anglais, une langue germanique et la langue cible, le français, est une langue romane.

3.2.Matériel et Procédure

Les données recueillies proviennent de questionnaires, d'observations, d'interviews, de rencontres, de huit examens oraux, de jeux de rôles et surtout du corpus que nous avons amassé pendant 16 mois. D'autres matériaux utilisés pour la réalisation de cette étude sont : (i) un enregistreur de voix numérique, (ii) une fiche relevé des erreurs ou un journal dans lequel on notait ou on transcrivait les énoncés erronés, et (iii) la méthode de français *Festival 1* et son CD. La prise de données a été réalisée entre début octobre 2007 et fin février 2009. Les participants ont répondu à deux questionnaires. Le premier questionnaire a été destiné au public cible pour collecter des informations sur leurs données démographiques, linguistiques et sur les raisons de leur motivation pour apprendre la langue française. Le deuxième portait sur les questions suivantes :

(i) La connaissance de l'anglais vous aide-t-elle dans l'apprentissage du français ?
□ Oui □ Non. Pourquoi ?
(ii) Sur quelle(s) langue(s) vous basez-vous pour apprendre la langue française ?
□ Le chinois □ l'anglais □ les deux langues. □ d'autres langues
Pourquoi ?

Pendant l'année académique 2007-2008, ils ont passé six épreuves orales et deux au cours de l'année universitaire 2009. Les épreuves se sont déroulées presque dans les mêmes conditions que celles du Baccalauréat. En effet, les étudiants avaient à se présenter par groupes de deux, chacun choisissait un sujet parmi ceux proposés (les textes étudiés en classe) et ils disposaient de dix minutes pour le préparer. Ensuite on les interrogeait pendant une dizaine de minutes. Dans une première phase, chacun rend compte du texte choisi et puis la deuxième phase est réservée à l'entretien avec le professeur, les textes servant d'amorce à la conversation.

Une autre procédure utilisée est l'enregistrement des jeux de rôles qu'ils font après la fin de chaque unité. Nous avons enregistré également, parfois à leur insu, nos entretiens ou conversations sur des sujets divers sur le

campus ou dans les restaurants situés autour du campus. Notre but était de consolider leur acquis, renforcer leurs automatismes et leur offrir des possibilités de pratiques de la langue, voire d'enrichissement personnel ou mutuel. Enfin, nous avons procédé à la transcription et à l'analyse des données. En d'autres termes, nous avons fait une étude à la fois transversale et longitudinale.

Par ailleurs, pour des raisons de fiabilité, de crédibilité et de validité de nos résultats, on a opté à la fois pour des interprétations autorisée et plausible des erreurs. Ainsi, on a demandé à certains apprenants d'interpréter leurs énoncés. En l'absence des intéressés, on a eu recours à une interprétation qui se base sur la forme et le contexte situationnel. Signalons également que, compte tenu de notre niveau de compétences élémentaires en chinois, nous avons sollicité, parfois, l'aide de deux locuteurs natifs du chinois afin de mieux interpréter les résultats.

4. Synthèse des résultats

Le présent travail examine l'influence translinguistique chez des Taïwanais multilingues de niveau élémentaire dans la langue française. Ces premiers résultats se basent sur 200 énoncés tirés au hasard de notre corpus de langue orale. Cette section a pour objectif de mettre en évidence l'influence du passé linguistique de nos participants sur leur production orale en français.

En ce qui concerne la première question du deuxième questionnaire, 39 répondants ont estimé que l'anglais les aide à comprendre et à produire des énoncés dans la langue française, en évoquant comme principale raison la similitude entre l'anglais et le français.

Quant à la deuxième question, seules sept personnes (17, 50 %) ont reconnu qu'elles se basent sur le chinois pour apprendre la langue française, car selon elles, c'est la langue qu'elles maîtrisent le mieux. Les 33 restants (82, 50 %) ont stipulé que la compréhension et la connaissance de l'anglais leur sont plus utiles à l'apprentissage du FLE que leur L1. Le principal facteur évoqué était la ressemblance formelle entre l'anglais et le français. D'une manière générale, la grande majorité des participants ont admis que l'anglais est une base sur laquelle se reposer.

En ce qui a trait à notre corpus de production orale, le contact entre les langues disponibles chez nos sujets a laissé des empreintes dans leurs interlangues. L'analyse des données transversales et longitudinales recueillies[3] montre que le chinois a eu une influence faible dans la production orale en français. Sur 200 énoncés, seuls quarante (40) cas (20 %) proviennent du chinois mandarin. Il y a eu des cas d'alternance codique (par exemple (1) et (2)) et de traduction littérale du chinois (l'exemple (3)):

(1) « Le stylo ? … *Zhè shì wǒde* » (R-av. 12) ; (cf. c'est à moi)
(2) « Rita ? Elle est (silence) *lóuxià*) ?» (O-av. 08) ; (cf. en bas)
(3) « Moi plus inoubliable personne …» (F-oct. 09). (cf. *Wǒ zuì nán wàng de rén*…).

Les deux premiers participants ont utilisé une stratégie qui ne leur demande pas beaucoup d'effort, une stratégie réaliste et moins risquée.

[3] Pour chaque exemple, figurent l'abréviation de la source et la date d'occurrence.

L'influence provenait surtout de l'anglais, 160 occurrences sur 200, soit 80 % des cas. Nos participants se sont aidés du bagage lexical, syntaxique, etc., accumulé au cours de l'apprentissage de l'anglais. La plupart des erreurs de notre corpus sont dues à divers facteurs, comme l'influence des sons de l'anglais, l'interférence de faux-amis et des mots formels et/ou sémantiquement proches et l'influence de la culture grammaticale apprise avec l'anglais.

a) Influence des sons de l'anglais

(5) «Je n'aime pas le *rat* [ræt] (Ma- janv. 09).

(6) «Elle a fait moto *accident* [æksidənt] hier] (Re-déc. 09).

