DIDÁCTICA DEL INGLÉS

Leyre GIL URRA

TASK-BASED INTERACTION: THE TANGRAM PUZZLE

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Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
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Grado en Maestro de Educación Primaria /
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Trabajo Fin de Grado
Gradu Bukaerako Lana

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Estudiante / Ikaslea
Leyre GIL URRA

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Grado / Gradu
Grado en Maestro en Educación Primaria / Lehen Hezkuntzako Irakasleen Gradua

Centro / Ikastegia
Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales / Giza eta Gizarte Zientzien Fakultatea
Universidad Pública de Navarra / Nafarroako Unibertsitate Publikoa

Director-a / Zuzendaria
Amparo LAZARO IBARROLA

Departamento / Saila
Departamento de Filología y Didáctica de la Lengua / Filologia eta Hizkuntzaren Didaktika Saila

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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 disciplinares 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.

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En este trabajo, el módulo *de formación básica* sirve para enmarcar las características que tienen los alumnos a la hora de adquirir conocimientos en la segunda lengua. Gracias a las teorías psicológicas y pedagógicas podemos entender las fases en las que está dividido este aprendizaje. Además gracias a la formación básica de este Grado ha sido posible hacer un breve recorrido por dos de las teorías más importantes en la historia de la Educación, tal y como queda reflejado en el punto "*Developments of language teaching in schools*" (ver página 11) y a lo largo del trabajo en el que uno de los mayores objetivos es lograr un aprendizaje enmarcado en la teoría Constructivista.

El módulo *didáctico y disciplinar* ha permitido que la propuesta didáctica creada tenga una vinculación con los contendidos del currículo de Primaria. Estos contendidos son una de las bases a través de la cual la propuesta ha podido ser diseñada. Al ser una propuesta de carácter adaptable a los tres ciclos de primaria, en el trabajo han sido señalados los contendidos correspondientes a los tres ciclos. Además de ser una propuesta adaptable también es una propuesta multidisciplinar, en la que podemos encontrarnos contenidos de Lengua extranjera, de Educación artística y de Matemáticas. Por tanto, aunque la mayor vinculación con el módulo didáctico sea a través de la Didáctica de la lengua extrajera, también lo es a través de Didáctica de la Educación Artística y de la Didáctica de las Matemáticas

Asimismo, el módulo *practicum* ha sido el módulo gracias al cual se pueden observar las necesidades de los alumnos hoy en día y en la práctica. Por tanto, el *practicum* me ha permitido desarrollar una propuesta de este tipo en la que el mayor objetivo es que los alumnos interactúen dentro de la clase de inglés. En el módulo didáctico y disciplinar la interacción en el aula de inglés es un contenido básico, pero en el práctica es algo que no se encuentra fácilmente. Así pues, esta propuesta quiere resolver ese problema dando la oportunidad a los alumnos de que interactúen dentro del aula.

Por último, el módulo *optativo* de mención en inglés me ha permitido adquirir conocimientos más específicos sobre las teorías de la enseñanza del inglés, y sobre cómo se debería llevar a cabo esta misma. Además gracias a este módulo he podido

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perfeccionar mis propios conocimientos en la lengua inglesa, demostrándolos en la escritura y defensa de este trabajo.

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 "1.2. Sentido y vinculación con los contenidos del Grado de Maestro en Primaria" y "2.1. Sentido y vinculación con el currículo de Primaria", así como el preceptivo resumen que aparece en el siguiente apartado.

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Abstract

The present project must by its objectives analyse of the Task-based Language Teaching approach used in the classroom, as well as present a brief summary of the developments of language teaching taking place in schools as task-based language teaching eventually becomes the kind of learning which would be promoted among second language learners. For this purpose, this project has been based on the theoretical foundations of authors like Seedhouse (1999), Byate (2000), Ogilvie and Dunn (2010), and Willis (1996). Taking into consideration the above methodology framed within the Constructivist theory, a feasible task has been created which can be accomplished in an actual classroom. The aim is for language to be used as a tool in order to achieve a final outcome. The use of the tangram is a particularly appropriate tool for achieving this goal as it allows students to work creatively with tangible objects and facilitates interaction and conversation among partners and groups.

Keywords: Constructivist theory; Task-based; language; interaction; tangram puzzle; creativity.

Resumen

El siguiente trabajo tiene como objetivo el análisis del método *Task-based Language Teaching* usado dentro del aula. Además de este análisis se presenta un breve resumen de la evolución de la enseñanza del inglés en la escuela antes de que el enfoque Task-based language teaching empezase a ser considerado como el método que se debe llevar a cabo dentro de las aulas de inglés. Por ello, este trabajo ha sido basado en las bases teóricas de autores como Seedhouse (1999), Byate (2000), Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) y Willis (1996). Teniendo en cuenta las teorías anteriores y enmarcándolas en la teoría Constructivista, se ha creado una tarea viable que puede llevarse a cabo en las clases de inglés de hoy en día. El objetivo de esta tarea es que el lenguaje sea usado como una herramienta para llegar a un fin. El uso del tangram como base para adquirir este fin permite a los estudiantes trabajar de una manera creativa con objetos tangibles que facilitan la conversación y la interacción entre compañeros.

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Palabras clave: Teoría Constructivista, Task-based, lenguaje, interacción, tangram, creatividad.

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Indice

Introducción

Tal y como dijo B. Franklin "dime y lo olvido, enséñame y lo recuerdo, involúcrame y lo aprendo". En este trabajo uno de los factores más importantes es el papel de los alumnos, ellos son el elemento clave en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y por tanto los protagonistas de él. El esta propuesta, el docente va a ser la herramienta facilitadora, que ofrezca a los alumnos unos conocimientos con los que ellos van a poder experimentar y trabajar.

La propuesta didáctica que se ha creado tiene como objetivo final proporcionar oportunidades a los alumnos para que puedan utilizar la lengua que están aprendiendo. De esta forma, los alumnos podrán adquirir conocimientos de la segunda lengua de una manera significativa y darse cuenta de su gran utilidad.

Esta propuesta no solo va a estar enmarcada en el ámbito del inglés, sino que se quiere extender a más áreas, como matemáticas y Educación Artística, con el fin de conseguir un aprendizaje integrado de las lenguas.

El aprendizaje a base de tareas, en este caso a base de la tarea del tangram, va a ser útil para motivar a los alumnos y para que despierte en ellos un interés por el aprendizaje de la segunda lengua.

Por tanto, trasladar esta propuesta didáctica al aula puede ser muy beneficiosa para los alumnos.

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1. ANTECEDENTS AND GOALS

1.1. Introduction and proposal

The proposal which is going to be developed is focused around a tangram puzzle. Using this puzzle, the aim of this task is to give the students the chance to interact with each other at the same moment they are reviewing or even learning new concepts. Thus, the task will provide chances or oral interaction among students and will also enhance the acquisition of different contents. The students will work in pairs or in small groups of three to four people.

Due to the lack of opportunities the students have to interact in English, even in the English class, this proposal wants to offers a way to improve this situation. One of the most important features in a second language acquisition is the interaction with others, and the level of the language acquisition will be based on it.

Apart from this goal, the task has specific purposes. The teacher could change them depending on the level of English the students have, or on what he or she is aiming to achieve. Hence, the goal of this task could be changed and therefore the difficulty of the task could be adapted.

If the lack of oral interactions is quite important, the lack of oral interactions among peers is nearly impossible to find in an English class. This task will introduce not only English as a second language, but also as it can be used in Mathematics, and Art and Crafts. This cross-curricular task will develop English as a second language as its main objective, although in addition it will focus on multiples intelligences following Gardner, H. and his theory of multiples intelligences this proposal will introduce: the logical-mathematical, the spatial, the bodily-kinesthetic, and of course the interpersonal and the linguistic as main assignments.

This task will be accomplished in an Elementary school in where English is taught as a second language, so the students have an English session once a week. As it has been outlined before, the level could be easily adapted depending on the specific goal of the

task and on its own difficulty. Therefore, it could vary and could be used in various levels and in various ways.

