

INGLÉS

Beatriz BURGUI ARRONDO

**ORAL PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION
WITH COMMUNICATIVE TASKS IN THE
CLASSROOM**

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**Grado en Maestro de Educación Primaria /
*Lehen Hezkuntzako Irakasleen Gradua***

Grado en Maestro en Educación Primaria

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Preámbulo

El Real Decreto 1393/2007, de 29 de octubre, modificado por el Real Decreto 861/2010, establece en el Capítulo III, dedicado a las enseñanzas oficiales de Grado, que “estas enseñanzas concluirán con la elaboración y defensa de un Trabajo Fin de Grado [...] El Trabajo Fin de Grado tendrá entre 6 y 30 créditos, deberá realizarse en la fase final del plan de estudios y estar orientado a la evaluación de competencias asociadas al título”.

El Grado en Maestro en Educación Primaria por la Universidad Pública de Navarra tiene una extensión de 12 ECTS, según la memoria del título verificada por la ANECA. El título está regido por la *Orden ECI/3857/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se establecen los requisitos para la verificación de los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria*; con la aplicación, con carácter subsidiario, del reglamento de Trabajos Fin de Grado, aprobado por el Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad el 12 de marzo de 2013.

Todos los planes de estudios de Maestro en Educación Primaria se estructuran, según la Orden ECI/3857/2007, en tres grandes módulos: uno, *de formación básica*, donde se desarrollan los contenidos socio-psico-pedagógicos; otro, *didáctico y disciplinar*, que recoge los contenidos de las disciplinas y su didáctica; y, por último, *Practicum*, donde se describen las competencias que tendrán que adquirir los estudiantes del Grado en las prácticas escolares. En este último módulo, se enmarca el Trabajo Fin de Grado, que debe reflejar la formación adquirida a lo largo de todas las enseñanzas. Finalmente, dado que la Orden ECI/3857/2007 no concreta la distribución de los 240 ECTS necesarios para la obtención del Grado, las universidades tienen la facultad de determinar un número de créditos, estableciendo, en general, asignaturas de carácter optativo.

Así, en cumplimiento de la Orden ECI/3857/2007, es requisito necesario que en el Trabajo Fin de Grado el estudiante demuestre competencias relativas a los módulos de formación básica, didáctico-disciplinar y practicum, exigidas para todos los títulos

universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria.

En este trabajo, el módulo *de formación básica* nos ha permitido elaborar las bases tanto en el marco teórico como en la propuesta pedagógica. De esta manera, y acorde con las competencias planteadas por la ANECA y el plan de estudios del Grado de Magisterio elaborado por la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales; este trabajo se desarrolla teniendo en cuenta las bases psicológicas y el desarrollo evolutivo del alumnado de 2º de Primaria en la elaboración de una propuesta didáctica acorde con las características sociales, cognitivas y psicológicas propias de este rango de edad. A su vez, este trabajo favorece el aprendizaje social y cooperativo por medio de tareas comunicativas en las que se fomenta la interacción y cooperación entre iguales, atendiendo a la diversidad del alumnado y abogando por la inclusión del mismo a través de grupos heterogéneos de trabajo. La autonomía, motivación y creatividad del alumnado son por otra parte pilares fundamentales del trabajo quedando reflejadas en la fundamentación teórica del mismo y en las tareas comunicativas propuestas, donde los alumnos y alumnas realizan las tareas de manera autónoma, llevan a cabo una auto-evaluación de su proceso de aprendizaje y crean y diseñan una tarea comunicativa.

El módulo *didáctico y disciplinar* permite enmarcar las competencias, objetivos y contenidos propios de la etapa de Educación Primaria, tanto en la propuesta didáctica elaborada como en la fundamentación teórica del trabajo. De esta manera, el uso del lenguaje funcional como herramienta de comunicación es una base primordial en el aprendizaje de las lenguas que queda reflejada tanto en el marco teórico del aprendizaje basado en tareas como en las tareas diseñadas y desarrolladas en el aula. En este contexto, se aboga por maximizar la producción y práctica del lenguaje oral en las tareas comunicativas llevadas a cabo por las alumnas y alumnos. A sí mismo, el campo propio de la didáctica y pedagogía fundamenta el diseño de los objetivos de la propuesta pedagógica, la planificación y desarrollo de la metodología, así como la evaluación del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje y la posterior reflexión sobre los resultados obtenidos en las prácticas del aula.

Asimismo, el módulo *practicum* se concreta fundamentalmente en el diseño, desarrollo, y evaluación de la propuesta metodológica y la puesta en práctica de la misma en el contexto de un aula de 2º curso de Educación Primaria, correspondiente con el período del prácticum V del 4º curso del Grado de Magisterio de Primaria. Por ello, el diseño de las tareas es acorde con la realidad propia del aula donde se enmarca y con las habilidades, conocimientos y capacidades propias de esta etapa de Educación Primaria, que se han podido observar en el desarrollo de dicho practicum.

Por último, el módulo *optativo* correspondiente con la mención de inglés del semestre VII del Grado de Maestro de Educación Primaria, nos ha permitido la elaboración de este trabajo orientado a la enseñanza y aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa, en concreto a la producción oral e interacción en las tareas de comunicación donde el lenguaje adquiere un carácter significativo y funcional. Para desarrollar este trabajo se ha tomando como referencia el nivel C1 de inglés del marco común Europeo de referencia para las lenguas.

Por otro lado, la Orden ECI/3857/2007 establece que al finalizar el Grado, los estudiantes deben haber adquirido el nivel C1 en lengua castellana. Por ello, para demostrar esta competencia lingüística, se redactan también en esta lengua los apartados “INTRODUCCIÓN”, “ANTECEDENTES, OBJETIVOS Y CUESTIONES” y “CONCLUSIONES Y CUESTIONES ABIERTAS”, así como el preceptivo resumen que aparece en el siguiente apartado.

Resumen

Aunque a menudo descuidado en las clases de inglés, en especial en los colegios españoles de Educación Primaria, el objetivo principal de aprender una lengua es utilizarla de manera funcional y significativa para comunicarse. Con este objetivo en mente, y basado en los principios del aprendizaje basado en tareas, este trabajo presenta una propuesta pedagógica de cuatro juegos comunicativos diseñados para fomentar la autonomía e interacción oral en el alumnado. Dos de los juegos se pusieron en práctica en una clase de inglés de 27 alumnos/as de 2º de Educación Primaria y los resultados muestran claramente que los/as estudiantes son capaces de interactuar en inglés de manera autónoma, utilizando escasamente el castellano. Además, estas actividades han sido muy motivadoras para ellos/as; lo cual nos lleva a recomendar el uso de estas tareas en Educación Primaria como herramienta para promover la interacción oral y mejorar la adquisición del inglés.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje basado en tareas; tareas comunicativas; autonomía; interacción; producción oral.

Abstract

Although often neglected in EFL lessons, particularly in Spanish Primary schools, the main objective when learning a language is to use it in meaningful and functional ways in order to communicate effectively. With this aim in mind, and based on the principles of Task Based Language Teaching, this project presents a pedagogical proposal consisting of four communicative games designed to foster learners' autonomy and oral communicative interaction. Two of the games were used with 27 EFL students in the 2nd year of Primary Education and the results clearly show that children are able to interact in English autonomously and that they use their L1 (Spanish) only scarcely. In addition, the activities have been very motivating for them. All this leads us to recommend the use of this type of tasks in the Primary classroom as a tool to promote oral interaction and to enhance the acquisition of English.

Keywords: task-based language teaching; communicative tasks; autonomy; interaction; oral production.

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INTRODUCCIÓN

El aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua ha cobrado especial relevancia en el contexto español en las últimas décadas, aumentando significativamente por parte del gobierno y administraciones educativas el número de horas dedicadas a la enseñanza de ese idioma, especialmente en Educación Primaria y en Educación Infantil. Sin embargo, los esfuerzos realizados para evaluar la competencia lingüística en inglés en el alumnado español muestran resultados dispares en los distintos aspectos de la lengua y poco satisfactorios, especialmente en el caso de la expresión oral.

De cara a nuestro trabajo, nos centraremos en los resultados y evaluaciones relativas a esta última competencia, con el objetivo de contextualizar la situación actual de la producción oral de inglés en el alumnado español y de fundamentar la utilización de las tareas de comunicación como propuesta para maximizar las oportunidades de producción oral en la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua.

A lo largo de las últimas décadas, se han llevado a cabo numerosos estudios sobre la competencia lingüística, en concreto sobre la producción oral en el contexto del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. A este respecto, tomaremos como referentes los estudios que se han realizado desde los años 80 en programas de inmersión lingüística de francés en alumnado angloparlante en Canadá. Estas investigaciones muestran que tras haber dedicado varios años al aprendizaje de esta lengua, los alumnos y alumnas han alcanzado niveles muy altos en comprensión oral y escrita; pero no en expresión oral ni escrita (Genesee, 1987).

De manera similar, un Estudio Europeo de Comunicación Lingüística (EECL) llevado a cabo en 2011 en 14 países europeos, donde España ocupa el noveno puesto; muestra que respecto al aspecto oral de la lengua, el 63% del alumnado español no comprende el inglés oral al finalizar la Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria.

Podemos inferir que los resultados poco satisfactorios de la expresión oral en ambos estudios son consecuencia de dos factores: en primer lugar la dificultad que supone la producción de lenguaje o “output”, tanto a nivel escrito como oral; y en segundo lugar el escaso tiempo que se ha dedicado en el contexto escolar a la producción oral del inglés.

Por otra parte, un pequeño estudio valorativo que he llevado a cabo a través de encuestas (pueden verse en *Anexo 1 encuestas estudio valorativo*) entre el alumnado universitario de la UPNA, con una muestra de 200 alumnas y alumnos con una edad promedio de 21,8 años muestra resultados relevantes respecto a este último factor del tiempo dedicado a la práctica del lenguaje oral en inglés.

A este respecto, el 66% de los encuestados y las encuestadas afirma haber dedicado un mínimo de 10 años al aprendizaje de esta lengua; tiempo que según el 59,7% de los encuestados no se corresponde con su capacidad para comunicarse eficazmente en

esta lengua. Por otra parte, el 68,3% de los encuestados afirma que la práctica del lenguaje oral en su experiencia académica ha recibido muy poca, poca o media importancia. Suponemos que la valoración del escaso tiempo dedicado a la práctica del lenguaje oral, podría extrapolarse al contexto de la Educación Primaria, donde profesorado y alumnado podrían coincidir en que el tiempo dedicado al lenguaje oral de los alumnos y alumnas es muy limitado. Esta situación puede deberse a diversos factores, entre los que destaca el ratio profesor/a-alumno/a en Educación Primaria, con 25 alumnos y alumnas de media por clase con un margen de hasta 27; lo cual limita en gran medida la posibilidad de una interacción alumno/a-profesor/a y la capacidad de la profesora o profesor de evaluar la producción oral de sus alumnas y alumnos.

Es por ello que a lo largo de este trabajo proponemos la utilización de tareas de comunicación en el aula, donde los alumnos y alumnas tienen la necesidad de interactuar y comunicarse mediante un lenguaje funcional y significativo con el objetivo de alcanzar un propósito común. De esta manera, abogando por la realización de actividades comunicativas en grupos o en parejas, se maximiza la producción oral de inglés del alumnado, contribuyendo significativamente al proceso de aprendizaje de esta segunda lengua. La Hipótesis de la producción (*Output Hypothesis*) propuesta por Swain (1985) evidencia que efectivamente la producción del lenguaje tiene un papel significativo en el proceso de adquisición del mismo; contraria con la postura de algunos investigadores que asumían que el “output” o producción servía únicamente como evidencia de que la adquisición del lenguaje había tenido lugar (Krashen, 1985).

Con el objetivo de fomentar la producción oral en inglés mediante la utilización de tareas comunicativas en Educación Primaria, incluiremos a lo largo del trabajo un marco teórico que fundamenta esta praxis; así como una propuesta metodológica compuesta de cuatro juegos comunicativos, que puede servir como referencia y recurso didáctico en el aula de 2º de Primaria; y por último, evaluaremos y discutiremos los resultados favorables obtenidos de la implementación de dos de estos juegos durante el practicum VI en una clase de 27 alumnos y alumnas de 2º de Primaria.

1. ANTECEDENTES, OBJETIVOS Y CUESTIONES

1.1. Sentido y vinculación con el currículo de Primaria

Esta sección del trabajo tiene como objetivo fundamentar el marco teórico y la propuesta pedagógica diseñada para el área de inglés de 2º curso de Educación Primaria en base al

Decreto foral 24/ 2007, por el que se establece el currículo de las enseñanzas de Educación Primaria en la comunidad foral de Navarra. A continuación evaluaremos los aspectos relevantes de este currículo que quedan reflejados a lo largo del trabajo.

En primer lugar, en el *preámbulo* establecido en el decreto se promueven, entre otros, los siguientes principios que se han tenido en cuenta en la elaboración del trabajo: aprendizaje autónomo, expresión oral, tratamiento integrado de las lenguas y “*desarrollo de la capacidad de imaginar, emprender, realizar y evaluar proyectos individuales o colectivos con creatividad, confianza, responsabilidad y sentido crítico*”.

Respecto a los *objetivos generales de la Educación Primaria* más relevantes en este trabajo podemos señalar el hábito de trabajo individual y de equipo; y la adquisición de la competencia comunicativa en al menos una lengua extranjera, que permita al alumnado expresar y comprender mensajes sencillos y desenvolverse en situaciones cotidianas.