Ces confusions de sons sont attribuables à la ressemblance graphique.

b) Faux-amis

(7) «Je suis *agréée* (cf. d'accord) avec vous» (P-fév. 09). (cf. *to be agree with*)

(8) «j'ai *appointements* avec le docteur (cf. rendez-vous)» (O-déc. 08). La source de cette erreur est l'influence du mot anglais *appointment*.

c) Des expressions formelles et/ou sémantiquement proches

• Des formes hybrides

Certains apprenants ont tenté d'adapter les mots anglais à la morphologie et à la phonologie française. Ils combinent une racine anglaise avec une terminaison ou une désinence française.

(9) «Qui est votre *barbeur* ?» (Eu-oct. 08), (anglais *barber*; cf. coiffeur).

(10) «Il a *exité* là» (Em-janv. 09) ; (anglais *to exit* ; cf. sortir).

• Traductions littérales

Certains apprenants ont traduit mot à mot certaines expressions propres à l'anglais.

(11) «Aimez-vous les *rapides aliments*?» (cf. fast- food ou prêt à manger).

(12) «Obama est la *personne d'année*» (F.-déc. 08) (cf. l'homme de l'année).

Le participant a traduit littéralement l'anglais « …*person of the year* ».

• Des insertions de mots anglais

(13) «Clauss parle cinq *languages and* il a un master …» (Ma.-nov. 08).

(14) «Vous pouvez *download* des films français …» (C.- jan. 09) ; (cf. télécharger).

d) Influence des savoirs grammaticaux en anglais

La culture grammaticale apprise avec l'anglais les a aussi induits en erreur.

• Emploi des chiffres et nombres

(15) «Si tu gagnes deux *billions* d'euros, tu feras quoi?» (Be-av. 08) (cf. deux milliards).

(16) «un kilo de poires, c'est *un point trente euros"* (1.30 €). (No-av. 08) (cf. 1,30 €, un euro trente ou un euro et trente centimes).

Ici on note l'influence du «point» en anglais, l'équivalent de la virgule française.

(17) «Aujourd'hui, c'est *décembre 20* » (O.-déc. 08). Il s'agit d'une construction de la date à l'anglaise.

• Emploi du génitif

(18) «Victor est Marc's cousin, c'est mamie's anniversaire» (G. ma-08).

(19) «Susana est Éric's copine» (C. -mai 08).

Ces exemples sont basés sur la formation du génitif en anglais : l'ordre des mots, la prononciation du « s » du génitif.

- **Confusion des genres et du nombre**

(20) «Rosita Gomez est son grand-mère» (Ja. -Av. 08).

Il se pourrait que ce soit un calque de «*Rosita Gomez is his grandmother*»

(21) «Ici, c'est mon sœur » (C. -janv. 09).

C'est probablement un calque de « … *my sister* »[4]

Il est intéressant de noter que les deux étudiants du département d'anglais ont réalisé d'indéniables progrès en matière de la maîtrise de la langue française. Mais malheureusement, ils n'ont pas pu participer à la deuxième phase de notre recherche. D'autre part, les participants ont l'habitude de passer rapidement à l'anglais dès qu'ils découvrent le bas ou faible niveau de compétence à l'oral de leurs interlocuteurs en chinois mandarin. En bref, ce premier volet de la recherche a permis de mettre en lumière, chez nos participants, une plus forte influence en provenance de l'anglais et une propension à chercher à tirer parti des compétences déjà élaborées en cette langue.

5. Interprétation des résultats

Notre travail a analysé l'influence des langues connues par les apprenants taïwanais sur leur production orale en langue française. Bien que notre corpus soit encore limité, nous avons trouvé des résultats intéressants que nous tenterons d'expliquer, en vue d'en tirer les implications. L'analyse des données a révélé que, l'influence la plus importante provenait de la langue anglaise (80%). Cette dernière a joué un rôle prépondérant dans l'apprentissage du français, alors que l'incidence du chinois est négligeable (20%) ; ce qui confirme l'hypothèse de la présente étude.

L'influence de la L1, le mandarin, ne ressort pas comme une caractéristique saillante, dans la mesure où l'effet de celle-ci sur les énoncés erronés de nos participants est faible. Ce léger impact de la L1 sur la langue française ne coïncide pas avec les études de Singleton & O Laoire (2006), Wolter & Gyllstad (2011), Mourssi & Al Doori (2014), etc., qui supportent une influence massive de la L1. La première explication plausible est la distance entre les langues du répertoire langagier de nos sujets. En effet, le chinois et le français appartiennent à des familles linguistiques différentes. De même, le premier utilise des sinogrammes alors que le second a recours à l'alphabet latin. La distance psychologique ou psychotypologie, c'est-à-dire la manière dont les apprenants taïwanais perçoivent la relation entre leur L1 et la langue française, peut être une autre source explicative. En d'autres termes, les facteurs qui expliquent ces écarts sont : la différence de structure entre leur L1 et le français (LE2), le degré de difficulté de compréhension qu'ils ont éprouvé en FLE. Ces résultats s'apparentent à ceux de Cenoz (2003), Odlin & Jarvis (2004), Hamada & Koda (2008), selon lesquels la psychotypologie ou la distance est un paramètre important dans l'influence translinguistique. Une autre explication possible serait l'origine étrangère de l'enseignant, son niveau de compétence élémentaire dans la langue chinoise ; connaissant cet état de

[4] Toutefois, il se pourrait que ces incorrections soient également une influence du chinois mandarin.

chose, les apprenants ont préféré utiliser la langue qu'ils ont en commun, l'anglais.

