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GENERAL OUTLOOKS ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

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1. Abstract and Key Words

This dissertation documents the possible solutions that can be applied in order to solve the actual problem that exists in our country regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The very low level that Spanish learners have in comparison to the rest of Europeans is worrying. Therefore, this work precisely begins by analysing this problem with the data gathered by some Spanish media. A possible solution is then suggested, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), defining and characterizing it. It subsequently focuses on one of the principal concerns that researchers who are reticent with CLT have: the place of grammar and vocabulary in communicative classrooms. The integration of the four skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) is hereto defended by characterizing each one in isolation in order to come to understand them better. A series of significant conclusions, based on the lessons that prior research has allowed us to learn, are finally exposed on the relevance that communication has actually acquired.

Key words: CLT, communication, grammar, vocabulary, skills, integration, roles in the classroom, input.

2. Epistemological background

2.1. Introduction

Spain is a country that has always been marked by poor levels in foreign languages, that is to say, Spanish people are almost at the bottom of Europe regarding their level of languages. One explanation for that could be the outdated method used in our country for teaching languages (Grammar-Translation Method), which does not let our students experiment themselves with the language. That is why, as a reaction, several approaches have emerged which have changed the perspective about that.

One of these approaches is the one known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is having a constant growth in Europe. Several studies and researchers support the implementation of this approach in our classrooms (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995; Nunan, 1989) in order to reinforce our foreign languages teaching levels. As its name suggests, its main goal is to make learners communicate with each other and to learn by communicating.

However, this has not occurred all in a sudden, several changes, innovations and advances have followed one another inside the approach itself. One of the main concerns of the critics is how grammar and vocabulary can be learnt in a communicative way. In answer to that, different studies proved the effectiveness of CLT for teaching grammar and vocabulary to learners (Cadierno, 1992; Ellis, 1984; VanPatten and Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten and Sanz, in press), being Krashen's study (1982) the most relevant for this approach, in his *Input Hypothesis*.

CLT is besides characterized by the relevance of integrating the four skills in order to make classroom contexts as similar as possible to real life contexts. That is why it is our firm belief that this approach needs to be implemented in order to prepare our learners for what they are going to find outside the classroom.

And that is precisely the aim of this present dissertation: to analyse the current Spanish situation regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages, looking for the possible reasons which have led to this situation and providing innovative ideas based on CLT. In doing so, this dissertation will be structured into five chief sections. The first section will justify the main reasons for choosing this topic, underlining its relevance to begin to boost the foreign languages situation in Spain. The object of study – CLT – will then be explained and examined in depth, outlining its main characteristics. Subsequently, a profound analysis of one of the main concerns about this approach will be summarized, namely the place of grammar and vocabulary in a communicative classroom. After that, we will offer a specific review of the four skills existing in the teaching and learning of languages – in our case, English – and will suggest the significance of integrating them in our classrooms. Finally, this dissertation will finish by presenting the most remarkable conclusions at which our analysis of CLT has allowed us to arrive.

2.2. Justification

The situation of Spain regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages is complicated. Several Spanish media (ABC, 2013; El Mundo, 2014) have documented the little knowledge and interest that Spaniards have in learning languages, though this interest is being incremented. That is why high hopes are being pinned on the emerging approaches, among them Communicative Language Teaching.

As certain authors (Nunan, 1989; Lee & VanPatten, 1995) maintain, this is the moment to change roles and let our students communicate and interact. This is a process which is slow and which will continue to be slow, as it could be said that this is the beginning of the change. Instructors and even learners are still too traditional and it is difficult to change people's minds. Results are optimistic, though more investigation and research is needed considering all the different factors that take part in learning a language in order to determine whether CLT is the definite approach before the rest which could revert this situation.

And this is precisely the aim of this dissertation: to revise the current Spanish circumstances with respect to the learning and teaching of foreign languages, in this case English, suggesting possible solutions in view of Communicative Language Teaching. In doing so, the place of grammar and vocabulary in the classroom will be analysed, as well as the integration of the four skills that a learner has to master in

order to have a good command of a language. Thus, in order to achieve these goals, let us begin by framing this dissertation in the wider background of Spain.

2.3. Analysis and explanation of the problem

Spain finds itself in a difficult situation regarding foreign languages. According to different media, our country is at the bottom of Europe in the knowledge of foreign languages (ABC, 2013). It is the third European country (only overcome by Hungary and Bulgaria) with fewer adults among 25 and 64 years old speaking at least one foreign language, being this figure below the average of the European Union. The Community average of people knowing some other language is 66%, while the Spanish one is 51% (according to a study published by the Eurostat statistics office).

On the one hand, the countries with more adults speaking some other languages are Luxembourg (99%), Lithuania (97%), Latvia (95%), Denmark (94%), Slovenia and Sweden (92%). On the other hand, the great countries classification is: Germany (78%), Italy (60%) and France (59%). There is no data about the United Kingdom (ABC, 2013).

We will focus our dissertation on English, the most known foreign language in Spain and in most of the European Union countries (except the Baltic States – Russian –, Slovakia – Czech –, and Luxembourg – German –) (ABC, 2013).

Among the people who speak English in Spain, 40% hold that their level is medium, whereas 42% claim their level is good and 19% describe it as very good. However, there are some European countries where a higher number of adults claim to have a very good level in English: Malta (53%), Sweden (43%), Cyprus (41%), Denmark and Holland (36%). In the opposite point we find Italy (10%), France (13%) and Germany (16%) (ABC, 2013).

Regarding our students, 99% of the Spanish learners of Primary Education and the first stage of Compulsory Secondary Education and 97% of the second stage of Compulsory Secondary Education students study English as a Foreign Language (the average in the European Union is 83% and 94% respectively)(ABC, 2013).

According to a different statistic, that of *El Mundo* (2014), only four out of every ten Spaniards are able to speak and write some foreign language, that is to say, 40%. Nine people out of ten consider knowing foreign languages has much importance nowadays, nevertheless, less than 19% of the people who claim to speak English or French are able to maintain an informal conversation about daily life topics without any difficulty.

As mentioned before, only 40% of the Spaniards polled were able to speak and write some foreign language, basically English (25,2%) and French (9,6%), according to

the data offered by the February 2014 CIS Barometer, based on 2.474 interviews to people of both sexes of legal age (El Mundo, 2014).

Still, among the people who claim to speak some other language, just 26,5% (English) and 30,7% (French) are able to do shopping, asking directions or asking for something in a restaurant or a bar without any difficulty. Moreover, less than 19% (in both languages) are able to carry on an informal conversation. If the idiomatic difficulty increases, for instance refuting other people opinions with arguments, only 11,9% (English) and 13,1% (French) are able to do it correctly (El Mundo, 2014).

Languages are even valued as more important than finding a job (only after professional experience and academic training). In fact, 29,7% of the ones polled claimed to have felt inequality in any moment of their studies or work life because of not speaking some foreign language, although most of them (69,4%, the rest) have not felt that (El Mundo, 2014).

In spite of that, only 12% of them are currently studying some foreign language, mainly English (79,2%), German (10,2%) and French (9,2%). Among them, 65,5% justifies it by saying that they have labour and/or education necessities, and 25,9% of them claim that they like foreign languages. On the opposite side, 23% of the population affirm they would not like to learn any language (El Mundo, 2014).

Four out of ten people think that the education system does not give much importance to language studies and 4,4% think it does not give any importance. On the contrary, 36% of them believe that Spanish education recognizes the worth of languages, and 13,4% consider it gives much importance to them (El Mundo, 2014).

60% of the ones polled in this survey believe that language teaching in their children school is good or very good. However, around 30% of the families with one or two children hire private lessons (El Mundo, 2014).

Languages are after Mathematics the most important subject in the learners' academic training according to most of the people polled, even before Spanish Language, History and Geography (El Mundo, 2014).

