

**INGLÉS**

**Uxue IBÁÑEZ ASA**

**ORAL INTERACTION AMONG  
YOUNG LEARNERS IN THE EFL  
CLASSROOM**

**TFG/GBL 2013**



Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales  
Giza eta Gizarte Zientzien Fakultatea

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



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Trabajo Fin de Grado  
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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES  
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## Preámbulo

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

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

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

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

En este trabajo, el módulo *de formación básica* nos ha permitido aprender cómo se desarrolla un individuo, en qué contextos y cómo se ve influenciado por su interacción con el medio, así como la importancia de la educación para su desarrollo tanto intelectual como social y personal. Además hemos adquirido conocimientos sobre la importancia del papel del profesorado en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje y sus responsabilidades tanto con el alumnado como con el resto de la comunidad educativa y en última instancia con el entorno social, teniendo en cuenta las posibilidades y límites de la educación en la sociedad actual. Hemos aprendido también la trascendencia de la adquisición de hábitos que fomenten el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo, dotando a los estudiantes de las herramientas necesarias para ello. Así mismo, hemos sido conscientes de la gran importancia de la educación multicultural, plurilingüe y diversa, atendiendo en todo momento la igualdad de género, la equidad y el respeto a los derechos humanos como base de la enseñanza. Finalmente, en este punto me gustaría destacar la relevancia de la innovación y las nuevas tecnologías en la práctica docente, tratando de aplicar las posibilidades que nos ofrecen en el aula para así mejorar la calidad de la educación. El módulo de formación básica se ve reflejado en mi trabajo de forma que éste promueve el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo entre el alumnado, dándoles la oportunidad de trabajar la actividad propuesta sin apenas mediación del profesor/a donde ellos/as son quienes llevan la responsabilidad de su propio aprendizaje. Además, para diseñar la tarea educativa que los alumnos y alumnas tienen que llevar a cabo era necesario conocer el proceso de desarrollo de los individuos, sus motivaciones y la importancia de su entorno y por último, considero necesario mencionar el hecho de la importancia de las nuevas tecnologías y su uso eficiente para la realización del trabajo.

El módulo *didáctico y disciplinar* se concreta en la capacidad tanto para diseñar como para planificar y evaluar procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje utilizando los medios y recursos disponibles que nos ha permitido aprender la gran variedad de métodos y teorías educativas que podemos seguir, de este modo, hemos adquirido las destrezas necesarias para saber elegir cuál se ajusta mejor a nuestro alumnado, teniendo en cuenta sus necesidades y entorno social. Este módulo, ha tenido una gran relevancia a la hora de diseñar el proyecto, ya que he encontrado necesario el revisar diferentes

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teorías educativas para poder decidir en cual basarme a la hora de diseñar, planificar y llevar a cabo el trabajo. Así mismo, la tarea diseñada en el proyecto fomenta el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo del alumnado, ya que, al tratarse de una tarea de interacción oral, gran parte de la responsabilidad de su aprendizaje recae sobre ellos mismos. Así mismo, para fomentar el esfuerzo y la implicación activa durante el desarrollo de la actividad, he propuesto un sistema de premios mediante el cual el alumnado podrá realizar una actividad educativa de su gusto tras la correcta realización de la tarea propuesta. Finalmente, durante el transcurso de este módulo, aprendimos también la necesidad de adaptar las actividades a las necesidades reales del aula, por ello, la actividad propuesta contiene tres niveles de dificultad que el profesor/a puede utilizar atendiendo a las necesidades de los estudiantes.

Asimismo, el módulo *practicum* permite enmarcar el trabajo realizado en el aula referido al diseño, puesta en práctica y evaluación de una unidad didáctica en la que se han visto reflejadas todas las competencias adquiridas durante el grado. Del mismo modo, durante la estancia en el centro escolar hemos aprendido la importancia del profesorado, las tareas que desarrolla realmente y los problemas a los que se tiene que enfrentar. Durante esta experiencia, he podido comprobar la imposibilidad de realizar muchas de las ideas que aprendemos durante el grado debido a la falta de recursos y profesorado. Por ello, este módulo se ve reflejado en mi actividad propuesta, de forma que ésta es realista, no implica el uso de grandes recursos que tal vez no haya en todos los colegios, y permite al alumnado trabajar de forma cooperativa dentro del aula de inglés mientras el profesorado se puede centrar en que ésta se lleve a cabo de la mejor forma posible trabajando por grupos separados por nivel de conocimiento de la lengua, de modo que el profesor o profesora pueda atender todas las necesidades del aula.

Por último, el módulo *optativo* correspondiente con la mención de inglés del semestre VII del Grado de Maestro en Educación Primaria es de vital importancia en mi propuesta, debido a que ésta está enfocada a la adquisición de la competencia oral en inglés del alumnado. Durante la mención hemos trabajado diversos aspectos de la lengua inglesa así como de su enseñanza que quedan patentes en la actividad propuesta. Hemos estudiado la importancia del uso de la lengua, de la necesidad de

ser capaces de comunicarnos en la lengua extranjera como objetivo último de su aprendizaje, y por ello mi proyecto se basa en la interacción oral entre el alumnado de forma que poco a poco se sientan más seguros y capaces de utilizar la lengua Inglesa.

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 4 Resultados y su Discusión y 5 Conclusiones, así como el preceptivo resumen que aparece en el siguiente apartado.



## Resumen

El objetivo final del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua se basa en la capacidad de comunicarse de manera eficaz y significativa. La interacción entre estudiantes es crucial para lograr este objetivo y por ello, en este estudio se propone la realización de una tarea en la cual los estudiantes deben interactuar describiendo y dibujando una imagen relacionada con la ciudad con el objetivo de practicar y aprender las preposiciones de lugar así como para fomentar el uso del inglés entre los estudiantes. La tarea será llevada a cabo durante tres sesiones donde los estudiantes trabajarán por parejas según tres diferentes niveles de dominio de la lengua. Para completar la tarea, el alumnado deberá utilizar diferentes estrategias de negociación del significado. Finalmente, al no ser posible llevar la actividad a la práctica, los resultados sobre su efectividad no pueden ser proporcionados, sino que será realizada una comparación entre la metodología seguida en este proyecto y una más tradicional. Así mismo, analizaremos las competencias que consideramos se trabajan a través de la actividad y que esperamos mejoren gracias a la práctica planteada.

*Palabras clave:* interacción; tarea; negociación; segunda lengua; estudiantes primaria.

## Abstract

The final goal of learning a foreign language is to use the target language to communicate in an effective and meaningful way. Interaction between students becomes crucial to achieve this. Therefore, this study proposes a task in which students must interact with each other in order to practice and learn the prepositions of place as well as to foster the use of the second language. The task is designed to be developed during three sessions in which students work in pairs taking into account three different proficiency levels. They will work cooperatively to complete the task successfully. One of the learners will describe a picture of a city building and the other one WILL draw their indications. Once finished, students will switch roles. Students will need to use different negotiation strategies to complete the task. As it has been impossible to put it into practice, results of the task are not available. However, a comparison between the methodology followed and the traditional one will be

provided. Furthermore, I will analyze the competences developed through the completion of the activity and that are thought to improve.

*Keywords:* interaction; task; negotiation strategies; second language; young learners.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Currently, the worldwide demand for English in business, trade, education and its gradual influence on all individual lives, makes it necessary to have good communication skills in this language.

During the last decades, we have witnessed the evolution of the approaches focused on teaching and learning English as a second and/or foreign language. Nowadays, the communicative approach is widespread for teaching English. Its focus for the learner is on the ability to use the target language for a wide range of different purposes and functions knowing how to vary the use of the language according to the setting and participants and also being able to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language. In order to achieve this goal, to be able to communicate in a meaningful and effective way in English, interaction among students has been described as essential by different authors such as Long, Pica, Gass or Mackey. Throughout this paper we are going to analyze the importance of interaction in the English class, how it can be practiced in the real learning context taking into account how children are as language learners, and we will present a task in which students have to practice one aspect of the language (prepositions of place and the expression there is/are) while interacting with one another. Therefore, they will practice not only a particular aspect of the language, but they are also going to find the need of speaking in English and in order to understand each other, they will develop negotiation for meaning strategies and listening skills. While completing the task students are going to be paired in equivalent proficiency levels, they will feel confident and will be able to manipulate the language and take risks, and thus, a more complete learning experience will have taken place. Finally, it is important to state that as I did not have the opportunity to put the task into practice, results are not available. However, it is significant to state that throughout the completion of the task students will learn and improve not only the grammatical aspect of study, but also they will practice it in a situation where a real need for communication will arise, and this way, the main objective of learning a second or foreign language which is to communicate effectively and meaningfully in the target language will be accomplished.