Dans notre étude, l'anglais était la source importante d'influence translinguistique. Les apprenants ont recours à cette langue en tant que roue de secours. Cela peut s'expliquer en termes de stades de l'acquisition du FLE, autrement dit, les résultats sont liés au niveau (débutant ou élémentaire) de compétence de nos apprenants-informateurs en FLE et à leur niveau assez élevé en anglais. Toutefois, une autre explication peut s'appuyer sur le degré de proximité linguistique entre les deux langues occidentales. Nos participants ont perçu de nombreuses ressemblances formelles entre l'anglais et la langue française (leurs caractéristiques structurales et lexicales). Étant donné que les deux langues utilisent l'alphabet latin, l'anglais semble plus proche du français que du chinois, qui emploie des sinogrammes. Par conséquent, pour parler français, ils consultaient dans leur répertoire la langue la plus voisine, la plus similaire. Nos participants perçoivent ainsi la langue française comme une variante nouvelle de la langue de Shakespeare, des langues identiques, simplement divergentes. Cela peut s'expliquer par leurs connaissances imparfaites en français, et atteste que l'anglais est la langue la plus activée au moment d'apprendre ou d'user de la langue de Molière, du moins à ce stade d'apprentissage du FLE. De sorte que les mots anglais sont plus accessibles et surgissaient plus aisément. Ces résultats appuient les idées de Singleton (1987) et Williams & Hammarberg (1998), selon lesquelles la langue étrangère dans laquelle l'apprenant est le plus compétent peut constituer la principale source d'influence translinguistique. Ils ressemblent également à ceux de Kim (2013), qui montrent que les apprenants coréens se basent sur leurs connaissances textuelles en anglais pour apprendre le français.

Un autre facteur plausible est le rôle valorisant de la connaissance de l'anglais dont la maîtrise, tout au moins approximative, est conçue comme un passeport pour l'emploi, un moyen de s'accorder de meilleures chances d'insertion socio-économique. Nos résultats sont différents de ceux de Bouvy (2000) et de Leung (2006). Rappelons que pour ces deux auteurs, l'interférence peut se produire uniquement, ou principalement, de la L1 à la troisième langue (L3). Par contre, nos résultats coïncident avec ceux de Flynn, Vinnitskaya & Foley (2004) selon lesquels les propriétés à la fois de la L1 et de la L2 peuvent se transférer à la L3.

Nos résultats suggèrent également qu'à certains stades de l'acquisition multilingue, les apprenants se servent de toutes les langues connues en leur attribuant des rôles divers. Ils mélangent souvent les structures de leur répertoire plurilingue en cherchant à exploiter surtout les ressources de la langue qu'ils jugent plus proche de la langue cible. Ainsi, ce qui importe n'est pas l'ordre d'acquisition des langues en présence, mais plutôt, que la langue (L1 ou L2) soit structurellement proche de la L3, ou perçu comme étant structurellement proche d'elle (de Angelis & Selinker 2001; Cenoz 2003b; Singleton & O'Laoire 2006 ; Foote 2009; Montrul, Dias & Santos 2011; Anderssen & Bentzen 2013), ainsi que le statut de la langue étrangère dans le pays. En outre, la créativité de nos sujets indique qu'ils ont très bien compris l'importance de l'intercompréhension et ressenti les similitudes structurelles et lexicales entre les deux langues européennes.

En résumé, la L1 aurait donc, un niveau d'activation plus bas et serait alors moins accessible au moment d'apprendre la langue française, du moins au début de l'apprentissage. En conséquence, on pourrait suggérer, dans le contexte taïwanais, que l'anglais pourrait servir de base pour apprendre la langue française, voire les langues romanes. Cette prise de position s'explique de multiples manières. D'abord, les facteurs contextuels, le

statut de l'anglais à Taiwan, et le fait que les apprenants ont souvent un niveau avancé en anglais. De plus, ce dernier est la première langue étrangère occidentale apprise dans le contexte d'enseignement formel ; autrement dit, l'anglais tient la place de représentant des langues occidentales, surtout du point de vue grammatical, orthographique, voire lexical. Par conséquent, ils le perçoivent comme un procédé logique et infaillible à l'apprentissage des autres langues européennes.

Outre cela, les pratiques pédagogiques actuelles en classe de langues étrangères privilégient l'intercompréhension, la proximité linguistique : le cas des initiatives européennes en faveur de l'enseignement des langues avec les programmes Galatea, Galanet, Eurom 4, EuroCom, InterCompréhension Européenne (ICE), etc. L'anglais peut donc être bénéfique pour l'acquisition du FLE, car, quoiqu'il soit classé parmi les langues germaniques, il existe une proximité entre les deux langues. Celles-ci possèdent un grand nombre de traits de ressemblance. Nous en prenons pour preuve leur proximité géographique, leur proximité lexicale qui est solidement ancrée dans l'histoire, la similitude de leurs alphabets, une structure de base similaire (SVO, sujet verbe objet), et les emprunts réciproques entre les deux langues sont assez considérables. À titre d'exemple, selon Robert (2008), les deux tiers du vocabulaire anglais proviennent du français ou du latin. Quant à Treps (2009), elle a identifié plus de 3000 mots français qui sont allés enrichir l'anglais. De plus, les observations de l'ICE ont rapporté une possible intercompréhension entre les anglophones et les francophones. Cela justifie, partiellement bien sûr, l'activation des connaissances lexicales, morphosyntaxiques, phonologiques, etc., de l'anglais de la part de nos participants dans la production en français, ainsi que les résultats du deuxième questionnaire. Toutefois, ces ressemblances de forme et de sens peuvent faciliter l'apprentissage de langues, comme le prouve l'étude de Hall et al. (2009).

Eu égard à ce qui précède, l'on peut dégager l'idée que, l'anglais et le français présentent des propriétés linguistiques qui peuvent en faire des alliées à Taiwan, et de surcroît elles peuvent être des facteurs de simplification, de facilitation de l'apprentissage du français chez les apprenants taïwanais, surtout chez les débutants. Dans la réalité, le passage du sinogramme à l'alphabet latin (et même vice versa) est dur, si bien que, l'anglais rassure nos apprenants-informateurs, les sécurise et les aide à fixer les structures des mots, le vocabulaire, etc. Toutefois, si judicieuse soit l'utilisation de la langue anglaise comme langue de référence, elle n'est pas exempte de problèmes : l'éloignement phonique, les différences prosodiques entre les deux langues, les possibles confusions dans les sons, l'orthographe, les faux-amis, l'anglicisme, et ainsi de suite. Pour cela, il nous semble indispensable une didactique de l'intercompréhension au delà des familles de langues, une certaine métalinguistique contrastive qui engage de prime abord tout le passé linguistique ou grammatical des apprenants taïwanais. On peut mettre à profit la proximité de l'anglais et du français en cherchant à équilibrer aussi bien leurs similitudes que leurs divergences, sans pour autant opter pour une méthode radicale.