1.2. Sentido y vinculación con los contenidos del Grado de Maestro en Primaria

This project has some general competences which the student teachers have to reach at the end of our studies.

1.2.1 Competencias generales del Grado

El Grado de Magisterio Primaria tiene unas competencias generales que están especificadas en el documento "Memoria de Grado" (http://unavarra.es). Estas competencias deben ser adquiridas al finalizar el Grado de Maestro de Primaria. Han sido organizadas en tres grupos bajo mi criterio las he agrupado según su tipología. Las competencias que van a ser desarrolladas son las siguientes:

- Grupo 1:

  1. G01 Conocer las áreas curriculares de la Educación Primaria, la relación interdisciplinar entre ellas y los criterios de evaluación

  2. G02 Conocer y aplicar el cuerpo de conocimientos didácticos en torno a los procedimientos de enseñanza y aprendizaje respectivos.

  3. G02 Diseñar, planificar y evaluar procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, tanto individualmente como en colaboración con otros docentes y profesionales del centro.

  4. G16 Observar y reflexionar sobre las prácticas de aula, describiéndolas y explicándolas con referencia a conocimientos psicopedagógicos y disciplinares pertinentes, para innovar y mejorar la labor docente.

  5. G19 Comprender la función, las posibilidades y los límites de la educación en la sociedad actual.

  6. G22 Organizar la enseñanza-aprendizaje de contenidos desde una perspectiva de desarrollo de competencias. Trabajar a partir de las

representaciones del alumnado y de los errores y obstáculos en el aprendizaje

7. G23 Adquirir una visión longitudinal de los objetivos de la enseñanza en el conjunto de la educación infantil y primaria, asumiendo que la evaluación periódica de las competencias del alumnado es un indicador empírico privilegiado para el análisis de la progresión de su aprendizaje y para la toma de decisiones de intervención por el profesorado.

Estas competencias tienen que ser adquiridas al finalizar el Grado para poder tener clara cuál es la función docente y para llevar a cabo una buena organización y planificación dentro del aula.

- Grupo 2:

    1. G08 Estimular y valorar el esfuerzo, la constancia y la disciplina personal en los alumnos

    2. G17 Adquirir hábitos y destrezas para el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo y promoverlo entre los alumnos.

    3. G21 Mostrar actitudes coherentes con las concepciones éticas y deontológicas, respetando y fomentando los valores democráticos y de cultura de paz, la no discriminación de personas con discapacidad, la accesibilidad universal y el diseño para todos.

    4. G24 Fomentar la motivación y el deseo de aprender, con una acogida afectiva al alumnado.

    5. G25 Desarrollar la cooperación entre estudiantes y formas simples de enseñanza mutua.

Estas competencias están relacionadas no sólo con los contenidos conceptuales sino con los procedimentales y actitudinales. Tan importante es transmitir a los alumnos conceptos como valorar individualmente su participación el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

- Grupo 3:

1. G11 Asumir que el ejercicio de la función docente ha de ir perfeccionándose y adaptándose a los cambios científicos, pedagógicos y sociales a lo largo de la vida.

2. G30 Entender la actividad docente como un ámbito de experimentación e investigación propio.

Estas competencias están relacionadas con la propia función del docente. Hay que ser conscientes que en esta profesión hay que renovarse continuamente para estar acorde con los cambios que van surgiendo en la sociedad. Por tanto, no podemos quedarnos con la adquisición de estas competencias sino que hay que ir adquiriendo nuevas con el paso del tiempo.

- Grupo 4:

1. G29 Fomentar en el alumnado el uso de técnicas funcionales y contextuales de expresión oral y escrita, tanto en su lengua materna como en una lengua segunda.

2. G04 Abordar con eficacia situaciones de aprendizaje de lenguas en contextos multiculturales y plurilingües.

Estas competencias son las que están relacionadas con el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas, siendo el objetivo de este proyecto. No sólo hay que intentar que los alumnos adquieran una segunda lengua sino que también hay que introducirles nuevos contextos en los que las puedan desarrollar y ver su uso real.

1.2.2. Competencias específicas de las asignaturas relacionadas con este proyecto del Grado

Además de las competencias generales de Grado es necesario destacar las competencias específicas de las asignaturas del mismo que son necesarias para el buen desarrollo de este proyecto en el aula. Estas competencias son comportamientos observables que están relacionados con el uso de conceptos, teorías o con las habilidades típicas del Grado de Maestro.

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Al ser un proyecto multidisciplinar, las áreas que son necesarias para tener un control y desarrollar este proyecto son: Educación Artística, Matemáticas, Didáctica del Inglés y Lengua inglesa. Por tanto, estas son las competencias específicas necesarias:

- Educación Artística I:

  1. Conocer y usar procedimientos, técnicas y materiales, propios de la creación en artes, a un nivel suficiente para su aplicación en las actividades propias de la educación primaria

- Matemáticas y su didáctica II

  1. Adquirir competencia geométrica y utilizar la Geometría como modelo matemático del espacio real.

  2. Adquirir habilidades de representación y comunicación en diversos registros de problemas geométricos y de su resolución.

- Educación artística II

  1. Conocer contenidos propios de la educación artística para esta etapa y distribuirlos adecuadamente en la programación y en las actividades.

  2. Usar los escenarios propios de la creación y exhibición de las artes como recurso para la acción formativa.

- Didáctica del idioma extranjero

  1. Conocer los objetivos, contenidos curriculares y criterios de evaluación del área de Lengua Extranjera de la Educación Primaria.

  2. Abordar con eficacia situaciones de aprendizaje de lenguas en contextos multiculturales y multilingües.

  3. Adquirir y saber aplicar los principios que rigen el Tratamiento Integrado de las Lenguas

  4. Adquirir un compromiso de aprendizaje y mejora continua del idioma.

  5. Adquirir una actitud positiva hacia las lenguas.

6. Adquirir un conocimiento básico de la didáctica de la lengua extranjera en la educación infantil y aplicar dicho conocimiento a través del desarrollo de proyectos.

- Proyectos de aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lengua extranjera

    1. Adquirir un conocimiento básico del *Aprendizaje Integrado de Lengua y Contenidos* (CLIL *Content and Language Integrated Learning*) y aplicar dicho conocimiento a través del desarrollo de proyectos específicos para Educación Primaria.

- Intensificación en lenguas y clil: lengua extranjera

    1. Ser capaz de elaborar proyectos didácticos interdisciplinares centrados en la Educación Primaria y dentro del marco del Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

2.1. Sentido y vinculación con el currículo de Primaria:

El carácter multidisciplinar del proyecto hace que lo tengamos que vincular con los contenidos del currículo de las tres asignaturas que están vinculadas en él. Además, al ser fácilmente adaptable a los tres ciclos de primaria los contenidos, según el BOE (13972 ORDEN ECI/2211/2007), corresponderán a los tres ciclos.

2.1.1. Inglés

- Contenidos comunes a los tres ciclos de Primaria:

Los siguientes contenidos son comunes a los tres ciclos, aunque se puede encontrar alguna ampliación en los ciclos superiores.

1. Interacción oral en situaciones reales o simuladas a través de respuestas verbales y no verbales de uso frecuente en las rutinas de comunicación.

2. Desarrollo de estrategias básicas para apoyar la comprensión y expresión oral: uso del contexto visual, gestual y verbal y de los conocimientos previos sobre el tema o la situación transferidos desde las lenguas que conoce a la lengua extranjera.

3. Valoración de la lengua extranjera como instrumento para comunicarse.

4. Actitud de cooperación y de respeto en situaciones de aprendizaje compartido.

5. Actitud de la valoración y respeto de las normas que rigen la interacción oral (turnos de palabra, volumen de voz y ritmo adecuado).

6. Uso de algunos aspectos elementales fonéticos, de ritmo, de acentuación y entonación, para la comprensión y para la producción oral.