Around 60% (more than a half) studied French or English in the school and high school. In the case of German, most of them learnt it abroad (25,6%) and/or with private lessons (23,2%). For learning foreign languages correctly, it is valued to start while being very young or to stay abroad (El Mundo, 2014).

Besides, 65,6% of the Spaniards polled have travelled some time abroad, whereas 34,3% have never gone abroad. Regarding the frequency people tend to go abroad, 12,1% admit they go more than once a year, 16,5% once a year, and 58,1% of them go abroad less frequently than the previous ones. The main reason for going

abroad is holidays and tourism (77,9%), but they also travel for labour reasons (12,3%) (El Mundo, 2014).

Thus, according to this data, we can see how important languages are for Spanish people, but also we can realize we are not good at them. In this dissertation, we intend to show the advantages of an innovative method in languages that could help with this situation, which is the Communicative Approach, as well as different techniques and activities that will be proposed in order to improve our oral skills in English.

2.4. Communicative Approach

The main reason for learning a language could be said to be *communication*. However, the idea of learning languages in Spain has always been connected to teaching and learning the grammar and vocabulary of that language perfectly. In doing so, Grammar-Translation Method has been the one used for years. The main characteristics of this method, as its name suggests, are: translating from and into the target language, laying little or no emphasis on speaking and listening to the second language, using the book (it is a book-oriented method “of working out and learning the grammatical system of the language”), or presenting few grammar points or rules which are illustrated by examples and which the learner will have to memorize (Pérez Cañado, 2016).

As a reaction to this method, several new approaches followed (the Direct Method, Audiolingualism, the Humanistic methods or the Natural Approach). However, the one we are going to focus on is called Communicative Language Teaching.

As it can be observed, it is important also to highlight in this ‘transition of methods’ the change of terminology from *method* to *approach*. The term method “includes the *approach, design* and *procedures*”, while approach refers to the “theoretical principles on which the curricular design is based (Richards and Rodgers, 1986)”. Then, an approach could be comprehended as the body of linguistic, pedagogical and psychological theories which inspire the teaching practice. Stern (1983: 43-50; in McLaren et al., 2004: 158) refers to “foundations/theoretical assumptions and to a level -interlevel- between theory and practice where the educational linguistics theory and research take place”.

Even so, let’s now focus on the so-called Communicative Language Teaching, whose name can make us figure out what it is about. However, what does exactly mean to communicate in a language? Do we have to produce perfect utterances in order to make ourselves understood? Is it possible to teach our students to communicate in a language different from their mother tongue in a class with other 30

students? Where is the role of grammar and vocabulary? Which is the role that a teacher should take? These and other questions will try to be answered.

The first idea that a teacher has to bear in mind is the fact that he or she has to create environments in the classroom where communication can take place and where the four skills have to be integrated; we want our students to speak, to read, to listen and to write in the other language (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: ix). In this case, we will concentrate on English, the first language that our students choose to learn (as mentioned before in the previous point).

The learner should be the centre of this type of teaching. They must learn “how to communicate in a new context: to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in the new language” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 1). That is to say, we need our learners to be able to get on different and new contexts where the language they are studying must be used.

Thus, teachers or instructors need to play roles which are different from the traditional ones if they do not want older methods to be perpetuated. Older roles are connected to older methods, and they are not appropriate for this communicative approach. *Roles* here means “the ways in which instructors and students view their jobs in the classroom” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 3); but which are these traditional and innovative roles we are speaking about?

Traditionally, the instructor was an active figure and expert of his/her subject who transmitted knowledge to the students (his passive audience, “*receptive vessels*”). He or she was the centre of the classroom and the one who was the authority. Thus, these “*authoritative transmitter of knowledge and receptive vessels*” were the primary roles of teachers and students respectively in the traditional classrooms following the Grammar-Translation Method (in fact, they still are in many classrooms, that is why the problem with languages remains). And we can find many other roles related to traditional teaching, as lecturer, leader or disciplinarian – teacher –, and notetaker, follower or discipline – student – (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 4).

Many instructors “assume that their principal task is one of improving the ways in which they express their expertise: Clear and precise explanations can always be sharpened; penetrating questions can always be made more penetrating” (Finkel & Monk, 1983: 86). That is to say, teachers assume they are experts of their subject and they always have to improve that expertise, as well as they assume the fact that students actually learn from their expert explanations. One more assumption would be that “students learn by being asked questions: by improving the questions asked, instructors assume students will learn more” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 6). It seems that our bad results in language subjects argue the contrary.

And finally, after several previous methods which rose up as a reaction to Grammar-Translation, *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) arrived, changing the ways of seeing the teaching-learning of languages and the roles of instructors and students. It seems understandable that such changes and contradictory messages regarding language teaching led to confusion (cf. Nunan, 1989: 12).

A relevant shift that can be observed thanks to communicative approaches is the change of focus from the result to the process itself. Breen (1984: 52-3), for instance, suggests that syllabus designers:

Prioritize the route itself; a focusing upon the means towards the learning of a new language. Here the designer would give priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom – to the psychological and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context... a greater concern with capacity for communication rather than repertoire of communication, with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself, and with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives, all indicate priority of process over content.

In summary, the goals and means of a curriculum which claims to be communicative begin to merge. On the one hand, its goal is making learners capable of using the target language in order to communicate with others. On the other hand, its means are activities carried out in the classroom which help learners to develop this capability (cf. Nunan, 1989: 13).

Therefore, as the goals and means of the curriculum changed, so did the instructor's and students' roles. The instructor was in charge of "providing students opportunities for communication", that is to say, "using the language to interpret and express real-life messages". He or she also had to interact with the students, and they simply had to be creative, to create answers (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 8).

Still, such a change did not occur all of a sudden, it took time and, at the beginning of CLT (we could call it as its 'early period'), the evolution was not so evident. It was clear that the instructor defined "her own role not as that of a conversational partner or facilitator, but as one responsible for telling her students how to speak" (Leemann Guthrie, 1984: 46). Thus, instructors and students roles changed little by little. "Communication was seen merely as conversation, which took the form of a question-and-answer session with the instructor in charge" (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 9).

However, in the following period of Communicative Language Teaching, the classroom dynamic evolved and it was not the instructor the only asking questions: students could. They were allowed to work in pairs and could ask questions to each other. Nevertheless, it did not mean that communication was real-life like. Sometimes

it could be found that there was not spontaneity and the speaking activities done in the classroom were more emphasized on “formal correctness” rather than on true communication. With the passage of time, more natural, spontaneous and personalized conversations began to appear, being the instructor, however, still the central figure in the classroom. He is “who initiates, responds, follows up, keeps the interaction going, and assigns turns” (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 10-11.).

That is why Howatt (1984: 279) suggests that CLT has a “weak” as well as a “strong” version. The first one “stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching”. By contrast, the so-called strong version “advances the claim that language is acquired through communication”.

Regarding that strong version, McLaren *et al.* (2004: 186) suggest that activities which stimulate target performance and that “require learners to do in class exactly what they will have to do outside it” develop language ability. In fact, that is the aim of communicative lessons: prepare our learners for what they are going to find outside the classroom. However, this will be discussed later.

Thus, the development of communicative proficiency in the foreign language (rather than knowledge of its rules and structures) started to be advocated by such relevant scholars as Widdowson or Candlin. Moreover, textbook writers, curriculum designers and developers, teaching specialists, and even some governments began to accept and apply these thoughts and ideas. That is why Communicative Language Teaching became an international movement (cf. McLaren *et al.*, 2004: 185).