Pour pousser encore plus loin, institutionnellement, il est tout à fait possible d'adapter aussi le Cadre européen commun de référence (CECR) aux langues occidentales, notamment le français, à Taiwan, compte tenu de sa plasticité, sa souplesse et son ouverture: on peut lui apporter des modifications qui tiendraient compte des traditions et des cultures éducatives du pays. D'ailleurs, les exemples ne manquent pas, passés ou contemporains, d'outils similaires au Cadre qui ont été adaptés à de nouveaux contextes. Le CECR pourrait fournir une base commune aux divers acteurs de l'éducation, à savoir les enseignants, les apprenants, les

formateurs d'enseignants, les concepteurs de programmes et auteurs, etc., pour ce qui a trait au clivage de niveau (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 et C2), la programmation et les contenus grammaticaux exigés pour chaque niveau. L'évaluation des apprenants taiwanais pourrait s'établir en fonction de ces six niveaux. Cela favoriserait entres autres, la mobilité aussi bien éducative que professionnelle des apprenants taïwanais, voire la pleine reconnaissance internationale de leur diplôme. De même, ils pourront ainsi situer leur niveau conformément à des critères internationaux. Cependant, une contextualisation par rapport aux publics taiwanais, et la prise en compte des réalités sociolinguistique et géographique de l'île s'avèrent nécessaire. La certification pourrait relever de la responsabilité des enseignants francophones et taiwanais chargés de l'enseignement du FLE.

L'idée que Taiwan gagnerait à adapter le CECR est aussi renforcée par le fait que cette adaptation est déjà dans les mœurs pédagogiques grâce aux diplômes et certifications calés sur le Cadre comme le TCF (Test de Connaissance du Français), le DELF (Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française), le DALF (Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française), et autres. De plus, cet outil est aussi le point de référence de certains manuels et méthodes utilisés dans les centres d'enseignement. On pourrait donc s'appuyer sur son référentiel pour l´élaboration des programmes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage du FLE, pour l'organisation de la certification, pour les démarches d'évaluation, voire pour la mise en place d'un auto-apprentissage. Toutefois, on doit veiller à ce que les tests valorisent les différences culturelles, tiennent compte de la distance culturelle et/ou intègrent les expériences, les systèmes culturels taiwanais ; car plusieurs candidats auxdits diplômes ont récriminé l'absence de données issues de leur environnement personnel : un certain nombre d'items ne cadrent pas du tout avec leurs us et coutumes ni avec les réalités de leur milieu, et qui pis est, ils invoquent parfois des références culturelles francophones que les étudiants sinophones ignorent.

L'approche actionnelle préconisée pourrait favoriser l'autonomie des apprenants taiwanais et elle pourrait développer chez eux un esprit créatif, leur permettant d'avoir un esprit critique (et non pas de critique). Cette autonomie peut constituer une source de motivation renouvelée et peut leur permettre d'opérer avec leur propre style cognitif, d'évoluer à leur propre rythme en utilisant des stratégies, des matériaux, des ressources qui leur semblent plus efficaces, plus utiles et/ou plus motivants. Qui plus est, elle pourrait les aider à poursuivre, à affiner l'apprentissage du FLE, voire les préparer à un apprentissage tout au long de la vie.

La mise en place de tâche pourrait s'inspirer des orientations du CECR. En général, les apprenants taïwanais aiment travailler en équipe et détestent les évaluations sur tables. Le Cadre pourrait présenter ainsi de nombreux atouts, dans la mesure où il préconise des stratégies d'apprentissage qui mettent en jeu la dynamique de groupe : il encourage les activités d'interaction, de réception, de médiations (traduction, interprétariat, résumé de textes, etc.), les savoirs métalinguistiques et métatextuels. Ces différentes stratégies favoriseraient l'épanouissement des apprenants taiwanais et leur donneraient une plus grande confiance en eux-mêmes. En outre, les compétences linguistiques, sociolinguistiques, pragmatiques ainsi que la variété des discours sont prises en compte. Les itinéraires de découverte (IDD), qui font appel à des compétences individuelles, pourraient permettre aux apprenants de travailler en équipe, de s'entraider, etc.

La prise en considération des compétences générales individuelles de l'acteur social peut permettre aux apprenants taiwanais de mieux comprendre la langue française et cultures francophones. Ils peuvent tirer parti

des capitaux linguistiques et culturels existants, c'est-à-dire, qu'ils pourront faire appel aux compétences acquises auparavant, leurs propres expériences, celles de leurs condisciples, leurs propres imaginations, pour réaliser toutes sortes de tâches. Par exemple, ils peuvent se servir des autres langues qu'ils connaissent (ici, l'anglais et le mandarin) pour découvrir mieux et plus vite la langue française, la nouvelle langue. L'enseignant pourrait ainsi exploiter des ressources authentiques, des supports filmiques, faire appel à des activités ludiques et musicales (populariser les karaokés en français), rendre les apprenants conscients de cette grande accessibilité des ressources, bref leur doter d'instruments et de méthodes leur permettant d'apprendre également en dehors de l'école, car cette dernière n'est pas la seule dispensatrice de savoirs. On peut aussi apprendre les langues ailleurs que dans les contextes guidés. Cela permettrait l'appropriation de certains éléments linguistiques et culturels fluctuants qui ne sont guère représentés dans les manuels. En outre, on tient compte de la grammaire de l'oral et on prend les erreurs comme un outil pour enseigner.