Respecto a las *competencias básicas* que se definen en el decreto Foral, son especialmente importantes de cara a este trabajo las competencias 1 y 8: competencia en comunicación lingüística y competencia en autonomía e iniciativa personal.

i. Competencia en comunicación lingüística

El trabajo refleja la concepción del lenguaje con un carácter comunicacional, funcional y significativo de acuerdo a lo establecido en el currículo: “*utilización del lenguaje como instrumento de comunicación oral [...] de construcción y comunicación del conocimiento*”. A su vez, acorde a la fundamentación del trabajo, también se fomenta en esta competencia la expresión e interpretación del discurso oral, el diálogo, la interacción oral, el intercambio de mensajes en situaciones comunicativas diversas y la adaptación de los mismos al contexto y la intención comunicativa.

En definitiva, el desarrollo de esta competencia está orientado al uso funcional del lenguaje en situaciones comunicativas; lo cual se promueve a través en el trabajo a través del carácter comunicativo de los juegos propuestos y la necesidad de los alumnos y alumnas de comunicarse para la consecución del mismo. *“...el desarrollo de la competencia lingüística al final de la educación obligatoria comporta el dominio de la lengua oral y escrita en múltiples contextos, y el uso funcional de, al menos, una lengua extranjera”*.

ii. *Autonomía e iniciativa personal*

Esta competencia abarca por una parte un conjunto de valores y actitudes personales como la creatividad, la autocrítica y la capacidad de aprender de los errores, entre otras; y por otra parte remite a la capacidad de planificar y elaborar proyectos, individuales o colectivos; donde disponer de habilidades sociales para relacionarse, cooperar y trabajar en equipo resultan fundamentales. *“En síntesis, la autonomía y la iniciativa personal suponen ser capaz de imaginar, emprender, desarrollar y evaluar acciones o proyectos individuales o colectivos con creatividad, confianza, responsabilidad y sentido crítico”*. Es por ello que en los juegos planteados los alumnos y alumnas deben cooperar y trabajar en grupo tanto para el desarrollo de los juegos propuestos como para la creación de otro juego, desarrollando así su capacidad creativa.

Respecto al *área de lengua inglesa*, *“el objetivo de esta materia es el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa, es decir, un conjunto de conocimientos sobre la lengua y de procedimientos de uso que son necesarios para interactuar satisfactoriamente en diferentes ámbitos sociales”*. Dentro de los conocimientos propios de esta materia, se trabajan principalmente a lo largo del trabajo los relativos al conocimiento del vocabulario, entonación, pronunciación y los tipos de interacción verbal. Respecto a las habilidades que los alumnos y alumnas deben demostrar en la realización de los juegos propuestos, destacan las siguientes propuestas en el currículo: *“habilidad para escuchar y comprender mensajes hablados en una gama apropiada de situaciones comunicativas”, “habilidad para iniciar, mantener y concluir conversaciones”, “el uso apropiado de recursos [...] para comprender o producir textos hablados”, y “habilidad para iniciar y mantener una variedad apropiada de actividades autónomas para el*

aprendizaje de una lengua”.

Por otra parte, dentro de los objetivos de esta materia en Educación Primaria, son claves para el objetivo y fundamentación de este trabajo el 1 y 2, definidos respectivamente en el currículo como: *“escuchar y comprender mensajes en interacciones verbales variadas, en lengua estándar utilizando las informaciones transmitidas por dichos textos para la realización de tareas concretas y diversas relacionadas con su experiencia”* y *“Expresarse e interactuar oralmente en situaciones sencillas y habituales que tengan un contenido y desarrollo conocido, utilizando procedimientos verbales y no verbales y adoptando una actitud respetuosa y de cooperación: expresar [...] informaciones simples sobre un tema”*. Por otra parte, también se reflejan en el trabajo aspectos propios de otros objetivos de esta materia para Educación Primaria, como la valoración de las lenguas como un medio de comunicación, la actitud receptiva e interesada en el uso de la lengua y la utilización de los conocimientos y destrezas previas con otras lenguas para una mejor adquisición de esta lengua.

En relación con los contenidos específicos de primer ciclo de Primaria aplicables a este trabajo, dentro del bloque 1. Escuchar y comprender, hablar y conversar; destacamos la *“comprensión de mensajes orales sencillos para realizar tareas en el aula”*, la *“Interacción oral en situaciones reales o simuladas a través de respuestas verbales y no verbales”*, *“el desarrollo de estrategias básicas para apoyar la expresión verbal : como el uso del contexto visual [...] y la transferencia de conocimientos previos desde la lengua que conoce, el “interés por participar oralmente en las actividades de grupo”*, la *“valoración de las lenguas como instrumento para comunicarse”*, y *“el uso de la lengua oral en tareas básicas”*. Respecto a los textos propios de este ciclo, se fomentan en nuestro trabajo las explicaciones, descripciones, y el responder preguntas a través de la conversación. Con relación a las habilidades y estrategias que se promueven en la propuesta pedagógica del trabajo destacan: *“escuchar activamente”*, *“utilizar estrategias básicas (fijarse en el contexto, ilustraciones, hacer preguntas, interpretar el lenguaje gestual...) para comprender textos orales sencillos”* y *“respetar las normas básicas que son de ayuda en los diálogos y en las conversaciones: atención, concentración, espera, turnos, adecuación de la respuesta a la intervención del*

interlocutor...". Por último, respecto al conocimiento de la lengua, es relevante el comenzar a distinguir y ordenar en los textos el nombre, adjetivo y verbo; a la hora de realizar las descripciones pertinentes en las tareas de comunicación propuestas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Speaking has traditionally been given little attention in L2 lessons where the main focus is placed in the written language; and when students are given the opportunity to practice the oral language in a second language they are drilled and evaluated by the teacher. Therefore the chances to communicate are very limited in a context where there is a ratio of approximately 25 students per teacher. An alternative to maximize the amount of time each student has available to use the target language and to create a more authentic situation in which language is used to communicate to reach a common goal, is by means of following a TBLT approach and assigning tasks to pairs or small groups of students. That is the reason why we will suggest to implement a TBLT approach and to consider tasks as a key element of the language classroom. (Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris; 2009)

Throughout this section of the project we will have a close look at the main approaches, theories and studies regarding task-based language teaching, interaction and autonomy; in order to build the basic theoretical support from which communicative tasks have been created, designed and implemented in the pedagogical proposal.

In order to so, first we will start with an introductory section about TBLT, where we will include the origins and principles of this approach, as well as studies that support its implementation in the language classroom, so that the emphasis is placed on reaching a communicative goal with a functional use of language.

Next, we will suggest the use of communicative tasks in the classroom as a tool to promote meaningful communication among learners and to foster an autonomous learning process. In this context, we will provide definitions, characteristics and a typology of tasks, so that later we will explain the tasks that have been designed in terms of the typology, main features and effects they will have on learners' production.

After that we will reflect on important factors to consider as regards the implementation of tasks in the classroom, such as the role of learners and teacher training, as paramount to the success of task implementation.

Moreover, we will reflect on the interactionist framework evaluating the role interaction plays in tasks developed through collaborative and peer work; with a focus on the communication strategies employed by students like meaning negotiation.

Finally I will explain the main current perspectives regarding autonomy, and we will suggest different degrees to gradually implement it in the language classroom, that will be later reflected on the methodological proposal.

2.2. Task-based language learning: communicative tasks

In the context of task-based language learning, a wealth of studies has explored the use of TBLT as a tool to achieve peer-peer interaction and to use the language in meaningful and communicative ways. In the following sections we concentrate on the principles of TBLT and also on the value of this type of activities to promote learner autonomy. Afterwards, we will focus on the concept of task and its main features, especially on communicative tasks and their importance regarding production and acquisition.

2.2.1. Rationale for the use of TBLT

During the past fifty years, several applied linguists and educationalists have proposed a multitude of pedagogical models and approaches that according to Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009) can be synthesized as follows:

- *Holistic versus discrete learning:*

The *discrete approach* conceives language as a complex system that must be broken down into smaller units, which need to be mastered before learners use language for functional purposes. The *holistic approach* confronts the learner with using language in functional situations, such as task performances, where they integrate different linguistic knowledge and sub-skills.

- *Teacher-centered versus learner-driven education:*

In the *teacher-centered approach* the teacher holds the main role of the learning process. They are responsible for the decision-making process according to the topics that will be covered and they occupy most of the speaking time in the classroom providing input to the students. The *learner-driven* approach focuses on the learner as an active participant of their learning process. Learners are given opportunities to determine content, select linguistic opportunities and produce output; in relation to their own internal syllabus, needs and capacities. From this approach, cooperation among students is fostered by peer interaction methodologies.

- *Communication-based versus form-focused instruction:*

Communication based instruction focuses on the understanding of meaning, whereas *form-focused instruction* emphasizes the accuracy and complexity of the linguistic forms produced by students.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, various educationalists had made the shift from teacher-centered and knowledge-oriented methodologists to more learner-driven and holistic approaches. According to educational thinkers like Dewey (1938), Vygostky (1978), Freinet (1993), and interaction researchers such as Barnes, Britton and Torbe (1986), in order to develop complex functional abilities, students should face holistic, challenging and real-life tasks; through group work and intensive interaction, with a special emphasis on autonomy.

In accordance with Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009), The *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) model of the late seventies placed an important stress on communication over form. From this perspective, language was no longer considered a set of grammatical rules, with sets of vocabulary to memorize, but rather a dynamic resource for creating meaning. Learners and their cognitive processes were highly considered regarding their learning process. However, the implementation of this model turned to maintain the knowledge-oriented structure of language and reduced the communicative framework to the last “Production” phases of lessons.

A new language learning paradigm related with CLT emerged, the *Task Based Language Teaching* (TBLT). A holistic, meaning-focused and learner-driven approach that placed communication at the heart of the teaching procedures.

From this perspective, the goal and the means of language learning has changed: “*people not only learn language in order to make functional use of it, but also by making functional use of it*” (Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John Norris, 2009: 6). For example if teachers aim their students to learn the vocabulary and structures typical of the discourse mode of description, they should confront them with functional tasks in which learners are required to provide descriptions of pictures or objects.

Along with this perspective, Breen (1984) suggested that when we place communication at the center of the curriculum the goal of that curriculum and the means begin to fuse: learners begin to communicate by communicating. The ends and the means become one and the same. In the same insight, according to Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John Norris (2009) the distinction between *syllabus*, or what is to be taught, and *methodology*, how to teach, is mixed into the same unit of analysis: *task*; with the primary focus placed on meaningful language. “*Meaningful language in the context of a task performance is the starting point, primary mechanism and final goal of this approach*” (Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John Norris, 2009: 6)

At present, debate centers on the extent to which a grammar syllabus should be included in the curriculum, some arguing that a focus on form should be an incidental activity in the communicative classroom (Long and Robinson 1998). However, as Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009) state a focus on form is also encouraged; since when form is integrated in the meaningful activity of a task performance, it may increase the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning processes.

From the outlook of David Nunan (2004) an important basis for TBLT is *experiential learning*. In this approach the starting point of the learning experience is the learner’s immediate personal experience. As learners engage in and reflect on sequences on tasks, they are actively involved while intellectual growth occurs. This approach is Oral production and interaction with communicative tasks in the classroom

based on theories from a multitude of disciplines such as social psychology, humanistic education, developmental education and cognitive theory. David Kolb (Kolb 1984) integrated these principles into his model; in which learners move from what they already know and are able to do to the incorporation of new knowledge and skills. They do this by making sense of some immediate experience, and then going beyond the immediate experience through a process of reflection and transformation.

Kohonen (1992) provides the most articulate *application of experiential learning* in language teaching. His model is characterized by the following precepts:

- Encourage the transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner.
- Encourage learners to participate actively in small, collaborative groups.
- Embrace a holistic attitude rather than a static and hierarchical attitude.
- Emphasize process rather than product, learning how to learn, self-inquiry, social and communication skills.
- Encourage self-directed rather than teacher-directed learning.
- Promote intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.

Therefore, Task-based Language Learning is encouraged to be implemented in the language classroom, since communicative knowledge is regarded as a unified system that in order to produce new language requires the learner to match choices from their linguistic repertoire to the social requirements and expectations of the communicative behavior and to meanings and ideas that they wish to share (Breen 1987).

Moreover, we make learning more efficient by exploiting the most dynamic element in the learning process: the learner's creativity (Willis 1990). Furthermore, nowadays learning as a social process is being increasingly emphasized and sociocultural theories are gaining ground. (Lantolf 2000).

As a result, we can conclude that a TBLT approach in the language classroom will advocate the implementation of communication tasks related with the experiences of

learners, using meaningful language to develop them. By doing so, we will foster learners' autonomy, creativity and interaction, considering learning a social process.

2.2.2. *The importance of production in language acquisition*

Production has been claimed to play a key role in language acquisition and the use of TBLT greatly multiplies students' changes to produce language (Ellis, 2003; Swain, 1995; Skehan, 1998).

According to Swain's *Output Hypothesis*, production causes learners to engage in syntactic processing and in doing so it promotes acquisition. Building on Swain's Output Hypothesis, Skehan (1998) distinguishes three aspects of production:

- *Fluency*: the capacity of the learner to mobilize their system to communicate meaning in real time.
- *Accuracy*: the ability of the learner to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity they have currently achieved.
- *Complexity*: the utilization of interlanguage structures that are "cutting edge", elaborate and structured.

The importance of production is supported by Skehan (1998) extending on Swain (1995), as he suggests that production has six roles:

- It serves to generate better input through the feedback that learners' efforts at production elicit
- It forces syntactic processing
- It allows learners to test out hypothesis about the target-language grammar
- It helps to automatize existing L2 knowledge
- It provides opportunities for learners to develop discourse skills
- It is important for helping learners to develop a "personal voice" by steering conversations on to topics they are interested in contributing to.
- Production provides the learners with auto-input (Schmidt and Frota 1986) in the sense that learners can attend to the "input" provided by their own productions.

