The Effectiveness of Activating in English as a Foreign Language

Autora: Iranzu Ardaiz Mañeru
Supervisora: Izaskun Villarreal Olaizola

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Abstract

This paper presents an experimental study undertaken with secondary students focusing on the effectiveness and appropriateness of activating prior knowledge strategies in the EFL classroom. In the study two types of groups were compared: an experimental group which were presented with activating activities in their EFL lessons; and a control group which followed the normal routine (no activating activities) for the same amount of time following the same book and carrying out similar tasks. The results obtained by the two groups as for the number of vocabulary items produced and the accuracy of grammatical structures were compared together with a survey about their personal impressions in order to determine the value of these activities to facilitate EFL acquisition. The findings suggest that activating prior knowledge might be a useful strategy to increase the language competence of learners immersed in regular EFL classes, especially in terms of vocabulary acquisition and recalling. Equally, activating activities have proved valid in order to raise the students’ interest and motivation, and, consequently, improving their results.

Keywords: activating, EFL, vocabulary and structures, motivation
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1. Introduction

Students are continually being presented with new information, not only in the EFL field, but in all areas, especially in the higher levels of education. If this new material is not integrated and connected to already existing ideas, it will be discarded in the medium or long term. In order to learn more effectively students need to integrate the new information into their previous knowledge database and thus, start making connections and constructing new understanding from their existing ideas and beliefs (Strangman and Hall, 2004). By putting the upcoming lesson contents into a context that may be familiar for the students, the teacher is giving them a framework into which they can then incorporate the new information and understanding (Shamla, 2010).

Frequently, educators expect previous knowledge from students when learning new language or content. However, the extent to which the link between the existing and the new knowledge is promoted in class, its potential benefits and its impact on the learning of new content and language has been underestimated. Few studies have addressed this issue. As a consequence, the present study has been undertaken against this backdrop and delves into exploring the effectiveness of language activating methods in EFL.

Activating or accessing previously learnt material has been considered a valuable way of revising and starting with a new topic as it is considered to stretch thinking, improve content learning and student engagement (Dale et al., 2010). In fact, activating prior knowledge activities are widely used in CLIL contexts (Dale et al., 2010; Dale et al., 2012) and most importantly, CLIL learners have been reported to obtain higher language competence levels than EFL learners1 (Marsh, 2002; Coyle, 2007). In particular, Dale et al. (2010) defend that activating prior knowledge boosts motivation, creates expectations about what is to come and urges tighter language and curricular connections between the new and previously learnt topics, while making individual differences visible to the teacher. In short, activating seems to promote more meaningful and successful content and language knowledge. In contrast to the CLIL field, studies that prove the effectiveness of activating in EFL contexts are very scarce (Maghsoudi, 2012; Majid Hayati, 2009; Shabani, 2013 and Roozkhon and Samani, 2013). Furthermore, most of the studies recently published focus mainly on activating vocabulary, while the activation of grammatical structures has not been so deeply explored.

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1 But see Villarreal (2011) and studies therein for findings questioning this.
With this in mind, the current study seeks to compare the effects of activating grammatical and lexical learning among EFL secondary learners. In particular, this project aims at examining the effectiveness of carrying out activating activities for vocabulary and grammatical acquisition operationalized as the production of a higher number of target vocabulary items and more accurate and varied grammatical structures.

2. Literature review

Activating (sometimes referred to as activating prior knowledge or activating existing knowledge) involves getting the learner’s brains working before introducing a topic or a theme, as well as motivating them to learn. It means engaging learners in a lesson topic and helping them access what they already know about it, so that they can link that knowledge to the new material and build on it (Dale et al., 2010). This practice is proved valid and highly advisable in CLIL contexts, where it is important to activate both ideas (content) and language. While accessing already acquired information and language is sometimes stressed in language books which usually begin new units in this way: lead-in, warm-up activities and then, the new content; it is frequently overlooked and the teaching of new language (vocabulary and structures) is done in an isolated manner without building connections with already acquired knowledge. Dale et al. (2010) also mention that although it may result time-consuming, it is “an essential part of the learning process” (2010, p. 26).

An activating stage of a CLIL lesson can engage the learners’ interest and curiosity, thus motivating them; provide rich language input; help learners notice features of the language; help learners notice the gap between their knowledge and understanding of concepts in their first and second language; help learners to make the language and content of the lesson meaningful to them personally; stimulate interaction between learners; encourage learners to produce (spoken or written) language; activate relevant, useful or half-remembered language for the lesson; activate relevant cultural and background knowledge for the lesson; activate existing beliefs about and attitudes to the topic of the lesson; challenge or surprise the learners in some way; challenge the learners to think more deeply about the topic of the lesson and appeal to different learning styles or multiple intelligences. (Dale et al. 2010, p. 26)

By contrast, the activation phase is often quite short and most commonly it just focuses on vocabulary in the EFL classroom.

The theoretical underpinnings in which the need for activation is sustained dates back to Cummins (1984) and it is frequently explained with the metaphor of the iceberg
(mentioned in Dale et al., 2010). Namely, it describes how some part of the learner’s knowledge is invisible (under the waterline) and other parts are visible (above the waterline). Underneath the waterline, learners have experiences and knowledge of the world, as well as a conception of how language is used to express their ideas and thoughts, independently of which language is employed to express them. This is what Cummins called Common Underlying Proficiency. Along these lines, other language acquisition theories were produced that are key to understand how we learn languages and which argument why activating is important (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).

Following the idea of activation, Castelotti and Moore (2005) suggested that the likelihood of learners benefitting from prior language knowledge depended on the commonalities between languages, encouraging learners to reflect upon their learning and having frequent opportunities to use those skills within the class. In fact, Moore’s work with Castelotti (in Mady, 2014) suggests that explicitly drawing learners’ “attention to strategies can also be beneficial to monolinguals”. They claim that “making commonalities between languages evident heightens the learners ability to access their prior language knowledge themselves” (2014, p. 13).