Pour ce qui est des compétences communicatives langagières, le fait que le CECR soit favorable à la reconnaissance de compétences partielles, peut permettre aux apprenants taïwanais de se départir de la peur de parler ou de « perdre la face ». Le fait de savoir que le mélange de code est normal, utile et transitoire les sécurise, les encourage à aller loin dans l'apprentissage du FLE et leur donne une motivation supplémentaire. Comme le niveau de compétence attendu n'est plus lié à des ambitions perfectionnistes, ils seront ravis de leurs connaissances imparfaites en langue française, dans la mesure où ils sauront désormais qu'on a plus nécessairement besoin d'être un apprenant omniscient, qui sait tout et peut parler comme un locuteur natif de la langue cible. Ce qui va compter plus que tout c'est la compréhensibilité et non (toujours) l'exactitude en cours. Cette nouvelle approche permet aux enseignants de prendre en considération, par exemple, les ressemblances et les différences importantes entre le français, le chinois mandarin et l'anglais au niveau de la phonétique et de la phonologie ; et de ne plus considérer les erreurs comme des «péchés» à extirper. Cela consoliderait les connaissances qu'ils ont dans les différentes langues de leur répertoire linguistique. D'ailleurs, comme le soulignaient si bien Coste, Moore et Zarate (1998:41-42), «les compétences partielles ne sont ni rudimentaires ni incomplètes ni approximatives. Bien au contraire, la concentration sur un objectif apparemment particularisé peut développer des savoirs, savoir-faire, cultiver des stratégies, travailler des modes d'apprentissage qui n'auraient pas été sollicités aussi intensément et aussi finement si l'objectif avait été plus global.»

Par ailleurs, on pourrait s'inspirer des portfolios, ces outils d'autoévaluation de l'apprenant, pour leur permettre de réfléchir sur leur apprentissage ainsi que d'être en contact avec la langue française dans et hors de l'école. Pour cela, il faudra tenir compte de leurs besoins spécifiques et de leurs motivations.

La prise en compte de l'anglais comme langue de référence, constitue aujourd'hui, avec peut-être, l'enseignement précoce du français ou des langues romanes, une des voies privilégiées pour améliorer les compétences des apprenants sinophones. Dans la même veine, la contextualisation de certaines orientations du CECR, la prise en considération de leurs habitudes traditionnelles, de leurs traditions éducatives et de leurs besoins, les échanges bilatéraux d'assistants de langue avec les pays francophones, l'élaboration de manuels d'apprentissage avec la collaboration des enseignants francophones et sinophones, l'association des TIC pourraient apporter une contribution significative à la qualité de l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues romanes en Asie et à Taiwan en particulier.

6. Conclusion

Le présent travail a examiné le rôle que jouent les langues chinoise et anglaise dans l'apprentissage du français chez des apprenants universitaires taïwanais. Dans le cadre sociolinguistique de notre étude, nous avons montré le caractère particulièrement privilégié de la langue anglaise. Les résultats ont montré que les apprenants, à ce stade, se basent très peu sur leur L1 pour acquérir la langue française. Par contre, ils mettent en lumière le rôle prééminent de l'anglais dans l'apprentissage du français, montrant que la proximité linguistique (voire la psychotypologie) a plus de poids que l'ordre d'acquisition des langues et que les phénomènes d'influence translinguistique ne se limitent pas à la seule L1. Notre hypothèse de départ est donc confirmée et en appelle à une didactique contextualisée de la langue française incluant le fait que l'anglais, à Taiwan, n'est pas une langue étrangère comme les autres et qu'il est proche du français. En conclusion, dans le contexte taïwanais, l'anglais représente la langue alternative, la langue passerelle idéale vers le français, voire vers les langues romanes, pour que les apprenants profitent et jouissent des tendances actuelles de la pratique éducative en milieu plurilingue. Le Cadre contextualisé pourrait également offrir un grand potentiel pédagogique. Il est en mesure d'apporter un appui efficient à la réalisation de référentiels de compétence, il pourrait fournir des pistes pour la conception des programmes d'enseignement, des activités, l'évaluation des acquis des apprenants, le traitement de l'erreur, etc.

La présente contribution, de caractère exploratoire, ne prétend pas épuiser l'ensemble des questions soulevées par l'analyse de notre corpus. Nous avons seulement voulu souligner l'importance que revêt la connaissance de l'anglais dans le contexte taïwanais, et nous avons suggéré quelques pistes de remédiation pour améliorer les compétences linguistiques des apprenants taïwanais de FLE. Mais il est possible que certaines réalités aient échappé à l'analyse. En d'autres termes, il sera judicieux à l'avenir, par exemple, de travailler avec un échantillon plus représentatif, d'exploiter aussi des textes écrits, de réexaminer de manière détaillée les résultats et conclusions.

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Encuentro
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LISTENING: THE MOST DIFFICULT SKILL TO TEACH

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Abstract

With listening skills usually requiring a considerably long period of time to acquire, normally involving the student experiencing a variety of emotions ranging from depression and frustration through to exhilaration and pride, teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks that a teacher faces. The following article evaluates contemporary research with the aim of dissecting and discussing the reasons why the teaching of listening skills seems to be so complex and consequently intends to report upon possible suggestions for improving listening competence in the second language (L2) classroom. Through the consideration of the difficulties encountered when undergoing listening, as well as the evaluation of various strategies and exercises suggested to facilitate the acquisition of listening skills, such as *Dictogloss, Listening from the middle* and *Discovery Learning,* this research highlights the important place that the teaching of listening strategies should be ever increasingly assuming in the modern foreign language classroom.

Key words: teaching, listening skills, modern foreign languages, Dictogloss, Listening from the middle, Discovery Learning

Resumen

La adquisición de la comprensión auditiva lleva mucho tiempo y normalmente somete al estudiante a una gran variedad de emociones, desde la depresión y la frustración hasta la alegría y el orgullo, por lo cuál es la enseñanza de la comprensión auditiva una de las tareas que entraña más dificultad para un profesor. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo evaluar estudios recientes sobre el tema con el fin de por una parte examinar y analizar las razones por las que la enseñanza de la comprensión auditiva suele ser tan compleja, a la vez que, por otra, proponer sugerencias para mejorar la comprensión auditiva en una lengua extranjera. Al tener en consideración las dificultades con las que nos encontramos cuando escuchamos una lengua extranjera, así como la evaluación de una variedad de estrategias y de ejercicios sugeridos para facilitar la adquisición de las destrezas de comprensión auditiva, como el *Dictogloss, Listening from the Middle* and *Discovery Learning*, este trabajo destaca el papel importante que la enseñanza de las competencias de comprensión auditiva deberá tener cada vez más en las aulas de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras claves: la enseñanza, las competencias de escuchar, lenguas extranjeras, Dictogloss, Listening from the middle, Discovery learning.