This approach is, besides, characterized by three main principles (see Richards and Rodgers, 1986). The first one is *the communication principle* – learning is promoted by activities involving real communication –, the second one is called *the task principle* – learning is also enhanced through the use of activities in which language is employed for carrying out meaningful tasks – and, finally, the third one, which is *the meaningfulness principle* – the learning process is supported by language which is meaningful to the student, and activities should consequently be selected according to how well they involve the learner in authentic and meaningful language use.

Thus, CLT has evolved since its commencement, from tasks where the only thing students did was to answer to their instructor’s questions to tasks where the teacher encourages spontaneous conversations and communication. Consequently, the instructor and students roles have changed, as well as the teaching materials. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) there are three types of materials used in Communicative Language Teaching: text-based materials (for example, textbooks),

task-based ones (relying on jigsaw or information-gap principles), and realia – these are authentic materials which are brought into the classroom, for instance magazines, pictures, objects, newspapers, etc. – (cf. McLaren *et al.*, 2004: 187).

The teachers' roles that are appearing in CLT now are those of "*resource person* and *architect* [...]". That is why teachers must "provide activities and tasks that allow for a distribution of teaching functions between instructors and students" (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 12-13). They act as a guide, counsellor, needs analyst and independent participant within the group, facilitating, moreover, opportunities for the learners to communicate and interact with each other (cf. McLaren *et al.*, 2004: 187).

On their behalf, learners become more active and responsible for their own learning, as they are the central member according to CLT (it is a learner-centred approach). They are expected to be able to communicate and be fluent in the target language and they are "trained" to be capable of producing spontaneous language outside the classroom. They cooperate, interact and negotiate with the rest of learners (cf. McLaren *et al.*, 2004: 187).

Still, what does it mean to be a *resource person*? The instructor would be a resource of information for the students, and it is the learners who are responsible for asking for that information. That is to say, the teacher is not an expert who repeats his knowledge anymore, assuming they do not have understood anything. Some will understand and some will not, and they are the ones responsible for expressing if they have comprehended everything and for asking for repetition or for more information. Thus, Lee & VanPatten (1995: 13-14) comment that the role of students would be that of information gatherer or negotiator of meaning; so that communication would entail "interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning".

Besides, an instructor playing the role of *architect* means that he or she is the one who plans and designs a task or activity, but he is not responsible for the final product, the ones responsible for that are students. Their roles are, therefore, that of *builders* or *coworkers* (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 16).

An important fact that should not be forgotten is that learning a language (either your mother tongue or a foreign one) entails socialization. Learners need to interact in order to communicate and to learn that language. Thus, the classroom becomes a "*social environment* in which there are social as well as linguistic outcomes" (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 17).

As a conclusion, Ur (1996: 6) explains the feeling that existed regarding CLT: "The coming of the communicative approach represented for those of us involved in teaching at the time a healthy revolution, promising a remedy to previous ills: objectives seemed more rational, classroom activity became more interesting and

obviously relevant to learner needs". On their behalf, J. Lee & B. VanPatten (1995: 17) remind us that:

We need look no further than the students' knowledge at the end of the semester for proof of its inaccuracy. Students do not leave our classes knowing as much as we do or knowing everything that was in the book. In order to [...] foster more active learning on the part of the students, instructors must reorient not only themselves and the materials they use, but also the students. They must change students' expectations of what happens inside the language classroom so that students know how to become "competent members" of the class.

2.5. The insertion of *grammar* and *vocabulary* in the communicative classroom

As it has been seen, several believes, theories and methods followed one another regarding language learning. In the 1950s and 1960s, behaviourism and habit formation were the dominant theories. The First Language (L1) of learners was believed to cause negative transfers to their Second Language (L2). Thus, errors were seen as something to be avoided at all costs and it was believed that the progressive accumulation of good habits leaded language acquisition. Moreover, theorists thought that students first acquired grammar (that is, the structures and forms of the L2) and, after that, they were able to express meaning. Then, at the moment of applying this theory to language learning and teaching, the result was the Audiolingual Method (ALM) where, apart from the characteristics previously mentioned, it consisted of the memorization of different dialogues and practice of different patterns – for instance, changing a sentence from present to past (transformation) or making a sentence negative (substitution) – (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 21-22).

However, in the late 60s and early 70s, several researchers and theorists, among them J. Corder (1967: 13), started to question Audiolingualism as a method for language learning and teaching. This author, for instance, questioned ALM main tenets defending errors as necessary for the student learning and posed it as follows:

We cannot really teach language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way... When we know [more about the processes underlying language acquisition from having studied errors] we may begin to be more critical of our cherished notions. We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to *his* needs rather than impose upon him *our* preconceptions of *how* he ought to learn, *what* he ought to learn and *when* he ought to learn it.

And it is since that moment that the concept of *input* begins to gain importance – the language that "the learner hears (or sees) and attends to for its meaning" – (Lee

& VanPatten, 1995: 28), in contrast to *output* – the language that the learner produces – and *intake* – “the language that the learner actually attends to and that gets processed in working memory in some way” – (*ibid.*, 1995: 42). It is important to highlight that, for the input to be useful for the learners, it has to be comprehensible. They need to understand it (*ibid.*, 1995: 28).

The main representative of this theory is S. Krashen (1982) with his *Input Hypothesis*, who claims that “comprehensible input *causes* acquisition”. The importance of input in language learning is practically not discussed nowadays; however, some theorists and researchers “suggest that language acquisition is a complex process involving social, cognitive, linguistic, and other factors”. That is to say, there are more things participating in language acquisition than only comprehensible input, for instance, our topic in question, *communication*. Then, we could say that “*successful language acquisition cannot happen without comprehensible input*” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 29).

Thus, does this explicit instruction in grammar that we still observe in our classrooms help our students to learn a language? Learners seem to follow a specific way of developing their L2 system, without regard to the order in which they were taught the different grammatical features. As it can be seen in Ellis’ study (1984), the learners of an English classroom who were exposed to practice and instruction showed the same stages of development in the acquisition of some grammatical structures as non-classroom learners. That is to say, learners are made up of several internal mechanisms and explicit instruction cannot pass over how these mechanisms work and what they do (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 30).

Besides, learners’ scores on grammar tests do not necessarily have to coincide with their communicative abilities or how good they are at the speaking part. It is Krashen (1982) again who gives an explanation for that. He believes that if learners receive explicit grammar instruction, a conscious *Monitor* will be developed. That is, they *learn* grammatical rules in order to monitor the correct use of their language. It is worthy of mentioning that Krashen distinguishes between *learning* and *acquisition*: acquisition is a natural process that happens when learners receive comprehensible input. For him, it is the knowledge which is acquired (and not learnt) what leads to fluent communication (cf. Chiu Yin Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012: 62-63). We could say that our students’ grammatical accuracy may depend on the types of tasks they are involved in.

This leads us to another issue: how can we teach our learners to communicate? Hatch (1978a), for instance, suggests that learners may ‘negotiate’ and even ‘regulate’ the kind of input they are going to obtain during communication, in a way that the input they are receiving would be appropriate to their own needs. On his behalf, Swain

(1985) argues that learners' communicative production (output) encourages them to "attend to input better since they themselves need to use language they are hearing around them". Nevertheless, there are some other researchers, as Sato (1986) for instance, who believe that there exist some aspects of grammar which learners are not able to acquire by simply communicating; they would need something else (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 34-35). And we can find even some researchers who maintained that grammar was not necessary to be taught and that learners' capability or ability to use the target language would be developed automatically by focusing on meaning (cf. Nunan, 1989: 13). In any case, what seems clear is the fact that one only learns to communicate by communicating with others, and not by means of habit formation or with the repetition and memorization of grammatical features and structures. However, these would help us to communicate *correctly or better*.

Littlewood (1981: 6) suggests several skills that should be considered for a learner to communicate. He explains them as follow in his introduction to communicative language teaching:

- The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.
- The learner must distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions which they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system.
- The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language.
- The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.