However, what happens if teachers do not have an activating period in their lessons? According to what Dale et al. (2010) state, the content and language presented and used in the lessons are less likely to be remembered and students will find it more difficult to reproduce it later. In other words, they believe that if teachers do not activate, the learning process may turn out to be both less effective and less efficient. That means that students will learn less and more slowly. Hence the importance of the activating stage to help students make connections between prior knowledge and new items of language.

As can be seen, when activating, a teacher needs to help learners make explicit in the target language both the ideas and the language they already know, so that they can make sense of new content as well as new language. Giving learners time to work on what they already know also underscores the differences or the gap between what they already are acquainted with and what they do not know yet. In this way, both teachers and learners become aware of this gap, which can make learning more effective. That is the reason why there are arguments for believing that activating is important both for CLIL learners and CLIL teachers (Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols, 2008). Parallel claims could be made to highlight its importance for EFL teaching and learning.

Three studies carried out with Iranian EFL students (Maghsoudi, 2012; Majid Hayati, 2009; Shabani, 2013) have demonstrated that the activation of vocabulary and structures as well as background knowledge reported on a higher command of the
language. For example, reading comprehension of texts was improved after schema activation (Maghsoudi, 2012). In this study, the experimental students’ schema, i.e. background knowledge, was activated through pre-reading activities while the participants in the control group received no treatment. “The results of the t-test showed a significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the experimental group before and after schema activation. Correlation analysis also revealed that as participants received more background knowledge, their comprehension of cultural texts was improved” (2012, p.1). A similar project was developed in order to investigate the effect of cultural knowledge on the listening comprehension skills and the results suggested that the participants performed differently once they were familiar with the culturally-oriented language material. This practice promoted their listening proficiency (Majid Hayati, 2009). Likewise, another study was directed at exploring the effect of background knowledge on the speaking ability. During the treatment, a topic was introduced to the learners to work on for the following session. The subjects were asked to get the needed information about the topic through searching in the Internet, books, magazines, newspapers, etc. In this way, they became familiar with the subject matter. When attending the class for the following session, the students were encouraged to present their opinions and findings about the topic. After having the language and content activated, the results showed how they could talk more easily and for longer periods of time if compared to other topics which had not been activated previously (Shabani, 2013). A different study tested the effect of using anticipation guide strategies to improve comprehension. This is a prereading technique which can activate learners’ prior knowledge and get them interested in the topic which they are going to read. The results proved that students enhanced their fluency and comprehension by means of the activation of prior knowledge (Roozkhon and Samani, 2013).

Similarly, a wealth of research studies has demonstrated that activating is beneficial not only in the EFL field but in the mother tongue as well. As Strangman and Hall (2004) state on a report about background knowledge, “prior knowledge has a large influence on student performance, explaining up to 81% of the variance in posttest scores” (Dochy et al., 1999, reviewed in 2004, p.3). The benefits for activating in the mother tongue are also observable in reading comprehension where various authors have established correlation between prior knowledge and reading comprehension (Langer, 1984; Long, Winograd, and Bridget, 1989; Stevens, 1980; Dole, Valencia, Greer, and Wardrop, 1991; Graves, Cooke, and Laberge, 1983; McKeown, Beck, Sinatra, and Loxterman, 1992; Stevens, 1982). And what is more, accessing prior knowledge seems to counteract the detrimental effects that incoherent or poorly organized texts have on comprehension (McKeown et al., 1992). In addition to the reading comprehension improvement, high correlations have also been found between prior knowledge and speed and accuracy of study behaviour (reviewed in
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Dochy et al., 1999) as well as student interest in a topic (Tobias, 1994). Thus, prior knowledge is associated with beneficial academic behaviours and higher academic performance.

Bearing all this in mind, there are grounds for believing that activating or accessing previous knowledge (both content and language) will also result in an improved performance of EFL learners and, as a result, into a higher mastery of the language.

The numerous benefits for activating mentioned above have led many teachers to start their lessons by engaging their learners’ attention in some way and reviewing what the learners already know about the topic. This is a way of revising what they already know and connecting new learning to their prior knowledge and experiences and at the same time of increasing learners’ readiness and effectiveness when learning new material. These activities facilitate the link among new words and structures, students’ everyday lives and cultures, which turn learning into a more meaningful process. In addition, these activities increase the learner’s motivation, create expectations about a topic and help them focus on the language and topic of the lesson.

In addition to the above-mentioned gains and due to the fact that all learners are different (they know different things, they may have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they have different experiences outside school and different interests, learning styles and intelligences), activating helps making these differences overt for the teacher, so that the teacher knows how to connect it to what different learners know. Moreover, it makes the differences visible to the learners, revealing them that they can gather information and learn from each other (Dale et al., 2010).

These practices are very well-known and have proven advantageous in contexts where the mother tongue is used as the language of instruction as well as in CLIL contexts. The EFL context, however, has been largely neglected and no attention has been paid to the impact of activation in successful FL learning, except for the studies about reading and listening comprehension (Maghsoudi, 2012; Majid Hayati, 2009; Shabani, 2013 and Roozkhon and Samani, 2013). Thus, it arose as an extraordinary opportunity to test such measures in the Practicum context as a result of the need to explore the validity of whether activating-prior-knowledge strategies in EFL contexts are effective and beneficial for students in the learning process.
3. Research questions and hypotheses

Bearing all this in mind, this study seeks to investigate how the activation of prior knowledge affects vocabulary production and grammatical accuracy in the EFL classroom. The study also aimed to find out whether activating affected grammar and vocabulary acquisition to a similar extent.