7. Confianza en la propia capacidad para aprender una lengua extranjera y gusto por el trabajo cooperativo.

- Contenidos añadidos en segundo ciclo y comunes a los de tercer ciclo:

  1. Escucha y compresión de mensajes orales de progresiva complejidad, como instrucciones o explicaciones e interacciones orales o grabaciones en soporte audiovisual e informático para extraer información global y de algún detalle concreto.

  2. Actitud favorable para superar las dificultades que surgen habitualmente en la comunicación, en parte debido al conocimiento limitado de la lengua extranjera, utilizando recursos lingüísticos y no lingüísticos y estrategias de comunicación de las lenguas que conoce.

  3. Reflexión sobre el propio aprendizaje y aceptación del error como parte del proceso.

- Contenido añadido en tercer ciclo:

  1. Uso funcional progresivamente autónomo de algunas formas y estructuras básicas propias de la lengua extranjera, previamente utilizadas: pedir aclaraciones y explicaciones; hablar y conversar sobre temas familiares; hacer descripciones sencillas de objetos, lugares y personas y estados de ánimo; componer diálogos; realizar exposiciones sencillas sobre conocimientos diversos; narrar historias y sucesos familiares, preparar y realizar entrevistas y cuestionarios siguiendo modelos.

2.1.2. Educación Artística

- Contenidos de primer ciclo:

  1. Experimentación con distintos tipos de línea: curva, recta, horizontal, vertical, oblicua, ondulada, quebrada.

  2. Exploración de las líneas que delimitan contornos y del espacio que delimita la forma abierta, cerrada, plana y en volumen.

- Contenidos de segundo ciclo:

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1. Experimentación de las posibilidades de representación con líneas, fina, gruesa, continua, discontinua, geométrica.

2. Experimentación de las dimensiones y proporciones de la forma en diferentes posiciones.

3. Construcción de móviles, estructuras y volúmenes.

- Contenidos de tercer ciclo:

1. Representación con distinta intencionalidad de formas abiertas y cerradas y de sus límites, contornos y superficies.

2. Elección de técnicas instrumentos y materiales de acuerdo con sus características y con el fin para el que se destinan.

2.1.3. Matemáticas

- Contenidos de primer ciclo:

1. Formas planas y espaciales.

2. Las figuras y sus elementos. Percepción de formas y tamaños e identificación de figuras planas (círculos, cuadrados, triángulos y rectángulos) en objetos y espacios cotidianos.

3. Formación de figuras planas y cuerpos geométricos a partir de otras por composición y descomposición.

4. Búsqueda de elementos de regularidad en figuras y cuerpos a partir de la manipulación de objetos.

- Contenidos de segundo ciclo:

1. Formas planas y espaciales

2. Identificación de figuras planas y espaciales en la vida cotidiana.

3. Clasificación de polígonos de hasta seis lados

4. Construcción de figuras geométricas planas a partir de datos y utilizando materiales diversos, y de cuerpos geométricos a partir de un desarrollo. Exploración de formas geométricas elementales y vértices.

5. Formación de figuras planas y cuerpos geométricos a partir de otras por composición y descomposición de figuras más complejas.

- Contenidos de tercer ciclo:

1. Formas planas y espaciales.

2. Formación de figuras planas y cuerpos geométricos a partir de otras por composición y descomposición.

2.2. State of the art

2.2.1. Developments of language teaching in schools:

The approaches used for teaching second languages have changed over the last years in order to improve their results. Some years ago, and unfortunately we will see that this situation still exists in many English classrooms, the approach used was the traditional one. This approach focuses on the Behaviourism theory, led by Skinner. Skinner was a psychologist, author, inventor and social philosopher. He invented the operant conditioning chamber (also known as Skinner Box). This psychologist sought to understand behaviour as a function of environmental histories of reinforcing consequences. His theory has three basic elements: discriminatory stimulus, answer and intensifier. For the behaviourists language is acquired as some other behaviour, following two principles: controlling the conditions in the environment, and raising and reinforcing the behaviours of proximity with the adult language. This theory is only focused on stimulus and answers, thus they think of the student as a passive recipient and they do not give any importance to creativity.

The problem is that teacher education programs are still based on traditional practices (Freeman, 1996) in the form of the 'tell, show, guide' model of education (Myers, 2002). This approach has a restrictive effect on professional development and, of course, on student's improvement, considering that they cannot make any inference because they need to follow the model. This approach has its emphasis on explicit

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grammatical instruction and a syllabus organized around linguistic forms. (Ogilvie, Dunn, 2010, 164)

'The traditional approach to teaching – the transmission model – promotes neither the interaction between prior and new knowledge not the conversations that are necessary for internalization and deep understanding. The information, if acquired at all, is usually not well integrated with other knowledge held by the students' Richardson (1997, p.3).

Becoming aware of the weakness of the traditional approach, a new Constructivist-based approach was adopted which takes knowledge and experiences as the starting point in teacher preparation (Edwards, 1996; Winitzky & Kauchuk, 1997; Richardson, 2003). Such an approach would promote professional development through the explicit analysis of personal practical knowledge (Golombek, 1998; Tsang, 2004) and the critical analysis of theoretical knowledge (Gass, 1995), translating it to the students in the English classroom. According to Tiellma (2004, p. 143), teachers would be prepared with a scaffolding with 'adequate' reflective conceptions before engaging in the immediacy and pressures of classroom teaching.

The constructivist nature of the new approach involves stating students' own prior knowledge and experiences while promoting the analysis of their tacit assumptions in relation to second language pedagogy and the concepts introduced in the class (Ogilvie, Dunn, 2010). In fact, the student's teachers who learn with this approach have a positive influence on their disposition towards innovation in order to implement it in their classrooms.

2.2.2. Task-based language teaching (henceforth TBLT):

Framed in this Constructivist theory and as Johnoson (1979) argued, methodologies should be based not only on *linguistic* insights focused on the knowledge of language, but also on *psycholinguistic* insights as to the process involved in its use (1979:198). This author insisted that this is the reason why fluency in communicative process can only be developed within "task-oriented teaching". This task-orientated teaching provides the students with "actual meaning" by focusing on the task to be mediated through language.

Task-based language teaching represents innovation at the philosophical and methodological levels, following Ogilvie & Dunn (2010). At the philosophical level, task-based language teaching views second language acquisition as a process which is not directly influenced by formal instruction but is encouraged through the meaningful use of language. Whereas, at the methodological level, this approach encourages students to act as language users rather than simply learners.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), TBLT has evolved into a trend in second language acquisition, as has been outlined before, the history of second language teaching methodology has seen a shift away from methods in isolation towards a focus on classroom interaction as the most vital element in second language teaching (Seedhouse, 1999).

- Defining task:

"The central component of TBLT, namely the task, has been defined in the literature in many different ways, though there is general agreement that task are language learning activities that are focused on meaning (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1998), that involve a clear goal or outcome (e.g. Breen, 1987; Ellis, 2003; Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996), and that reflect how language is used in 'authentic' non-pedagogical context (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Long, 1985; Skehan, 1998)". (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, 162).

There are too many definitions of task, but every clarification states that tasks involve language in order to achieve an outcome rather than focus on the language which has been used in the process. As argued by Seedhouse (1999) and as the goal of TBLT the learners must communicate and interact with their classmates so as to accomplish a task. The teacher and the students should be focused on the accomplishment of the task rather than on the language used. This approach is a very active one, thus the students are "stimulated to mobilise all their linguistic resources, and push their linguistic knowledge" (Seedhouse, 1999, 154) to the limit in order to achieve the outcome. Although, additionally as Willis (1996) stated, it is the challenge of achieving this outcome that makes TBLT a motivating procedure among the students.

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Therefore, if tasks are considered as a key tool for promoting a particular approach to language learning and teaching, as argued by Bygate (2000), "a range of task is more important for successful learning than seeking to identify an ideal combination of teaching procedures". Hence, the selection of appropiate and relevant task has been viewed as central to the design and implementation of specific types of syllabus, as stated by Bygate (2000).