Then, as Nunan (1989: 14) mentions, "whatever the position taken, there is no doubt that the development of communicative language teaching has had a profound effect on both methodology and syllabus design". So, in relation to grammar, which is the correct way of inserting it in the classroom? Well, each teacher may have his or her own rules according to the characteristics of each class; however, we could name several ways of introducing grammar in communicative classrooms.

As it has been mentioned before, traditional teaching is still very present in our classrooms and so it is the traditional way of teaching grammar, even in those

classrooms which claim to be communicative. This type of instruction, as previously explained, is based on behaviourism (reinforcing 'good habits'), following a specific grammatical sequence, for instance, teaching present tense forms first, and then past tense ones. That is why all textbooks are divided into different tenses and teachers' election of one particular book is based on whether verbal tenses are ordered the way they think is the correct one. Another feature shared by all textbooks following the traditional instruction is how activities are sequenced: first of all, mechanical practice; then, meaningful practice; and, lastly, communicative practice (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 90). Let's revise each one in detail.

Students do not need to know meaning in 'mechanical drills', as their name suggests these exercises are simply *mechanical*. Another characteristic is that there is just one correct answer. By contrast, in meaningful drills learners do have to pay attention to meaning. However, again, there is only one correct answer and we could question how *meaningful* this kind of activities really is. Finally, in communicative drills learners may attend to meaning, as well as they can answer the questions creatively and spontaneously. That is to say, there is not just one correct option, students can say or answer whatever they want – obviously related to the topic in question – (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 91-93).

Still, it could be said that, in this sequence, the type of activities most used are those of mechanical drills in traditional teaching. There is not focus on communication or meaning when dealing with traditional grammar instruction, it is just mechanical. Thus, little communication can be found in our classrooms. That is why nowadays more innovative teachers have decided to abandon grammar directly and dedicate their classrooms only to communication. For this reason, some others have criticized communicative approaches. So, what is the solution? How can we make our lessons communicative without forgetting grammar?

Communicative classes are based on the idea that learners need comprehensible and meaningful input for successful acquisition to take place. Learners build an internal representation of the language they are learning, what is called the *developing system*. Thus, learners need that input in order to construct their systems, making internal 'form-meaning' connections. Intake was another term explained, which could be said to be the one which 'filters' input. In other words, intake makes students process the information (the input) in order to understand it, in a way that they just process part of that input, which is what the brain uses to create their linguistic systems (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 94). Then, it is not the same what we think they have understood of the input they receive as what they have *really* comprehended, and instructors need to bear this in mind. Finally, once their systems are constructed, it will be the time for practice, for output.

Thus, we can see how different this basis is in contrast to that of traditional instruction, based just on practice. The first is *input-oriented*, while the second is *output-oriented*. This could be the reason why we obtain such bad results. Till now, teachers just tried to access to that developing system, instead of helping learners to construct it. Learners were not able to *learn* a particular foreign language because they did not have their systems constructed.

That is why the instruction of grammar should take place when processing input, so that we need to implement what is called as *structured input activities*. Learners pay attention to grammatical information in the input and they process it. These activities consist on a structured set of input sentences or utterances which contain specific characteristics of language. Learners must be focused on meaning and they are not asked to “produce the grammatical item”, but to “process it in the input” (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 99-102). There are several studies carried out in order to find out these activities’ results:

VanPatten and Cadierno (1993), for instance, studied the effects of processing instructions with Spanish learners studying direct-object pronouns. They compared three groups: processing instruction (explanation + structured input activities), traditional instruction (explanation + output practice), and no instruction. The methodology followed was to give them a pretest and, at the end, a posttest which were two assessment tasks. The pretest was focused on interpretation of meaning: learners had to identify subjects and objects in different sentences by matching what they listened to a picture. The posttest, in contrast, was focused on the production of meaning and it was their turn to create an utterance themselves based on a visual stimulus.

The processing and traditional groups received instruction for two days, without setting homework. The investigation incorporated some concise controls as well: “equivalence in vocabulary, number of items for practice, instructor, and equivalence of ability of the target grammatical items before instruction among others”. The results were the following (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 103):

The processing group made significant gains on the interpretation task after instruction, while the traditional group did not. The traditional group and control group did not differ from each other in terms of performance on the interpretation task. The processing group and the traditional group made equivalent significant gains on the production task after instruction.

Cadierno (1992) carried out another research similar to the previous one about the preterit tense in Spanish. And the results were completely the same. The processing group made meaningful gains in comprehension as well as production of

preterit forms; while the traditional group made gains just in production and, in fact, these learners were not much better at production than those of the processing group.

One more research was performed in order to find out whether these results would be more or less the same in more communicative production tasks. Thus, VanPatten and Sanz (in press) replicated the VanPatten and Cadierno study with a little change: they added two other production tasks: a question-answer interview and a video narration task. They discovered that processing instruction has a relevant impact on students' ability to use direct object pronouns in their output (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 103).

The results were clear again: on the one hand, processing instruction had an important effect on students' developing linguistic systems, both in their production and comprehension of the foreign language items. On the other hand, traditional instruction did not have this effect on learners. As J. Lee & B. VanPatten (1995: 103) put it:

What is especially exciting is that, in the research studies just cited, processing subjects never once produced the grammatical item during the experiment; their instruction was confined to structured input activities. Yet, they were able to produce the grammatical items *after* instruction as well as, if not better than, the subjects in the traditional groups could. This is a clear indication that we are on the right track in looking at grammar instruction from the viewpoint of input and input processing.

However, most current foreign language learning textbooks and other materials do not contain structured input activities and, probably, teachers will have to develop them themselves if they want to carry out this type of lessons. It is these two authors (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 104-109) who offer us some principles that can help instructors with that:

The first one would be *presenting one thing at a time*. Students need to be focused in order to learn and to develop their linguistic systems correctly. At the moment you start teaching several things at a time, they get lost. It could be said that when there is less to pay attention to, it is easier to pay attention. Thus, if you are teaching a new grammatical function or item, teach it, let them learn it and, then, go to the next point or lesson.

The second principle should be to *keep meaning in focus*. Learners should attend to meaning, to the message in the activities. Instructors must remember that they are not looking for those traditional mechanical activities.

The third one is to *move from sentences to connected discourse*. It makes sense that if students are learning one thing at a time, they should go from the easier items to the more complex ones. Thus, instructors should begin with shorter and isolated

sentences (the shorter, the better) and then move to longer ones until connected discourse. Otherwise, they would get lost, as they have to learn to process them little by little.

The following principle is to *use both oral and written input*. Learners need to have opportunities to see and to hear the input. It does not have to be one oral activity and the other written. One activity can be both for example. In summary, instructors can create any combination of written and oral input in one or several activities; the thing is to provide both to students.

One more principle should be to *have the learner do something with the input*. As it has been explained, learners are not *receptive* vessels anymore, their roles have changed to more active ones. Thus, “the learners must be actively engaged in attending to the input to encourage the processing of grammar” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 107-108). That is to say, learners should respond to the input in some way, they should actively process it.

Finally, the last principle, or piece of advice, is to *keep the learner’s processing strategies in mind*. Learners should be focused on the grammatical items they are learning during the processing and not be focused on other grammatical elements which are not relevant in that moment. In the same way, instructors should be focused always on the learner in communicative teaching. Thus, they should use structured-input activities which are personal or affective; for instance, asking for a personal response or for an opinion. Nevertheless, it is better for instructors to start a lesson with the so-called *referentially oriented activities* where learners have a reference which is concrete and inanimate and they have to determine the truth-value of a sentence. Instructors are able to check whether learners are truly focusing on those relevant grammatical items with these activities before starting with the affective ones.