1. The forgotten skill

It seems that, for a long time, the skill of listening didn't receive adequate acknowledgement as a skill in its own right, but rather was long "regarded as a passive skill, [...] an ability that would develop without assistance" (Osada 2004:53). Such lack of regard for developing listening skills may seem quite absurd when according to Burley-Allen (in Flowerdew and Miller 2005:22-23) more than forty percent of our daily communication time is spent on listening, with thirty-five percent being dedicated to speaking, sixteen percent devoted to reading and only nine percent of our daily communication being occupied by writing. It was only really at the turn of the 1970s that listening comprehension began to be explored (Osada 2004:53), conducing to a shift in listening skills being viewed as a passive skill to being viewed as elements which students should actively acquire. However, with this newly found accreditation having only been proportioned very late on in comparison to the other three standardised language skills (reading, writing and

speaking), listening skills have been rendered the "least researched of all four language skills" (Vandergrift 2007:291). This lack of research means that listening "remains one of the least understood processes" (Osada 2004:53), making the effective teaching of these skills a somewhat grey area, subjecting it to often being viewed as a "somewhat neglected and poorly taught aspect of English" (Osada 2004:57). Furthermore, the very complex nature of the activity of listening also contributes to the teaching of such skills being a rather challenging affair indeed.

1.1 Difficulties encountered when undergoing listening.

To understand better the difficulties in teaching listening, we should begin by identifying the difficulties the student faces when undergoing listening. One obvious obstacle is the fact that "the pronunciation of words may also differ greatly from the way they appear in print" (Bloomfield et al 2010:3). With the acoustics of the spoken language often varying dramatically to the form of the written language, the identification of the words that constitute the oral discourse could prove to be problematic for the student. Likewise, "listeners, unlike readers, do not have the luxury of regular spaces that signal where words begin or end" (Vandergrift 2007:296), meaning that in addition to trying to recognise the words in spite of their unfamiliar pronunciation, students are also trying to decipher which linguistic unit belongs to which word. In addition to pronunciation and the identification of word boundaries, prosodic characteristics of spoken discourse, such as where the stress falls, weak forms and strong forms of words and intonation, also influence the understanding of the oral passage. Furthermore, spoken discourse rarely presents consistently complete sentences, but instead short phrases or clusters loosely strung together (Osada 2004; Field, 2008), in which mispronunciation, hesitation, the rephrasing of utterances, repetition and even the losing track of what is wanting to be said (Field 2008) all play a role in the verbal interaction. Another point to be considered is that the "vocabulary and grammar also tend to be far more colloquial and much less formal" (Osada 2004:59) than what the student may be accustomed to, making for potential confusion should their vocabulary knowledge not be familiar with such expressions, as "an obvious factor that can influence comprehension of a spoken passage is the overlap between the listener's vocabulary knowledge and the vocabulary of the passage" (Bloomfield et al 2010:12).

Another issue to take into account is that "oral texts exist in real time and need to be processed quickly; when the text is over, only a mental representation remains" (Vandergrift 2004:18). Unlike reading, listening requires instantaneous processing with little or no option to access the spoken input again, making the skill arguably more complex than, for example, reading. Also, "in most cases, listeners must process the text at a speed determined by speakers, which is generally quite fast" (Osada 2004:58), meaning that the listeners can't normally control the speed at which they must process the delivered discourse. Therefore, the pressure to combat all the structural and grammatical obstacles when deciphering the message of a piece of spoken discourse, combined with, as Celce-Murcia 1995 (in Osada 2004:56) suggests, the fact that students accomplish all this in real time as the message reveals itself makes listening complex, dynamic and fragile.

Sociolinguistic elements of listening, such as the student's cultural background and the student's knowledge of the cultural background of the foreign language can also play a significant part in the student's comprehension of the verbal discourse. As much as culturally-centred vocabulary may impede comprehension, a general understanding of the country's culture and history can also help to avoid conversational impasses. For example, should a Spanish learner be talking to a native and a commentrelating to the Franco era is introduced, a basic knowledge of the main themes of the historical period should help the

learner to make predictions about the content of the spoken discourse, which in turn can effectively aid understanding in the case of any imperfections in the student's reception of the dialogue. To conclude, the concept that "listeners use pragmatic knowledge, which is often culturally bound, to make inferences and determine the speaker's implied meaning" (Vandergrift 2007:298) seems to be a fairly common belief amongst pedagogues, meaning that this aspect should also be considered by the teacher when teaching listening.

In connection to cultural background, regional accents can also affect the spoken message being understood by the recipient, with familiar accents being "easier to understand than unfamiliar accents" (Bloomfield 2010: ii). With most languages, although undeniably some more than others, offering a variety of different dialects, this linguistic feature should also be taken into account when assessing the difficulties of achieving success in listening in a foreign language.