According to Breen (1987) the task-based syllabus:

> '... approaches communicative knowledge as a unified system wherein any use of the new language requires the learner to continually match choices from his or her linguistic repertoire to the social requirements and expectations governing communicative behaviour and to meanings and ideas he wishes to share'.

Thus, students need to feel free to experiment with language and to take risks. Fluency in communication is what counts. As argued by Willis (1996), learners need to accept their mistakes in a positive way, to treat them as a normal part of the learning process. The teacher should explain to the students that it is better for them to risk getting something wrong, than not to say anything. If their message is understood and they have reached their goal, they have been successful.

- Criterial features of a task:

Ellis (2003) in his book *Task-based language learning and teaching,* claimed six criterial features of a task with which the concept of task is completed framed in the TBLT approach.

1. A task is a workplan: a task establishes a plan for learner activity.

2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning: "a task seeks to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language" (Ellis, 2003, 9).

3. A task involves real-world processes of language use: the language activities will reflect situations that occur in real-world communication.

4. A task can involve any of the four language skills: "(1) listen to or read a text and display their understanding, (2) produce an oral or written text,

or (3) employ a combination of receptive and productive skills. A task may require dialogic or monologic language use". (Ellis, 2003, 10).

5. A task engages cognitive process: this approach requires learners to use cognitive processes such as selecting, classifying, ordering or reasoning.

6. A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome: this outcome would be the goal of the taks.

- Types of tasks:

According to Willis (1996) there are six main types of tasks that could be adapted for use with almost any topic:

1. Listing: the processes involved are: Brainstorming and fact-finding in which students find things out by asking each other. The outcome would be the completed list for instance.

2. Ordering and sorting: these tasks involve four processes: sequencing items, ranking items according to a specified criteria, organising items under given headings and classifying items in different ways, where the categories themselves are not given.

3. Comparing: These tasks involve comparing information of a similar nature but from different sources in order to identify common points or different points.

4. Problem solving: these type of task are engaging and satisfying for solve to the students. The processes will vary depending on the type and complexity of the problem.

5. Sharing personal experiences: these types are not as directly goal-oriented as in the other types, but students are more free in the interaction.

6. Creative task: This type could be more open and complex, tending to have more stages than other tasks and involving combinations of task types.

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- Language used on tasks:

As has been outlined before, focusing on language is not the main goal of this approach, thus language can be considered "the vehicle for attaching task goals, but the emphasis is on meaning and communication, not on producing language form correctly" (Willis, 1996, 25).

In task-based language teaching we can find spontaneous language and planned language. The kind of language will depend on the task the students are given, the type of task, closed or open, the audience who will listen to the task or depending on the circumstances of communication. Additionally, predicted language forms can be found. Willis (1996) stated that with experience it may be possible to predict some of the forms that may occur in closed tasks, although in more open task it is virtually impossible to do so. Formulaes such as 'Can I have a...?' 'Has the woman/man in your picture got a...?' 'Is there a... in your picture?' are quite common in tasks in which the speakers cannot see each other's pictures.

- Comparing TBLT and "Presentation, Practice, Production model" (henceforth PPP

Despite the fact that the task is the base of TBLT, it is also used in others approaches although not in the same way. Hence, Ellis (2003) proposed the terms 'task-based' and 'task-supported' as a way of distinguishing TBLT from approaches that use task primarily as a means of practicing linguistic forms after they have been taught. Task-based language teaching differs from task-based support because this last approach is based in a Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model.

According to Willis (1996), the PPP model begins with the presentation and practice of a small sample of language, and the teacher emphasizes on the correct use of the new form. After this, the students are given the chance to produce the new form in a 'free' situation. Hence, PPP as a second language teaching approach makes emphasis on explicit grammatical instruction and a syllabus organized around linguistic forms. "Unfortunately, the PPP cycle restricts the learner's experience of language by focusing on a single item. By relying on exercises that encourage habit formation, it may

actually discourage learners from thinking about language and working things out for themselves" (Willis, 1996, 135).

As Willis (1996) asserts, TBLT offers a holistic language experience where learners carry out a communication task, using the language they have learnt from other previous lessons. The teacher in this approach is a helper, always keeping the key conditions for learning in mind. Thus, the TBLT framework provides the three basic conditions for language learning: exposure, use and motivation. With TBLT there is a natural progression from the holistic (conception of the reality as a whole) to the specific.
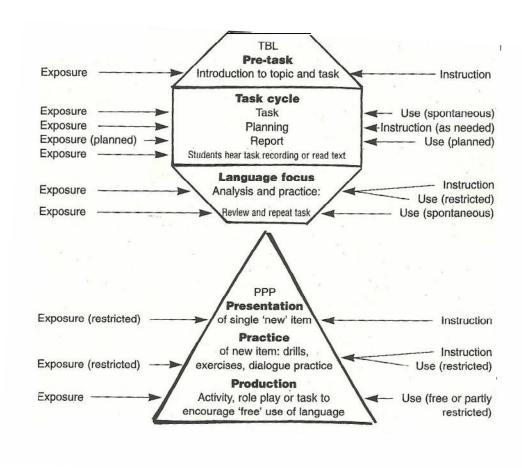

Figure 1: Comparing PPP and TBLT (Willis, 1996, 135)

Regarding this diagram we can assume that the TBLT framework consists of three phases: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. "The pre-task phase introduces the class to the topic and the task, activating topic-related words and phases. The task cycle offers learners the chance to use whatever language they already know in order

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to carry out the task, and then to improve that language, under teacher guidance, while planning their reports of the task. (...) The last phase in the framework, language focus, allows a closer study of some of the specific features naturally occurring in the language used during the task cycle.

- Advantages from using tasks for second language learners (Willis, 1996)

  1. Learners feel confidence trying out the language they know, without fear of being wrong or being corrected in front of the class.

  2. The lack of spontaneous interaction that the second language classrooms had will be covered by TBLT

  3. It gives all learners chances to practise negotiating turns to speak, answering questions, and reacting to other's contributions.

  4. It engages learners in using language concentrating on building meaning as main goal.

  5. Learners will acquire some discourse skills through the interaction which is needed in TBLT.

  6. It gives learners more chance to try out communication strategies.

- Interaction:

TBLT tasks promote interaction among students. Thus, we will devote this section to analyse the value of interaction.

"In the mid-1990s, researchers began to move beyond suggestions in which interaction might be useful in L2 learning and toward demonstrating empirically that it was, in fact, useful" (Mackey & Gass, 2006, 170). Mackey's (1999) study of English as a second language (ESL) question formation showed that active participation in interaction was associated with learning, and Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki (1994) likewise showed positive effects for interaction.

Obviously, as has been developed in this project, interaction is a key factor in TBLT, which according to Seedhouse (1999) it is the most vital element in the instructed second language learning process.

It has been studied that conversational interaction facilitated second language learning because students receive comprehensible input and interactional feedback from their partners. Thus, students are obliged to make changes in their input and 'negotiate the meaning' of the terms they do not understand.

Gass and Mackey (1999) illustrated that the interaction includes elements of an *hypothesis* (and idea that needs to be tested about a single phenomenon), elements of a *model* (a description of a process or a set of processes that comprise a phenomenon), and elements of a *theory* (a set of statements about natural phenomena that explains why events occur the way they do).

The feedback that takes place in the interaction, has been referred to as the information students receive from their partners. Feedback in this approach includes confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks.

- Confirmation checks are done in order to elicit information that has been correctly heard or understood by the speaker at this moment.

- Clarifications requests are done in order to elicit a clarification of information the speaker has not understood.

- Comprehension check is done in order to prevent any misunderstanding in the communicative process.