Another two authors, Chiu Yin Wong & Barrea-Marlys (2012: 62-63), in their study, differentiate between the scholars who support the exclusion of grammar in learning a language (for instance Prabhu, 1987), and those who highlight the need to include it in Communicative Language Teaching (as Nassaji, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; or Spada & Lightbown, 1993) who argue that if meaning is the only focus while acquiring a language, it is not adequate to acquire it.

They emphasize as well the distinction made by Long (1991), who distinguishes between focus on *forms* (learning grammar features and rules) and focus on *form* (“drawing learners’ attention to grammar in activities and tasks”), although many other researchers and even educators do not think this way. For them, to focus on form means to focus on rules.

There exist several studies which have proved the effectiveness of focusing on *form* instead of focusing on *forms* (for instance Doughty, 1991; White, 1991; Trahey & White, 1993; Doughty & Williams, 1998; etc.), and their results show that students with instruction which is *form*-focused outperformed those who received no instruction on the targeted forms. However, other studies (Lightbown, 1998) emphasize that drawing learners' attention to grammar at the same time that they are engaged in meaning could have damaging effects or consequences. That is why some teachers prefer to separate communicative activities and form-focused instruction. Nevertheless, some other researches (Nassaji, 2000; Wang, 2009) have been carried out which support the combination of both and which argue that learners pay more attention to target forms if they are in context, becoming more memorable (cf. Chiu Yin Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012: 62-63). And this leads us to structured-input activities as the way to present grammar communicatively (the activities that have been already explained).

Thus, we cannot forget how important practice in learning a language is. That is why the ideal thing in a lesson is to move from these input-based activities to output-based ones which are focused on grammar. We need practice to help our students develop fluency and accuracy in a particular foreign language.

Several types of structured-input activities can be found, and varying the techniques and contents of each type give rise to a variety of activities. These types are the following: *binary options* – where learners are given two possible answers; for instance: 'agree' or 'disagree', 'true' or 'false', 'good' or 'bad', 'mom' or 'dad', etc. – ; *matching* – learners have to indicate the correspondence between an input sentence and something else; for instance: matching an event to its cause or to its logical consequence, or matching a picture to an input sentence – ; *supplying information* – these activities provide structured input and learners do not have to produce the grammatical item that is being learnt, but something else – ; *selecting alternatives* – any type of activity which gives a stimulus to the learners and ask them to select among three or more alternatives can be included in this category; "either the stimulus or the alternatives contain the targeted grammatical items that are being practiced in the activity" – ; or *surveys* – where learners respond to a survey item or elicit survey information from someone else – (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 109-112).

Surveys are special activities as they can be found in any of the different formats explained before (matching, binary options, etc.). Learners interact with one another and it makes this activity more engaging and motivating for them. Different tasks that can be done with surveys are: "indicating agreement with a statement, indicating frequency of an activity, answering 'Yes' or 'No' to particular questions,

finding a certain number of people who respond to an item in the same way”, etc. (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 112).

In short, instructors’ goal should be that their learners are able to communicate, but communicate correctly. However, that traditional obsession with knowing grammar by heart and not making mistakes is not an obsession anymore. What should be clear here is that input comes first (comprehensible and meaningful input) and practice comes then.

Moving now to vocabulary, the traditional methodology is to present lists of vocabulary of the L1 with their equivalents in the L2 and make learners study them by heart. However, this is only useful for the learners to do some test in which they have to complete some list of vocabulary equivalencies. Nowadays, there exist other methods which are more innovative; for instance, using visuals such as photographs, cartoons or drawings in order to present some vocabulary; that is to say, simplifying language for them to understand it, simplifying the received input (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 48-49).

The concept that Terrell (1986: 214), for example, uses to refer to the direct connections between form and meaning is *binding*. As he explained: “*Binding* is the term I propose to describe the cognitive and affective mental process of linking a meaning to a form. The concept of binding is what language teachers refer to when they insist that a new word ultimately be associated directly with its meaning and not with a translation”.

For this, the use of visuals previously mentioned can help as well, making the concepts more concrete. Still, we can find some other ways of learning vocabulary; for instance using the learners themselves and their personal properties, as well as the resources of the classroom, making the learners become active participants in their learning. One useful method is the so-called Total-Physical Response (TPR), by which the instructor commands actions that learners perform. First of all, learners observe and listen to the instructor carrying out the actions; after that, they accompany him or her; and, finally, they perform the actions all alone, that is to say, they connect actions with meanings. If some learner makes a mistake, the teacher just repeats the action or gives some clue to him or her. We could say that the instructor is a visual aid (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 50-53).

McLaren *et al.* (2004: 186-187) also explain the two types of activities that Littlewood (1981) suggested: the first type is *social interaction activities*, where students learn to communicate by interacting in the target language – debates and discussions, simulations, role plays and dialogues are part of this kind of activities –; while the second type is *functional communication activities*, where we can find the activities mentioned before – “information-gap principle is the basis for comparing

pictures, working out sequences of events, discovering missing features in a map or picture, giving instructions, following directions, or problem solving”.

One more way of using language in the classroom is focusing on topics they are interested in or they know, in such a way that learners would be involved in familiar situations. That is why they would be able to “make use of what they know about the real world in order to comprehend better. [...] The instructor expects that learners’ background knowledge will help them anticipate vocabulary and topics that he, the instructor, is talking about” (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 45).

As we have seen, grammar and vocabulary can find their place in communicative teaching. And even mixing up several methods and approaches or using the one you need at any moment can be a very good idea. Teachers may adapt to students’ necessities and update themselves whenever is necessary. Then, for communication to take place, anyone could think that learners will need to speak and to listen, but what about the other two skills: reading and writing? We are going to focus now on this point and to emphasize the necessity of integrating the four existing skills.

2.6. Integration of skills

We have revised the role that grammar and vocabulary have in a communicative classroom, but which role do the different skills have? Is it true that communication only involves speaking and listening? There has been a traditional definition for the different four skills: *passive/active* or *receptive/productive*. ‘Listening’ and ‘reading’ are the skills called passive or receptive, as they are the ones in which a person *receives* input; whereas ‘speaking’ and ‘writing’ are called as active or productive because of the fact that the person *produces* output. However, is it really in this way? Being passive means not participating in any way. That is why scholars agree that, in the case of listening for instance, “listeners are active participants during the communicative act and that listening is a dynamic process drawing on a variety of mental processes and knowledge sources (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 60). So, let’s now focus on this particular skill, *listening*.

2.6.1. Listening

When dealing with communication, people usually think about speaking; but what about listening? When we communicate, we communicate a message, we are communicating meaning, but we also need to interpret it. This interpretation involves speaking, but also listening. Speakers live different situations every day in which they have to listen. As J. Lee & B. VanPatten (1995: 63) explain:

Broadly speaking, there are two types of listening situations: *collaborative* and *non-collaborative*. Collaborative situations are those in which both speaker and

listener work together to negotiate meaning. The listener actively collaborates in the construction of the discourse. Nodding, frowning the brow, asking questions, [...] –all of these allow the listener to play an active role in shaping what the other speaker says and how he says it. Non-collaborative situations are those in which the listener does not participate in the construction of discourse and is merely an observant listener. The speaker is the sole person who determines the nature of the discourse. Listening to a song is an example [...].

Anderson and Lynch (1988; in Nunan, 1989: 23), on their behalf, thought about a different name for these types of listening: reciprocal or non-reciprocal. However, the meaning is exactly the same, as Nunan (1989: 23) clarifies: reciprocal listening contains collaboration, interaction and negotiation of meaning, while non-reciprocal does not, as “the transfer of information is in one direction only – from the speaker to the listener.

Then, by means of the existence or not of collaboration we can classify listening situations, but also according to the presence or not of visual stimuli. That is to say, listeners are accompanied by other person/people if they are having a conversation. Thus, they see these other people and, so, their gestures, body posture, etc., and receive other kind of information apart from what is being listened or said; for example, they see whether or not the other person understands what has being said (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 63).