All of the aforementioned factors contribute towards the complex process that the student undergoes whilst interpreting an oral dialogue, making the activity of listening very demanding of the student, who is constantly and simultaneously dealing with multiple dynamics in order to decipher and grasp the message of the spoken discourse. The student is required to "comprehend the text as they listen to it, retain information in memory, integrate it with what follows and continually adjust their understanding of what they hear in the light of prior knowledge and incoming information. This processing imposes a heavy cognitive load on listeners" (Osada 2004:60), which can also be perceived as a factor that "causes them to lose concentration rather quickly" (Osada 2004:61); an obstacle that both student and teacher are faced with. This heavy cognitive load, produced by the natural environment in which listening occurs, in which students must instantaneously and simultaneously retain and disregard information as necessary, whilst also battling with grammatical features, the pronunciation of the spoken discourse, and the speed at which it is delivered, can also lead to anxiety on the part of the student. "Difficulties associated with rate of speech, lexical features and pronunciation are the main sources of stress" (Kurita 2012:39), meaning that teachers should both be aware of these factors and investigate these factors with the student, providing access to the necessary skill set to address potential difficulties which may stem from these obstructions. This high cognitive load, potential loss in concentration, and anxiety can greatly affect the student's overall success in receiving and understanding the verbal interaction, as "if a listener is anxious or in some other way distracted and unable to pay attention, it will be more difficult to accurately determine what was said" (Bloomfield et al. 2010:6).

2. Why teach listening strategies?

Having discussed the problems that the student faces when undergoing a listening exercise, and thus the associated difficulties that a teacher faces when teaching listening, a natural progression would be to examine the listening skills and strategies that the teacher should strive to develop in the student. It is widely accepted that top-down and bottom-up processes are common practice when inferring both written and verbal input. Bottom-up processes call on the student's previously learnt knowledge with reference to lexical awareness and knowledge of grammatical and syntactical aspects of the language, whereas top-down processes draw upon the student's ability to utilise background knowledge that has been gathered and stored from previous experiences to decipher meaning - essentially "it allows us to fill in – by "default" – other parts of the pattern, with related words, images and concepts" (Rost 2006:53). "Strategies are not isolated

actions, but rather a process of orchestrating more than one action to accomplish an L2 task" (Anderson 2005:757), therefore learners are believed to use both bottom-up processes and top-down processes when deciphering a message and "a key issue for the teaching and testing of L2 listening skills is the relationship between top and bottom" (Lynch 2006:92). Through making students aware of these strategies, they can "be trained to listen for *any* word they might recognise and then to guess beyond it" (Mendelsohn 2006:84), which immediately gives them more options, or rather more opportunity for success, than a student who hasn't been taught these skills and so listens to a verbal passage on a very unextensive and monotonal level. These cognitive strategies are also very closely involved with metacognitive regulation, the monitoring and controlling of one's metacognition, which could be described as the awareness of one's own ability to acquire knowledge. ""Metacognition" is often simply defined as "thinking about thinking"" (Livingston 1997). Metacognition has further been categorised to include metacognitive knowledge, which can be described as knowing your abilities, for example a child's belief that she is better at arithmetic than her friends, and metacognitive experience, which can be depicted as consciously identifying affective experiences, such as the sudden feeling of not understanding something another person has just said (Flavell 1979:906). "Understanding and controlling cognitive processes may be one of the most essential skills that classroom teachers can develop in themselves and the students with whom they work" (Anderson 2005:767), ergo a solid understanding of these metacognitive processes can help teachers to maximise on the student's acquisition of listening skills such as the ability to use bottom-up and top-down processes when decoding oral input, as they can guide the student into being aware of how they acquire information. Anderson (2005) echoes this previous sentiment by concluding that "the metacognitive strategies play a more significant role because once a learner understands how to regulate his or her own learning through the use of strategies, language acquisition should proceed at a faster rate" (Anderson 2005:766).

In continuation to the above point, it would therefore be logical to assume that teachers should "recognize that they have to concentrate on the listening process rather than the listening test results" (Othman and Vanathas 2004:31). "This shifts the emphasis of listening practice from product to process and the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the student, thereby helping students become self-regulated learners" (Vandergrift 2002). By guiding students towards independently recognising the tools available to aid them in the decoding of a message, students can begin to question and experiment with their own listening process, fine-tuning their reactions to oral input in order to maximise upon the level of comprehension gained.

However, the efficacy of current teaching materials to effectively train students in the technicalities behind the listening process seems to be a rather dubious matter. "Textbooks are in fact not sufficiently applying the theoretical findings [of current research]" (Mendelsohn 1998:95), with most doing "very little to develop metacognitive knowledge through raising learners' consciousness of listening processes. [Therefore,] It is imperative [for teachers] to teach students **how** to listen" (Vandergrift 2002) through raising students awareness of listening strategies.

3. Raising strategy awareness in the modern foreign language classroom

Strategy awareness can be promoted "by asking students to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used. Group or class discussions on the approach taken by students can also stimulate reflection and valuable

evaluation" (Vandergrift 1997:406). During these discussions, teachers should heavily focus on encouraging students "to share individual routes leading to success; e.g. how someone guessed (inference) the meaning of a certain word or how someone modified a particular strategy" (Vandergrift 2002). It is then crucial to further support this ever-developing awareness of listening strategies through offering structured practice, where the focus is "on the *process* as well as the product of listening [...] [, thereby] help[ing] students to reflect on their learning and [...] encourag[~~e~~][ing] them to consciously adjust their strategies" (Vandergrift 1997:406). Madden (2008) describes one strategy-training activity which he calls *Listening from the Middle* and attributes to the ideas of Mendelsohn (1994, 1995) and Anderson and Lynch (1998) (In Madden 2008). This activity aims to expand upon students' top-down processing-skills, by getting students to listen to a recorded piece of authentic conversation from the middle and use referential clues from the discourse and background noise to infer information regarding its setting, context, mood and relationship between the interlocutors. Each of these pieces of information can act as indicators to trigger background knowledge. For example, should the setting be identified as one of a school, and the relationship as one between a teacher and a student, previous experience of typical language and conversational subjects that are presented in an academic setting could help students to infer any impasses in the spoken dialogue.