2.2.3. Limitations to TBLT

Despite all these advantages that have been specified in this project, "applied linguistics have identified a number of issues that inhibit the application of task-based principles to classroom settings" (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, 163). Most likely the main problem within TBLT is that teachers' conceptions need to be changed. Hence, "adopting TBLT would require not only a change in teaching practices but also a shift in teachers' perceptions of the teaching learning process. (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, 163). For many teachers this shift would be impossible, even if desired, because of their

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limited linguistic abilities (Markee, 1997; Zhang, 2007) or repertoire of teaching skills (Van den Branden, 2006b).

Additionally, teachers may have the dilemma of either using pencil and paper tests that emphasize grammatical knowledge and written skills, focusing their teaching on the test, or risking poor exam scores by following a task-based approach (Carless, 2002; Tinker Sachs, 2007). Thus, the whole pedagogical scaffolding about second language teaching should be changed in order for the teachers to adopt TBLT as a holistic approach in which language is the mechanism for achieving task goals.

It is worth saying that the PPP approach is much more convenient for teacher who do not want to become involved in a complete way in their classrooms. The use of textbooks is easier than creating your own materials in order to adapt your classroom to a TBLT approach. "Utilizing TBLT would require student teachers to either adapt existing materials or develop their own materials that correspond to the approach" (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, 175). Thus, "for many educators the absence of resources designed for TBLT poses a feasibility problem because it requires them to design their own materials, a significant burden for teachers whose time is already taxed (Richards & Rogers, 2001; Zhang, 2007). It is important stress that time constraints exist, however teachers should be aware of this limitation and organize it into their teaching process.

According to Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) after running a study among some students teachers there are three main facts why these students would not utilize TBLT in their classrooms: epistemological frame, cultural norms and lack of support. Needless to say that these students have studied and have been taught in a frame of PPP.

- Epistemological frame: students argued that they did not perceive how knowledge could be generated through tasks without linguistic content provided by the teacher. They preferred an epistemological frame that adapts learning as a structured, predictable process.

- Cultural norms: these students have perception of the teacher as an expert who controls learning episodes (Britzman, 2003). To the contrary TBLT would

not allow teachers to demonstrate their expertise through explanations and controlled activities, in this approach teacher is just a "facilitator".

- Lack of support: One of the most important features in TBLT is that most of the field-experience mentors of student teachers are not familiar with TBLT; hence they do have not the background needed to support student teachers in implementing TBLT.

"On way of improving this link might be for pre-service teacher education programs to combine a constructivist-based approach, (...), with the type of guidance and support outlined in Van den Braden (2006b). Only after greater attention is devoted to issues of implementation will the principles of TBLT regularly be put into practice" (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010, 176)

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOS

3.1. Description of my proposal

My proposal consists of a task which is based on oral interaction, thus this task could be framed in TBLT. According to Willis (1996), the tangram task will be one of comparing. Its nature is quite flexible; hence the level, the student's organization and some other features could easily be changed. The only requirement that should be respected is that during the task there will be a pair of students playing with each other or two groups of students playing with each other. Each student or group cannot see the materials from the other. Each of them will have pieces of the tangram, some of these pieces equal and some others different.

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Figure 2: Students' position while they are doing the task

One of the groups (henceforth we will refer to it as Group 1) will have a shape built with tangram pieces. The other group (henceforth we will refer to it as Group 2) will ask group 1 about their figure, in order to figure out and to build the same figure as them. Each group will be back to back in order to maintain their figures out of sight. Thus, a communicative process will be developed by them. They need to use language as a facilitator to achieve the final outcome. The following example of conversations show how students would accomplish a task:

Candidate A: Do you have a triangle?

Cadidate B: A triangle... No...

A: Do you have a square?

B: Yes

A: But small or big?

B: Big, big...

A: How many squares do you have?

B: Four

A: Four?

B: Yes, four

A: *Forming a big square?*

B: Yes !!

In this conversation we can see that using a correct language in this kind of task is not the main objective. In this example these children have used language as a tool in order to get their goal.

I designed the pieces of the tangram and the shapes which will be showed in this section bearing in mind the level, the competences and the needs of the students. Although each teacher can create they own one following the goals they want to achieve. Needless to say that being creative is one of the most important aspects a teacher should be in order to adapt the materials and to create a good work-

environment. With creativity and with implication teachers could completely involved learners in the teaching-learning process.

3.2. Why a Tangram puzzle? (Reflections on its advantages)

The tangram is a Chinese game constituted of 7 pieces (five triangles, one square, and one rhomboid). It is used for entertainment but it is also used in fields as psychology, physical education, design, philosophy and particularly in pedagogy. It is also used in order to introduce geometric concepts and to promote the development of psychomotor and mental capacities. Hence, the tangram could connect in a ludic way the specific handing of materials with the creation of abstract ideas.

Although the main material of this project has been named "tangram", it is not a traditional one because it has not got the 7 pieces as the original game.

The original tangram is a very antique game called *"Chi Chiao Pan"*. This name means "game of the seven elements" or "wisdom board". In China, the tangram was very popular and was considered a women and children's game.

Nobody knows who and when the game was invented, but the first Chinese publications about the game appear in XVIII century. At this time, the game was quite well-known in some countries. Even in Europe, this game became a usual entertainment among children, women, men and scientific personalities.

Figure 3: Picture of an original tangram

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The current situation in English as a second language education is being improved with new methodologies and new approaches, but with the same goal, achieving the "content language integrated learning" approach. Within this approach, I would like to open the language learning process to more fields than only English, such as mathematics and arts-crafts. Hence, as this is a crosscurricular proposal, students will develop spatial intelligences, and will be able to create their own materials in order to work with them. As a matter of fact, this task will allow teachers to integrate the following competences from Primary Education:

- Linguistic communication competence: This competence frames the rest of competences involved in this project. Thus, the main goal is achieve a communication process in English.

- Mathematical competence: This competence is reflected in the use of the tangram as a mathematical tool, and the development of the students in spatial intelligence.

- Cultural and artistic competence: This competence is involved in the process in which the students will create their own tangram.

- Social and civic competence: As the task the students will accomplish is cooperative, they should know how to work in groups and how to respect their peers.

- Autonomy and personal initiative: Students could use this competence when they are interacting with each other, showing their opinions or trying to express them self in order to achieve the outcome.

- Competence to learn how to learn: This task is an example of a TBLT task, so students and even teacher could learn how to learn a second language. Additionally they will realize the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

It is very important to understand that teaching different subjects should not be carried out in isolation but rather in an integrated and interconnected manner reflecting the connections we can find in real life.

Additionally, I have chosen this task that involves using your hands because, in my belief, it could help students to acquire contents in a meaningful way if they can "manipulate" the tangram to some point. In my view, if students have tangible support during the learning-process they will understand the contents better, especially in lower levels.

Nowadays, as mentioned in the theoretical background, the focus of second language teaching has been changed and it is on the interaction among students and on teaching from a holistic perspective. Thus, this kind of task should be done not only one day in isolation, but from time to time, adapting the topic of the task or the level depending on the students.

As mentioned above, teachers tend to use the PPP approach, organizing their contents table in a closed schedule, explaining content by content without integrating one into the other. I firmly believe that task-based learning such as this proposal, could replace or be used alternatively with the "tell, show, guide" approach. For students it is much better to acquire contents with interaction using the language as a facilitator, rather than having a poster hanging on a wall.

For instance, if a student in the first level has to learn how to say "square", "circle", or "triangle" it is better for them work with some tangible support from time to time practicing with it, rather than working with it once a week and then hold a poster on the wall.

Thanks to the outcome of this task, and its relation to the geometric forms, students from higher levels could find it easy at the beginning. This is a good aspect because they can feel comfortable before starting the task, thus they will be willing to interact in the communication process. If they feel tense with just the topic before starting the task they will not be willing to participate in the communicative process.

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This kind of task in which the students are engaged and motivated in order to achieve an outcome is quite beneficial for them because they tend to be more focused on the learning process, and they start liking the language. Additionally, the teacher can present this task as a "game", so learners can connect English with fun in the classroom while of course; they are developing their English knowledge. Teachers should be ready to motivate and create a good work environment in the classrooms and with tasks, thus students will be engaged and involved in the second language acquisition which is quite important.