## 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Sense and connection with the contents of the Teacher Training Degree/Sentido y vinculación con los contenidos del Grado de Maestro en Educación Primaria.

During the teacher training degree we have studied the importance of adapting the contents that we are going to study to our students, their knowledge, likes and dislikes, as well as to their background experiences and their surroundings. My project is intended for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that are studying English as a second language and it aims to promote and foster interaction in English among students while practicing description and prepositions in the target language. They are going to use the structure *there is/are* and all the prepositions of place that they have studied such as *on, under, in, behind, between* and *next to*.

We have learned that it is very important to make students aware of the significance of communication, especially in a foreign language they do not have a good command of and through the completion of the task they are going to become conscious of the need of a second language in order to be able to communicate effectively with others. Moreover, framed in the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky that states that “human activities take place in a cultural setting and cannot be understood apart from this setting” (Woolfolk, 2009:39). It is very important to take into account our students background experiences and needs. Also, Vygotsky, 1978 points out that cognitive structures are directly related to our interactions with others or cultural experiences what means that social interaction is crucial for an individual’s development and thus, it is very important to make our students be able to communicate in a second language.

Another point that I would like to state is that, as we studied, it is very important to create different activities that engage students and in which they have to meet an objective that in some way challenges them. Thus, the task proposed tries to meet all the criteria set above. Children are going to work in pairs making their own decisions on how to use the language and how to approach the task. Also, through interaction they will have to use different negotiation for meaning strategies to successfully complete the task.

Having studied the importance of games as a crucial resource for teaching and learning that motivates students and makes them adopt a more participative role in the learning process, I tried to create a task in which students will feel engaged and find it necessary to speak in English. Furthermore, games provide intrinsic motivation, allow for basic communication and help learners to build a better understanding of the language, in terms of the chance that they have to manipulate it. Moreover, through games, students have the opportunity to use the target language in a meaningful way in which they have the most important role, and therefore the second language acquisition becomes more relevant. At this point I would like to make reference to a quote that reminds us of the importance of active participation in the learning process that can be achieved through games. "I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand" (unknown).

Furthermore, we have studied the importance of letting students explore their abilities and surroundings, and I believe that working in small groups (pairs) is a very good way of achieving this goal. Also, building relationships between each other is very important to guarantee a good self-development during the next years.

With regards to the teacher role in the class, we have studied that it is essential to be supportive and to approach our children with an open mind and expect the best of them, which will result in a better disposition towards work that our students will embrace. We have to give our students opportunities to grow and learn and thus, we have to help them in this complex process. Moreover, students are vulnerable and need to feel valued and important so, as teachers we must make them feel safe and confident in order to assure a good cognitive and personal development.

Finally, regarding interaction, which is the main topic of this project, it is necessary to take into account that students like to interact with each other, and consequently, we should let them work in groups, help each other and share their thoughts, understandings and misunderstandings while making them feel safe and comfortable in the class. "If they feel at home in the classroom, they are more likely to participate and take risks" (Moon, 2000: 10). Thus, it is significant to create a supportive and cooperative environment in the classroom where students feel self-confident and able to participate in the class.



Also, as teachers it is very important to prepare the classes in advance, and therefore planning instructions becomes an important process that we have to carry out in order to make creative, successful lessons in which our students will have the main role and consequently we will foster autonomy, higher-level thinking and creativity between them. During planning instructions we have to take into account all the needs that we can find among our students.

I tried to reflect the ideas presented above by creating a task in which different needs are taken into account by means of having prepared the same task with three different difficulty levels so that all students will find it challenging but they will feel that they can approach it and complete it successfully.

Concerning the task, it aims to foster the autonomous use of the second language (English) in the classroom between students. I consider this to be very important factor since most of the interaction in class happens between the teacher and the students. The teacher explains the activities and contents and students answer some questions, and most of the time the teacher is the one that leads the conversation. Thus, this task is based on students' interaction, in which they have to select what they are going to say and how they are going to explain and solve the task. As the goal of learning a language is to be able to communicate, the activities in which students have to interact with each other, and in which they find a communication gap that they have to overcome are very important for language acquisition.

At this point I would like to state that while having students work in groups there is a risk that concerns foreign language teachers, and it is the use of the first language, in this case Spanish, during task completion. Several studies such as the one made by Neomy Storch and Ali Aldosari on learners' use of first language in pair work in an EFL class (2010), have shown that the main use of the first language is in order to manage the task, and that in many cases it is not a bad thing for them to use some words that they cannot find in the target language, so that they can continue with the activity.

By carrying out this task during our lesson, we intend to help students to improve their speaking skills as well as their grammar, vocabulary acquisition and practice, to develop the ability of listening to their peers and to make them feel the need to make themselves understood. Furthermore, children are going to practice negotiation when they will find a communication gap that they will need to overcome and by means of

negotiation for meaning. In consequence, they will be able to complete the task successfully. This means that apart from the academic and cognitive work, students are also going to develop social skills which are very important for the present and future of an individual.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GROUNDING AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS.**

### **2.1. Sense and connection with the Primary Education Curriculum**

This project aims to foster interaction through oral communication in the English class in primary education. Students are going to perform a task in which they have to make use of the English language interacting with each other actively and thus, the learning will be more meaningful and effective. "Interaction facilitates acquisition because of the conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in such discourse and that provide learners with the input they need" (Long 1983a, 1983b, 1985, 1996)

Nowadays, the acquisition of a second and or foreign language is essential in the globalized world that we live in and the final goal of learning a second language is achieving the ability to communicate with other speakers effectively.

The curriculum of primary education 24/2007 establishes the importance of learning a second language, pointing out that the four skills that compose a language (reading, writing, listening and speaking) have to be developed through the six years of primary education. The objective is to build a basic communicative competence that includes different abilities.

Among the different aims that the curriculum sets, we can find some that are strictly associated with the task presented. Through the development of the task, students will have to listen to their peers, express themselves, and deal with misunderstandings and possible conflicts that may arise due to the communicative gaps that they will find through interaction. Also, they will need to use the vocabulary they know and the background knowledge and experiences they have with the second language in order to successfully complete the task. Moreover, language awareness will be built so that students will be able to identify different needs and characteristics of the second language learning by means of their active role and participation in the learning process.

All these objectives are named in the curriculum and it is remarkable the emphasis that we can find related to the oral language which is the main aim of this project. With this project I intend to develop the oral language through the completion of a

task in which students have to interact to complete it. They have to describe in detail a picture of a landscape to their partner, and the other person has to draw the picture following his/her partner's indications. As I explained above, since students are intended to do all the work interacting with each other, all the objectives named above will be accomplished. Students will feel more self-confident working with a peer so that they will feel more willing to manipulate and use the language. Also, they will have to negotiate when misunderstandings arise and finally, while working in groups, they will focus on the language, where they find difficulties, when they need the help of another student or the teacher and how they manage to say what they want to express. This means that students will need to follow different strategies in order to successfully complete the task, and moreover, they will be aware of their language learning process.

The curriculum also states the need of using engaging and challenging activities with students so that they will find the tasks attractive and motivating, and thus, they will do their best in order to successfully complete the task. The task that I have designed tries to embrace all these characteristics so that students will practice English autonomously learning at the same time as they find the activities enjoyable.

At this point, I would like to mention the progressive autonomy that students have to acquire related to their work and also to the independent use of the second language, in this case English. Through this task, I tried to develop their awareness by means of making them use the language between peers and not with the teacher. It is very important that students implicitly recognise that they have to practice the language not only with the teacher but also with their partners.

The curriculum states that a language is learned as the result of the communicative tasks that we find and carry out throughout the learning process. All the typical tasks of school, explanations and comments are recommended to be done in the target language. The school is the scenery and situation in which the English learning happens. In the task that I created, the explanations of the teacher and the interaction between students are supposed to be done in the target language, and moreover, the task makes students find a real need for speaking English, providing them a most favorable environment where English becomes the language of learning and that used for any communicative purpose.