As reported in similar studies carried out in different scenarios, the expectations are that the activation activities will prove fruitful in the EFL context and will lead to a higher competence in vocabulary and grammatical accuracy operationalized as the production of a higher number of target vocabulary items and more accurate grammatical structures.

4. Methodology

An experimental research design was set up to analyze whether and how activation affects vocabulary and grammar acquisition. In the following sections the participants of the study and the materials and procedures applied are sketched.

Participants

The participants in this study are 30 students attending the 2nd course of Optional Secondary Education who receive EFL classes as part of their school curriculum. They were 13-14 at the age of data collection. As for their English language proficiency measured through a Placement Test (Cambridge University Press, 2010), it ranged from A2 (Elementary) to B2 (Intermediate), although most of them were Elementary English learners (57% from the total) followed by Pre-Intermediate (33%) level learners.

The participants were divided into two different groups according to School procedures determined at the beginning of the academic year. Nevertheless, it was never the proficiency level of the students the criteria to allocate them in different classes. Having varied classes was the main purpose indeed.

An Anova Test was conducted to determine whether the competence level of the groups was intrinsically different prior to the implementation of the treatment. The results obtained showed that the two groups were comparable as for their language competence at the starting point of the research study (F=3.64; p=0.07). Thus, any differences that arise between the groups could be attributable to the effects of the activating treatment.
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As no differences were observed, the two school classes were randomly assigned to the experimental (Group E, hereafter) and control groups (Group C, from now on). While Group E received activating treatment at the beginning of each session for a period of 10 teaching days, the latter, Group C, did not and it followed the traditional teaching methods and pedagogical procedures of the English classroom.

Materials and procedures

In order to carry out the research project a series of different instruments were used.

First of all, the whole set of participants, that is both the control and experimental groups, fulfilled a placement test (Cambridge University Press, 2010). The test contains one hundred written multiple-choice questions to be answered in less than 40 minutes. This test has been widely used by researchers to gauge the learners’ knowledge and establish which level is right for them (see, for instance, Khademi 2014).

Secondly, Group C and Group E took a pretest in order to establish the baseline for their vocabulary production ability and their grammar knowledge with topics related to the last unit taught at school. The pretest consisted of two sections: on the one hand, one vocabulary activity where students had to produce as many words as they could in 3 minutes about two different topics; on the other hand, students had three minutes to do one fill in the gaps grammar exercise with ten sentences about modal verbs. Appendix 1 includes the pretest.

Subsequently, ten sessions of activating were implemented with Group E using activities taken from the manual CLIL skills (Dale et al., 2010). Some of these activities included the following (see Appendix 2): “Guessing the lesson”, a combination of flashcards and a brainstorming activity; a “Spider diagram” using graphic organizers to facilitate learning; the “Quickest, most and best” game in which students compete to answer questions about the topics “means of transport” and “geographical features” in a very motivating and interactive way; a “Placemat” task done in small groups; the “Scrambled eggs” competition to work on a certain grammatical structure; creating a “Word Wall” and a “More and Most Wall”; playing the “Red and Green Circles” game to work on the correctness of grammar structures; a “Finish the sentence” game about class matters and some other activities.

These activities were aimed at motivating students and activating their background knowledge about the topic, including both vocabulary and grammatical structures. The
idea was to help them build up new vocabulary and structures on their prior knowledge. They lasted between ten and twenty minutes and most of them were performed in small groups promoting collaborative learning skills. At the beginning of each session an activating activity was introduced to the class and depending on the nature and dynamics of it, the class was rearranged for it (either individually, in pairs, threesomes, small groups or two halves). Once the activity was finished, a brief brainstorm of impressions and ideas related to it proceeded in order to introduce the class.

While Group E completed activating tasks at the beginning of each lesson and for the whole unit, Group C followed the regular class for the same amount of lessons. Both groups completed and worked on unit 5 about “Our Wonderful World” (Evans and Dooley, 2010) which was the unit that needed to be learnt in class.

After the treatment, a posttest was completed by all students to assess their vocabulary production ability and grammar knowledge. This one was similar to the pretest, but the topics were connected to the new unit. Both groups took the same posttest. Appendix 3 includes the model used.

Finally, a satisfaction questionnaire was filled in anonymously by the two groups and in their mother tongue. The surveys were different for Group C (see Appendix 4) and Group E (see Appendix 5). The first had to answer questions about their personal feelings towards the English class, what they miss and what they find useful and interesting. The latter were asked questions about the activating activities introduced in the English classroom, their usefulness and impressions about it.

Additionally, the unit tests performed in class were also taken as instruments to measure the degree of improvement after the treatment and the usefulness of the activating activities.

5. Results

The following section presents the data obtained from the pretest, posttest and satisfaction questionnaires.

Table 1 and Table 2 feature the results obtained in each test-type (the unit tests, the pretests and posttests) by each student in Group C and Group E, respectively. Pretest and posttest V stand for vocabulary pretest and posttest and G for grammar pretest and posttest.
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Table 1. Comparison of individual results in Group C: unit tests, pre and posttests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP C</th>
<th>UNIT 4 TEST</th>
<th>PRETEST-V</th>
<th>PRETEST-G</th>
<th>UNIT 5 TEST</th>
<th>POSTTEST-V</th>
<th>POSTTEST-G</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>GC2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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The results indicate that Group C students have performed similarly in both units. In the unit 5 test half of the class has slightly improved the results obtained in the unit 4 test, while the rest have obtained similar or lower scores. In the vocabulary posttest their performance has been poorer, since they have decreased the total amount of words produced: 126 in the pretest vs. 113 in the posttest. Furthermore, the grammatical accuracy has also decreased, and they obtain lower scores in the posttest than in the pretest. All the students have produced a lower number of correct grammatical structures and only three out of fourteen students would have passed the test.

Table 2 presents the individual results for Group E.