4. Teaching culture to enrich background knowledge

Regarding the background knowledge of the student, it is widely accepted that "language carries [...] cultural information and it reflects the substantial and particular ways of thinking of that people" (Hayati 2009:144). "An important requirement, then, for learning spoken English, is the acquisition of cultural knowledge" (Hayati 2009:144) and as a consequence "there is now, an emphasis in modern language teaching on cultural knowledge as a basis for language learning" (Hayati 2009:144). Teachers should therefore embrace the target language's culture and include culturally-infused information as part of the course criteria, as "the presence of cultural references is something inherent in any piece of discourse [...] thus listeners' background knowledge of those cultural aspects will help them construct its meaning as well as acknowledge differences between their own culture and that of the target language so that possible misunderstandings can be avoided" (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006:39). That said, choosing the cultural information to include when teaching English can be deemed quite an over-whelming task in comparison to when teaching certain other languages. "The language of Bulgaria belongs to Bulgarian, the language of Dutch belongs to the Netherlands; but the language of English does not belong to Britain any more" (Hayati 2009:150), meaning that teachers must also be acute to the fact that cultural diversity amongst English speaking countries can also play a role when dealing with culturally-specific schemata. Teachers should be encouraged to teach cultural aspects of the language not in spite of but alongside this cultural diversity, "tackling cultural issues as essential aspects that influence listeners' interpretation of what they are hearing" (Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2006:39). Through an enriched knowledge of the target language culture, top-down processing during comprehension exercises can be enhanced, allowing for greater success in L2 listening. In a study carried out by Bacon (1992) which investigated strategy use amongst almost 1000 university level students of Spanish, it was found that "effective listeners related what they heard to both personal experience and their knowledge of the world" (Bacon 1992:162), thus further consolidating the importance of cultural knowledge in both developing top-down processing and also encouraging progression in L2 listening as a whole.

5. Top-down processing skills vs Bottom-Up processing skills

"While some studies have found that less-skilled readers/listeners are deficient in top-down processing skills, others have contradicted this, citing evidence that, in fact, less-skilled readers/listeners lack bottom-up processing skills" (Tsui and Fullilove 1998:433). Top-down processing skills seem to be a dominant tool when discussing how to improve learners' listening strategies, however arguments for a more fundamental focus on bottom-up processing skills have also emerged. Students will, undeniably, reach a level in the target language which requires a greater element of accuracy in the comprehension of an oral text than inferential top-down processing skills will be able to offer. "Top-down processing is used by all listeners, it is not the ideal, and we should keep in mind that the learners' ultimate aim is to rely less on contextual guesswork, and more on hearing what was actually said. Current EFL teaching has tended to overlook this point." (Wilson 2003:336). One activity that has been developed in order to address this point is a text reconstruction exercise called *Dichtogloss*. Students listen several times to an oral passage, making notes throughout to which they can refer to in the consequent phase, which is one of reconstructing the passage to as close a likeness to the original text as possible. The objective of this exercise is "to demonstrate the guesswork involved in listening and encourage students to adjust their strategies—those who are 'risk-avoiders' should make more use of contextual knowledge, and those who are 'risk-takers' should learn to check their hypotheses more carefully." (Wilson 2003:337) This idea was then adapted to give more credence to the identification of students' listening difficulties, giving birth to the concept of *Discovery Listening.* The first two steps of *Discovery Learning* are practically identical to the *Dichtogloss* process. The first stage – the Listening stage – requires the students to listen once to a complete passage without taking notes, followed by a self-assessment of their level of comprehension, before listening to the passage twice more whilst taking notes. The second stage –the Reconstruction stage– requires groups of students to create as accurate a reconstruction of the text as possible. An additional third stage was then added –the Discovery stage– in order to better highlight the difficulties the students faced during the two preceding stages. In the Discovery stage, students "a. compare their text with the original, and attempt to classify the causes of mistakes; b. assess the relative importance of their errors; c. listen again without reading the text, and assess their performance" (Wilson 2003:337). As a result, it is strongly argued that both *Dichtogloss* and *Discovery Learning* seem to successfully "indicate just how difficult top-down processing can be when bottom-up processing has been inadequate" (Wilson 2003:338), thus bringing the importance of bottom-up processing competences largely into the focal point.

6. Conclusion

First, after examining the linguistic features (pronunciation, word boundaries, intonation, sentence and word stress, etc.), the cultural features (cultural background both of the student and the language, regional accents, etc.) and the psychological features (bottom-up and top-down processes, metacognition, metacognitive regulation, metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, etc.) of the activity of listening, I would concur with Alicia Martinez-Flor and Esther Usó-Juan when they say that "the complexity involved in how these factors affect the listening comprehension act has made the teaching of this particular skill an arduous task" (Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2006:40). I would agree with this statement on two levels. First, on the fact that the effective teaching of listening skills, taking into account the intricacy of these skills, could seem like a rather mammoth, even daunting task. Secondly, because identifying the root of misunderstandings in

listening comprehension could prove to be problematic, due to the wide scope of strategies used and the numerous factors involved in deciphering a verbal message. This sentiment is reflected by Lynch (2006), who states that "the multiplicity of the sources that we normally use to achieve understanding can make it hard to identify which of the many levels is the source of a current problem – for the teacher, as well as the learners" (Lynch 2006:95). Due to this "complexity that underlies this process of listening comprehension, it has been considered the most difficult skill to learn out of the four skills" (Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2006:29), which would lead me to conclude that this complexity would also make listening the most difficult skill to teach.

Secondly, the importance of strategy awareness was discussed and various exercises (*Listening from the Middle, Dichtogloss* and *Discovery Learning)* were described as suggestions that could potentially be simulated, or adapted, and used to form a part of a teacher's blueprint when addressing the effective teaching of both top-down and bottom-up listening strategies. In addition to this, the relevance of cultural background knowledge was considered and its unfaltering inclusion in any language curricula was strongly argued for. Therefore, I would have to first conclude that, "culture and language are inexorably linked" (Hayati 2009:150) and as such should be taught in unison; and secondly, and more focally, I would wish to emphasise that in order for the comparatively poorly researched area of L2 listening to continue advancing with the momentum it has gathered in recent years, "L2 teachers need to know how to teach effective strategies and provide practical exercises" (Aponte-de-Hanna 2012) in order to aid the students towards the successful selection and application of said strategies, with the ultimate, united goal being to transform the students of today into strategy-savvy, independent linguists.

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