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According to Rod Ellis (2003), the importance of production for acquisition is widely accepted. However, for this author, it seems to contribute indirectly, by motivating learners to attend to input; rather than directly. All in all, whether production contributes directly rather than indirectly, the role of production is crucial in task-based learning as it promotes greater control and automaticity.

2.2.3. Task typology and characteristics

Within the TBLT approach previously discussed, there are several definitions and concepts regarding *tasks* that have been proposed by different authors over the last thirty years. We will first have a look at some of these definitions, to place the focus afterwards on the features of tasks and their impact on the task typology and the language production.

Ellis defines a *pedagogical task* as follows:

“A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes”. (Ellis, 2003: 16)

Bygate provides another definition of *pedagogic task*:

“Structured, bounded, purposeful activities involving the processing of language, which learners undertake in order to learn.” (Bygate, 2006:185)

Willis considers *task* as:

“An activity which involves the use of language but in which the focus is on the outcome of the activity rather than on the language used to achieve that outcome”. (Willis, 1990: 127)

In particular, a *communication task* is a task that focuses on the exchange of meaningful information in order to reach a goal. (Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate, John M. Norris, 2009)

Skehan (1998) notes five key characteristics of a task:

- Meaning is primary.
- Learners are not given other people's meaning to repeat mechanically.
- There is a similarity and comparison with real-world activities.
- Task completion is the priority.
- Task is assessed in terms of outcome.

According to Kris Van der Branden Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009) two main characteristics of task are:

- Tasks are orientated toward *goals* that learners must achieve through talk or action.
- Participants take an active role to carry out a task, whether working alone or with other participants.

Given these definitions and characteristics of tasks, we can then infer that tasks involve a communicative use of language with a focus on meaning, where learners are free to use language structures to achieve the specific outcome of the task. Willis and Willis (2001).

i. Effects of task features and design variables

There are several task features that have an impact on the typology of the task that affect the characteristics of the language production that arises with them. We are going to describe the ones proposed by Rod Ellis (2003), and explore the extent to which they affect the learner's production.

- *Required vs. optional information exchange*

Newton (1991) showed that in tasks where the information provided to the students was split, that is not all interactants hold the same information, there

was almost double the quantity of negotiation than on tasks where the information was shared among the participants.

Along with Newton's findings, Foster (1998) proved that the amount of negotiation was greater in tasks where the information exchange was required than in tasks where the information exchange was optional. Interestingly, she also found that there was more negotiation in tasks performed in pairs than in tasks performed in groups.

However, a study carried out by Nakahama, Tyler and van Lier (2001) showed that although required information tasks resulted in more meaning negotiation exchanges, these exchanges were rather mechanical. Whereas, in conversation tasks where the information exchange was optional there was greater negotiation of global problems, interactants took longer and more complex turns, and they use greater discourse strategies, such as paraphrase.

On the whole, we can infer that split information tasks that require information exchange between pairs promote the greatest meaning negotiation, although the utterances produced by the learners are more simple and mechanic than in conversation tasks where the information exchange is optional.

- *Information gap: one-way vs. two-way tasks*

They are required information exchange tasks that differ from whether the information to be shared is held by a single person or between two or more people.

In *one-way tasks* the responsibility of completing the task successfully is sometimes only placed on the information-provider, while in *two-way tasks* all participants are required to contribute efficiently in order to complete the task.

Long (1980) studied that in *two-way tasks* there were significantly more confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests; that is more meaning negotiation than in *one-way tasks*.

Long (1989) concluded that *two way tasks* produce more negotiation work and more useful negotiation work than *one-way tasks*. However, there is no study

that demonstrates that there is any difference in learning from the use of one-way or two-way tasks.

We can conclude that two-way tasks involve the successful contribution of all learners to accomplish them; they promote more meaning negotiation than one-way tasks; although there is no significant difference in learning from the use of one-way or two-way tasks to date.

- *Task outcome: open vs. closed tasks*

Open tasks refer to tasks where participants know that there is no predetermined solution, and learners are free to decide on the solution. Examples of these are opinion gap tasks, tasks that involve making choices, debates and general discussion tasks. *Closed tasks* are tasks that require participants to reach a single, correct solution or one of a closed set of solutions. One example of these are information gap tasks.

Long (1989) promotes the use of closed tasks. He explains that closed tasks elicit more negotiation work than open tasks, as they are less likely to be given up by students if they face a challenge, whereas in open tasks there is no need for students to discuss difficult topics; nor there is the need to provide feedback. Thus, Long argues that closed-tasks require students to persevere to make themselves understood, resulting in greater precision and more language recycling, suggesting that this prompts acquisition.

However, Rod Ellis (2003) suggests that one-way tasks led to discourse characterized by longer turns encouraging accuracy and complexity.

All in all, closed tasks result in more negotiation work than open tasks, although they may be less beneficial in other aspects such as the opportunity to produce long turns.

- *Familiarity*

Another factor to take into account regarding tasks is *familiarity*, in terms of content and procedure. Regarding this variable, there are several studies that show different effects on students' production. We will include the conclusions

of a remarkable study about task familiarity carried out by Mackey, Kanganas and Oliver (2007).

It shows that on the one hand *unfamiliar tasks* in terms of content and procedure produce more clarification requests and confirmation checks than familiar ones.

On the other hand, tasks involving procedures that students are familiar with result in more opportunities to use feedback. However, tasks that are characterized by both: *familiar content and familiar procedure* show more actual use of feedback.

Consequently, different tasks characterized by familiar or unfamiliar content and procedures, have different effects on learners' performance. On the whole, unfamiliar tasks, in content and procedure, promote more meaning negotiation; whereas familiar tasks lead to more feedback.

- *Discourse mode*

Different tasks are likely to promote one kind of discourse mode than others, which will lead learners to use different linguistic forms in order to perform each task.

Duff (1986) suggests that problem-solving tasks are characterized by the discourse mode of *discussion*; whereas debates and decision-making tasks led to the discourse mode of *argumentation*; which he found to be twice as complex as the discussion one.

Newton and Kennedy (1996) suggested that tasks that require *argumentation* are more effective in promoting learner's production, while tasks that involve description are better in fostering meaning negotiation.

Bygate stated that "*the narrative tasks may be the ones that stretch the speakers more in terms of complexity of syntactic and lexical processing, whereas the argumentation tasks ... appear to push them towards less complex syntactic processing*" (Bygate, 1999: 204).

In terms of language complexity, we can infer that the discourse mode that results in the less complex language is the discussion, followed by the argument discourse, and leading to the narrative discourse as the most complex one. Regarding meaning negotiation, the discourse mode of description seems to prompt the most negotiation; while in order to promote learner's production, the best discourse mode appears to be argumentation.

- *Cognitive complexity*

Studies by Shortreed (1993), Samuda and Rounds (1993) and Poulisse (1990) evidence that tasks that are context-free and require detailed information to be communicated seem to promote more sustained interaction, more attempts to repair communication, more pushed output and greater use of communication strategies. Thus, these cognitively demanding tasks may induce acquisition.

There are also other variables regarding the design of a task that need to be taken into account to show how they affect the learners' production. However, as well as the variables previously stated, it is important to consider that they are interrelated and it is difficult to consider the effect of one independently of another, as their effects may overlap.

- *Contextual support of the input*

The input of the task is a non-verbal device (picture, map or diagram) making the learner to transfer that information orally; which can or can't be seen by them while they are communicating. This is an important distinction, as it has been proven that an input with displaced activity (in time or space) is more cognitively demanding than an input with contiguous events (here-and-now).

On the contrary, in their study Brown et al. (1984) suggested that tasks involving pictures might be easier, as they proved that the learners they investigated never gave up on tasks that provided pictorial support.

Furthermore, according to Ellis (2003) there is evidence to suggest that "here-and-now" tasks promote fluency, whereas "there-and-then" tasks seem to enhance complexity and sometimes accuracy.

As a result, we can conclude that tasks with pictorial support are easier than the ones without it. Similarly, “here-and- now” tasks seem to be easier and promote fluency, while “there-and-then” appear to be more complex and enhance accuracy.

- *Number of elements in a task*

Robinson (2001) compared learner’s performance on two map tasks with different amount of information provided. He reported that learners produced more fluent language when working with the simple map, and lexically more complex language with the simple one. However, the maps also differ in another variable: topic familiarity, making it impossible to determine the relative effects of the two variables on learner production.

- *The inherent structure of the outcome*

Structure refers to whether the product the task elicits has to be creatively constructed or it exists in some kind of pre-structured form.

A study by Skehan and Foster (1997) showed that structured tasks resulted in greater fluency, although it didn’t seem to have an effect on complexity.

However, it should be recognized that it is complicated to analyze the effect of this variable on its own, as it is also affected by the relationship between the task content and the learners’ background knowledge; as well as the opportunity to plan.

Therefore, it can be inferred that different task variables are more likely to promote one aspect of the learners’ performance than others, and that the factors that have an impact on production are different from those that prompt meaning negotiation.

On the one hand, in order to elicit the most *complex language*, the input: ought not to provide contextual support, contain many elements where the information is shared rather than split, and where the outcome is open. Moreover, the narrative discourse seems to contribute to produce more complex language.

On the other hand, if the goal to achieve is to promote *fluency*, tasks should provide contextual support, have familiar topics, include a single demand, be closed and have an inherent structure.

As a whole, different kinds of tasks can potentially contribute in different ways to acquisition.

ii. Task typology

According to the different task features and variables previously described, we are going to include a typology of five tasks proposed by Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009).

- *Jigsaw:*

A task in which interactants hold portions of a totality of information which must be exchanged and manipulated, as they work together toward a single task goal. Each participant requests and supplies information related to task completion and is engaged in a relationship of mutual request and supply. Since no participant is given all the information needed to complete the task, the flow of communication is two-way, and interaction is absolutely required; as they seek and give information in a mutual relationship in order to accomplish the task.

Although jigsaw tasks are usually one-way, there is also a possibility to turn them into two-way tasks. This could happen if the information-receiving interactant began to present information which needed to be confirmed or rejected by the original sender. Moreover, interactants can also alternate roles as information suppliers and requesters.

- *Information gap task:*

According to Johnson (1981), an information gap task is created when one participant holds information that the other does not already know, but needs to know in order to complete a task.

In an information gap task, both interactants work together toward a single outcome and there are fixed and assigned roles to each interact: one holds

crucial, task-relevant information and the other must request this information. The gap in the distribution of information results in one-way flow of information from the sending interactant. Thus, while the interactant who possesses and supplies the crucial information may gain opportunities to receive feedback on production and therefore modify interlanguage, there are fewer opportunities to seek help with unclear input. The opposite occurs to the information requester, who would have more opportunities to seek modification of unclear input, but less of a chance to modify production toward greater comprehensibility.

- *Problem-solving task:*

This term has been used by Duff (1986) and Ur (1984) to describe tasks oriented toward a single resolution or outcome that interactants reach working together.

- *Decision-making task*

Doughty & Pica (1986) referred to this as tasks in which participants are expected to work toward a single outcome, but have several outcomes available to them.

- *Opinion-exchange task:*

It includes a variety of classroom activities in which learners discuss and exchange ideas.

On the whole, in the problem-solving task, the decision-making task, and the opinion exchange task; interactants start with shared access to the information needed to complete the task. Consequently, two-way information is possible, but interaction is not necessary to the task completion; as one participant can work individually, and make the decision or form an opinion; without the need to interact with the other participant.

In a study carried out by Pica, Young and Doughty (1987) in which they used information gap tasks to measure learner's comprehension through interaction, they found that negotiation features such as clarification and confirmation requests and comprehension checks served as mechanisms for input

redundancy and repetition, which consequently enhanced learner's comprehension.

Pica et al. (1989, 1990, 1991) developed a study about information tasks as well, but in this case, these tasks required learners to take turns drawing and describing pictures for each other to replicate. They showed that this task provided greater opportunities for learners to produce L2, to understand descriptions and to receive feedback regarding their own descriptions; which led to greater amounts of modified interlanguage.

Therefore, these communication task types present clear differences in their effectiveness regarding comprehension, feedback, and interlanguage modification. The fewest opportunities for experiencing these aspects seem to be the opinion exchange tasks, as there is no requirement for interaction and one single interactant might dominate the task. Whereas the most effective task types appear to be the jigsaw and information gap tasks, providing greater opportunities for students to seek comprehensible input and modify their output for communication.

We could conclude this section with a study carried out by Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris (2009). They suggest that a task which promotes the greatest opportunities for learners to experience comprehension of input, feedback on production and interlanguage modification is one in which the following four conditions are present:

- Each interactant holds a different portion of information which must be exchanged and manipulated in order to reach the task outcome. That is, the *information is split*.
- Both interactants are required to request and supply this information to each other. That is the *information exchange is required*.
- Interactants have the same or convergent goals. That is, *they work collaboratively*.
- Only one acceptable outcome is possible from their attempts to meet this goal. That is the *outcome of the task is closed*.

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2.2.4. *Task-driven methodology and implementation*

In this section, we will focus on the rationale and approaches of task methodology and on the main factors that need to be taken into account regarding the implementation of tasks. Afterwards, we will show the role of learners in a learner-centered approach and we will finally regard teacher training as a key factor for the successful implementation of tasks.

i. Task implementation factors

There are several factors of task-implementation that need to be considered as they have an impact on different aspects of learners' performance. The following distinction regarding planning, task repetition and post-task requirements; has been proposed by Rod Ellis (2003).