Thus, adapting materials as a textbook into a TBLT is quite relevant to the success of the classroom. Few children would be motivated with a textbook, whereas almost every one would be motivated with a task that involved interaction, games, and working with their own materials.

3.3. Contextualization in Primary School

As it has been outlined, the nature of this task allows it to be adapted it to every level. The materials required to do it are always the same: geometrical pieces made of foam.

The teacher will be free to adapt each figure to a specific group of students, for instance, if a group of students in first level are advanced speakers and they are able to do some figure from second level the teacher can create some more difficult figures for them. Even he or she can even transform the figures to get the outcome that he or she wants. Thus, the teacher should be aware of the comprehension and interaction level of his or her students. The teacher can play with different figures, positions, colours, sizes, one figure on top of another.

This section will be devoted to showing some examples of figures in each level:

3.3.1. First stage (6-8 years)

The first stage comprises the first and second year of Primary school in the Spanish educational system. When students enter this stage they are 5-6 years old and they are 7-8when they leave.

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Of course this task will be focused on the first stage contents such as: oral interaction in real or simulated situations, development of basic strategies in order to support the expression and comprehension and additionally the value of the second language as an instrument of communication.

In the first course the geometric pieces that will be used, in theory, are: a square, triangle and circle, as can be seen in the pictures below. Although it is possible for the teacher to introduce other figures. The figures are quite simple, because the main objective in these levels is that students get used to speaking in English as a usual context for them. Students should be used to terms such as: square, and triangle. Additionally they will get used to the prepositions of place such as: "on the right", "on the left", "next to", "above", "below". It could even be that some students know the preposition "between".

In order to simplify the task as it is for first course, group 1 (the group who has the built figure) will explain to group 2 how the figure looks. Thus, group 2 will ask questions and clarifications and, following the description of group 1, will build the same figure.
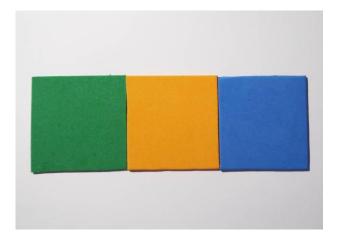

Figure 4: First example of figure

This is quite a simple example of a shape in which students will need to figure out the position of the square and to correctly choose the colours of them. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: three squares: green yellow, and blue.
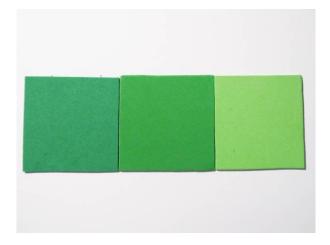
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Figure 5: Second example of figure

This example is the same as the first one, but adding one aspect that complicate the outcome, the combinations of greens. Pieces needed in order to build to build this shape: three green squares.

Figure 6: Third example of figure

In this figure apart from "on the left" and "on the right" they will need to add "above" and "below". Pieces needed in order to build this shape: four squares: red, green, blue and yellow.
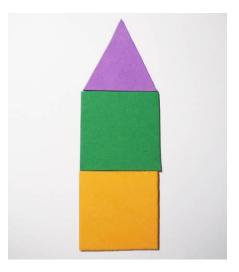
Figure 7: Fourth example of figure

In this figure a triangle has been added. It is important that in some way the figures could remind them to a known concept, like this to a house. Because if they do not know how to express themselves, they can connect the figure to another one. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: two squares: yellow and green and a purple triangle.
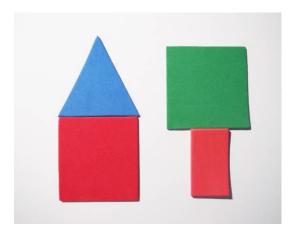

Figure 8: Fifth example of figure

In this example there are two figures instead of one which could be more difficult for the students because they need to differentiate between them when they are explaining or asking in order to figure them out. Additionally, there is a new geometric piece, the rectangle. It could be that they do not know the specific name of the piece,

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but they can find a way to explain its characteristics. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: two squares: green and red; a blue triangle; and a pink rectangle.

3.3.2. Second stage (8-10 years)

Apart from the contents from the first course, in this one, the teacher could add more geometrical pieces such as: a circle, rhomboid or rhombus.

The methodology of the task could be the same, or could be changed. The variation would be: Group 2, the one which has not got the built shape can ask questions in order to figure out the shape, without any explanation or description from group 1.

Additionally, the teacher can add preposition of place like, "around" and, "in the middle"
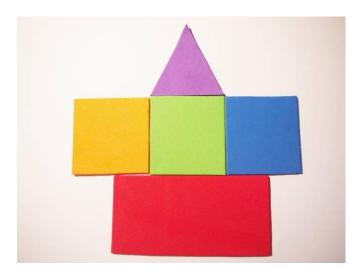

Figure 9: sixth example of figure

This example involves squares, a rectangle and a triangle. The pieces which have been worked in the previous stage but together in the same shape, as a review. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: three squares: yellow, green and blue; a red rectangle; and a purple triangle.

Figure 10: seventh example of figure

This is the first shape in which there is a circle. In the middle there is a rectangle and at each corner there are and other figure. The rectangle is touching the middle of the side of the square and the circle. This shape could be difficult for learners thus; the figures are at the corners. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: three squares: yellow, green and blue; a red triangle; and a light yellow circle.
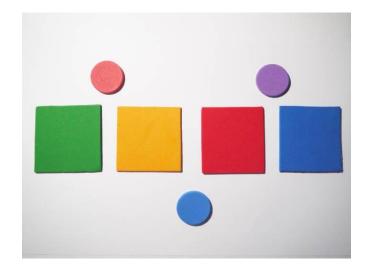

Figure 11: eight example of figure

In this shape the position of the squares is quite easy, but the difficulty is in the position of the circles which are above and between the squares. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: four squares: green, yellow, red and blue; and three small circles: pink, blue and purple.

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Figure 12: ninth example of figure

This shape could be explained in many ways because for some students could remind them to a tree. The circles are building a triangle and below them there is a rectangle. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: three small circles: pink, blue and purple; and a small pink rectangle.
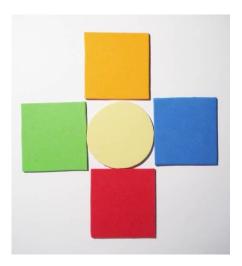

Figure 13: tenth example of figure

In this shape the squares are around the circle touching at the corners. Additionally, some students could say that they are forming a cross. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: four squares: yellow, blue, red and green; and a light yellow circle.
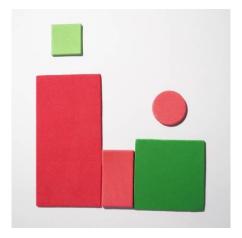
Figure 14: eleventh example of figure

This a quite simple figure in which it is important to difference the sizes of the figures to get the right outcome. Pieces needed in order to build this figure: a big red rectangle, a small pink rectangle, a big green square, a small light green square, and a small pink circle.
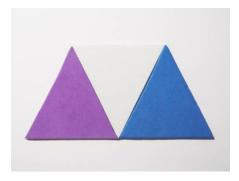

Figure 15: twelfth example of figure

This shape is the first one which is built only with triangles. The key aspect is that one triangle is upside down. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: three triangles: purple, white and blue.

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Figure 16: thirteenth example of figure

This is the first shape in which there is a rhombus. If students do not know how to say it they could explain how the figure is defining the position of the squares. Pieces needed in order to build this figure: four squares: green, blue, yellow and red; and a white rhombus.
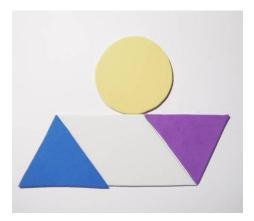

Figure 17: fourteenth example of figure

In this shape there is a rhomboid and a triangle upside down. Pieces needed in order to build this figure: two triangles: blue and purple; a white rhomboid; and a light yellow circle.