In addition, the curriculum establishes general objectives with the aim of developing a communicative competence that is composed of different abilities that students must acquire. These objectives are closely related to the task that I planned since students are going to use the target language and by means of peer-peer interaction they are going to achieve the goals that we find in the curriculum. These objectives are:

- They have to be able to listen to and comprehend messages and varied oral interactions, using the information given in order to complete concrete tasks related to their experience.
- Express themselves and interact orally in simple and usual situations within a familiar content, using verbal and non-verbal procedures and adopting a respectful and cooperative attitude: they must be able to express feelings, opinions and any simple information, among others.
- Acquire a precise vocabulary in order to achieve an adequate expression.
- Value languages as a mean of communication and understanding between people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Show a receptive, interested and self-confident attitude in learning capability and the use of the language.

All these objectives set above have to be with the task presented in the project which aims to make students improve their interaction while respecting each other, negotiating for meaning and ultimately understanding the need to learn and use English in the real world.

Finally, as this task is going to be developed in fifth grade, students have to achieve more challenging goals related to the oral use of the English language. These objectives are related to the task designed since its completion will mean an improvement in their oral and communicative skills. The objectives that the curriculum sets in terms of oral language that are closely related with the task are:

- Oral interaction in real or simulated situations with progressive autonomy, efficiency and complexity based on familiar linguistic structures, showing interest for oral expression in individual and group activities.
- Development of basic strategies in order to support oral expression and comprehension: use of the visual context and previous knowledge about the topic or situation transferred by the known languages to the target language.

- Interest in expressing orally in individual and group activities (songs, drama...) working progressively more autonomously.

It is also very important, and so the curriculum states, the need to develop a positive attitude towards the English language as well as the value of languages in general as a means of communication with people from other countries. Students must be aware of the possibility that the English language offers access to new information and that it can be a vehicle to meet new cultures and their customs. In addition, it is important to foster the development of positive attitudes towards other cultural groups, as well as to increase students' awareness of their own cultures.

As a conclusion to this point, I would like to point out that the task I have designed aims to give students the opportunity to manipulate and use the target language interacting with each other and thus, it tries to accomplish the final aim set in the curriculum which is that as much as possible, language learning should emulate authentic language use.

## **2.2. Literature Review**

Teaching and learning English is a daunting task that requires great amounts of effort from both, teachers and students. The task that I have created is focused on the necessity to foster student interaction in class. Thus, it is crucial to clarify why English is so important nowadays, what a task is, why interaction is a key component of acquiring the target language, and also, why some strategies are used during the development of the task and not others.

### *2.2.1. The importance of English worldwide*

First of all, it's vital to clarify why learning English nowadays is very important. English is the major language of international communication and even though a variety of difficulties exist in getting an accurate count of the current number of English users, estimates for the number of native-English speakers worldwide range from about 300 million to over 400 million. It is known that millions more speak English as a second language. It is remarkable that nearly a billion people around the world speak English, which means that nowadays more people speak English as a second language than there are native speakers. (Peter Thompson, 2012) Thus, it is essential to take into

account that these bilingual speakers of English will use the target language for a variety of purposes, often for cross-cultural communication. Moreover, some of these bilingual speakers will use English on a daily basis within their own country while others will have more restricted purposes in using English, often for accessing and sharing information. Furthermore, as the use of English as an international language has been brought about by the continuing spread of the target language, this has resulted in a variety of changes in the grammatical, lexical and phonological levels that we, as teachers have to take into account.

The widespread use of English in a variety of political and intellectual areas makes it imperative for any country wishing to access the global community to have a good command of the language. Hence, it is crucial for individuals to learn and use the target language. However, we have to take into account that there are different contexts in which children learn English. The ideal situation for children learning a second language is to live in the country where the language is spoken, to be surrounded by it and to acquire it naturally through its use in everyday routines. However, in the context that we are placed in as foreign language speakers, children have a low exposure to English outside school and they do not have a real need to use the target language on a regular basis, it is acquired, learned and primarily used in the classroom.

Furthermore, the only access to English is in a formal learning environment with the focus mainly on correctness where language input is limited and controlled. Although these drawbacks can negatively influence English acquisition, a great many children learn English successfully in school contexts like the one described above. So we, as teachers need to consider the best way of making the classroom a positive learning environment. One of the recommendations that Moon (2000) states is that we have to motivate pupils to learn English by using interesting and enjoyable learning activities, e.g. project works, games and drama. In the task that I have designed, children will find a need to speak in English while enjoying the activity working in pairs and interacting with each other.

In conclusion, one of the primary reasons for the spread of English today is because it has such a variety of specific purposes. Knowledge of English is essential for accessing many discourses at many different levels, from international relations to popular

culture. As it is explained above, today English is an international language, and teaching it entails implementing tailored goals and approaches in which we have to take into account children's needs, likes, dislikes and interests, among other factors such as their social, cognitive and developmental stages.

### *2.2.2 Approaches on teaching English.*

The history of English language teaching is described as if one method followed another. Brown (1994) describes how in the 19th century, grammar-translation was the main and most popular method in language teaching. He then describes how audiolingualism become popular, and how the 1970s witnessed the rise of the "alternative" methods; for example, community language learning (henceforth, CLL). CLL is primarily meant as a "whole" approach to teaching. "It's a teaching method which encompasses all four skills while simultaneously revealing learners' styles which are more or less analytical in their approach to language learning" (Bertrand, 2004: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/community-language-learning>). Students work in a community where they take peer correction and by working together, they overcome their fear of speaking. In this description, all these teaching methods were substituted by the present-day emphasis on communicative language teaching whose main goal is to promote meaningful, appropriate language use. Halliday (1994) points out that there are two versions of CLL teaching. The first one is focused on oral work and group and pair work where students' participation is crucial. The other version is focused on learning about how language works in discourse. Students carry out tasks which are designed to pose language problems that help them understand how a text is constructed. Students may work with one another to solve a language problem and use their mother tongue in talking about the text but must report their results in English. In the task that I have designed, we can see how both methods convey in order to offer a complete, meaningful task to our students.

The new approaches regarding teaching English as a second language emphasize the use of tasks as a way of facilitating language acquisition. There are different definitions of task but for this project I am going to take into account Shekan's definition: "A task is an activity in which meaning is primary; there is some sort of communication problem to solve; there is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities;



task completion has some priority; assessment of the task in terms of outcome". (Skehan 1998: 95)

Thus, the task created tries to meet all the conditions explained above where students will have to understand each other and make themselves understood; i.e. they will find the need of using the language as well as negotiation for meaning strategies; the activity can be transferred into a similar real world situation and finally they will have a result of their performance.

### *2.2.3 Children as language learners:*

The task presented is designed to be performed by 5th grade students (10-11 years old). Thus, it is vital to take into account how children are as language learners at this age. It is very important to take into consideration that in general, younger children (5 to 11 years old) tend to be more enthusiastic and willing to talk in the class than older children showing a powerful desire to communicate that is carried over into foreign language learning. Accordingly, English teachers need to take advantage of this characteristic and foster interaction between students. Also, according to A. Pinter (1997), children at this age begin to resemble adult patterns of thinking and talking and they are able to think in an organized and logical fashion and their attention is more selective, adaptable and planned than younger children.

Another important advantage that they have over younger children, is their ability to reflect on their own thinking, their own language use and to take others' views and opinions into account. However, "communicating with someone who has not shared the same experience can still be a demanding task because it requires abstracting chunks of the experience and determining the amount of background knowledge based on the judgment of what the listeners may or may not know" (Menyuk and Brisk, 2005: 120). These are some of the reasons why this task has been designed for this age group, in view of the fact that they are going to be able to work in an order following a logical sequence while describing the task. Furthermore, at this age (10-11 years old) students are going to be able to give more details while describing the picture and also they are going to use a wide range of expressions that younger children would not be able to use. Their negotiations for meaning would be more

challenging and they will try harder to achieve the task assigned in the target language, due to the fact that they have more resources to successfully complete it.