According to Anderson and Lynch (1988; cited in Nunan, 1989: 23) the listener must simultaneously integrate several linguistic skills. Some of them are: “identify spoken signals from the midst of surrounding sounds; segment the stream of speech into words; grasp the syntax of the utterance(s); (in interactive listening) formulate an appropriate response”. Besides, they add some other non-linguistic skills, such as having an appropriate social and cultural knowledge (and skills) or having an appropriate purpose for listening.

Thinking about the classroom situation, it is a particular environment which has limited opportunities for listening situations. The most common type of listening in traditional classroom is non-collaborative and without visual stimuli. In this case, the teacher comes with a tape player and students listen to some specific situation and do several listening activities. If the school has the necessary resources, nowadays we can use the Internet, Youtube, etc. and it is more motivating for the learners (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 66).

It is precisely this type of listening that Anderson and Lynch criticize the most. They explain that “we do not simply take language in like a tape-recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our background knowledge. We then store the meaning(s) of the message rather than the forms in

which these are encoded". They highlight the idea that a learner may be able to remember the words of some spoken message, nevertheless, this does not mean he or she has comprehended the message itself (cf. Nunan, 1989: 23).

Similar to the type before, we can find lectures or presentations thinking about the learners who will continue their education and will attend to some of them, so that they get used to them. The instructor is the one who gives the lecture and the learners have to listen to him or her and make some notes. Thus, occasionally, the teacher can do this and, after that, the learners can make a presentation about the information they have heard (with PowerPoint, charts or whatever they want), summarize it or something like that. Then, this is a different type of listening in which learners have to listen without interrupting and wait until the instructor says to make the necessary clarifications or questions (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 69).

Richards (1987), by contrast, thinks that this type should be used just in academic contexts, not in English language learning contexts. His reason is the fact that lectures need specific rhetorical or discourse conversational skills that learners may not have (in Nunan, 1989: 24). Apart from this, not all learners will be interested in an academic future.

Another type of listening situation could be classroom discussion, which is collaborative and has visual stimuli. A listening of this kind can also be divided into two types: whether the instructor participates or not (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 66-68). The teacher participating would be more unnatural, learners would notice they are being evaluated and this does not allow them to have a regular and calm discussion or conversation. If learners discuss one another, they have equal conditions and probably the conversation would be more spontaneous. One of the new things that Spanish schools are introducing in order to improve our learners listening and speaking skills is hiring a language assistant. They are native speakers who maintain ordinary conversations with learners and, in this way, they are able to listen to an English or American accent and get used to it.

In the case of Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 36-37), they suggest that the purposes for listening in classroom and non-classroom situations are different. In real life, people's purposes are to get information about something or to listen because they are interested in what the other person is talking. Some other characteristics of real-life listening are the fact that we tend to know what we are going to hear (or we tend to have an idea of it) before hearing it and we make predictions from knowledge of the speaker, the situation and the language (lexis/grammar). Moreover, we do not focus on every word that the speaker says when listening to him, but we extract the general meaning (that is, we decode). Finally, another common feature of non-classroom listening is that we respond or react to what is being said verbally or/and non-verbally.

However, this is not what we teach to our students and they find several problems and difficulties when dealing with listening. Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 37) summarize some of them as follows:

They don't know where the message is contained so they try to listen to everything; they take everything literally and may fail to grasp the implicit meaning; they don't know the language well enough to predict what will come next; they don't understand that meaning may be conveyed by intonation, changes in pitch, etc.; they suffer from tiredness and tension.

Thus, instructors have to provide learners the tools to help them transferring the listening skills that they already have in their mother tongue to a foreign language (in our case, from Spanish to English). Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 40) share with us a P. Hubbard's statement (1983) which could be very revealing and helpful: "we can show students how *easy* it is to understand *something*, rather than how *difficult* it is to understand *everything*".

So let's now focus on the organization of a lesson devoted to listening. Normally, listening lessons are divided into *pre-listening*, *listening* and *post-listening* activities. Pre-listening activities are the ones that students do before listening to something. Their aim is to orient learners about what they are going to listen. This makes them focus on the information which will be necessary for them, at the same time that helps in their comprehension. They are also useful for their creativeness: it is very important to let them make predictions about what they think they are going to hear. J. Lee & B. VanPatten (1995: 74-76) divide these activities into three distinct groups which do not have to be mutually exclusive:

The first group is the so-called 'vocabulary preparation'. We do not want learners to learn words by heart, but to make them familiar with these words and recognize them while listening to the tape recorder or whatever they are listening to. Pre-listening activities are normally input-oriented activities, and some examples could be using TPR, definitions or visuals. The new words can also be linked with existing knowledge of the learners or with the content they are going to listen as well.

The second one consists of 'reviewing existing knowledge', that is to say, learners may reflect on the knowledge they already have, on what they know. In this way, the teacher checks their knowledge in order to continue with the topic or to review previous concepts. There are several activities that can be done:

- Brainstorming: learners say and give ideas about what they know about the topic in question. They can make a list of these ideas or concepts, or do a semantic map for instance. They can do it individually, in pairs, in groups or with the instructor.

- Teacher-led discussion: the instructor is who leads a particular discussion about a topic that he or she explains and, then, learners answer some questions. Some visual devices can be used.
- Short Reading: As its name suggests, students read a short text before doing the listening. After reading, they can do the teacher-led discussion, answer some questions or some other activity.
- Quizzes: there exist several types, for example multiple choice, short answer questions, true-false-“don’t have a clue”, etc.

Finally, the third group is that of ‘anticipation of content’. Anticipating content means to imagine, predict or intuit what they are going to listen. Here any of the activities of the second group can be used.

After doing the pre-listening activities, it is the time to listen in its strict sense. As it was previously explained, there are several ways of doing a listening: with the tape recorder, with the teacher giving a lecture or doing a presentation (students can do a presentation as well), with the teaching assistant, or doing a classroom discussion. Nevertheless, what do we do after that? We will focus on the so-called post-listening activities.

Post-listening activities are the ones used to check the students’ comprehension about what they have heard. The aims of this stage, according to Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 47-48) are to train learners to respond to what has been listened to, to help learners to activate what has been learnt through listening, to integrate the listening skill with other skills; and to extend the while-listening work. Some possible activities that they suggest are: role-play, simulation or dramatization, discussions and debates, writing letters, postcards, messages, adverts, etc., problem solving activities, or listening to/reading a related text.

Thus, we could affirm that a classroom is not the ideal place for the learner to develop all the listening skills necessary to maintain different types of conversations in non-classroom situations. However, it is the best place to start developing them.

2.6.2. Reading

Reading would be the other ‘receptive’ skill apart from listening that involves many other things than only receiving information from a text. Reading a text or a passage implies *understanding* it. However, normally, learners are used to translate little by little or word by a word the text instead of simply reading and comprehending it. Thus, the important thing here would be to teach learners to really *read* a text in their second or foreign language without their mother tongue intervening (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 189).

Regarding this skill, there is a very interesting theory called schema theory. It is based on the importance of background knowledge to reading, and Rumelhart (1980: 34) explains it this way:

According to schema theories, all knowledge is packaged into units. These units are the schemata [plural of *schema*]. Embedded in these packages of knowledge is, in addition to the knowledge itself, information about how this knowledge is to be used. A schema, then, is a data structure for representing the generic concepts stored in memory.

That is to say, these schemata are mental structures that store our knowledge. Then, according to the schema theory, reading is an *interactive process* (not just a receptive one) “between what a reader already knows about a given topic or subject and what the writer writes”, as Nunan (1989: 33) explains. Readers contribute to their reading with their personal experiences and knowledge. That is why it is very useful for the readers of a second language: if they have a significant cultural knowledge, they are more likely to comprehend a given passage.