Table 2. Comparison of individual results in Group E: unit tests, pre and posttests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP E</th>
<th>UNIT 4 TEST</th>
<th>PRETEST-V</th>
<th>PRETEST-G</th>
<th>UNIT 5 TEST</th>
<th>POSTTEST-V</th>
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The results show that Group E students have obtained higher scores in the tests undertaken after the activation process. In fact, in the unit 5 test eleven students out of sixteen have improved the results obtained in unit 4 test, while Group C learners scored parallel or lower in the same test. This increase is more remarkable for the vocabulary posttest, as they have outnumbered the total amount of words produced in the pretest in 148 items. This is a 48% increase if compared to the non-activated group. However, the grammar results are clearly not as proficient as in the pretest. Only five students have obtained a superior number of accurate grammatical structures, three have maintained it and the rest have decreased the amount of correct answers.

Figure 1 illustrates graphically the results obtained for the vocabulary in both groups and in each test.

*Figure 1. Result differences between Group C and Group E in the pre and post vocabulary tests.*

Figure 1 shows that while Group C produced overall 126 and 113 words in the pre and posttests, Group E increased dramatically the number of produced words from 159 in the pretest to 307 in the posttest. To see whether these differences pointed to a categorically different behaviour between the two groups in favour of Group E, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare vocabulary production in the pretest and in the posttest (before and after the treatment). The analysis confirmed that Group E did indeed perform significantly better in the post-test producing a higher number of vocabulary items (t= -8,125; p<0,01). The same analysis, on the other hand, did not report any significant difference for Group C (t=0,75; p=0,466). These results confirm that activating promotes vocabulary learning.
The second part of the results deals with the activation of grammatical structures. In the following tables the raw results are presented and compared. The first column shows the results of the pretest while the second column features the results for the posttest.

Table 3. Grammar results in Group C and E for all participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP C</th>
<th>Pretest-G</th>
<th>Posttest-G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP E</th>
<th>Pretest-G</th>
<th>Posttest-G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GE1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE11</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE12</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results reveal that students in Group C do not improve their grammar results in the posttest in any case. The number of grammatical accurate structures has decreased in the posttest for all the participants. Similarly, this decrease of the results is also observed in Group E. However, the results are slightly more positive: five students have obtained a higher number of accurate grammatical structures; three have produced similar numbers and the rest have decreased the amount of correct answers.

The results obtained reveal that while vocabulary memorisation and production is boosted, grammar structures do not experiment such a prominent improvement. Both the activated and the control group fail to show signs of progress in this area.

In Figure 2 the mean scores for each group have been calculated and compared in two sets of bars, the first showing Group C results and the second presenting the results for Group E. Both of them fail to improve the first results, although the activated Group (E) shows a more accurate production of the structures included in the posttest.
As for the vocabulary, the grammar results were contrasted using a T-test for related measures. The analyses show that the results for Group E are parallel in both tests (p=0.193; t=1.359), that is to say, although their performance is less target-like it is essentially similar. The results for Group C, however, show that this group exhibits a distinctly different behaviour, and their results are significantly worse in the posttest (p<0.01; t=11.015). Although far from being conclusive, the results obtained point to the fact that activating can also exert certain influence on grammatical structures, probably by helping learners to transfer previous relevant knowledge to new forms learnt.

The third, and final, part of the results is devoted to the questionnaires about the students’ opinions about the English classroom and the methodology followed. Starting with Group C, most of them (9 out of 14) admit being satisfied with the activities and procedures used in class, and only one has doubts about it. Similarly, when they are asked whether they miss review activities (or activating activities) at the beginning of each lesson, nine students declare they do not miss warming up or introductory activities, while five say they would increase them (and they suggest homework revision or oral activities to recall the topic and content they were working on the previous days). However, when they are asked for suggestions to improve the English classroom the great majority agree on proposing more games, motivating activities, less memorising and more pair or group work, among others (see Table 4).
On the other hand, the experimental group shows a great level of satisfaction with the activating activities introduced in their classroom.

In all the questions a minimum of 70% of the class gave positive answers when they were asked if the nature of the activities helped them remember and learn in a more effective way the content of the unit; if the activities were an easier, motivating and longer-lasting way of learning English; whether collaborative learning was enhanced or not; if they would recommend them to other EFL teachers and when they were asked about the general impression of these activities. In the same line, all of them agreed that these activities should be maintained and from now onwards put into practice at the beginning of each session.

### Table 5. Satisfaction questionnaire results for Group E.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of the activities</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The content of the activities was appropriate and helped me learn better</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The type of activities helped me remember and learn the content</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activating activities helped me learn with and from my classmates</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should continue doing these activities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend them to other teachers?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider these activities have had a positive effect on your learning?</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the activating help you learn more and better?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some comments received included that “these activities helped me remember more things and understand better”, “they were very exciting and you learn a lot”, “they would make us learn in a more effective way”, “it is a motivating form of starting the lesson for all of us”, “it helps us take part in the class and feel attracted by the subject”, “it is a good manner of varying the everyday routine”, “I believe that it is a very appropriate teaching method” and “I hope these activities continue being done to remember and learn more vocabulary”. All in all, 75% of the class admitted having learnt more and in a more effective way after the activation period. The rest
considered that their learning had not varied, but in no case they thought it had decreased (as it can be seen in the last question of Table 5).

In all, results point to a clear benefit of activation for vocabulary acquisition and recalling, while the effect on the production of accurate grammatical structures is not so visible. In addition, the activating activities seem to attain a motivating and enhancing result among the learners.

6. Discussion

The results obtained and presented in the section above are discussed along the lines of the hypotheses entertained.

The results displayed earlier (Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2) show that Group E has achieved a notable general improvement if compared to Group C. This proves that activating prior knowledge turns out to be fruitful in the EFL classroom and supports earlier work carried out by Maghsoudi (2012), Majid Hayati (2009) and Shabani (2013), among others. While experimental students have improved the mean scores nearly in a 16%, the control group students have remained stable, with a slightly small decrease of their vocabulary results and more significant in terms of grammar.