At this point, it is also very important to take into account that pupils have feelings about language learning and as teachers, we need to be sensitive to a pupil's feelings as this may affect their motivation and attitude towards language learning. "If they feel at home in the classroom, they are more likely to participate and take risks" (Moon, 2004: 10). Moore also claims that it is crucial that teachers create conditions to support language learning by encouraging a real need and desire to use English, providing sufficient time for English, exposure to varied and meaningful input with a focus on communication, opportunities for children to experiment with their new language, plenty of opportunities to practice and use the language in different contexts and creating a friendly atmosphere in which children can take risks and enjoy their learning experience. All this should be while also providing feedback on learning and helping children to notice the underlying pattern in language.

In order to maintain a safe and friendly classroom environment where students' participation is the norm, a system of rules and routines is needed. It is the same when completing a task. It is very important to keep students engaged with the activity while they show and perform appropriate behavior. According to this line of reasoning, for the task designed I took into account Fred Jones' management theory. He points out that most successful teachers not only help students learn, but simultaneously teach them how to manage their behavior responsibly. In his theory, he stresses the importance of keeping students engaged in learning, and thus, he developed a teaching approach called *Say, see, do teaching* in which the teacher says, the students see and do. He also adds that effective teachers put students to work from the beginning. They present information and, most of the times, an example to the students and then, they have students do something with it. Moreover, Jones states that the approach becomes more effective when augmented with visuals. Thus, with an example, students know what they have to do and they have an idea on how to do it. Finally, Jones states that it is important to increase students' motivation and responsibility through judicious use of incentives. This author defines an incentive as a "proffered condition that prompts an individual to act" (Jones, 1987: 57). In other words, the teacher promises students something they will enjoy, provided they first do

their work and behave properly. Jones claims that it is crucial to explain the reason of incentives to students and to agree with them on what the choices for their preferred activity time henceforth, PAT will be. Finally, he stressed that the incentives must have instructional value so that students will learn something while carrying out one activity that they enjoy. The theory of Fred Jones is used in the task that I have designed in order to motivate students' to speak in English.

During the task, students are going to work in pairs, and it is very important to take into account different features of the class and the students. It is necessary to organize children in ways that will maximize opportunities for learning. A key difference between working with adults and children is that adults are able to understand the point of group and pair work whereas children will find it much harder to understand the intellectual reason for working in a particular way. They may not be able to regulate their behavior unless the activity makes sense to them in human or imaginative terms. So we have to give them a reason to work in groups, and also, as stated before it is very important to follow a management plan and to have established routines. It is also essential to give short and clear instructions on how to do it.

Nowadays, pair and group work are widespread in foreign language classrooms because "it gives the opportunity for increased language input, pupil practice and greater involvement in language learning. In order to work effectively in groups, children have to be able to co-operate and communicate with others and, they may need to learn how to do this". (Moon, 2000: 52) As children may find it difficult to work in groups or pairs, it is very important to explain to them what they are going to do and how they are expected to behave. There are a great deal of different techniques that teachers can follow in order to form pairs and groups which may help to engage children's interest and make this form of working meaningful for them. One of those is the one that I decided to use for the development of my task. Students will sit in front of each other and they are going to work with a similar English proficiency partner, working in this way will make students feel more comfortable and self-confident where the communication and participation will be equal or similar. Sitting opposite each other is crucial for the completion of the task due to the fact that students are not supposed to see each other's papers and while describing the task

they will find the necessity of negotiating for meaning. They will have to use different strategies to overcome the problems that could arise and thus, they will find it necessary to communicate the ideas in the target language.

Also, working in pairs benefits students since they have more freedom to choose what to say or do. "Children benefit in several ways from being given greater control. If they are in control they have more choice over what to say, which allows them to experiment with the language. They play some of the roles the teacher would normally play, which involves giving instructions, asking questions, checking, etc. This provides opportunities for them to use a wider variety of language functions. They are also learning how to become more independent as learners" (Moon, 58; 2000). Thus, pair work is valuable in providing more opportunities for children to get more language exposure and practice, but as previously noted, it needs a big effort from the teacher and a good management plan.

#### 2.2.4. Interaction

Currently, more studies are approaching the topic of interaction in the second or foreign language class (English) and they establish the importance of interaction for second language acquisition. In order to create the task, I took into account two studies about how interaction benefits children while learning English. For this study, I took into consideration the theories of Long (1996) on interaction, Mackey (1999) on Input, interaction and second language development, and the theory of Pinter (2006) on Verbal evidence of task related strategies: child versus adult interactions. The importance of interaction has been stated by several authors such as the ones stated before. Also, similar claims for the benefits of negotiation have been made by Pica (1994) and Gass (1997).

According to the Long's Interactional Hypothesis, interaction facilitates acquisition because of the conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in such discourse and that it provides learners with the input they need. Through one type of interaction, termed *negotiation* by Long, nonnative speakers and their interlocutors signal that they do not understand something and thus, through the resulting interaction, learners have opportunities to understand and use the language that was

incomprehensible. Moreover, they will receive more or different input and have more opportunities for output. (Swain 1985, 1995).

There are also different studies that have considered the effects of different input and interactional conditions on second language production and acquisition. Pica's review of work on negotiated interaction suggests that interaction facilitates conditions and processes that are claimed to be important in second language learning. As different linguistic units are rephrased, repeated and reorganized to aid comprehension, learners may have opportunities to notice features of the target language. Also, it is very important for us as future teachers to know that there are also studies, such as the one that Mackey and Gass (2005) carried out, that point out that the effects of interaction may not be immediate. This means, that even though as teachers we do not observe the benefits of interaction between students immediately, we have to keep on working like this, since one in due time the benefits of this practice will be noticed.

In one of the studies carried out by Swain they state that "it is having to actually produce language that forces learners to think about syntax" (Swain, 1995:48) This is very important due to the fact that not only is to understand each other important but also to improve the quality of the used language. Swain also argued for the importance of comprehensible output in the second language acquisition process. Understanding this, learners in their effort to be understood in the target language, are forced in their production and may try out new forms of modify others. They will find it necessary to try out new ways of using the language.

Based on the output hypothesis, it would seem that, to facilitate second language acquisition, for interaction to happen, learners need to have opportunities for output during the process. The problem is that in many second language classrooms, learners often see the output that their peers receive without producing their own one which is not very productive in terms of speech improvement.

Long's hypothesis differentiates between modified input and pre-modified input, that is, when the speech of the native speaker is characterized by decreased complexity, but increased length and redundancy like foreigner talk. It is generally operationalized as input that has been carefully targeted at the level of the learner in order to facilitate learner's comprehension. It is important to point out that negotiation is not as

necessary as when there is not pre-modified input than when it is pre-modified. Examples of this kind of input can be seen in ESL/EFL textbooks. However, in terms of the interaction hypothesis, pre-modified input may be less beneficial for learners because their opportunities to listen for mismatches between their own output and the target language are limited in order to ensure comprehension. "Pre-modified input, such as that obtained through scripted interaction, which results in few or no opportunities for negotiation or misunderstandings, may not be helpful for second language acquisition. Learners who participate in negotiation in the context of interaction have more learning opportunities". (Mackey, 1999: 560).

However, I would like to point out that one of the reasons why textbooks use pre-modified input is because comprehensible input is essential to language learning since there cannot be interaction if there is not a minimal understanding.

Also, Long's (1996) claim in the interaction hypothesis was that there is an important role in the second language acquisition process for negotiated interaction that elicits negative feedback. According to Long, this feedback may induce noticing of some forms. "It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learners developing second language processing capacity... negative feedback obtained in negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of second language development" (LONG, 1996: 414) There is also, another source of negative feedback termed recasts. "Recasts are a target like way of saying something that was previously formulated in a non-target like way." (Mackey, 1999: 561) Understanding this, the native speaker interlocutor responds to the non-native speaker's utterance by supplying a correct version of the mistake. The problem that recasts have is that the non native speaker may confuse the negative feedback with another way of saying the same thing. Consequently, teachers must be careful with this possible problem, and to avoid it they must make it clear that the student made a mistake. Thus, researchers have claimed that if interaction is to affect the learners' interlanguage, learners may need to notice the gap between their interlanguage form and the second language alternative (Gass, 2005). Gass pointed out that "nothing in the target language is available for intake into a language learners existing system unless it is consciously noticed" (p. 136).