3.3.3. Third stage:

In this stage would be integrated every content from the previous stages. Hence, every figure could be use and the new one in this level would be the rhomboid. Despite this, the teacher could even add more if they want.

The methodology of the task could be the same as the first stage or as the second stage.

The new feature that will be added in this stage would be a new position, "one figure on top of another". This aspect would become the task more difficult. Although being aware of this difficulty the shapes that have been designed are known shapes in some point for the students.

Figure 18: fifteenth example of figure

In this figure the rhomboid has been added, although in a quite simple shape because it only has three pieces. Pieces needed in order to build this figure: a red rectangle, a white rhomboid, and a purple triangle.

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Figure 19: sixteenth example of figure

This is the first figure in which the position "one figure on top of another". This shape has been chosen as the first one with this characteristic because the triangle which is on top the circle could remind the students to a nose in the face of this shape, and this feature could be helpful in order to get the final outcome. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: a red rectangle, three small triangles: two orange and one green, a big light yellow circle, and two small blue circles.
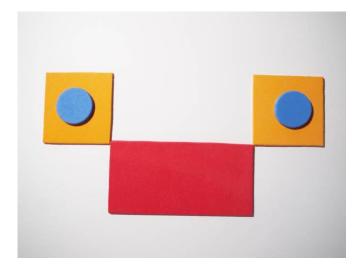

Figure 20: seventeenth example of figure

This figure is quite similar to the Figure 17. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: a red rectangle, two orange squares, and two small blue circles.
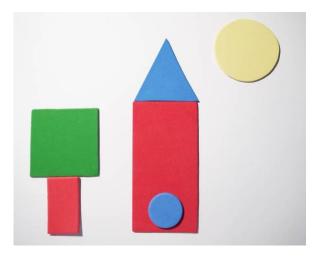
Leyre GIL URRA

Figure 21: eighteenth example of figure

This shape is almost the same as Figure 6 but adding more elements which difficult the outcome. Pieces needed in order to build this shape: a big red rectangle, a small pink rectangle, a green square, a blue triangle, a small blue circle and a big light yellow circle.

Figure 22: nineteenth example of figure

The "face" shape could engaged the students because they find it funny. Pieces needed in order to build this figure: a big red rectangle, a small pink rectangle, two small blue circles, and two small orange triangles.

3.4. Objectives of my task

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The tangram puzzle task involves many objectives related to the fields that take part in its development. The following objectives are going to be general without making the distinction of the adaptable nature of this task.

As this task is framed in the TBLT approach, and unfortunately it is not as used as it should be in English classrooms, there are some objectives of my task that are directed toward students and others toward teachers

3.2.1. Objectives directed toward students:

It is worth saying that if teachers would like their students to acquire these objectives, the task should not be done only once. In order to achieve these contents the teacher should repeat it several times, focusing it in various ways and trying to engage the students. This task could be used as a base in order to build a good scaffolding in the oral interaction and at the same time to review mathematical contents. The objectives from this task directed toward students are:

- Improve the knowledge of English as a second language.

- Solve the lack of English interaction chances students have in English classes.

- Introduce the interaction as a usual aspect in the English class, until the students would be used to it.

- Develop basic communicative strategies in order to improve the communicative process.

- Admit English learning as a useful tool in their daily lives.

- Acquire the contents related to "prepositions of place".

- Acquire methods and techniques in order to build their own work materials.

- Use their own materials as a learning support in other fields.

- Identification of geometric shapes.

- Formation of geometric shapes through others by composition.

- Adopt a friendly and helpful attitude towards their peers in the communicative process.

- Use English as an integrating tool for more fields in the teaching-learning process.

- Accept English as a facilitator in the communicative process in order to get an outcome.

3.2.2. Objectives directed toward teachers:

The objectives directed toward teachers are not only related with this task, although it could be helpful as an example for TBLT task. Through this proposal and its objectives, teachers could realize the advantages of the TBLT approach in the classroom.

- Realize how important and useful the "Content and Language Integrated Learning" could be for English as a second language learners.

- Realize that language is not an outcome by itself; it is a helper to get to the communicative process.

- Acquire an interest in adopting their PPP materials to TBLT materials.

- Change their conception about learning each field in isolation for teaching contents in an integrated way.

- Realize how important is being creative in the language class in order to engage students and to involve them in a task that they like.

3.5. Adaptable nature of the tangram puzzle task

Thanks to the adaptability of the task, teachers could adjust it depending on their students. Apart from customizing the level of English, some others adaptations could be done, such as:

- Teachers could gather the students in different groups:

  1. The number of members of the group could vary. The minimum is having a student in each group.

  2. The teacher could make groups depending on the level of the students. She or he could distribute them: Students with high English level in groups 1, and students with low English level in groups 2. In this way

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students could help each other, actually it may be quite helpful because some students prefer been helped by peers rather than by the teacher. Additionally the teacher could make groups with students of the same level.

3. The teacher could make groups alternating a talkative student with a shy student. As this is an interactive task, shy students who do not take part in big group interactions could take part in this one because they are in charge of getting the final outcome.

4. The groups could even be made with the teacher taking part in a group. This option could be done if the teacher would like to analyse the interaction level or the English level of some student.

- There are some different ways of getting the final outcome:

1. Group 2 would ask Group 1 and this last group would answer the questions in order to give explanations of their figure, while Group 2 tries to build the same shape.

2. Group 1 explains without beginning questions as to how their figure looks. While Group 2 listens to this explanation they could ask questions.

- Another variation that could be made is the number of pieces the Group 2 has. If the teacher wants to make it easier Group 2 would only have the pieces which would be used to build the shape. Although if the teacher would like to make the task more difficult, Group 2 would have more pieces, some would be used to build the figure and some others would be left over.

- Competitions could be made in the classroom. The students could gather in 4 big groups (eg. A, B, C, D), each of them of course, would consist of Group 1 and Group 2. Every Group 1 would have the same figure, and the first Group 2 who gets the final outcome correctly wins some points. Additionally as students would be enthusiastic about the competition they may want to speak Spanish in order to get the final outcome faster. But, if some student speaks Spanish his or her group would lose points automatically.

- The individualization of the learning process is one of the most important aspect in education. Each student has different needs and they should be meet. Thus, in the class in which this task is been accomplished the teacher could adapt the level of each group. Hence, every group would not need to accomplish the same level task.

3.6. Design

Before starting to describe how the design of this TBLT task would be, it is worth emphasizing the effort that English teachers should make in order to adapt their materials and their conceptions in the TBLT approach. There could be some teachers who would feel they are not doing their job unless they are centre stage, teaching, or giving advice. Hence, they would need to understand that "a TBLT lesson outline offers and more flexible framework, enabling learners to move from language experience to language analysis" (Willis, 1996). Teacher would comprehend that they are not going to be the base of the learning process for students, as they are in PPP lessons. In this new approach this position would not be possible although without them the learning process would not be accomplished.

3.6.1. Design of the materials:

As explained before, I have created the materials of this task basing them on the contents of the curriculum. Thus, I have not introduced pieces such as a rhombus or a rhomboid in the first stage because students of these levels do not know their characteristics. Although, as outlined above in this project, teachers could adapt their materials as they like.

The pieces which have been used in this proposal are: squares, triangles, circles, and rectangles for every stage, and rhombus and rhomboid for second and third stage. The characteristics of these pieces are quite easy, but it would be possible to add pieces such as pentagons, hexagons, heptagons... Even different kinds of triangles bearing in mind the different types of angles, or the length of their side. Nevertheless, framed in the levels in which this proposal would be done, I have considered the geometrical pieces chosen appropiate for the students.