- *Planning*

- *Online planning:* Studies show that opportunities for online planning have a great impact on accuracy and complexity, although they inhibited fluency.
- *Strategic planning:* Giving learners the opportunity to plan strategically has a strong effect on fluency and complexity than on accuracy. This is due to the fact that when learners plan strategically they give more attention to drawing a conceptual plan of what they want to say rather than on formulating detailed linguistic plans. It is only if they are given a short time to plan, when they spend this time thinking of the language they need, which results in a gain in accuracy.

- *Task repetition*

Several studies show that asking learners to repeat a task has a great impact on their interaction. A research carried out by Gass and Varonis (1985), in which they asked learners to repeat a describe-and-draw task in pairs, reversing the roles on the second occasion; showed that the number of non-understanding indicators decreased in the second occasion.

Furthermore, studies show that when learners are given the opportunity to repeat a task, the complexity of their productions improves, reducing the

inappropriate lexical collocations and increasing self-correcting repetitions. Therefore, there is an impact on fluency and complexity.

However, all these gains are only beneficial when learners repeat the same task, but they are not transferred when learners perform a new task of the same type.

- *A post-task requirement*

Skehan and Foster (1997) investigated this possibility. They concluded that a post-task requirement resulted in greater accuracy on the decision-making task but not on the personal and narrative task. It also resulted in less fluent production. On the whole, the effect of the post-task requirement was generally weak.

All in all, we can infer that giving learners the opportunity to plan, shows greater impacts on accuracy, complexity and fluency; giving them the possibility to repeat the same task promotes fluency and complexity decreasing the number of non-understanding indicators, although these effects are not transferred to a new task of the same type. Furthermore, a post-task requirement has a double effect on learners; on the one hand it enhances accuracy on decision-making, and on the other hand it dampens the fluent production of learners.

To illustrate these task variables and factors and the effect they have on learners' production, I will provide a table that summarizes these features.

Table 1. Task variables and effects

Task variable		Effect
Information provided → <i>Split information provided</i>		- More meaning negotiation
Information exchange	<i>Required information Exchange</i>	- More meaning negotiation - Mechanical exchanges
	<i>Optional information exchange</i>	- Greater negotiation of global problems - Longer and more complex turns - Greater discourse strategies (e.g. paraphrase)
Grouping → <i>Pair-group</i>		- More negotiation work
Flow of information	<i>One-way</i>	- Accuracy - Complexity
	<i>Two-way</i>	- More negotiation work
Task outcome → <i>Closed tasks</i>		- Greater precision - More negotiation work - More language recycling
Familiarity of content and procedure	<i>Unfamiliar</i>	- More clarification requests - More confirmation checks
	<i>Familiar</i>	- More use of feedback
Discourse mode	<i>Argumentation</i>	- More complex language - Promotes learners' production
	<i>Description</i>	- More meaning negotiation
	<i>Narration</i>	- Most complex language
Context	<i>Context-free tasks</i>	- More sustained interaction - More attempts to repair communication - More pushed output - More communication strategies
	<i>Pictorial support</i>	- Easier for learners
	<i>Here-and-now contextual support</i>	- Easier for learners - Promotes fluency
	<i>There-and-then contextual support</i>	- Promotes complexity - Promotes accuracy
Outcome → <i>structured outcome</i>		- Greater fluency
Planning	<i>Online planning</i>	- Promotes accuracy - Promotes complexity
	<i>Strategic planning</i>	- Promotes fluency - Promotes complexity
Repetition → <i>repetition of the same task</i>		- Promotes fluency - Promotes complexity

ii. Learner role

After having seen the approaches regarding task-based methodology and the effects of task implementation factors, we will have a close look at the main participants of the task implementation process, that is, we will focus on learners from a learner-centered perspective, in accordance with the views of David Nunan (2004).

Learner-centeredness has strong links with communicative language teaching. From this perspective, the information about learners and from learners will be built into all stages of the curriculum process, from initial planning, through implementation, to assessment and evaluation. Curriculum development becomes a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners will be involved in decisions on content selection, methodology and evaluation (Nunan 1988). The reasons for adopting a learner-centered approach to instruction have been supported by research into learning styles and strategies (Willing 1988; Oxford 1990), as well as conceptual and empirical work in the area of learner autonomy (Benson 2002).

Breen has stated the link between learner-centeredness and learning tasks. He has pointed out that the outcomes of a task will be affected by learners' perceptions about what they should contribute to task completion, their views about the nature and demands of a task, and their definitions of the situation in which the task takes place.

Therefore, by following a TBLT model, by using a "task" as a basic unit of learning, and by incorporating a focus on strategies, we give the students the possibility of planning and monitoring their own learning.

iii. Teacher training

Besides task implementation factors and the role of learners, a crucial factor regarding task-based language teaching is the extent to which this approach is actually implemented in the language classroom successfully. In order to so, it is paramount that teachers receive a proper task-based training, including a theoretical framework to support their teaching and the opportunity to reflect on it in the practical field. Furthermore, teachers must be supported throughout their teaching process, especially in terms of pedagogical resources, providing the fact that most text books are not designed for a task-based syllabus.

Hence teachers are required to create or adapt pre-existing materials, which is not always possible in the classroom setting, due to time constraints.

This insight is supported by a study about the effects of a constructivist-based curriculum course on student teacher's disposition towards the principles of TBLT (Greg Olive and William Dunn, 2010). The study showed that the course enhanced student teachers' disposition towards TBLT. However, this positive disposition to TBLT did not tend to transfer into the implementation or application of the TBLT principles into practice. This is due to several impediments that students faced during their practicum such as the epistemological frame of the student teachers, the cultural norms settled in the schools and the lack of support students received by means of pedagogical resources.

In conclusion, there are several factors that need to be considered in order to implement a TBLT approach and use communicative tasks in the classroom. It is necessary not only to consider the features and typology of tasks themselves and their effect on the learners' production and acquisition; but also to implement them from a learner-centered perspective, in which learners are autonomous and participate actively in the decision-making process. As well as to consider the extent to which teachers are properly trained and afterwards supported in the use of communicative tasks in the language classroom.

2.3. Interaction and negotiation of meaning

In this section, we will explain the theoretical support of the role interaction plays in language acquisition through the negotiation of meaning, and we will suggest tasks as the mean to foster learners' interaction and autonomy in the language classroom.

2.3.1. Rationale and characteristics of task-based interaction

Interaction research has a tradition of over 25 years and its focus has evolved from suggesting that interaction might be useful in L2 learning in the mid-1990s, towards empirically demonstrating that it is useful, and how it facilitates development. For instance, based on interlocutor's success in following spoken directions, Gass and Varonis (1994) suggested that interaction could potentially have positive effects on L2

learners' later production. Another study by (Mackey 1999) about question formation in L2 learners showed that active participation in interaction was associated with learning.

The Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1977) states that *"humans acquire language in only way – by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input"* (Krashen, 1985: 2). From his perspective, input would be necessary and sufficient for L2 acquisition. However, studies proved that input is not sufficient for acquisition to occur.

Long updated the interaction hypothesis proposed by Krashen, including some aspects of the output hypothesis. From his perspective, interaction facilitates acquisition, as learners receive input, and interactional feedback from the interlocutor, and they produce output and modify it by means of negotiation work. In his own words *"negotiation for meaning, and specially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways"*.(Long, 1996: 451-452).

According to Ellis (2003), this hypothesis proposed by Long, stating that *"comprehensible input that arises when the less competent speaker provides feedback on their lack of comprehension assists acquisition."* (Ellis, 2003: 79), is quite restrictive, as it only considers acquisition in situations where meaning exchanges occur in the form of the less competent speaker providing feedback when there is lack of comprehension. Therefore, this hypothesis has been extended to include discourse exchanges where the initial problem arises in the speech of the less competent speaker and where learner production as well as input is given a constitutive role in language acquisition. (Ellis, 2003)

Along with the IH and the ways in which interaction contributes to language acquisition, there is a study by Pica (1992, 1994) that shows how meaning negotiation affects input, feedback and output. She suggests that opportunities to negotiate meaning assist language learners in three principal ways:

- Negotiation help learners to obtain comprehensible *input* → when conversational modifications arise through negotiation break down or segment the input units that learners can process more easily.
- Negotiation provides learners with *feedback* on their own use of L2. → When more competent speakers respond to less competent speakers they tend to reformulate what they mean, providing very specific feedback on a problem item. For example, in this exchange from Pica (1994) the L2 learner received feedback on how to pronounce “closed”, which she found problematic:

NNS: the windows are “crozed”.

NS: the windows have what?

NNS: closed

NS: crossed? I’m not sure what you’re saying there.

NNS: windows are closed.

NS: oh the windows are closed oh OK sorry.

- Negotiation prompts learners to adjust, manipulate, and modify their own *output* → when learners are pushed into producing output that is more comprehensible and therefore more target-like. This works best in exchanges where the more competent speaker requests clarification of the less competent speaker. For instance, in the example provided above, the learner is pushed into improving her pronunciation of “closed”.

In general terms, according to Rod Ellis (2003) the IH states that the more opportunities for negotiation there are the more likely language acquisition occurs.

However, due to advances in empirical research the “Interaction hypothesis” was reevaluated and evolved into an “Interaction approach” (Gass and Mackey, 2007). They pointed out that the interaction approach includes elements of a *hypothesis*, elements of a *model* and elements of a *theory*.

The IH has aroused a lot of criticism, some arguing that it has some imitations as we can not only evaluate tasks in terms of the quantity of meaning negotiation that occurs.

Nevertheless, although this hypothesis is limited in terms of the concept of “*hypothesis*” as it seems more accurate to define it as “*approach*”; and in terms of the main role meaning negotiation places to promote acquisition; the interaction approach offers a theoretical basis and a set of clearly defined discourse categories for analysing the interactions that arise in the performance of a task. Moreover, there are solid grounds for believing that tasks that afford opportunities for negotiation work will contribute to the acquisition of at least some aspects of language. Ellis (2003)

Similarly, input and interactionist theories of L2 acquisition hold that language learning is assisted through the social interaction of learners and their interlocutors, particularly when they negotiate toward mutual comprehension. To accomplish this goal, learners request their interlocutor’s help to comprehend unclear or unfamiliar linguistic input, and obtain interlocutor feedback on the comprehensibility or their own interlanguage form and content.

To engage in these kinds of interaction responsible for acquisition processes, classroom activities must be structures to provide a context through which learners not only talk to their interlocutors, but also negotiate meaning with them.

We will conclude this passage suggesting that the best way to foster autonomy through interaction is by means of using communicative tasks in the language classroom. This insight is supported by the rationale for using communicative tasks proposed by Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris, (2009).

According to these authors, the implementation of communicative tasks is supported by the consideration that language is best learned and taught through interaction. In interaction-based pedagogy, there are more opportunities to perceive, comprehend and internalize L2 words, forms, and structures; when learners and their interlocutors can exchange information and communicate ideas.

2.3.2. Communication strategies: meaning negotiation

Within interaction-based tasks, a paramount factor to consider is the strategies that learners use in order to communicate among each other.

These communication strategies are defined by Kasper and Kellerman (1997: 2) as “*a form of self-help that did not have to engage the interlocutor’s support for resolution*”. They are used by the speakers when they lack specific linguistic knowledge of meaning.

Rod Ellis (2003) identifies the following communication strategies:

- *Reduction strategies*: where the learner abandons or gives up a topic.
- *Achievement strategies*: when the learner compensates for the means needed to communicate effectively. These includes:
 - *Approximation*. For example “worm” is substituted for “silkworm”.
 - *Paraphrase*. For example “it sucks air” is substituted for “vacuum cleaner”.
 - *Word coinage*. For example substituting “picture place” for “art gallery”
 - *Conscious transfer*. For example literally translating an L1 expression.
 - *Appeals of assistance*.
 - *Mime*.

The use of one communication strategy or another by the learners is influenced by two general principles or communication stated by Poulisse (1997): the principle of *clarity* and the principle of *economy*.

Along with the perspective of Rod Ellis (2003), and within the strategies learners use to communicate we can include the *negotiation of meaning*, which is conceived as the discourse done to resolve sequences that have not been understood.

Four strategies for the negotiation of meaning have been identified:

- *Comprehension checks*: expressions that one participant makes in order to make sure that their previous utterances have been understood by the other participant. For example: “I was really chuffed. Know what I mean?”
- *Clarification requests*: expressions that imply clarification of a previous utterance made by a participant. For example:

A: I was really chuffed.

B: Uh?

A: Really pleased

- *Confirmation checks:* expressions made immediately after the utterance of a participant to assure that it was heard or understood correctly by the other participant. For example:

A: I was really chuffed.

B: You were pleased?

A: Yes.

- *Recasts:* utterances that rephrase other utterances, maintaining their original meaning, but changing the sentence components. For example:

A: I go to the cinema at weekend.

B: *You went to the cinema.* What did you see?

A: Gladiator. It was great.

Recasts are similar to confirmation checks, but they differ from confirmation checks, as they do not necessarily need to confirm the information provided, but rather they perform the function of correction from one speaker to the other. Moreover, not all confirmation checks imply reformulation from the other speaker's utterance.

As we have stated above in the previous section, and following the study by Pica (1992, 1994) learners engage in the negotiation of meaning through interaction, and this contributes to acquisition by means of the input, feedback and output they produce. In conclusion, the role meaning negotiation plays in interaction is paramount to learners' acquisition and production; therefore we should provide them with opportunities to negotiate meaning through communicative tasks that promote interaction.