It is also relevant to bear in mind that second language learners (or readers) have different purposes for reading. W. M. Rivers and M. S. Temperley (1978: 187-8) expose some of them, for instance “to obtain information for some purpose; [...] to act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle; to keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters; [...] for enjoy or excitement,” etc.

Traditional teaching had its effects in reading second language materials as well. It was presupposed that students could not comprehend language that they had not learnt. Research has proved this was incorrect (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 196).

The language which the text is written with has importance, although it is not the only criterion for judging the appropriateness of a text. Investigations (Bransford and Johnson, 1972; Carrell, 1983; Lee, 1986) assure that “first and second language readers comprehend the passage better when the lexical items are *transparent* and *specific*” – words that refer to the topic in an explicit way –, rather than *opaque* and *general* – they refer to the topic but in an indirect way – (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 197).

Another aspect that affects comprehension is the manner in which information is organized. Carrell (1984) presented the same information to learners of English as a second language, but this information was organized in four different ways: the first one was as a comparison/contrast; the second way was as a problem with a solution; the third was as a collection of descriptions; and the fourth one was as a cause-and-effect relationship. The results were clear: both the retention and comprehension of information were “best for more highly organized information (comparison/contrast,

problem/solution, and cause/effect) than for more loosely organized information (collection of descriptions)” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 197).

A similar investigation with French learners was carried out by Lee and Riley (1990) and they found similar results. Besides, they found that the fact of providing them information about the text they were going to read before reading improved their comprehension.

In another study, Flick and Anderson (1980: 345-6) investigated the ways in which discourse can be organized regarding more local levels within the text, not just the text level in general. They delivered short passages with implicit and explicit definitions to first and second language learners (or readers), and discovered that both comprehended better explicit ones.

Nunan (1989: 35), on his behalf, suggests that for successful reading to take place several factors may happen:

- using word attack skills such as identifying sound / symbol correspondences;
- using grammatical knowledge to recover meaning, for example interpreting non-finite clauses;
- using different techniques for different purposes, for example skimming and scanning for key words or information;
- relating text content to one’s own background knowledge of the subject at hand;
- identifying the rhetorical or functional intention of individual sentences or text segments, for example recognising when the writer is offering a definition or a summary even when these are not explicitly signalled by phrases such as ‘X may be defined as...’.

Moreover, Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 41-42) also spoke about that third factor, the different techniques used by readers, adding two more, receptive and intensive reading. These are techniques that learners should learn in order to become better readers. They explained each one of them with an example from Parrot, *Tasks for Language Teachers* (1993) in order to understand them better. For *scanning*, the example is reading “a poem by a poet you particularly like. You enjoy paying close attention to the poet’s use of language”. The instance for *skimming* would be visiting “a library in the course of researching a particular topic. You quickly look through books and articles in order to ascertain whether they contain information on this topic and are therefore worth borrowing”. For *receptive reading*, they add: being “on holiday and sit down to read the latest thriller by your favourite writer. There is no pressure on you to finish it quickly”. And, finally, for intensive reading, they illustrate it as follows: “while waiting for an appointment, you pick up a magazine and discover it contains an article of great interest to you. You do not have time to read the article in

detail but you want to extract as much information from it as you can in the few minutes you have”.

There are several things that teachers do in a wrong way when learners are to read. Sometimes instructors summarize and explain the passage before letting learners read it, so that they know in advance what they are going to read. If the purpose of reading is improving their comprehension skills, by doing this we are avoiding it to happen. We want our students to be able to discover the text for themselves. In the same way, teachers should not advance the problems they are going to find while reading or translate him/herself the text, as learners will pay attention to their teacher instead of to the text. One more problem is the fact that learners should associate letters or words with their sounds, and if teachers read directly the passage aloud, they are doing the students’ job again (cf. Lázaro *et al.* 1996: 43). Instructors need to let their learners work, fail and learn, that is to say, students need to be *active* and on their own when doing reading tasks.

The teacher’s job, then, would be to choose a suitable text, as well as suitable tasks, apart from encouraging learners in such a way that they will perceive a feeling of success when reading. Besides, students simply need to be trained in order to work on their own (cf. Lázaro *et al.* 1996: 43).

The organization of a lesson devoted to reading is basically the same that the ones devoted to listening, there are three stages called *pre-reading*, *reading*, and *post-reading* stage. The aims of each stage are the same as those of the listening lesson and we can use the same activities. However, some other activities could be added:

For the pre-reading stage, some possible activities according to Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 45-46) could be: Personalization, Question and Answer Work, Conversation/Discussion (all of these activities being “based on topic/title/associated visuals/text headings”), Prediction Work (“based on title/associated visuals/text headings/first lines” or on vocabulary from text), Teaching of Essential Vocabulary and Setting of Reading Task to Follow.

Lázaro *et al.* (1996: 46-47) suggest as well several possible activities for the *while-reading* stage (which could be used for the listening stage too), which are: giving the text a title; filling in blanks/cloze; selection or matching exercise (text and title/topic/illustration); information transfer; sequencing (pictures according to paragraphs/text); comparison (passages and hypotheses from the prediction stage); spotting differences/inaccuracies (compared to a written or tape version of the ‘same’ text); following instructions and doing something; answering questions; personal response tasks; finding evidence for statements; students in groups write their own questions about the text and then ask each other; summarising text content; information gap activity; jigsaw; crossword puzzle; etc.

In summary, it could be said that for a learner to comprehend a given text or passage both the reader and text factors are necessary, and both interact. Learners need to be independent readers and instructors have to help them feeling they are able to understand texts and thinking that they will succeed.

2.6.3. Writing

After dealing with the 'receptive' skills, we are going to focus now on the *active* or *productive* ones, although it has been already seen that this distinction is not so correct. Another belief that is worth of mentioning is the fact that we only communicate with others by speaking, but this is not true again. We can communicate by writing letters, e-mails, etc., because communication is the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning, as we previously defined it, and it does not refer just to oral language, it is applicable to writing as well. White (1981: 2) gave much importance to writing and its difficulty, and he explained it as follows:

Writing is not a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language. Yet all people have to be taught how to write. This is a crucial difference between the spoken and written forms of language. There are other important differences as well. Writing, unlike speech, is displaced in time. Indeed, this must be one reason why writing originally evolved since it makes possible the transmission of a message from one place to another. A written message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time. It is permanent in comparison with the ephemeral 'here one minute and gone the next' character of spoken language – even of spoken language that is recorded on tape or disk.

This means that, for learners, it will probably be the most difficult skill to master or to learn in the second or foreign language, as this happens even when they are to learn their mother tongue. Nunan (1989: 37) suggests several skills that successful writing involves:

- mastering the mechanics of letter formation;
- mastering and obeying conventions of spelling and punctuation;
- using the grammatical system to convey one's intended meaning;
- organising content at the level of the paragraph and the complete text to reflect given / new information and topic / comment structures;
- polishing and revising one's initial efforts;
- selecting an appropriate style for one's audience.

Thus, it can be seen that writing is a complex activity that involves having different abilities. That is why two distinct views have appeared in these last years about the nature of writing. They could be named as the *product* approach and the *process* approach. The first one would be focused on the final result of the composition, so that the instructor following this view would check whether the final

product is grammatically correct, readable and follows the discourse conventions. By contrast, the second approach would be centred on both the means and the end, that is to say, the final product is important in this view, but how the composition was created, the process, is much more relevant. (cf. Nunan, 1989: 36)

Dvorak (1986: 145) explains an important and different distinction regarding writing as well:

Writing will be used as a generic term to refer to all of the various activities that involve transferring thought to paper. Writing that focuses primarily on the conventions of language form, i.e., grammatical or lexical structure, will be termed transcription. The term composition will refer to the skills involved in effectively developing and communicating an idea or making a point.