The comparisons for the vocabulary category show that the activated group achieved a greater capacity for remembering and producing lexical items. Parallel to Tılfarlioğlu and Bozgeyik (2012), they concluded that positive correlations exist between vocabulary proficiency and activating strategies.

However, if results are analysed separately, it is clear that activating does not have the same effect in terms of vocabulary and grammar acquisition. In other words, despite the fact that it has been proved that it leads to a higher competence in vocabulary (students produce more words than they did before), grammatical accuracy seems to be unaffected by the treatment and learners in the experimental group do not produce more correct grammatical structures. In fact, both the control and the experimental classes fail to show a higher command of the language in terms of grammar. However, although both groups show this lack of improvement or even backsliding, this decline is more marked for Group C.

In short, the findings obtained suggest that while activating previous knowledge proves fruitful for vocabulary learning, this benefit is not so clear for grammatical competence. Many are the reasons that might be put forward to explain such relapse:
First of all, to the fact that teaching grammar has always been challenging both for teachers and learners in an EFL context, as it is suggested by Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011). This grammatical difficulty has been discussed in Foreign Language Acquisition with reference to some factors, including complexity of rules, learner’s developmental stage, L1 transfer, individual differences in language aptitude, etc. (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011; Burgess and Etherington, 2002) as Kaçani L. and S. Mangelli (2013) explain in their research project carried out in an Albanian context. In their study it is confirmed what is often observed in a foreign language classroom where communication is marked by low levels of linguistic accuracy, though learners have studied its grammar for many years. They prove how learners have difficulties in the process of transferring the knowledge about grammar (declarative knowledge) into the ability to use that knowledge in real life communication (procedural knowledge). It is also supported by their results that learners find it difficult to use the language accurately in both written and spoken communication.

Another reason why the grammar results have not been successful could be due to the fact that two different grammatical structures have been tested and contrasted. The results of the current research project have been obtained comparing different grammatical structures: on the one hand, *necessity, possibility* and *advice modal verbs* (must, can and should and the negative corresponding forms) and, on the other hand, the *comparative and superlative form of adjectives*. Although different grammatical structures are not easily comparable, the educational needs forced us to use these precise structures. Even though it is not the ideal situation, the researching necessities always must be adapted and rescheduled according to the reality of the EFL classroom and although it may limit the results reliability it caters for its ecological validity (García Mayo and Villarreal, 2011) of the investigation. Bearing this in mind, it can be drawn that the second grammatical point seemed to be somehow more complex for the students than modal verbs.

In order to see whether grammatical or overall language improvements were observed for the two groups, the results obtained from two writings tasks are presented in Table 6.
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Table 6. Writing results for Group C and E.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP C</th>
<th>Unit 4 Writing</th>
<th>Unit 5 Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC13</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP E</th>
<th>Unit 4 Writing</th>
<th>Unit 5 Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GE1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE6</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE13</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE14</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A composition task is considered relevant to prove overall language improvements as it combines grammatical and lexical production skills. The results indicate that Group E scores higher on the second composition, that is to say, after the activating period, while the improvement in Group C is not so clear. This result suggests that although the two groups, and in particular, Group E does not show a significant improvement in the grammar production, it does behave more target-likely in a more holistic activity which integrates grammar and other language aspects. Although, speculative, it might be the case that intralanguage errors as a result of L1 and L2 differences (Valero García et al., 2000) are responsible for the larger amount of errors attested in the posttest.

Another remarkable point is the positive attitude and opinion learners have over the project. Besides, this positivity is supported by encouraging results obtained both for vocabulary and grammar production, though in a lower extent. Consequently, just for the sake of engaging students, making the EFL classroom an enjoyable and attractive learning environment and facilitating their prior knowledge recalling is constructive and encouraging enough in order to consider this teaching technique as positive and highly advisable.

All in all, in spite of the limited impact on grammar that activation has shown in the student’s results (and this due to several uncontrollable factors), the significant improvements achieved in terms of the general performance of the students, the
vocabulary acquisition, memorisation and production and the confident opinion of the students upon the activating activities are the main benefits obtained.

7. Conclusion

In spite of the time and content-related limitations, the present study reveals that activating prior knowledge is a useful strategy and a clear boost to increase the language competence of learners immersed in regular EFL classes, at least for vocabulary. The results showed a marked increase in the number of produced words among the experimental group, while this increase could not be observed among the control learners. These findings support the few studies carried out in other countries (Maghsoudi, 2012; Majid Hayati, 2009 and Shabani, 2013) among university learners in which they also reported clear benefits for activating in EFL. For this reason, the pedagogical implications of the current research study embrace that emphasis should be laid on integrating activation activities in the day-to-day EFL classroom.

Furthermore, learners participating in the current study found the activities motivating and engaging and thought that they unquestionably helped them improve their language competence. Such a positive response cannot be ignored and actions to keep up the motivation level should be undertaken, particularly among secondary learners who have frequently been reported to show little or no motivation or willingness to learn a foreign language (see, for instance, Tena 2009).

The not so promising results obtained for the grammatical structures, however, cannot be straightforwardly explained. Many might be the potential reasons behind such a finding. The permeability of grammar teaching and the difficulty to provoke short-term visible effects, the differences in the compared language structures, time constraints and the fact that other grammatical aspects might have been improved but not measured are some of the factors that have determined this research project. Therefore, a future research proposal could be testing the treatment over a longer period of time in order to prove its effectiveness in terms of grammar acquisition and consolidation. Additionally, a delayed posttest may be passed on to the same students in order to see the long-run effects of the activation after a period of no treatment.