2.4. Autonomy as a key factor of TBLT

We have previously discussed the importance of promoting interaction and meaning negotiation in the language classroom and we have suggested communicative tasks in order to do so. In this section we will focus on another crucial aspect that needs to be considered regarding the implementation of tasks in the classroom: *learners' autonomy*.

Throughout this section, we will have a look at the three main approaches of autonomy proposed by Phil Benson (1997) to see afterwards the extent to which autonomy can be implemented in the language classroom and the means to do so, following the guidelines and levels suggested by David Nunan (1997).

2.4.1. Autonomy approaches

First, we will include the three main versions of autonomy proposed by Phil Benson (1997)

- *The technical versions* refer to the act of learning outside the educational system and without teacher intervention.
- *The psychological versions* conceive autonomy as a construct of attitudes and abilities which permit learners to take more responsibility of their own learning.
- *The political versions* imply that the learner take control over the processes and content of learning.

Highly related with the versions of autonomy, there are three main approaches regarding autonomy also proposed by Phil Benson (1997):

- *Positivist approaches* are connected with the *technical versions* of autonomy. From the perspective of language autonomy, autonomy can be understood in terms of the situational conditions under which acquisition takes place. From the positivist insight of autonomy, discovery learning is a more effective method of knowledge acquisition than direct teacher-learner transmission.
- *Constructivist approaches* are related with the *psychological versions* of autonomy. This perspective focuses on the learner's behavior, attitudes and

personality. Candy (1989: p.101) considers autonomy as an innate capacity of the individual which may be suppressed or distorted by institutional education. Constructivist approaches of language learning place on the learner the responsibility of decisions regarding content and methodology. They also tend to promote interaction and engagement with the target language.

- *Critical theory* is connected with the *political versions* of autonomy. This approach argues that as learners become more aware of the social context of their learning, the target language and the social change implicit in language learning; their autonomy increases.

From the perspective of the critical theory of autonomy, Phil Benson (1997) proposes several guidelines to take into account in the language classroom:

- Authentic interaction with the target language and its users.
- Collaborative group work and collective decision making.
- Participation in open-ended learning tasks.
- Learning about the target language and its social contexts of use.
- Exploration of societal and personal learning goals.
- Criticism of learning tasks and materials.
- Self-production of tasks and materials.
- Control over the management of learning.
- Control over the content of learning.
- Control over resources.
- Discussion and criticism of target language norms.

On the whole, it needs to be considered that these versions and approaches of autonomy are not clearly divided, but rather they interact and they are related with one another.

2.4.2. *Levels of autonomy implementation in the language classroom*

In order to implement autonomy in the classroom, David Nunan (1997) proposes several levels for gradually increasing the learner's autonomy in the context of the language classroom, regarding the *experiential content* that is the syllabus; and the *learning process* in other words, the methodology. The levels are defined in the following table:

Table 2.Levels of autonomy implementation

Level	Learner action	Content	Process
1	<i>Awareness</i>	Learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using.	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles/ strategies.
2	<i>Involvement</i>	Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer.	Learners make choices among a range of options.
3	<i>Intervention</i>	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning programme.	Learners modify/ adapt tasks.
4	<i>Creation</i>	Learners create their own goals and objectives.	Learners create their own tasks.
5	<i>Transcendence</i>	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond.	Learners become teachers and researchers.

It needs to be taken into account that these levels of autonomy are not independent from each other and learners do not follow a lineal process through them, but rather they overlap and learners move back and forth among them.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Nunan (1997) some assumptions need to be pointed out according to autonomy and the degree of its implementation in the language classroom. They are stated as follows:

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- Few individuals come to the task of language as autonomous learners.
- Developing some degree of autonomy is essential if learners are to become effective language users.
- The ability to direct one's own language can be developed through pedagogical intervention.
- There are degrees of autonomy.
- The extent to which autonomy can be developed will be constrained by a broad range of personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural factors.

On the whole, we can conclude that promoting learner's autonomy in the classroom is paramount to their learning and their peers' as they will become more independent and active in their learning process, more aware of their learning strategies and needs, more involved in the classroom methodologies and therefore more motivated to learn and transfer that learning into their outside realities. Nunan has suggested different levels to gradually implement autonomy in the classroom, and we will suggest communicative tasks as a key tool to do so. In the pedagogical proposal of the task implementation, we will suggest ways in which we can foster learners' autonomy in different levels.

2.5. Conclusion

We have widely discussed the importance of TBLT for L2 language learning from different perspectives and studies; advocating for the use of tasks in which learners have the need to communicate among each other using meaningful and functional language to reach a common outcome.

Providing the fact that students are usually given very short time to practice speaking and teachers struggle to provide students with opportunities to practice the oral language, we claim the use of TBLT to maximize the amount of time they have available to interact with a communicative use of language. This perspective is supported by Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John M. Norris as they state that *"second language teachers spend a great amount of their time and energy toward getting language learners to talk [...] the most effective way to assist language learning*

in the classroom is revealed through the use of communication tasks.” (Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate and John Norris; 2009: 171).

Moreover, we support the need to provide students with more opportunities to interact and thus to negotiate meaning; as they lead to a greater impact on production and acquisition.

Regarding the features and typology of communicative tasks as we have already stated in the previous sections, different task features and types result in different aspects of learners’ production. However, in order to have the greatest impact on comprehension of input, feedback on production and interlanguage modification; we will advocate for the implementation of tasks where the information is split among interactants, the information exchange is required and students work collaboratively toward the same closed outcome. Therefore, we will take into account these considerations of the task features in order to design and implement the pedagogical proposal.

Besides, we understand learning as a social process and therefore we promote the use of communicative tasks to foster peer-work and cooperative work among students. We also consider the psychological and cognitive dimensions of learning, and thus we understand TBLT from a learner-centered perspective, where students participate actively in the content selection, methodology and evaluation. This insight will be reflected on the pedagogical proposal, where learners will experience this degree of autonomy, taking part in the task design and performing a self-evaluation and a peer-evaluation questionnaire at the end of the task.

Finally, we will suggest that the other main participants of the language learning process, that is teachers, will first receive a proper task-based training and will be provided with long-term pedagogical support throughout their teaching practice in order to implement a TBLT approach successfully.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1. Location in a specific year

Four tasks have been designed and two of them implemented in a Primary Education class, specifically in a class of 27 students of 2nd grade of Primary Education. The games designed are the following: "*Monster's game*", "*Zoo game*", "*Family photograph*", and "*Game creation*". The ones that have been implemented in the classroom are the first two: *Monster's game* and *Zoo game*.

In this developmental stage, 7 – 8 year-olds, among other features, students are characterized by their willingness to play games and the growth of their speaking and listening skills, as well as for their quick vocabulary acquisition.

These characteristics have been considered in order to plan and design the communicative tasks. Thus these have adopted the format of a game¹ in order to foster the collaboration and cooperative work among students (in pairs and in groups), promote the interaction and practice of oral skills through production, and give them opportunities to review previously seen vocabulary in a communicative context.

I will further explain the games in the next sections, including the objectives of each one of them, the characteristics and development of the games, and the final results of the games implementation. I will also attach an example of the games to illustrate and clarify the explanation.

3.2. Objectives

Following the theoretical background stated in the previous section, I have designed four communicative tasks in which students have to communicate using meaningful language to reach a common goal. Moreover, students are pushed to interact with each other in order to enhance language acquisition by working collaboratively in pairs and small groups.

¹ "Henceforth, we will be using the terms tasks and games indistinctively when referring to the ones we are presenting in this study."

Furthermore, autonomy is prompted as they have to work independently in order to complete the task successfully as well as to evaluate themselves and their peers after completing the tasks. They also have to design and create one of the tasks, corresponding to the fourth level of autonomy implementation proposed by Nunan (1997): *creation*.

The objectives of this task proposal and implementation are stated as follows:

- Foster students' autonomy through interaction.
- Enhance the oral production of students.
- Develop the students' listening and comprehension skills.
- Promote collaborative and cooperative work among students.
- Learners make a functional use of language, with an emphasis on communication.
- Give learners opportunities to employ communication strategies, like meaning negotiation.
- Students connect learning with fun, by means of games in the language classroom.
- Learners apply previously seen language structures and vocabulary.
- Teachers evaluate the extent to which learners are autonomous enough to carry out these tasks on their own.
- Teachers assess their language production.
- Teacher can check their use of the L1 when interacting in English.

3.3. Design

I have designed four communicative games that meet different goals and purposes, and are characterized by different features. I will explain each game in detail, specifying the objectives, the features and typology of task, the development of the task, the evaluation of the task and the materials needed to implement the task. Finally I will reflect on the results found in the evaluation of the task implementation in

the case of the two tasks that I actually used in the classroom. Here I will provide a table including the different features of each task:

Table 3. Features of games

	Information exchange	Information gap	Task outcome	Discourse mode	Contextual support	Rehearsal	Work
Monster's game	Required	One-way	Closed	Description	Pictorial "here-and-now"	Yes	Pair-work
Zoo game	Required	Two-way	Closed	Description	Pictorial "here-and-now"	No	Group-work
Family photograph	Required	Two-wa	Closed	Description	Pictorial "here-and-now"	No	Pair-work

3.3.1. *Monster's game*

i. Objectives

- Students work cooperatively.
- Students are independent and autonomous in the task completion.
- Students use the L2 to communicate effectively.
- Students produce sentences orally to describe their monster successfully.
- Students understand their partner's descriptions and instructions and they are able to draw the monster according to them.
- Students employ communication strategies to understand each other.
- Students apply the vocabulary of the body parts they know.
- Learners make use of adjectives and they include them in the correct order of the sentence. For example: "*Brown eyes*"; instead of "*Eyes brown*".
- Students practice the structure: *It's got...*

ii. Task typology and features

- Typology:
 - Information gap task: one participant holds information that the other does not know but needs to know in order to complete the task.
- Features:
 - Split information: the information exchange is required, as students have the need to communicate and exchange information to complete the task successfully.
 - One-way information gap: only one student holds the information and provides information to the other.
 - Closed task outcome
 - Discourse mode of description: this task elicits the description of pictures.
 - Pictorial and “here-and-now” contextual support
 - One element in the task: there is only one picture.
 - Familiar content and procedure: students are familiar with the content, as they have previously seen it in class; and they are familiar with the procedure as the task is repeated.
 - The task is repeated: students carry out the task a second time; this time swapping roles.
 - Pair-work

iii. Materials

- Monsters’ pictures: 14 of each
- Half pieces of paper: 28
- Pencils and crayons.
- Self-evaluation questionnaires: 28 of each.

iv. *Development*

Students are divided in *student A*, and *student B*, so that there is an even number of each category of students. Students are grouped in pairs, one of them is *student A*; and the other is *student B*. They are sitting back to back so they cannot see each other or each other's' pictures or drawings. They can use a folder to hold their pieces of paper and draw on them, when necessary.

The teacher gives all *A-students* a picture of a monster, which they will have to describe to their partners. The picture is shown below:

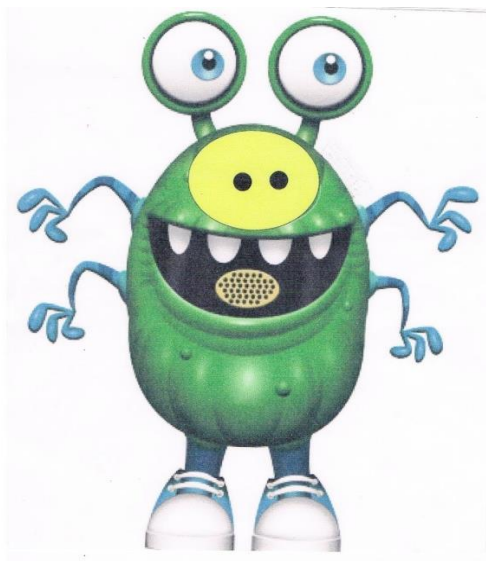


Figure 1. Monster's game picture day 1

B-students hold a piece of paper (half of the size of an A4 piece of paper) where they will have to draw and colour a picture according to the descriptions of their partner. The goal of the game is that student B's drawings look as similar as possible to student A's pictures.

The main rules of this game are that students have to speak in English, and that they cannot look at their partner's pictures or drawings.

If they finish they must keep their pictures and drawings face down, as there might be other students who have not finished yet. Once all students have finished, the teacher will ask them to have a look at their partner's picture and drawing so that they can compare them. After that, they will play the game in the opposite direction, that is

student A will become B this time, and student B will turn into A, and they will have a different picture of a monster to describe and draw, that can be seen as follows:



Figure 2. Monster's game picture day 2

v. *Evaluation*

The teacher gives students two self-evaluation questionnaires, one when they are performing the role of student A, and the other when they are performing the one of student B. The questionnaires read as follows:

Table 4. Self-evaluation questionnaire Monster's game Student A

Monster's game	
Name: _____ Student: A	
Did you like the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult to describe your picture?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you speak in Spanish?	<i>Circle:</i> Never Sometimes Often

Table 5. Self-evaluation questionnaire Monster's game Student B

Monster's game	
Name: _____ Student: B	
Did you like the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult to understand your partner?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you speak in Spanish?	<i>Circle:</i> Never Sometimes Often

Thus once they had carried out each game, I gave them the self-evaluation questionnaire for them to fill which I later collected and evaluated the results. In the self-evaluation questionnaires I gave to students I assessed some aspects of the game implementation that students reflected on, such as whether they find the game difficult in general, whether they find it difficult to describe their picture/ understand

their partner; whether they liked the game or not, and finally how much they had spoken in Spanish.