Furthermore, Long's interactional hypothesis, claims that when language users struggle to maximize comprehension, there are different strategies that students follow in order to find out the meaning. It is important to point out that there is no need for negotiation if there is no communication breakdown. They classified the different negotiation strategies language learners use into four main categories: repetition, confirmation checks, comprehension checks or clarification requests. It is important to point out that in the task designed students are going to find the need to negotiate for meaning and that they are intended follow the strategies named above.

There are also more studies about interaction and second language acquisition that confirm that negotiated interaction is beneficial for second language acquisition and production. For example, Loschky (1994) proved in his study that negotiated interaction had a positive effect on comprehension of the vocabulary items or the acquisition of grammatical structures. Also, Ellis et al. (1994) suggested that interaction allows learners to comprehend items in the target language and that comprehended input is important for second language acquisition.

There is also a study in which I have based the task designed, that examines the relationship between different types of conversational interaction where the central question was whether conversational interaction facilitate second language development or not, carried out by Alison Mackey (1999). Long's last version of the interaction hypothesis points out that implicit negative feedback, which can be obtained through negotiated interaction, facilitates second language acquisition. Also, similar claims for the benefits of negotiation have been made by Pica (1994) and Gass (1997). Mackey study aimed to answer whether conversational interaction facilitates second language or not and if the developmental outcomes are related to the conversational interaction and the level of learner involvement or not. These questions led to a prediction in which interaction is thought to lead to development, and associated prediction that the extent of the development would be related to the nature of the interaction and the role of the learner, such that learners who actively participated in interaction would receive the most benefit and learners who did not would receive less benefits.

In Mackey's study, she used a conversational task in which students had to "spot the differences" in order to foster production in the target language. Only development in

terms of question forms was investigated. Each participant had a similar picture with 10 differences. The non-native speaker was required to find the differences between the two pictures by asking questions to his/her partner. She carried out the study with 34 ESL adult learners. (Even though the task that I have designed it is going to be performed by children, we can transfer her results since we have seen above some of the differences between children and adult learners).

Her results from the study showed that the group that took part in interaction was significantly more likely to demonstrate stage increase than the group that did not take part in it. Understanding that they had improved their command of the target language. Thus, the results suggest that students that actively participated in interaction would receive the most benefits. This is very important so that, for the design of the task, I took it into account by means of having all the students participating actively during the task.

Moreover, students who interacted with a native speaker using goal-based tasks that encouraged negotiated interaction involving a range of question forms increased in both their production of those question forms at higher levels and their developmental stage. However, those students that work under the premises of pre-modified input (without opportunities for negotiation) had limited effects on development. During the task, they were following a text that had been pre-modified to minimize the possibility of any breakdown in communication, which would lead to less-improvement in the production or acquisition of the target language.

Finally, in her conclusion, she establishes that it is very important to keep on studying this topic and that one of the features that best interacts with the student-internal factors to facilitate subsequent language development is learner participation that offers opportunities for the negotiation of meaning to take place. Also, she points out in her conclusions that this interaction is effectively obtained through the use of tasks.

Another issue that it is very important to take into account is the fact that learners tend to use their first language during peer interaction. A study by Neomy Storch and Ali Aldosari (2010) gives us clarification about this. Nowadays, following the communicative approaches to second language learning in which students work in small groups, one of the biggest concerns of teachers is the fact that learners may use their first language instead of their second language during the development of the



activities. There are studies that suggest that the use of the first language during the foreign language class enables learners to complete the task more effectively. (e.g. gain a clearer understanding of the text and offer suggestions on how to improve the texts...) Anton and Dicamila (1998) investigated the talk of five pairs of English learners of Spanish engaged in a writing task and found similar uses of the first language. Based on their data, the authors established a list of categories for first language use: providing each other with assistance, initiating and maintaining interrelationships, externalizing or vocalizing their thoughts.

Moreover, Swain and Lapkin's study (2000) showed that the first language was found to perform three functions: moving the task along, focusing attention and task management. To understand why students use their first language in the second language class is important to take into account the role of the language in the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1986) that views cognitive development as essentially social where language, one of the most important cultural artifacts, plays a key role in human cognitive development. Language mediates not only our relationship with others, but also our own mental activity.

There are a number of studies that seem to indicate that students, when assigned to work in small groups tend to use their first language for a wide variety of functions deemed helpful for language learning. However, findings about the effect of the type task on the amount of first language use seem to be inconclusive.

The study carried out by Neomy Storch and Ali Aldosari, took part in Saudi Arabia between male college students during three weeks. They had to develop three tasks: jigsaw, composition and text editing. Also, all students were familiar with the tasks to be performed. The study aimed to answer whether second language proficiency had any impact on the use of first language and on the functions the first language served.

The study refined the functions that the first language served in the completion of the task: task management, discussing and generation ideas, grammar deliberations, vocabulary deliberations and mechanics deliberations. They established three different proficiency groups. (High-high level of English, Low-high level and low-low level) in order to find out if there are significant differences between the amount of the first language that they use. They found that across the three proficiency groupings, pairs who had a low command of the second language users used little first language

regardless of task type. In contrast, those that were moderate or extensive second language users tended to use more first language in the editing task than in the two other tasks. Moreover, they found that the main function the first language served was task management, that was most used between high-low level students. The study concludes that the students used their first language to a fairly limited extent. Interviews in Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) suggest that learners are aware that they should avoid the use of their first language in foreign language class. Also, the researchers found that weaker pairs used more their first language than stronger pairs in the editing task, but there was little difference in the amount of first language used between the three proficiency groups on the other two tasks. One reason why the editing task required more first language use by the low level groups is that this task requires students first to understand the meaning of a text written by other students and then to improve it. And thus, when confronted with a difficult task, the lower proficiency learners needed to use all of their available resources (among which is first language) to complete it.

The research also sought to study the functions served by the first language. The study found that when used, the first language served a number of important functions, but the predominant function between all the groups was task management. This, was followed by deliberations over vocabulary. Also, students use their first language in private conversations. These functions of first language accord with the sociocultural approach of language as an important cognitive and psychological tool, mediating social interaction and mental activity. Moreover, a closer examination of the use of the first language suggested that it was also used as a social tool that reflected and maintained the relationship formed by the pairs.

In conclusion, research seem to suggest that when learners in a foreign language class are asked to work in pairs, they tend to use their first language, but to a limited extent. These findings could help teachers not to be very worried about the issue. Also, the findings show that the use of first language by students implies an important cognitive, social and pedagogical function. However, it is important to point out that, in spite of all this, students should not be encouraged to use their first language during interaction, but that it is not useful to restrict or prohibit the use of the first language

in the foreign language class due to its usefulness by means that they can carry out the task assigned in a more confident way.

For the task designed, Storch's study is very useful, due to the fact that it is going to be a task where students have to interact with each other, also taking into account their needs, understanding by this that they are going to perform the task working in pairs with same proficiency English levels, and thus, for the teacher it is very important to take into account that students will be likely to need to use their first language in order to complete the task successfully, and that teachers should not see this as something negative, as long as the first language use corresponds to any of the functions we have already mentioned and it is sensibly used by the learners.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Age

The task designed is meant to be taught in the fifth grade of primary education due to the abilities and capabilities that students have achieved during the previous years. At this age, they are able to use a wide range of expressions and vocabulary, as well as work autonomously and cooperatively with their peers.

It is also remarkable, that this task can be modified and applied in different age groups.

#### 3.2. Objectives

This task is designed to foster and promote the use of the second language between peers. This is the main general objective due to the fact that most of the interaction in the class is teacher-fronted with little or no room for peer interaction. There is evidence supported by different studies on the issue by Swain (1985, 1995), Gass (1997) and Long (1996) that peer interaction is very important in order to improve a language because students find themselves more confident, they interact in the target language and try to use new vocabulary and expressions. Time for peer interaction is very important since nowadays students outnumber the teacher 1 vs. 25 on average and therefore, by using communicative activities between students, learners get more opportunities to use the target language.