As a concluding remark it should be stated that, as expected, activating seems to be effective in order to build up new language upon the learners’ prior knowledge. Equally, activating activities have proved valid in order to raise the students’ interest and motivation, enhancing the English learning process and, consequently, improving their results even after a short period of treatment. Although the size of the sample may not be considered big enough in order to generalize the results, the conclusions
derived seem promising. Hence, teachers are expected to take this initiative as an upgrade since activating seemed to improve the learners’ love for the subject, their willingness to learn, engagement and proficiency.
8. References:


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9. Appendices:

1. Pretest

**MODULE 4 – PRETEST**

**HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

**FREE-TIME ACTIVITIES**

**School rules**

In this school,

- You ___________ be late for class.
- You ___________ wear a uniform.
- You ___________ eat in class.
- You ___________ stand up while the teacher is explaining the lesson.
- You ___________ make friends.
- You ___________ use your mobile phone.
- You ___________ be quiet.
- You ___________ listen to the teacher.
- You ___________ respect your teacher and classmates.
- You ___________ sit on your desk.
2. Activating activities

1. Guessing the lesson

1. Randomly 20 words are chosen which are related to the topic that is going to be covered and that learners need to know.

2. I explain the learners that we are going to play a guessing game to see how much they already know about the next topic or unit.

Words: coast, forest, mountain, river, island, valley, desert, lake, waterfall, volcano, better than, the worst, temperature, weather, season, train, ship, plane

3. Each learner will get a card with one word. He or she has to explain the word with an example or with a definition. Besides, he or she has to add two or three words related to the original word. We will write them all on the blackboard.

4. After the brainstorming learners look at the words and answer questions such as the following:

- What do you think the lesson will be about?
- Which words can you add to these?
- Which words do you know?
- Which words you don’t you know?
- How can you guess the meaning of the words you don’t know?

Outline: learners guess what the lesson is going to be about from a set of clues on the blackboard. Thinking skills: guessing, hypothesizing. Language focus: nouns or questions related to the topic you are about to learn. Language skills: speaking and writing Time: 15 minutes

---

Coast
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?

2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

---
Forest
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Mountain
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

River
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Island
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Valley
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Desert
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Lake
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?
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2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

Waterfall
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?

Volcano
1. What is the meaning of the word? An example?

2. Can you think of other words related to this one?

2. Graphic organizers for activating: spider diagram

1. Now that we already know the topic, we will write it in the middle of the board. I will ask them to call out ideas or words which they already know related to the topic. As they do so, we will write the ideas clearly but randomly around the topic in the centre of the board.

I will help the learners to think of more ideas by asking questions like Have you thought of....? What about this aspect of the topic?

2. When all the ideas are on the board, I will ask the learners if they can see sub-topics. We will write these on the board and I will suggest my own ideas if necessary.

3. Now I will ask the learners to make a spider diagram using the sub-topics, each arm of the spider related to a sub-topic. Learners can also add more ideas to the diagram.

Outline: learners and teachers brainstorm on a topic and make a spider diagram together.
Thinking skills: Remembering, ordering, classifying.
Language focus: vocabulary.
Language skills: speaking and writing.
Time: 20 minutes
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**Topic:**
Name ___________________________ Date ______________________

**Spider Map**
Write main ideas on the slanted lines that connect to the circle. Write details on the branching lines.

---

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3. Quickest, most, best

Procedure: After writing the topic of the lesson on the board [GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES] learners are given a competitive task.

In groups of three they have to answer the following questions:
- Who is the first group to write five words related to GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES?
- Who is the first group to write the name of three FAMOUS RIVERS?
- Who is the first group to write down the name of three FAMOUS ISLANDS?
- Who is the first group to write down the name of three FAMOUS MOUNTAINS?
- Who is the first to write the name of the CONTINENTS?
  Africa – Asia – Europe – Australia – North America – South America
- Who is the first to write the name of three FAMOUS DESERTS?

Outline: learners participate in a competition to interest and motivate them on the topic.
Thinking skills: brainstorming, remembering, identifying.
Language focus: variable (geographical features, names of places, continents, countries, etc.)
Language skills: writing (note taking) and speaking.
Time: 5-10 minutes

4. Placemat

Procedure: Learners sit in pairs or threes (maximum) around a table with the placemat paper between them and one pen each.

They have to turn the placemat around them and write as many ideas as possible in their own space of the placemat. Otherwise, they can brainstorm ideas and write them in the different spaces.

The “sponge” question will be: How much do you know about means of transport?
The idea is to revise the comparatives and superlatives together with verbs and nouns related to means of transport.

After they have filled up the chart, the groups will compare and discuss the answers, to have as many ideas as possible.
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Outline: learners write verbs and nouns about the same topic (means of transport).
Thinking skills: brainstorming, compare, contrast.
Language focus: verbs and nouns related to means of transport.
Language skills: writing (note taking) and speaking.
Time: 5-10 minutes

5. Scrambled eggs

Procedure: In six groups of three students, they are given a set of words and they are asked to create one sentence from the mixed-up words. As soon as they get it right, student number 1 has to quickly run to the teacher and recite the sentence in the correct order. If the sentence is right, he/she will get a new set of words to put in order again. When that is done, the second student will have to run to the teacher and repeat the process. Finally, the third student will do the same with the third sentence. The first group to finish the three sentences will be the winner.

This activity will lead to a discussion about the form of comparatives and superlatives before explaining the grammar section of the lesson.

Sentences:

- London is more expensive than Mumbai.
- Madrid is smaller than Paris.
- Planes are faster than trains.
- Greenland is colder than Russia.
- The Amazon River is longer than the Ebro River.
- Sao Paulo is much more crowded than Sydney.
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- The deepest ocean in the world is the Pacific.
- The Vatican City is the smallest country in the world.
- The Atacama Desert in Chile is the driest place in the world.
- Shanghai is the city with the largest population in the world.
- The plane is the fastest mean of transport.
- Russia is the biggest country in the world.