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It is woth saying that there are some pieces in different sizes, hence this aspect could be a difficulty for students. If they do not have the piece in both sizes they would not know that there are small and big squares, for instance.
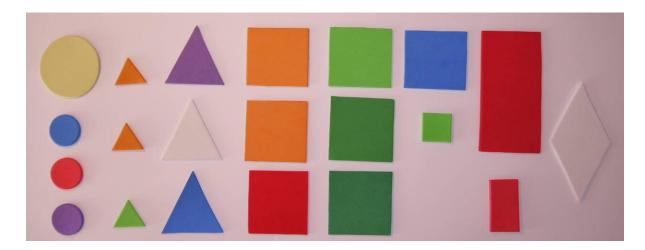

Figure 23: the twenty one pieces which have been used in the construction of the shapes in this proposal.

3.6.2. Material for the pieces:

The material in which the pieces have been made is foam, this material is quite useful in the school. Students can manipulate it easily and additionally we can find it in many colours, a feature required in this task. The pieces could be done also in craft paper, but as these pieces are going to be manipulated in the interaction, foam is more resistant it is better to make them in foam.

Figure 24: thickness of the foam pieces.

3.6.3. Design of the shapes:

The shape to be constructed, as well as the pieces used in them, have been designed following the contents of each stage.

When the students begin to accomplish this task, the first figures will be easy. In this way, they will feel confident. When students get used to this task, teachers could introduce more complex shapes in which a higher level of interaction is required.

Additionally, I have tried to connect in some way the shapes with known or familiar images for the learners, such as: a house and a tree with the sun or a face, with eyes, mouth and nose. In the case that students might not know how to express themselves using the names of the geometrical pieces and their positions, they would be helped by these "known shapes". As the main objective in this task is to interact with each other, in first stages knowing the name of the pieces or their positions is not as important as being willing to interact with peers.

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4. REFLECTION ON THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PUTTING THE TANGRAM INTO PRACTICE

Despite the advantages of a method or approach, it is needless to say that in the moment of applying knowledge in a practical way we could encounter some problems. Thus, we will designate this section to explain the advantages that this task could have as well as the problems.

4.1. Advantages:

- This task do not need to use the textbook, nor be based on it. Students need to break their routines consisting of reading texts, answering questions and learning some new grammatical content each day, like translating sentences. They do not like this kind of learning and they need to be involved while they are acquiring contents. Learning languages in this way they are not, so they might not like the English classroom.

- One of the most important problems in the English class is that learners do not have the chance of interact with their peers. The little opportunity they have is answering the questions the teacher asks every day, such as "what is the weather like today?" or questions about the exercises they are doing. Apart from the little time they have to interact they must do it in front of everyone. If they are not used to speaking English it would be much more difficult for them to speak out loud. The tangram task allows the students to speak in small groups with their peers; it is a chance to interact in English in a relaxed environment, without feeling tense.

- The interaction exercises which are proposed in the textbook are usually in order to practice the vocabulary they have just "acquired". This kind of exercises are even located below the theory or vocabulary part. Hence, they are only focused on reviewing specific contents instead of trying to improve the communication process as a whole as the tangram task does.

- The tangram task stands for a *Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Learning contents while they are acquiring a language such as English. In this way English would be a useful tool in their future lives. If they acquire English through isolated exercises of grammar contents they would not be able to take part in a communicative process in the future. With TBLT task, students are trying to use language, and to gain experience with it. Learners should realize its usefulness, additionally they should be conscious of the outcomes they could achieve using the language. It is important for students to recognize that what they are doing is useful for achieving some outcome. They like to see this outcome immediately in order to be motivated, as in this task, when they see if they have done a good job trying to figure out the shape.

- The interaction exercises of the textbooks are not concerned about the individualization, about the personal needs each student has. With this task teachers are able to adapt it in order to meet the students' needs, although in the same classroom there would be learners with different English levels.

- Although the teacher should be paying attention to the students while they are interacting with each other, students by themselves could help to their peers, could make clarifications, and could learn from each other. They are in a controlled environment while they are not under the pressure of being corrected by the teacher.

- Students are going to use their own materials as a support for this task. This feature is quite interesting because the students would see the utility of their work. For good measure, they would be motivated in this task, being involved in the learning process.

4.2 Disadvantages:

- As the main goal of this task is to interact in English, the teacher should pay attention to the possibility that some student might speak in his or her mother language. It is understandable that it is quite difficult to control this situation if the number of students in a classroom is about twenty five. A solution for this situation could be to establish a point system with the learners, in such a way

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that students would lose points if they spoke Spanish. They would not be controlled by the teacher, their own peers would control it. The ideal condition for putting this task into practice would be a classroom with fifteen students maximum, or if this is not possible, another solution would be to have two teachers instead of one inside the classroom.

- It is possible that students might not be used to this kind of learning, and furthermore, if they are studying in higher stages, it would take time for them to get used to this kind of task. Thus, TBLT should be in practice from the time the students are in lower levels. In this way students would be used to using English not only in the English class but also in other fields such as Mathematics or Arts-Crafts.

- It is be possible that this kind of TBLT task might be complex for teachers who have not studied this approach. Hence, they may not understand their new position in the classroom.

- Some people could opine that the TBLT approach is not a good method for acquiring English contents, although some experts have recognised this method as the one teachers should promote in their classrooms.

CONCLUSIÓN

Después de haber analizado en profundidad el método "TBLT" en este trabajo y de haber creado una propuesta didáctica enmarcada en él, creo que este nuevo enfoque didáctico debería estar más presente en las aulas de inglés de hoy en día.

El periodo de prácticas escolares nos ha permitido darnos cuenta de la realidad en las aulas, y de las carencias que tienen las metodologías usadas en ellas. A pesar, por supuesto, de las ventajas que puede establecer un profesor de inglés con experiencia, tenemos que intentar cambiar la concepción de estos profesores y dirigirla a un enfoque constructivista del idioma extranjero.

Para ello, la formación del profesorado en nuevos métodos y metodologías es uno de los aspectos más importantes en la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua. Tenemos que ser conscientes de que la formación del docente es ilimitada, así pues, estos profesores se irán adecuando a las demandas de la sociedad, de los alumnos y de la propia lengua.

Los profesores a parte de ser responsables del proceso de enseñanza tienen que involucrar a los alumnos en ésta. Por tanto, y en este caso centrándonos en el inglés, los docentes pueden crear o encontrar muchos materiales que atraigan a los alumnos y que les interesen.

Como ya se ha explicado en este trabajo los alumnos tienen que estar motivados en la enseñanza y una de las maneras que hay de hacerlo es viendo los resultados de su esfuerzo de una manera inmediata. Si ellos están aprendiendo inglés necesitan ver cuál es su uso. Por eso se ha presentado la propuesta del tangram. En esta tarea los alumnos utilizan el lenguaje para alcanzar un fin. Ellos mismos pueden ver los resultados de su aprendizaje a corto plazo.

Los profesores tienen que ser conscientes de que un idioma se aprende usándolo y cometiendo errores, por eso los alumnos tienen que utilizarlo sin miedo a ser corregidos o a equivocarse. En los ciclos de Educación Primaria, la interacción es un aspecto base en el aprendizaje de una lengua. Pero, si sabemos que la interacción es una característica básica en la adquisición de la segunda lengua, ¿por qué no se dedica

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más tiempo a ella dentro del aula? La tarea del tangram quiere solucionar esta falta de interacción entre alumnos, ofreciéndoles la oportunidad de hablar los unos con los otros sin ser atentamente observados y corregidos por el profesor. El proceso comunicativo que se forma entre los alumnos es en un tono distendido, que permite al alumno sentirse tranquilo y seguro.

Por su puesto, no solo queremos que se utilice el inglés dentro del aula de esta lengua, sino que queremos que se consiga un aprendizaje integrado de las lenguas en las demás áreas. De esta manera los alumnos podrán vincular el inglés con el aprendizaje de múltiples conceptos y no lo verán únicamente como una asignatura aislada en el currículo.

Por tanto, para concluir este trabajo me gustaría destacar la manera en la que se podría mejorar la enseñanza del inglés en la Educación Primaria, introduciendo aspectos como la creatividad, la interacción y el aprendizaje a base de tareas.

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