3.3.2. Zoo game

i. Objectives

- Students work cooperatively.
- Students are independent and autonomous in the task completion.
- Students use the L2 to communicate effectively
- Students employ communication strategies to understand each other.
- Students follow the turn-taking system successfully.
- Students know and employ the animals vocabulary.
- Students ask questions to their partners using the structures: *Has it got...? Is it ...? Can it ...? How many ...?*
- Students answer their partner's questions with complete answers: *Yes, it has/ No, it hasn't; Yes it is/ No, it isn't; Yes, it can/No, it can't; It's got ...*

ii. Features and typology of task

- Typology of task:
 - Information gap task: one participant holds information that the other does not already know, but needs to know in order to complete the task.
- Features:
 - Split information: the information exchange among students is required, as they do not know what animal their partners have, and thus they need to ask and answer questions to guess it.
 - One way information gap: all students hold information but it is different. The information holder is one at a time.
 - Closed task outcome: the outcome of the task is closed, as it is from a set of possible solutions (animals).
 - Discourse mode of description. Asking and answering questions elicits description.

- Pictorial and “here-and-now” contextual support: students are given animal cards.
- 8 elements in the task: there are eight animals in each set of cards.
- Group-work: students work in groups of 4-5.

iii. Materials

- 6 sets of 8 animal cards.
- Words
- Self-evaluation questionnaires: 27

iv. Development

Students are placed in groups of 4-5 students with mixed abilities and levels. Each group is given a set of eight animal cards that will be face-down in the middle of the group. Some examples of the animal cards students are given are provided below:



Figure 3. Examples animal cards

Each student picks up a card and keeps it so that the others cannot see what animal it is, as they will have to guess it asking questions among each other. Students are also given some words which they can use to make questions in case they need to, although it is not required. Examples of these words are: *teeth, trunk, tail, wings, big, small,*

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horns, fly, swim, run and jump. They can be seen below:

Table 6. Words zoo game

trunk	tail	horns	wings	teeth
jump	fly	run	big	small
legs	swim			

Students take turns to ask questions to each other. They are free to make the question they want to and they can also choose who they are going to ask the question to. Examples of questions they can make are: *Has it got a tail? How many legs has it got? Can it swim? Is it green?*

The student who is being asked a question has to answer the question successfully proving true information of their animal. Once a student has gathered enough information about another student's animal, they can ask them a question to guess what their animal is.

For example, one student can ask: *Is it a lion?* If the answer is correct and they have guessed the animal, that student keeps the guessed card for himself. However, they keep answering questions about their original card, the one they have won is just for them to keep as a "prize". The student who loses their card, picks up another one from the set of cards that is placed in the middle of the group.

The goal of the game is that students guess their partners' cards. The student with the most number of cards guessed and therefore kept wins the game. Once all cards have been guessed, students can mix them up and give them out again and continue playing until the teacher considers that the game is over and asks them to stop playing.

v. *Evaluation*

Once students finish the game, the teacher gives them a self-evaluation questionnaire where they reflect on which game they liked the most (the monster's game or the zoo game), on whether they find it difficult to ask questions, on whether they find it difficult to answer questions and on how much Spanish they had spoken.

Table 7. Self-evaluation questionnaire zoo game

Zoo game	
Name: _____	
What game did you like most?	<i>Circle:</i> Monster Zoo
Did you find it difficult to ask questions?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult to answer questions?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you speak in Spanish?	<i>Circle:</i> Never Sometimes Often

3.3.3. Family photograph

It needs to be pointed out, that this task has been designed but not implemented in the class.

i. Objectives

- Students work cooperatively.
- Students are independent and autonomous in the task completion.
- Students use the L2 to communicate effectively.
- Students will describe the family members they have got in their picture.
- Students will ask their partners for information about the family members they have got in theirs.
- Students will answer and provide information about the questions their partner has asked.
- Students will apply the vocabulary they know about the family members.

- Students will identify the differences between "she" and "he" and they will be able to use the subjects properly.
- Students will employ a variety of adjectives and they will do so in the correct order or the sentence. Foreexample: *She's got blue eyes.*
- Students will use prepositions of place as well as "on the left" and "on the right" to describe and draw the family members on the correct place on their photographs.

ii. Task typology and features

- Typology:
 - Jigsaw: a task in which interactants hold portions of a totality of information which must be exchanged and manipulated, as they work together toward a single task goal.
- Features:
 - Split information: the information exchange is required, as students need to know their partners' information in order to complete the task successfully.
 - Two-way information gap: the flow of information is two way, as both students are holders and providers of information.
 - Closed task outcome: students reach to a common goal, the complete family picture.
 - Discourse mode of description: this game elicits the description of the photographs.
 - Pictorial and "here-and-now" contextual support: students are provided with pictures of the family photograph.
 - 3 Elements in the task: each student has three family members in their photograph.
 - Pair-work

iii. Materials

- Students A pictures: family photograph (14)
- Students B pictures: family photograph (14)
- Self-evaluation questionnaires (27)

iv. Development

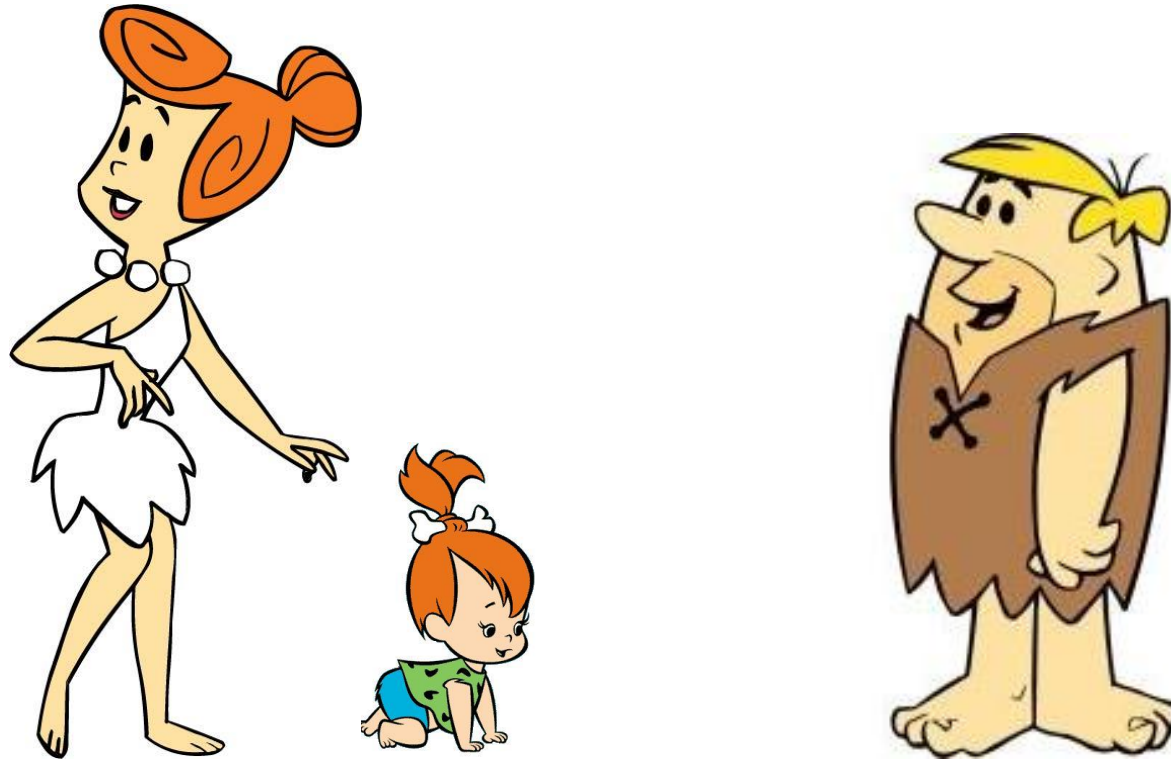
The teacher will assign a role to each student, they can be student A or student B, and there will be even numbers of each role. The teacher will group them in pairs, so that there is a student A and a student B in each pair. Students A will receive a picture of a family photograph, where part of their members are missing; while students B will receive another picture containing the family members that are missing in students' A pictures. Thus students will need to communicate and exchange information with each other so that both will end up with the same family photographs.

Students have to work together to reach the same goal, and they have to collaborate with each other to draw their pictures successfully. They will monitor the turn-taking system themselves, asking and answering questions, and giving descriptions as they want.

I will provide an example of Student A' picture and Student B' picture.

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH

Student A



FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH

Student B



v. *Evaluation*

The teacher gives each student a self-evaluation questionnaire once they have finished completing the task, in which they will reflect on several aspects such as: if they like/dislike the game, if they find the game difficult, if they were able to differentiate between "what we say for a girl" and "what we say for a boy", if they could make a complete sentence, and how much they spoke in Spanish. An example of the self-evaluation is provided below:

Table 8. Self-evaluation questionnaire Family photograph

Family photograph	
Name: _____	
Did you like the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find the game difficult?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Can you differentiate between what we say for a girl and what we say for a boy?	
<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so	<i>Give an example:</i> ♣ Girl: <hr/> ♣ Boy: <hr/>
Can you make a complete sentence to describe a person?	
<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so	<i>Give an example:</i> <hr/>
Did you speak in Spanish?	<i>Circle:</i> Never Sometimes Often

3.3.4. Game creation

It needs to be considered that the creation of this game has been proposed but It has not been implemented in the class.

i. Objectives

- Promote collaborative with among students.
- Foster students' creativity.
- Promote students' autonomy at level 4: creation.
- Involve students actively in their learning process.
- Students use the L2 to communicate efficiently.

ii. Materials

- Pieces of paper.
- Pencils and crayons.
- Self-evaluation questionnaires: *game creation* and *game completion*.

iii. Development

The teacher will ask students to design and create a game in pairs for their partners to play. Each pair will be given one or two pieces of paper, as necessary; and they will create a game similar to the ones they have played before. The teacher can suggest them types of games or ideas, for example to draw a different picture of the same topic in each piece of paper so that their partners will have to describe and draw them (as they did in the monster's game); or to draw an incomplete picture in each piece of paper (with different elements to complete in each) so that they have to communicate to complete both pictures (as they did in the family photograph game).

However, these are just suggestions and ideas to give them, in case they do not come up with an idea; but they can be creative and make up a completely different kind of game, as long as the game requires students to speak in English to solve the task and they include clear instructions to complete the task. The role of the teacher is to monitor students, rather than to tell them what to do. Students will be asked to write both names of the "creators" of the game, so that the teacher and the other students

know who the games they are playing belong to. Once all students have created a game, they will pass them to next pair nearer to them, and they will all play somebody else's game

iv. Evaluation

Regarding the evaluation of the task, the teacher will not only evaluate the completion of the game, but also its design and creation. In order to do so, students will be given two self-evaluation questionnaires: one of them about the game they created; and the other one about the game they played. In the game creation the teacher assesses if they liked creating the game, if they found it difficult, if they and their partners collaborated in the creation of the game and if they gave clear instructions to their partners to play the game.

In the game completion, the teacher assesses if they liked playing their partners' games, if they found it difficult to play the game, if they received clear instructions to play the game, if they spoke in Spanish while playing it, and the structures and language they used by asking them to write some sentences they said when they were playing the game.

Examples of the questionnaires are provided below:

Table 9. Self-evaluation questionnaire game creation

Game creation	
Name: _____	
Did you like creating a game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult to create a game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you collaborate in the game creation?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did your partner collaborate in the game creation?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you give clear instructions to your partners to play your game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so

Table 10. Self-evaluation questionnaire game completion

Game completion	
Name: _____	
Did you like playing your partners' game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you find it difficult to play the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
Did you have clear instructions to play the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Yes No So, so
What sentences did you make when you play the game?	<i>Write:</i> _____
Did you speak in Spanish when you played the game?	<i>Circle:</i> Never Sometimes Often

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I will discuss and reflect on the results elicited from the implementation of the two games: the *monster's game* and the *zoo game*. I will consider the experiences and perceptions obtained in the three lessons where I developed these games, as well as the self-evaluations students filled after completing the tasks. I will first discuss about the monster's game, and I will later include my reflections regarding the zoo game.

4.1. Monster's game

4.1.1. General observations

First, it needs to be pointed out that this game took me two lessons to fully carry it out, as in the second lesson students changed roles so that all of them had the chance to be student A and student B.

On the whole, the assessment of this task is very positive, as students enjoyed and had fun while playing the game. They seem very enthusiastic and keen on doing something different, and they all participated and collaborated in the task completion.

From my experience, students found exciting the fact that they could not see their partner's picture and they all did their best in describing and drawing the pictures as accurate as possible. I pasted on the blackboard some flashcards with vocabulary of parts of the body they had previously seen in class such as *horns, tail, wings, trunk, teeth*, etc.; to help them describe their pictures in case it was necessary. Students were also allowed to ask me questions regarding vocabulary or how to make sentences, but generally they did not require a lot of support from the teacher, especially to use the vocabulary they had previously seen.

There were two students, with a low level of English who struggle to remember some basic vocabulary words such as *head* or *body* or the structure: *It's got...* Thus when they asked me I answered them and I wrote on the blackboard the vocabulary they needed and the structure: *It's got*so that they could have a look if they did not remember.

Moreover, other students asked me questions about vocabulary they did not have seen before to describe specific details of the picture given. For example students asked me: "*How do you say zapatillas?*" Or "*How do you say tiene una boca con puntos?*". And I told them the specific word they did not know, but not the whole sentence they had to make, so that they had to think about the *It's got...* structure as well. I also told them that they had to try and use the vocabulary they knew, since if a told a student a specific word when they describe it to their partner they may not know the word either and therefore they will not understand it.