- Seville is not as cold as Pamplona.
- Spain is not as big as Australia.
- The Niagara Waterfalls are as beautiful as the Iguazu Waterfalls.
- The Gobi desert is not as big as the Sahara desert.
- The Everest is as high as the K2 Mountain.
- Ibiza is as far away as Fuerteventura from Pamplona.

Outline: learners focus on a topic by putting several sentences into the right order.
Thinking skills: ordering, organising.
Language focus: word order, comparatives and superlatives, text organisation.
Language skills: speaking.
Time: 10-15 minutes

6. Word wall

Procedure:
- In two groups they have to create two different “Word Walls” of unfamiliar, new or key vocabulary as well as expressions that have appeared in the chapter of the course book.
- Each learner looks through the chapter or their notebooks individually and writes down a list of five words to start with.
- Once they have their own list, they get in groups and start creating their word wall with markers. Each word has to have a picture or brief definition on the side.
- They have to try to write down as many words and expressions as possible.
- The word wall will be hanged on the classroom wall during the lessons dealing with the chapter.

Outline: learners remember and learn key vocabulary and expressions
Thinking skills: classifying, deciding and evaluating.
Language focus: vocabulary and grammatical structures.
Language skills: reading and speaking.
Time: 15-20 minutes
7. “More and most wall”

Procedure: following the same steps as in the previous activating activity, a “More and most wall” is created comparing the objects, people and characteristics of the English classroom.

The aim of this activity is to practice the comparative and superlative adjectives in an enjoyable and visual way.

8. Red and green circles game

Procedure:
- Each learner is given one red and one green cardboard circle.
- The teacher reads true and false or grammatically correct and incorrect statements.
- The learners each have to decide if the statement is true or correct (green circle) or false or incorrect (red circle).
- Once the statement is read out, they have to hold up a green or red circle.
- After each statement, the students with the teacher discuss their answers.

Examples of statements:

1. A bike is not as fast as a train.
2. The Himalayas is a big beach.
3. Christian is taller than Jhoanna.
4. English is interestinger than Maths.
5. Winter is the hottest season.
6. We live in a big island surrounded by water.
7. A forest is full of tall buildings. New York is a forest.
8. Spain is the biggest country in Europe.
9. Burlada is a village.
10. There are not waterfalls in Pamplona.
11. I love going to the river and lying in the sand.
12. Berta is as tall as Iranzu.
13. The biggest animal in the world is the plane.
14. A chocolate ice-cream is badder than a raspberry ice-cream.
15. The best season of the year is summer and the fastest means of transport is the plane.
The Effectiveness of Activating in English as a Foreign Language

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Outline: learners decide whether statements about a topic are true or false, correct or incorrect.
Thinking skills: remembering, evaluating, and listening.
Language focus: geographical features vocabulary and comparatives and superlatives.
Language skills: listening and speaking.
Time: 10-15 minutes.

9. Finish the sentence

Procedure:

- Students are given ten sentences and they are asked to complete them as quickly as possible. Learners should be encouraged not to give up and to complete all the sentences, adding more if possible. As they think harder, they will come up with more ideas.
- After this step, learners are paired up and they have to compare their answers and improve their own, in terms of both ideas and language.
- Finally, some ideas will be shared and brainstormed in a group activity.

Sentences:

1. The desert is ..........................................................
2. When I go on holidays my favourite means of transport is ..........................................., because ..............................................................
3. I don´t like the beach because ..........................................................
4. The mountains sometimes are ..........................................................
5. The most ..........................................................
6. ........................................................... are more ...................................... than ..........................................................
7. This class is ..........................................................
8. I like/ don´t like English because ..........................................................
9. A helicopter is ........................................................... than ..........................................................
10. The best city in the world is ........................................................... It is ........................................................... than ..........................................................

Outline: learners activate prior knowledge by completing the sentences.
Thinking skills: recalling.
Language focus: geographical features vocabulary and comparatives and superlatives.
Language skills: writing.
Time: 10-15 minutes.
10. Reconstructing a scrambled postcard

Procedure:

- Learners are divided into pairs. Each pair gets a scrambled postcard.
- They have to put the different sentences in the right order.
- After this activity, they will analyse and discuss the different parts of a postcard in order to introduce the last part of the unit: writing a postcard.

Postcard 1:

... and it has got sixteen lakes connected by waterfalls. The highest waterfall is 10 metres tall.
Greetings from Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia.
I’ve got a lot of pictures to show you when I get back.
It is the most popular tourist attraction here and one of the most beautiful places in the world.
It was amazing! Today, we are going on a boat tour of the park.
See you soon, Fred.
The park is a huge forest....
We saw a lot of deer and rare birds. We even saw a bear eating grass on a mountain.
Yesterday, we went on a guided hike.

Postcard 2:

... or take a boat tour to the volcano and hot springs.
... watch one of the most beautiful sunsets in the world ...
Got to go now. Lots of love, Danielle.
Hello from Santorini, Greece. It is hot and sunny here.
I went on the boat tour yesterday and it was amazing.
Right now, I’m writing to you from Akrotiri.
Some people believe that this is the lost city of Atlantis.
There is also a beach with red sand here.
This island is so beautiful. There are so many things to do here.
You can visit the many museums, go to the black sandy beaches, ...

Outline: learners focus on a writing pattern by putting several sentences into the right order.
Thinking skills: ordering, organising.
Language focus: text order, sequencing.
Language skills: reading and writing.
Time: 10-15 minutes
3. Posttest

Name: ________________________________
CLASS: ______________________________
TEACHER’S NAME: ____________________

MODULE 5 – POSTTEST

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Talking about the world...