Also, as the main goal of learning a language is communication, this task seeks to make students more self-confident and to give them resources to communicate in a second language that in this case is English. They are going to practice the description using the structures *there is* and *there are* and also they are going to practice the prepositions such as *on*, *under*, *behind*, *between*, *next to*. It is important to point out that students are going to find the need to negotiate for meaning and ask for clarification or repetition so that a real need and desire to use English will arise. By negotiation for meaning, we refer to “a process in which a listener requests message clarification and confirmation and a speaker follows up these requests, often through repeating, elaboration, or simplifying the original message” (Pica, 1994, p.497). They will find it necessary to use the different strategies defined by (Gass & Varonis 1994,

Long 1996 and Pica 1994) which are: *Clarification requests*, where the learner asks for clarification using different questions and expressions. When students use the *confirmation check*, they express what they have understood seeking to get an affirmative answer for the interlocutor. Finally, the *comprehension check* refers to when the interlocutor asks questions to assure the understanding of the other person.

- *Clarification requests*: What? I didn't understand. Can you repeat, please?
- *Confirmation check*: Did you say...?
- *Comprehension check*: Do you understand? In order to make sure that the other speaker has understood what we have just said.

Another important objective of this task is to make students aware of the importance of English in the world we live in and the use of English as a communication tool that will give them opportunities all around the world and will provide them with the necessary skills to grow as individuals in this globalized world.

Finally, the task seeks to make students enjoy as well as be willing to speak in English and to work in the English class. This will help us avoid or at least moderate situations in which students sometimes do not like English lessons since they find it difficult to follow instructions or complete the tasks. Thus, as this task is designed to be developed in pairs, students will find it more comfortable and will feel more confident in what they can do. Also, as I stated before, there are going to be three different difficulty levels, the teacher has to take this into account when making pairs with equal or similar English proficiency level. Understanding this, the teacher will have prepared a more challenging activity for high-level students, a medium difficulty activity for medium-level students and an easier activity for low-level students. By doing this, all students will find it challenging but they will feel that they can approach it and complete it successfully. Moreover, grouping students in similar proficiency pairs is beneficial for their performance since they will feel self-confident about what they can do. Finally, at this point it is important to note that teachers must take into account the fact that students are going to use their mother tongue at some point, presumably when managing the task but as the study carried out by Neomy Storch and Ali Aldosari on learners' use of first language in pair work in an EFL class there is little or no difference between the different proficiency groups on the amount of Spanish that they might use. In addition, the study concludes that students only use their mother

tongue in few occasions and generally with for a reason that facilitates the development of the task.

### **3.3 Design**

Task title: *Describe and draw.*

Timing: *10 minutes*

Grouping: *pair-work*

Sessions: *3*

Students will have to work in pairs in order to complete a task in which one of the members of the pair is given a picture, and has to describe it in detail so that his/her partner will draw it. Children will take turns to describe their picture.

The pictures that the students are going to describe and draw are connected to a familiar topic that they have studied before so that they are going to be able to use the vocabulary and expressions previously learned. They have to use the structure *there is/are* in order to describe what they can find in their pictures and also they are going to practice the prepositions of place. Since it is a pair work activity, students will have more opportunities for trying new expressions and experiment the language in a safe environment.

The topic studied before is the city, different buildings, places and objects that they can find in a city. It is very important for students to have this background knowledge so that they will feel confident in completing the task assigned. Thus, the teacher is going to explain to the pupils that they are going to describe different places that we can find in town. They will provide an example using the digital board of what students have to do in order to give them a model on how to complete the task successfully. Once they have repeated the task several times and they have remembered the expressions, the teacher will post some of the resulting drawings on their classroom wall. Saying this to the children will make them more willing to complete the task as well as they can so that they will feel proud of their final product.

While completing this task, students are going to practice, on the one hand the description expressions *there is/are* and the prepositions of place *on, under, behind, between,* etc. and on the other hand, they are going to practice different questions they will need to use in order to give accuracy to their final product.

This task is partially controlled by the teacher by means that they will select the pictures that students are going to describe and draw. However, children are free to select the language they are going to use. At this point it is very important to remember that students tend to use their first language while working with their peers. There are some studies that suggest that the use of L1 is quite limited while completing a pair or small group task and they use their L1 sensibly and for purposes and functions that facilitate language learning mainly for organizational purposes or to facilitate deliberation over vocabulary (Storch & Aldosari, 2011) . However, the teacher has to be aware of this fact and try to make students use as much English as they can.

In order to start the activity, the teacher will ask students to review the prepositions they know using the digital board. They will have prepared a picture of a table that will appear on the digital board, and students will determine the prepositions while the teacher place objects around the table. Also, they will review the expressions that they have to use in order to make reference to where in the paper an item is put. As a scaffolding tip, the teacher will write those expressions in the digital board in order to help students to carrying out the task. This will last no more than five minutes due to the fact that this is only a review of what they already know. Also, the teacher is going to make students think of how they can best describe a picture. They will stress the structures *there is/are*. As explained before, the teacher will post an example on the board and all the students will complete the assignment. Thus, students will have a model to follow and the instructions given by the teacher will remind them of their objectives.

Then, the teacher is going to indicate how the pairs are going to be established. Even though there are very different techniques for forming pairs, for this activity I consider that it is more desirable to get children sitting opposite each other to work as pairs since the activity consists of describing a picture that the other student is not supposed to see. The pairs are going to be established taking into account proficiency levels; high, medium and low. As a consequence, the teacher will hand out the different pictures to describe taking this into account. As pupils are likely to feel more comfortable and confident with the students who have the same proficiency level, having them working with a partner that has a similar English level will make them approach the activity with more enthusiasm and willingness. The students'



arrangement in the class is also very important for the teacher so that they will know which groups are more likely to get into difficulties and they can pay more attention to those groups of children while walking around the class listening and helping all groups.

Secondly, the teacher will give one picture to each student that they are going to describe and one piece of paper in which they are going to draw what their partner indicates.

Then, students will start the activity. It is very important to make sure that all students speak in English while doing the activity always taking into consideration the L1 uses mentioned before. Thus, the teacher will establish a reward system in which if they hear students speaking in English she will give them points that can be exchangeable at the end of the week with an Earning Preferred Activity Time (PAT). Students will be able to choose between different activities that have educational value such as reading a book for pleasure, playing educative games on the computer or playing hangman. Since the task is going to be developed during three days, those students who obtain three points will have the chance to choose one of the activities designed by the teacher as PAT. This will motivate students and they will make a bigger effort in order to speak in English and be able to have time for an activity that they love. Otherwise, students might find the task boring after performing it the second or even the first time. Therefore, I consider that adopting this approach would be very useful in maintaining students high motivation and engagement on the task.

In this task, the timing is also very important, since children's concentration is limited they need short activities very carefully structured with defined outcomes and clearly repeated procedures (routines), and this is the reason why this task has been designed to last 10 minutes in which students have to manipulate and use the language. Here we can find a problem because in the same classroom we can find very different achievement levels and rhythms and we have to make sure that all the students achieve the goals established for the task. To approach this challenge, we have to remember that:

“Differences are natural [...] having high expectations of children raises their own expectations which may prompt them to increase effort and so lead to

improved performance. This in turn may assist children in developing more positive self-images and levels of self-esteem.” (Moon, 2004)

The students who finish the task before the 10 minutes-time they have for completing it, can describe what they have drawn and the differences that they find between their drawing and the original picture. On the other hand, for the students that struggle more, the teacher, as it has been explained before, will provide them with an easier picture to describe and also will be attentive in case they need more help.

Finally, I would like to point out that since this task is going to be performed during three sessions in which students will have to describe three different pictures and also draw another three different pictures, it is very important to maintain the pairs for the three days, so that it would be easier to provide children with different pictures.

### **3.4. Materials**

The materials needed in order to put in practice this task are:

- Sheets of paper
- 3 different sets of high-level pictures for describing
- 3 different sets of medium-level pictures for describing
- 3 different sets of low-level pictures for describing
- pencils
- crayons
- markers

The teacher will have to select how many copies of each set they will need taking into account their students' needs.

### **3.5. Assessment of the task**

The teacher will assess the task during the second and third sessions, following a rubric (See appendix 2) in which they will take into account different parameters such as the context in which the target language has been used, different aspects of the language where the correct use of the prepositions of place is the main focus and learner participation. It is essential to assess all these parameters since we have to understand the language as a whole and even though the main concern of the activity is the prepositions, everything counts. Regarding the context, the teacher will take into

account how students interact with each other, and if they follow different strategies in order to access to meaning. Concerning the formal aspect of the language, as it is stated before, the main issue is prepositions of place, but also vocabulary, fluency, sentence structures and pronunciation will count to the final grade so that not only a particular item of the language is assessed but also different features that conform it.