I sometimes heard students speaking in Spanish, and I reminded them that it was paramount that they spoke in English, and that they did not have to worry about not drawing the picture perfectly, as that was not the goal of the game, the goal was to speak in English, use the vocabulary and structures they knew and to describe and draw their picture as well as they could. However, most of these conversations were to make sure the other partner had understood their instructions, or to ask for help when they did not understand something they were told, they wanted them to repeat or to describe specific parts of their drawing; that is they used the L1 to employ communication strategies such as meaning negotiation. Sometimes, they also used the L1 language when they did not know how to say something in English, especially when it was a word they had not previously seen before. Nevertheless, they successfully use the L2 to use the structure *It's got...* and to use the vocabulary they knew about the body parts and the colours.

4.1.2. Analysing the outcomes

Having a look at the pictures they draw, I will focus on some examples of the pictures I collected. For example, one pair of students successfully draws and colour the body of the monster with all its parts, even the "yellow mouth with black spots". That's because the student asked me how to say "*con puntos*" and I told her.



Figure 6.Example student's drawing 1.

However, the eyes of the monster are inside of the body instead of over it in the form of antenna, as they probably do not know how to specify that concrete feature. In the same drawing, we can also see that the arms and legs are in green, although the original colour of the picture is blue. This shows that at least they did not look at each other's picture. Nevertheless, she was successful in drawing the yellow nose with the two black holes, the white round teeth, the blue eyes and the blue and white trainers.

This is another example of the students' drawings:

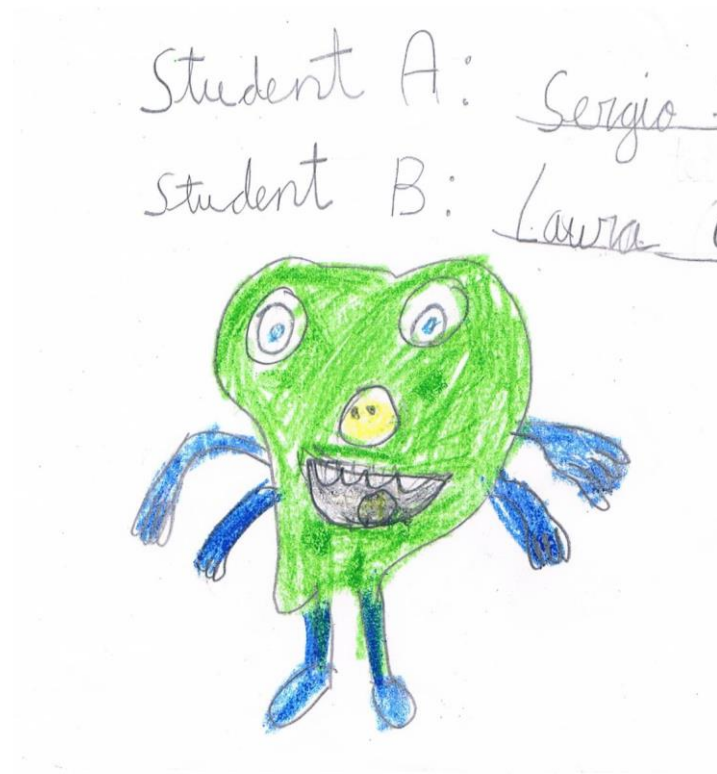


Figure 7. Example student's drawing 2

In this example, we can see how they have also struggled to describe the eyes, and the student has drawn them inside of the body as well. However, they are blue as in the original picture. In this particular picture, the student A has not specified how many fingers the monster has, and student B has drawn four fingers, instead of three. The trainers do not appear in the drawing either. However, she has successfully drawn the four round teeth, the yellow nose with the black holes, and the blue eyes. These shows not only that they have been able to describe and draw the picture quite accurately, but also that they have not looked at their partner's pictures either, as the drawing is not "perfect"

If we focus on the drawing 3 shown below:



Figure 8. Example student's drawing 3

First of all, it is important to consider that this task was performed by three students, instead of two as there was an odd number of students in the class (27). It is also necessary to take into account that in this case, the student A had quite a low level of English, and he asked for help not only with the difficult vocabulary they had not previously seen, but also with very simple one such as *body* and *head*, so I wrote it down on the blackboard so that he could have it to support him. The drawing shows that when he described the picture he did not specify where the parts of the face were, or whether it had a head or not; and probably student B, made it up, as in the drawing we can perceive a head and a body, whereas in the original picture they are together in the same body part. However, the rest of the drawing successfully matches the original one, and we can see that even though he struggled to describe some parts of it, we did well in describing others. For example, the eyes not only match the original colour of the picture but they are also over the head, which is quite a difficult feature to describe and understand. Moreover, the mouth is not "perfectly" drawn as it does not include the yellow circle with the black spots. This is a positive aspect to take into account, as it means that students may not have looked at each other's pictures.

The fourth and last drawing that I will examine, can be seen as follows:

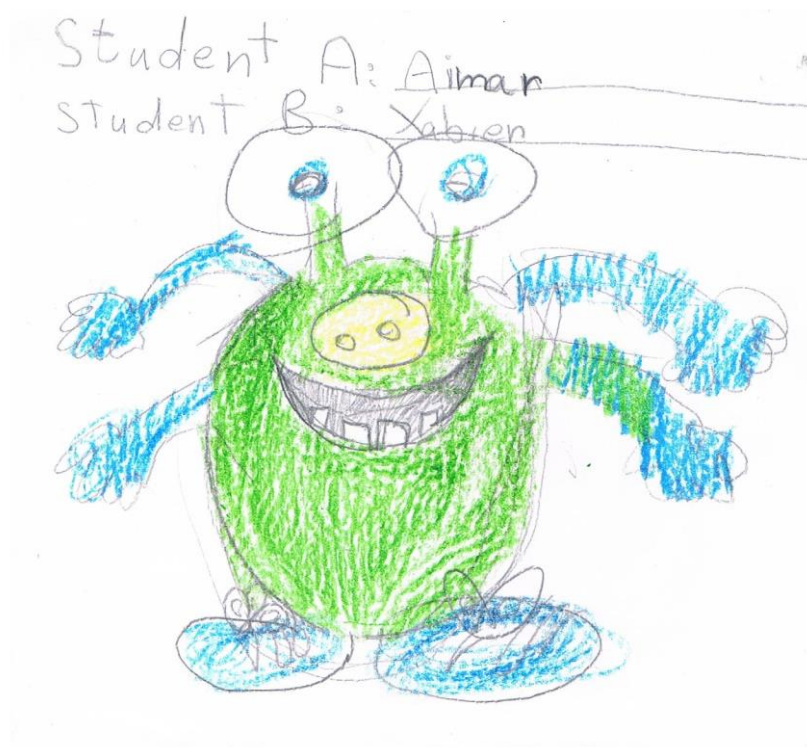


Figure 9. Example student's drawing 4

This example is particularly interesting as the task was carried out between a student with a very high level of English performing the role of student B, and between a student with quite a low English level (student A). Student B also has good artistic skills. Despite the level differences, student B successfully drew the picture, and we can infer that when his partner was stuck in describing the picture he may have helped him, or he may have asked questions to seek for information. I would not suggest that he looked at his partner's picture, as the drawing is not "perfect" either, and small details such as the mouth and the legs were not accurately drawn. This shows the positive effect of grouping students in heterogeneous levels, as one may ask for help not to the teacher but to the other student, and they will provide it successfully.

Looking at the drawings from day two, we can observe that the drawings are quite accurate and students have given a lot of details in their descriptions.

Having a look at drawing 5, included below:



Figure 10. Example student's drawing 5

We can see how the student has drawn specific details like the striped horns, the sharp yellow teeth and the tail, although the tail is on the right side instead of on the left.

An example of drawing 6 is provided below:



Figure 11. Example student's drawing 6

Drawing 6 is very accurate too, although the tail is on the right side as well instead of on the left. In this drawing the arms are separated from the body, which means they did not look at their partner's picture.

An example of drawing 7 is shown as follows:

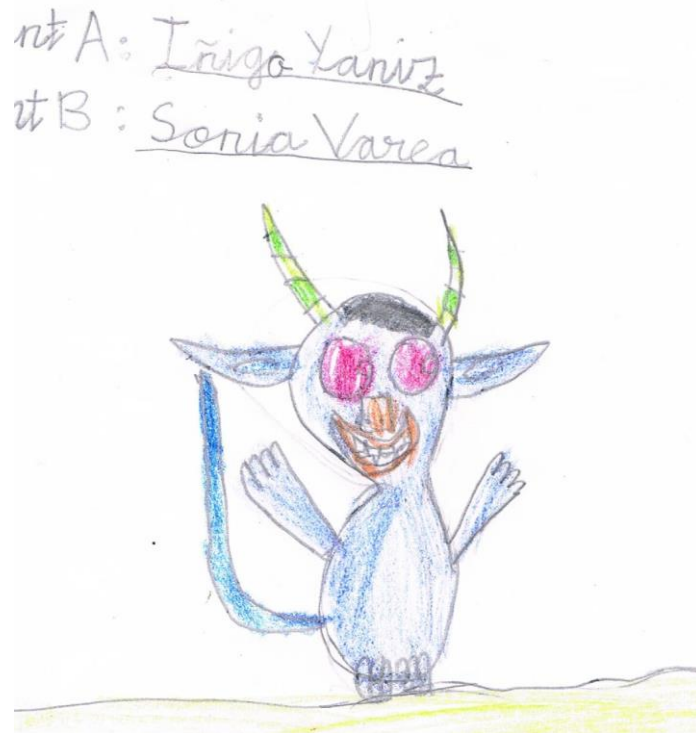


Figure 12. Example student's drawing 7

In *drawing 7*, they also draw the striped horns and the black hair and in this picture the tail is on the correct place. However, the head and body of the monster are separated, whereas in the original picture they are together.

Drawing 8 is included below:



Figure 13. Example student's drawing 8

Looking at *drawing 8*, we can see how they draw the horns, although they are not striped, as they probably did not know how to say that in English. The teeth of this drawing are sharp as the ones in the original picture, although they have not specified their colour. In this drawing the head and body of the monster are all together, as in the original picture.

4.1.3. Students' groupings

Regarding the way I grouped students, it is crucial to mention that I did it in heterogeneous levels, except the first day they performed this task, as I put together a pair of students with quite a low level of English. From the self-evaluations they completed I noticed that one student of this pair, said he did not like the game that is why the following day when they performed the task changing roles and describing another picture I mixed all levels, so that there was not a pair of students with a low level of English together. In the next day of the task performance he changed his mind and he said he did like it; which reinforced my previous thought of grouping students with mixed levels.

According to the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires students completed after the task performance, I would like to mention that there were not significant changes

from day one to day two, except the one I already mentioned of the student who said he did not like the game the first day, but he changed his mind and he did like it the following day. Regarding the use of L1 by students, it is significant that it did not decrease from day one to two, it even increased; as in day one 3 students said they spoke often in Spanish and in day two 4 of them stated so; in day one, 14 students said they spoke sometimes in Spanish whereas in day two 17 of them said so; in day one 9 students said they never spoke in Spanish while in day two 6 of them said they never spoke in Spanish. However, although it showed how the use of L1 increased a little from day 1 to day 2, it is also important to consider that they did so as a mechanism to better understand each other for example to ask for repetitions or with expressions like: “¿Que? No te entiendo,” etc. But they use the L2 successfully to describe the parts of the body they knew. Here I will provide two graphics to illustrate the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires.