- Pompensa is ___________________________ (big/small) Barcelona.
- Mt. Everest is ___________________________ (high) mountain in the world.
- A computer is ___________________________ (expensive/cheap) than a mobile phone.
- A rose is ________________________________ (beautiful) flower.
- A train is _______________________________ (slow/fast) a bike.
- Summer is _______________________________ (cold/warm) winter.
- The plane is _____________________________ (comfortable) means of transport.
- The Pyreness in summer are _____________________ (green/white) in winter.
- The Atacama Desert in Chile is _____________________ (dry) place on Earth.
- The blue whale is _________________________ (large) animal in the world.
4. ‘Group C’ Satisfaction questionnaire

¡Participa en nuestra encuesta!
Por favor, dedica un momento a completar esta pequeña encuesta. La información que nos proporciones será para mejorar las clases de inglés en Salesianos Pamplona y en otros centros. 
Tus respuestas serán tratadas de forma confidencial y no serán utilizadas para ningún propósito distinto a la investigación llevada a cabo por Iranzu Ardaiz.

1. ¿Estás satisfecho con tus clases de inglés? Justifica la respuesta.
   □ Sí, porque........
   □ No, porque........

2. ¿Al comienzo de cada clase el profesor o profesora hace actividades para repasar lo que se dio en la clase anterior o lo que vosotros ya sabéis sobre el tema de cursos anteriores?
   □ Sí. ¿Cómo?
   □ No. ¿Crees que sería útil?

3. ¿Echas de menos juegos o actividades de calentamiento para poner en marcha nuestros cerebros antes de comenzar la clase de inglés?
   □ Sí, porque........
   □ No. ¿Cuáles hacíais?

4. ¿Qué sugerencias harías al profesor para que aprender inglés fuera más divertido y a la vez aprendiésteis más y mejor?

Muchas gracias por tu participación y tus comentarios. Seguro que nos ayudan a conseguir que la asignatura de inglés sea más fácil de aprender de una manera muy entretenida.

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5. ‘Group E’ Satisfaction questionnaire

¡Participa en nuestra encuesta!
Por favor, dedica un momento a completar esta pequeña encuesta. La información que nos proporciones será para mejorar las clases de inglés en Salesianos Pamplona y en otros centros.
Tus respuestas serán tratadas de forma confidencial y no serán utilizadas para ningún propósito distinto a la investigación llevada a cabo por Iranzu Ardaiz.

Contenido de las actividades:

1. Por favor, valora los siguientes aspectos relacionados con las actividades que hemos estado realizado al comienzo de cada clase durante la unidad 5, por ejemplo, el puzle de frases, la competición por grupos escribiendo nombres de fenómenos geográficos, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Muy de acuerdo</th>
<th>De acuerdo</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Poco de acuerdo</th>
<th>Nada de acuerdo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El tema que se trabajaba me ayudaba a aprender mejor el tema.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El nivel del contenido era apropiado para mí.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracias a estas actividades recordaba palabras y gramática que ya había estudiado pero que en ese momento no recordaba.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tipo de actividades:

2. Por favor, valora los siguientes aspectos sobre las actividades que realizábamos al comienzo de cada clase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mucho</th>
<th>Bastante</th>
<th>Poco</th>
<th>Nada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Te han servido estas actividades para recordar vocabulario y gramática relacionada con el tema 5 que ya sabías antes de comenzar la unidad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Gracias a estas actividades has conseguido aprender mejor la unidad 5?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effectiveness of Activating in English as a Foreign Language

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¿Crees que estas actividades ayudan a entender y aprender de una manera más divertida y fácil? □ □ □ □

¿Crees que lo que has aprendido con estas actividades lo vas a recordar durante más tiempo? □ □ □ □

3. ¿Qué es lo que más te ha gustado sobre las actividades que realizábamos al comienzo de cada clase? Marca más de una respuesta si necesitas.

□ Me divertían, pero no me ayudaban a aprender más.
□ Me ayudaban a centrarme en la clase y a recordar lo que habíamos estado viendo días atrás.
□ Sólo servían para perder tiempo de la clase normal.
□ Eran una manera divertida de aprender y recordar vocabulario y estructuras gramaticales que ya sabía.
□ No me ayudaban en nada.
□ Me ayudaban a aprender con la ayuda de mis compañeros y de lo que ellos ya sabían y decían.

• Añade cualquier otra idea que pueda ser útil para mejorar estas actividades y, como resultado, la clase de inglés.

4. ¿Cómo valorarías en general estas actividades y juegos?

□ Muy adecuados □ Adecuados □ Inadecuados □ Muy inadecuados

5. ¿Te han servido estas actividades para aprender de tus compañeros y con tus compañeros?

□ Sí □ Bastante □ Poco □ Nada

Justifica tu respuesta:
6. ¿Crees que se deberían de seguir haciendo actividades de este tipo al comienzo de cada unidad? Justifica tu respuesta:

☐ Sí  ☐ No

Porque....

7. ¿Sería bueno hacer también actividades de este tipo al comienzo de cada clase, tal y como hicimos con la unidad 5? Justifica tu respuesta:

☐ Sí  ☐ No

Porque....

Valoración general y comentarios

8. ¿Estás satisfecho con lo que has aprendido gracias a estas actividades?

☐ Muy satisfecho  ☐ Bastante satisfecho  ☐ Poco satisfecho  ☐ Nada satisfecho

9. ¿Recomendarías estas actividades a otros profesores?

☐ Sí  ☐ No

Porque....

10. EN DEFINITIVA: ¿Crees que con estas actividades has aprendido más y mejor? Indica tu grado de aprendizaje.

☐ MAS  ☐ MENOS  ☐ IGUAL

¿Tienes algún comentario o sugerencia que sirva para mejorar estas actividades que hemos estado realizando en la clase de inglés durante la unidad 5?
Muchas gracias por tu participación y tus comentarios. Seguro que nos ayudan a conseguir que la asignatura de inglés sea más fácil de aprender de una manera muy entretenida.

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