It is also very important to receive feedback from the students. So that, at the end of the third session, they will have to fill in a self-assessment handout (See appendix 3) in which they will write what they think about their performance and their feelings towards the activity. In addition, there will be some questions regarding the evaluation of the task. Here issues such as the suitability of the task, the difficulty and the methodology used will be analyzed.



## **4. ANÁLISIS Y SU CONCLUSIÓN.**

Al no haber tenido la oportunidad de poner en práctica la tarea propuesta en el proyecto, en este punto voy a analizar las competencias que mediante la realización de la tarea se trabajan, así como las razones por las que este planteamiento en el que la interacción entre el alumnado es clave, es una muy buena opción para trabajar y aprender las preposiciones de lugar, al mismo tiempo que se trabaja la expresión y comprensión oral.

### **4.1 Comparación entre la forma tradicional de enseñanza-aprendizaje de las preposiciones con la propuesta.**

Tradicionalmente, la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés en las aulas de educación primaria ha estado basada en los métodos tanto de audio-lengua como de gramática-traducción.

El método de audio-lengua consiste en la repetición constante de oraciones correctas reforzadas con la ayuda del docente donde encontramos muy escasa cabida a la realización de errores, que son corregidos inmediatamente y no forman parte del aprendizaje.

Así mismo, el tradicional método de gramática traducción, ya en desuso, se basa en la creencia de que a través de la adquisición de la competencia gramatical se consigue el dominio de la lengua. Por lo tanto, en este contexto la enseñanza del inglés se basa en el estudio de las normas gramaticales del idioma y su práctica a partir de ejercicios escritos.

Estos dos modelos de aprendizaje, además, trabajan el uso de la lengua oral mediante la memorización de diálogos, preguntas y respuestas donde no hay cabida a errores. Al trabajar las preposiciones de lugar en la tarea propuesta, es importante destacar que los métodos tradicionales proponen trabajar este aspecto del lenguaje mediante la memorización y la práctica basada en ejercicios controlados, básicamente escritos, en los que no hay lugar a discusión o error, lo cual influye negativamente al alumnado, ya que el error es parte del proceso de aprendizaje. En este punto me gustaría hacer referencia a Krashen donde apunta que: “language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill”

(Krashen, 1981, 14). Por ello, considero que la tarea propuesta trabaja un aspecto gramatical como son las preposiciones sin olvidar otro de los componentes fundamentales de la lengua: la interacción oral esencial a la hora de adquirir un idioma. A través del desarrollo de la tarea, los alumnos y alumnas tendrán que poner en práctica diferentes estrategias de negociación de significado para poder completar la actividad. Además, de este modo se fomenta la comunicación, que es en última instancia el objetivo de la adquisición de una segunda lengua. Más aún, gracias a la posibilidad que se les otorga a los alumnos y alumnas de manipular la lengua, éstos serán capaces de experimentar con el uso de diferentes expresiones, palabras y construcciones gramaticales que les dan la oportunidad de mejorar su competencia lingüística. Otro punto a favor de la tarea propuesta, en contra de la forma tradicional de enseñanza aprendizaje donde las preposiciones se aprenden memorísticamente y mediante la realización de ejercicios escritos individualmente, se basa en el hecho en que los estudiantes trabajan por parejas, lo cual se define en la necesidad de comunicación real, de tratar de hacerse entender, de solucionar problemas que les ocurran sobre la marcha de la actividad y además deberán ser capaces de escuchar y atender a las indicaciones de sus compañeros por lo que de este modo el aprendizaje y adquisición de la segunda lengua se realiza de forma significativa y comprensiva.

#### **4.2. Competencias que trabajarán/adquirirán los alumnos y alumnas**

Durante la realización de dicha tarea, los alumnos y alumnas trabajarán diferentes competencias, no solo relacionadas con la adquisición y aprendizaje de la lengua sino también con las implicaciones sociales que esto conlleva debido a que la actividad será desarrollada por parejas.

Durante la realización de la tarea, los estudiantes trabajarán la competencia en comunicación lingüística, social y ciudadana, para aprender a aprender y desarrollarán la competencia que versa sobre la autonomía y la iniciativa personal.

La adquisición de la competencia lingüística se refleja de modo que el lenguaje se utiliza como instrumento de comunicación oral y escrita. En el caso de la tarea propuesta, los estudiantes se centrarán en el desarrollo del lenguaje oral. De este modo, trabajarán la expresión de ideas así como el diálogo, ya que la tarea se basa en la interacción oral entre dos alumnos y/o alumnas. Además, la competencia lingüística

hace hincapié en la comunicación y conversación como acciones que suponen habilidades para establecer vínculos y relaciones constructivas con los demás y con el entorno, además de acercarse a nuevas culturas. Por ello, considero que la competencia de comunicación lingüística está muy presente en el desarrollo de esta tarea.

En cuanto a la competencia social y ciudadana que hace posible comprender la realidad social en la que se vive, cooperar y convivir democráticamente, los alumnos y alumnas a través de la tarea a desarrollar, trabajarán de cara a este fin. Al realizar el trabajo además en una lengua extranjera, inglés, el alumnado entiende la globalización, pluralidad a la que hoy atendemos. Además, implícitamente en esta competencia se haya el hecho de conocerse y valorarse, saber comunicarse en diferentes contextos, expresar sus ideas y escuchar las ajenas, ser capaz de ponerse en el lugar del otro y valorar las actividades tanto individuales tanto como las grupales. Todas estas cuestiones se trabajan de manera clara en la tarea propuesta, ya que los alumnos trabajan en inglés, lengua cada vez más necesaria para poder comunicarse con cualquier persona de otro país y al trabajar por parejas, aprenden a respetar los turnos, escuchar y dar su punto de vista.

Las competencias de aprender a aprender y de autonomía e iniciativa personal, se ven reflejadas durante la tarea por el hecho de que el alumnado trabaja autónomamente y cooperativamente con sus compañeros, siendo éste el principal sujeto de su propio aprendizaje, donde la mayor parte de la responsabilidad de la adquisición de las competencias y objetivos recae sobre sí mismo, desarrollando un sentido de conciencia sobre su propio aprendizaje, dejando el papel del profesorado como guía y facilitador de la actividad.

Finalmente, en este punto, me gustaría destacar que al estar trabajando las preposiciones mediante fotos de la ciudad, el alumnado también trabaja la competencia en el conocimiento y la interacción con el mundo físico de modo que los alumnos y alumnas desarrollan la capacidad de percibir el espacio físico en el que se desenvuelven y son capaces de interactuar con el espacio circundante moviéndose en él, y resolviendo problemas en los que intervienen objetos y su posición.

### **4.3. Dificultades al plantear la actividad en clase.**

La actividad propuesta no requiere de la utilidad de muchos recursos tal vez no disponibles en el aula, pero a su vez ésta requiere un buen conocimiento sobre el alumnado y el nivel de inglés que estos poseen. Además, la mayor dificultad que el profesorado puede encontrar para la realización de esta tarea es el hecho de que los alumnos y alumnas trabajan en parejas cooperativamente, y por ello es importante llevar a cabo la metodología propuesta para que los alumnos y alumnas se comporten como es debido, y se sientan motivados para realizar la actividad satisfactoriamente. Es importante dejar claro a los alumnos y alumnas que no deben subir el tono de voz, que deben hablar en inglés, punto que se ha debatido anteriormente, y que en caso de que acaben la actividad con antelación al tiempo estimado qué deben realizar. Finalmente, con objetivo de facilitar la evaluación, se propone una rúbrica que puede hacer más sencillo el proceso de evaluación de los alumnos de modo que el profesor o profesora que ponga en práctica la actividad encuentre más sencillo el valorar a su alumnado.