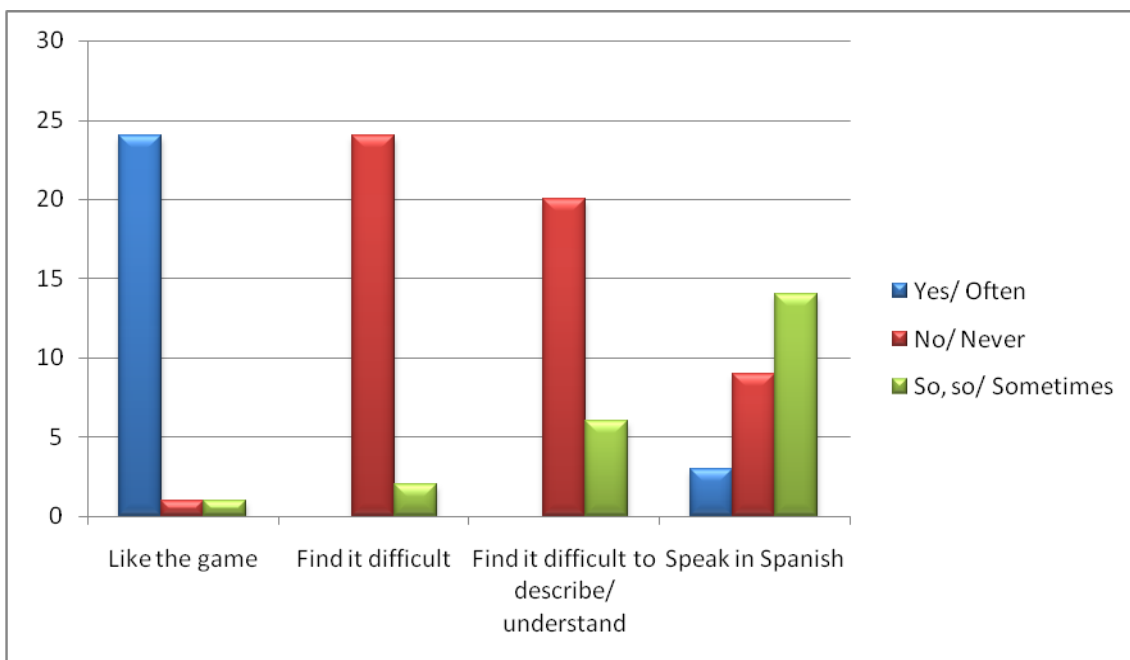


Figure 14. Results self-evaluation questionnaires monster's game day 1

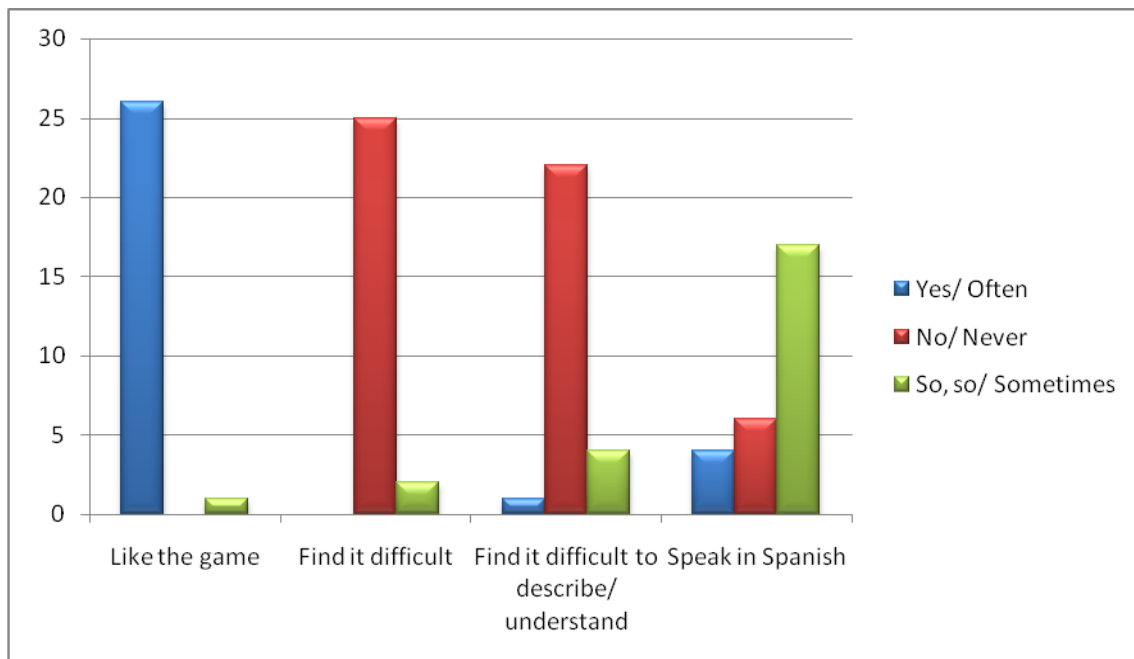


Figure 15. Results self-evaluation questionnaires monster's game day 2

We can also infer that part of the reason why students use the L1 is that they were sitting back to back and all students were holding conversations and there was a lot of talking going on in the class. Therefore, they struggled to understand each other due to two factors: the general "noise" of the class, and the difficulty to listen to each other while they are sitting back to back. This last factor could have been avoided, if instead of asking students to sit back to back so that they cannot see each other's pictures, we would have asked them to sit in front of each other and put for example a folder in the middle of the table to hide the pictures. All in all, the L1 was not used for the main purpose of the game but mainly due to these organizational problems.

All in all, we can conclude that the implementation of this task was very positive, as students had a lot of opportunities to communicate with each other in English, they apply their English knowledge to carry out the task successfully, and they all enjoyed the game.

4.2. Zoo game

4.2.1. General observations

This game took me only one lesson to carry it out and I only gave them one questionnaire to complete after finishing the game. Regarding the implementation of this game, I would like to mention, that they all enjoyed it as well, and they liked the idea of guessing their partners pictures.

Before starting to play the game in groups, I hold a picture of an animal they could not see and I ask the whole class to ask me questions to guess it, so that I could notice if they were able to ask questions and if they needed help in doing so. While they were asking me questions, I wrote them down in the blackboard, including the affirmative answer and the negative one, so that they had them there to support them if they needed help.

They were able to make questions although they used to change the word order of the sentence. However, there were questions such as "How many...?" or "Can it ...?" that they did not think of, so I guided them pointing to parts of my body for example "legs", and I asked them how they should ask if they wanted to know the number of legs of the animal, or miming actions like "fly" and I asked them how they are going to ask a question if they wanted to know if the animal was able to fly.

I did this activity with them so that it was easier to explain the game afterwards; I kind of explained it by playing it with the whole class. Later I told them that they had to take turns and keep asking questions to their partners in order to guess their animals.

4.2.2. Analyzing the outcomes

While playing the game, some students asked me how to ask specific questions, and I told them the question and pointed to the blackboard so that they could read it from there. However, most students did not seek for help, as they either look at the blackboard or asked the question as they thought. It is important to stress that while I was listening to them, as a whole they did not formulate the questions properly, as they asked questions such as: "Is it fly?" or "It's got wings?" Since asking questions is a complicated aspect of language that takes them time to acquire. However, even they

did not formulate the questions correctly they were able to perfectly understand each other and communicate effectively.

Another aspect to emphasize regarding the game implementation is the high decrease of use of L1 by students. If we have a look at the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires provided below:

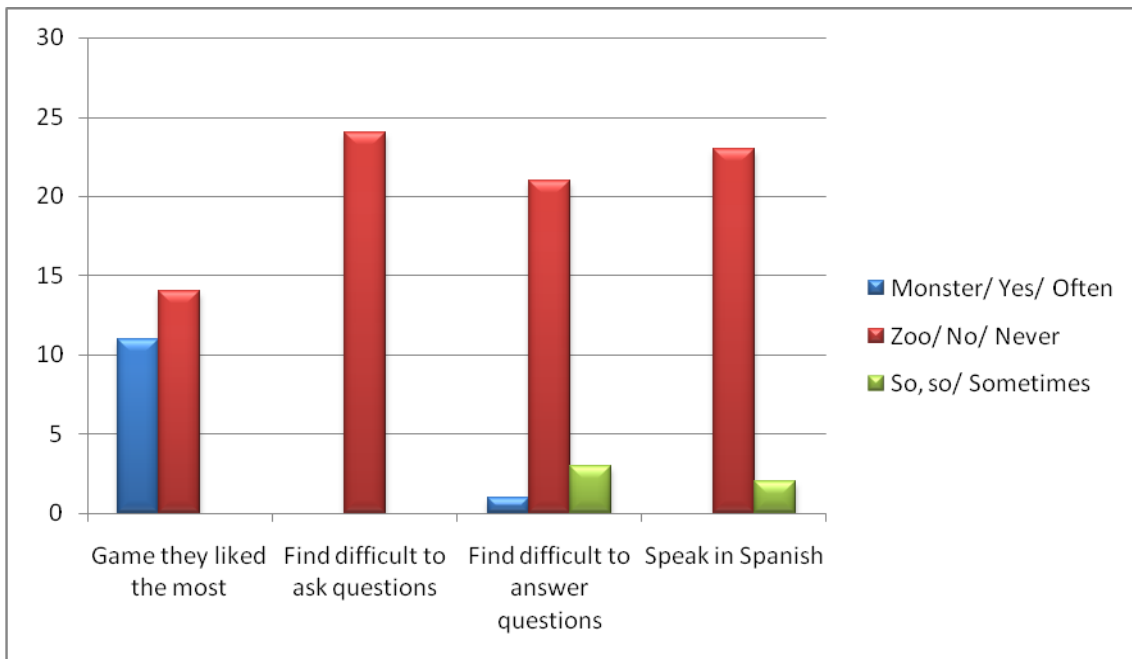


Figure 16. Results self-evaluation questionnaires zoo game

We can see that in this game 23 students reported they had never spoken in Spanish and only 2 of them said they had sometimes spoken in Spanish. This differs a lot from the Monster's game, where most of students reported they had sometimes spoken in Spanish and 7 of them said they had spoken often. We can infer that this is due to the task grouping and the way students were placed, rather than to the difficulty of the task or the lack of students' knowledge of the vocabulary or structures necessary to the task completion. As I have previously stated, in the previous game students used the L1 mainly to make sure they had understood their partner's descriptions, or to ask them to repeat specific utterances they had not heard due to the classroom "noise". Thus, in the zoo game, they did not need to use the L1 for such purposes as they could perfectly see each other's expressions and understand them, as they were facing each other.

In fact, the language needed to complete this task was more challenging for students as they had to keep asking questions, which has been proven to be more difficult for them than to describe pictures. However, they used their L2 knowledge to complete the task successfully, even though they did not formulate the questions properly.

We can then suggest that regarding the use of L1, it is more important that students are placed in a way that they can perfectly understand each other; rather than the level of difficulty of the structures and vocabulary necessary for the task completion.

As a whole, we can conclude that the task implementation was very positive as students spoke a lot less in Spanish making an effort to formulate the questions and answers in English; they also enjoyed playing the game and they were autonomous enough to carry it out on their own with little or no support from the teacher.

CONCLUSIONES Y CUESTIONES ABIERTAS

Podemos concluir este apartado poniendo de manifiesto la poca dedicación que ha recibido tradicionalmente la práctica del lenguaje oral en el contexto de las clases de inglés como segunda lengua, donde la importancia radicaba en el aspecto gramatical de la lengua. Esta visión está respaldada por los resultados poco satisfactorios del alumnado español en competencia oral obtenidos en un estudio del Estudio Europeo de Competencia lingüística en 2011.

Como alternativa a este respecto, se ha propuesto a lo largo del trabajo la utilización de un enfoque basado en tareas, o TBLT. La utilización de este enfoque está apoyada por numerosos estudios que muestran la importancia de la interacción y la producción oral (*oral output*) en la adquisición del lenguaje para los y las estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua. En este contexto, entendemos la utilización de tareas comunicativas en la clase de inglés no solo como meta final que alcanzar con el objetivo de evidenciar la adquisición de la lengua inglesa en los alumnos y alumnas; sino también como medio a través del cual esta adquisición tiene lugar. Es decir, las tareas comunicativas forman parte del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés y no constituyen exclusivamente el resultado final del mismo.

Desde esta perspectiva y en relación con la competencia comunicativa que se incluye en el currículo, el objetivo de las tareas que se han propuesto reside en alcanzar un objetivo común a los participantes para el cual deben interactuar utilizando un lenguaje funcional y significativo. Además tanto en el marco teórico del trabajo como en la propuesta metodológica de las tareas se promueve un aprendizaje autónomo del alumnado, apoyado por los diversos enfoques teóricos de la autonomía, los niveles de implementación en la clase propuestos por Nunan (1997) y la competencia en autonomía e iniciativa personal reflejada en el currículo de Educación Primaria. Por otra parte, el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje se ha centrado en el/la alumno/a, teniendo éste/a un papel activo y protagonista de su proceso de aprendizaje. Además, se ha tenido en cuenta el aprendizaje desde la perspectiva social, favoreciendo la interacción entre iguales a través de tareas realizadas en grupos y parejas. A su vez,

estas tareas fomentan la cooperación y trabajo en grupo de los estudiantes, así como la creatividad, motivación y actitud positiva frente al aprendizaje del inglés.

Por otra parte, a la hora de diseñar las distintas tareas, se han incluido en primer lugar en el marco teórico las diferentes modalidades de tareas que existen y las características y efectos de las mismas sobre la producción de los alumnos y alumnas.

Es por ello que se ha optado por diseñar juegos de la tipología “*information gap task*” y “*jigsaw*”; dado que según un estudio elaborado por Kris Van der Branden, Martin Bygate y John M. Norris (2009) son las tareas que más efectivas resultan en relación con las oportunidades que proporcionan al alumnado para buscar “*input*” o comprensión y para modificar el “*output*” o producción a la hora de comunicarse.

Además, a través de la implementación de dos de las tareas diseñadas en un aula de 2º de Educación Primaria, se ha podido demostrar los beneficios que aportan las mismas al aprendizaje de una segunda lengua; dentro de los cuales destacan los siguientes: eficacia de los alumnos y alumnas en el desarrollo de las tareas, aumento significativo del lenguaje oral producido en la segunda lengua, cooperación y participación en grupo, alumnos/as de nivel más bajo se benefician de trabajar en grupos con niveles heterogéneos, fomento de la autonomía en el alumnado, utilización de estructuras gramaticales y vocabulario de la segunda lengua por parte de los alumnos y alumnas, y como aspecto más destacable podemos señalar la motivación, participación activa y disfrute de las tareas por parte de los alumnos y alumnas.

Por último, cabe añadir que a la hora de poner en práctica de manera satisfactoria este enfoque basado en tareas comunicativas en el aula, es primordial que el profesorado tenga en primer lugar la base teórica y los conocimientos prácticos necesarios para la implementación de las tareas, y en segundo lugar las herramientas y soportes adecuados para la elaboración y aplicación de las mismas durante su práctica docente.

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ANEXOS

Table 11. Encuestas aprendizaje de la lengua oral

TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO	
Edad: _____	Género: Mujer Hombre
<i>Rodea:</i> Nivel de inglés en la actualidad: A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2	
En tu experiencia del aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa valora en una escala del 1 al 5 la importancia que ha recibido la práctica del lenguaje ORAL.	<i>1= muy poco 2= poco 3= medio 4= bastante 5= mucho</i> <i>Rodea:</i> 1 2 3 4 5
¿Cuántos años has dedicado al aprendizaje del inglés?	<i>Rodea:</i> Menos de 10 De 10 a 15 Más de 15
¿Crees que se corresponde el tiempo dedicado al aprendizaje del inglés con tu capacidad para comunicarte eficazmente en el idioma?	<i>Rodea:</i> SI NO QUIZÁS