## CONCLUSIONES/CONCLUSIONS

Como conclusión me gustaría destacar la importancia de la interacción oral en el aula de inglés de manera que haciendo trabajar a los alumnos y alumnas de este modo, los beneficios son máximos. Los estudiantes se benefician de la oportunidad que se les da de interactuar con sus iguales tratando de hacerse entender en la segunda lengua (inglés), y por ello tienen la necesidad de desarrollar diferentes estrategias para la búsqueda de significado que les llevará a un mayor desarrollo de la competencia lingüística en la segunda lengua ya mencionada. Además, al realizar el trabajo entre iguales, los alumnos y alumnas se sienten más seguros para manipular la lengua y explorar nuevas expresiones, vocabulario y construcciones gramaticales, entre otros aspectos de la lengua. Por ello, considero esta es una muy buena actividad donde los estudiantes se sentirán cómodos y seguros practicando la segunda lengua.

Es aquí también donde hay que tener en cuenta la posibilidad de que el alumnado utilice la primera lengua a la hora de trabajar la actividad. Como ya se ha señalado anteriormente, no es deseable animar a los alumnos y alumnas a realizar esto, pero puede ser necesario para que puedan completar la tarea satisfactoriamente. Dando a entender con ello, que el profesorado debe de ser consciente de la necesidad que los alumnos y alumnas pueden encontrar a este respecto y que puede ser algo bueno para conseguir finalizar la actividad exitosamente.

Así mismo, la tarea propuesta trata de crear una situación de aprendizaje propicia para la adquisición y perfeccionamiento de las preposiciones de lugar. Los estudiantes, al trabajar por parejas de modo cooperativo, deberán ser los principales sujetos de su propio aprendizaje, fomentando así el aprendizaje autónomo del alumnado, donde la figura del profesor o profesora será la de facilitador y guía de la tarea.

Finalmente, señalar que el objetivo del aprendizaje de un lenguaje es la comunicación efectiva y significativa en el idioma de estudio, y esto es lo que se ha tratado de reflejar en la actividad propuesta, de modo que a través del estudio de un aspecto gramatical de la lengua como son las preposiciones de lugar, al desarrollar la tarea oralmente, los alumnos y alumnas amplían y mejoran la competencia lingüística en general.



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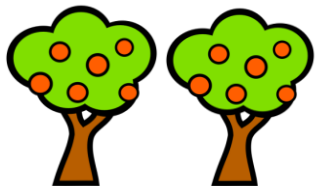
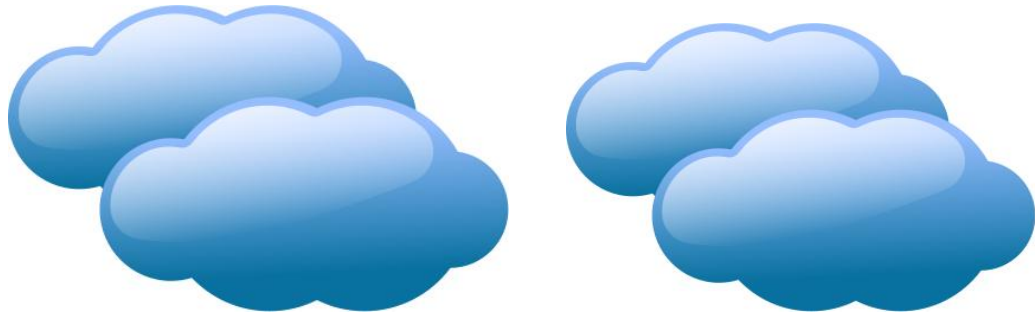
# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX #1/



# Easy level





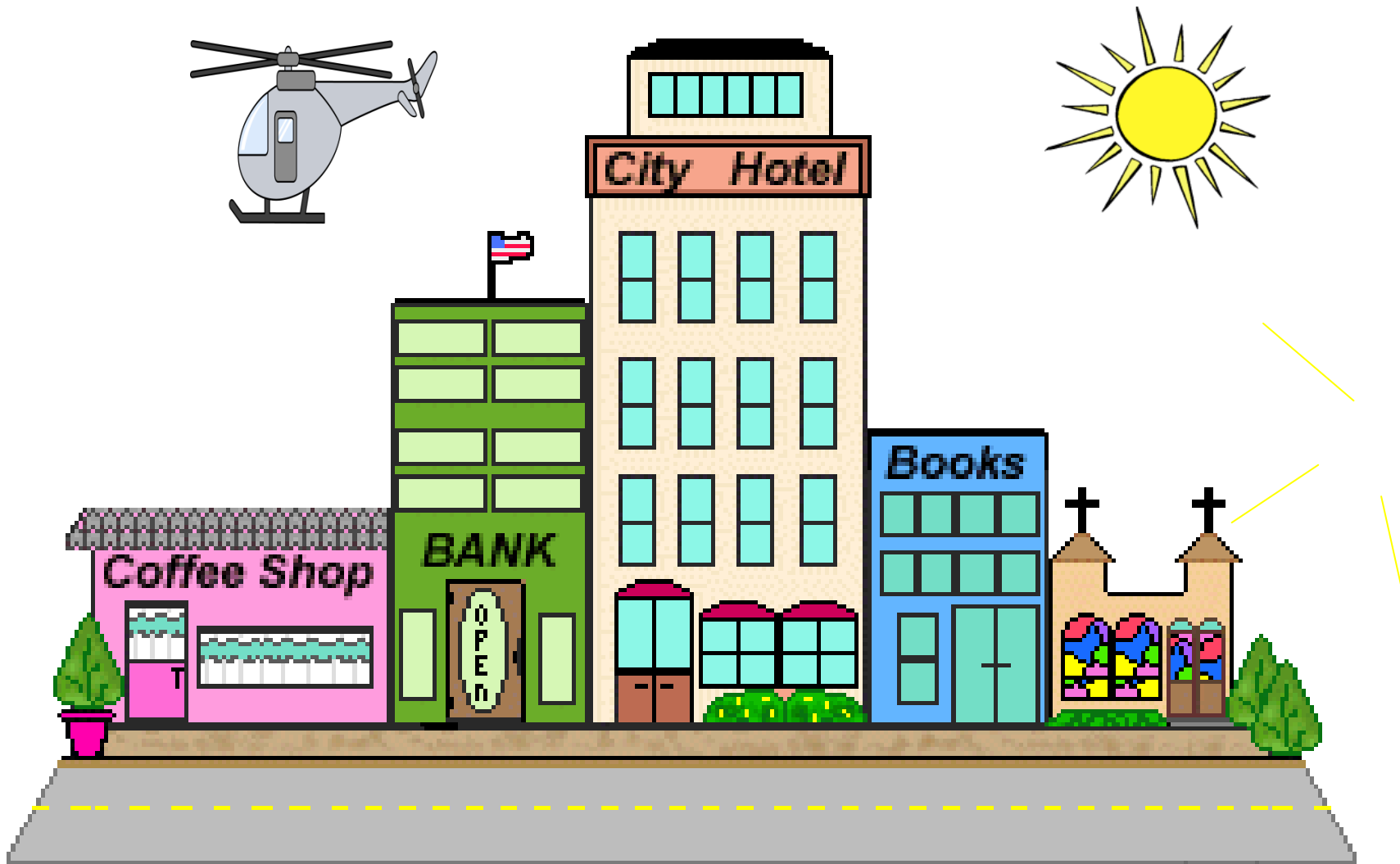




# Medium level









# Difficult level











# APPENDIX #2

**Assessment Chart:**

<b>Oral language activity:</b>  <b>Topic:</b>  <b>Requirements of the task:</b>  <b>Interaction pattern:</b>  <b>Previous experience:</b>
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Student name:	Date:			
Language focus	English level	Competency		
Context:		1	2	3
Use the language to negotiate for meaning				
Use the language to give directions				
<b>Aspects of the language:</b>				
Prepositions of place				
Vocabulary				
Sentence structures				
Fluency				
Pronunciation				
Comprehension				
Conversation interactions				
<b>Other</b>				

# APPENDIX #3

## Student self-assessment

**Name:**

**Date:**

Put a tick on the sentences that best fit with your feelings:

- I tried my best working with my partner.
- I collaborated and participated with my partner.
- I felt confident during the work-time.
- I didn't do anything during the work-time.
- I feel happy with our final result.
- I used different prepositions during the task.
- I found difficulties to understand my partner but finally we overcame the problem.
- I found difficulties to understand my partner and we didn't overcome the problem.
- I think the task helped us to learn the prepositions of place.