Thus, on the one hand, learners will be focused on the subcomponents of writing in transcription activities, highlighting the processes by which they convert their ideas into words, into language. That is to say, they will be centred on whether or not they have used specific grammatical and lexical items because form is more important than content. On the other hand, in compositions learners will be engaged in a series of cognitive processes which lead towards that composition, so that the process will be more important here (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 219-222).

Finally, Zamel (1982: 195-209) suggests some significant differences that Sommers and Perl explained between the skilled and unskilled writers. Unskilled writers see composing as more formulaic and mechanical, in such a way that “they cannot get beyond the surface in order to anticipate the needs and expectations of their readers” because of their excessive attention to form and correctness. In addition, these writers do not usually update themselves; they normally do not modify their ideas as they are only focused on the lexicon and the rules that have already been written by teachers. By contrast, more skilled writers see their writing “from a more global perspective. In the process of discovering meaning, these experienced writers changed whole chunks of discourse, and each of these changes represented a reordering of the whole”.

Hence, it has been seen the difficulty of this skill, but also its importance. Its complexity falls to different skills that good writers need to have in order to communicate a message correctly. We have reviewed the significance of the process of writing itself, but we cannot play down the final product in these current times where grammatical mistakes are ‘in fashion’. Instructors need to teach their students the importance of writing correctly. Writing, then, is the mixture of both, process and product, apart from a combination of different skills that learners need to master in order to become experienced writers.

2.6.4. Speaking

Traditional teaching has given much importance to writing; students had to write correctly in order to learn the language correctly as well. The consequence of this was the fact that spoken language was in the background. One reason could be that spoken language is much less organized than written language. Writing is related to organized structures, while speaking consists more of “short, often fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciations” (Nunan, 1989: 26).

Some researchers suggest that instructors who teach the spoken language must confront some problems that ‘writing teachers’ must not. Brown and Yule (1983: 3), for instance, mention several questions that these ‘speaking teachers’ may ask themselves some time:

- What is the appropriate form of spoken language to teach?
- From the point of view of pronunciation, what is a reasonable model?
- How important is pronunciation?
- Is it any more important than teaching appropriate handwriting in the foreign language?
- If so, why?
- From the point of view of the structures taught, is it all right to teach the spoken language as if it were exactly like the written language, but with a few ‘spoken expressions’ thrown in?
- Is it appropriate to teach the same structures to all foreign language students, no matter what their age is or their intentions in learning the spoken language?
- Are those structures which are described in standard grammars the structures which our students should be expected to produce when they speak English?
- How is it possible to give students any sort of meaningful practice in producing spoken language?

Thus, how can communication take place in our classrooms? For communication to take place, some context should be developed and there have to be a listener and a speaker (or several). The listener should understand the message that the speaker is expressing and sometimes it is needed some negotiation (just like there has to be some negotiation between the instructor and the learners). However, some other times, breakdowns in communication happen and learners need to develop some skills in order to resolve them (what is known as strategic competence). We could find in our classrooms that learners have underdeveloped cultural or linguistic knowledge (there could be missing grammar, missing vocabulary or problems with pronunciation) and instructors have to provide learners with resources for them to manage with these problems (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 148). Some of these resources are, for instance, paraphrasing or miming.

It is also worth of mentioning that there is always some purpose for communication, and, in classrooms, learners usually communicate for exchanging information – what is known as transactional function –; although some other times the purpose of communication is to maintain social relationships – interactional function – (cf. Nunan, 1989: 27). Thus, there are some common interactional patterns that can be found between instructors and learners for them to interchange information, but we will focus on two of them. The first one is known as *Communicative Drills*, which consists of questions that the instructor asks to his or her students and unknown answers. That is to say, learners give answers with information which is real and new. One pitfall of this type of interaction could be the fact that the exchange is not too extended. The second interactional pattern is called *Teacher-Fronted and Paired Interaction* (cf. Lee & VanPatten, 1995: 151-154).

One research was conducted by Rulon and McCreary in which they compared teacher-fronted activities with small-group ones and their conclusion was that, with the same amount of content covered, learners talked more when they were allowed to work in groups or pairs. They comment that “very little negotiation of either content or meaning was actually taking place in these teacher-fronted classes” (Rulon and McCreary, 1986: 194).

Thus, about the latter type of interaction, J. Lee and B. VanPatten (1995: 154-156) explain that quantitative research conducted on it suggests that “teacher-fronted activities provide few opportunities for the expression and negotiation of meaning among participants (perhaps because there are too many potential participants)”. That is why it can be determined that these activities may not be the best option for providing learners with opportunities for communication; opportunities that can be provided by paired or group interaction. However, instructors should not forget to let learners be spontaneous and creative, they have to let them interact going beyond the previously explained communicative drills.

An argument very much to the point was that of Brooks (1990: 162) in his study with one university Spanish class with an elementary level. He stated that learners imitate their instructor, that is, they reproduce the instructor’s behaviours that he or she uses at the whole-class level. He suggested that:

Rather than use the exercise to participate in a communication stimulation activity, as originally intended by the teacher, the students seem to have turned the activity into another chance to reinforce the rules of Spanish grammar, thereby getting ready for the subsequent quiz... It appears as though the two students have learned through imitation and inference, rather than explicit instruction, an acceptable manner for doing this type of activity.

Then, how can a communicative classroom be organized? J. Lee & B. VanPatten (1995: 156-161) give us some suggestions. The activities used in these lessons are called 'information-exchange' or 'informational-based' tasks and, as their name suggests, learners have to exchange information that will be necessary then for something else. Thus, lessons would be divided into three stages. The first one consists in identifying the topic (or sub-topic) for a particular task. Learners can identify it by means of specific questions of any kind that they will answer with the information they are obtaining. It is important for an instructor to remember always the time and materials they have in order to organize themselves and organize the lesson correctly. After that, the following stage would be to design an appropriate immediate purpose, which could have the form of a particular task that learners should complete. Therefore, exchanging information would be the *means* to get their *purpose*, that is to say, they will do something with the information they have obtained, in order to achieve their goal, their end. Some tasks could be: creating a survey, filling in a table or a chart, drawing a picture, a diagram, etc., making an oral report, writing a paragraph...

Finally, the last stage of this lesson would consist in identifying the information source (or sources). The instructor will select the task according to the information source which is necessary in order to carry out the interaction. Thus, some common sources are the learners' likes and dislikes, their experiences and their habits. Nevertheless, more sources can be used, for instance a reading or a listening which can be about anything about the world. Instructors should not forget that learners know more things apart from their personal experiences.

There is one more thing that instructors should bear in mind: the learners' level. Advanced learners are able to discuss about different topics without the task being so structured, while beginning-level learners need the task and the teacher to guide them. Instead of letting them discuss about some complicated topic, it is easier for them to answer to true/false statements for instance.

Moreover, there are two different views on speaking, what are called the bottom-up and the top-down approaches. On the one hand, the bottom-up view suggests to start teaching the smallest units of language (that is, individual sounds) and, then, teaching words, sentences and discourse. On the other hand, the top-down approach suggests the contrary: starting with larger units of language in their specific context and, with their knowledge about that context, learners will understand and use correctly the smaller units (cf. Nunan, 1989: 32).

Precisely, Nunan (1989: 32) suggests the skills that a speaker should have in order to achieve successful oral communication:

- the ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensibly;
- mastery of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns;

- an acceptable degree of fluency;
- transactional and interpersonal skills;
- skills in taking short and long speaking turns;
- skills in the management of interaction;
- skills in negotiating meaning;
- conversational listening skills (successful conversations require good listeners as well as good speakers);
- skills in knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations;
- using appropriate conversational formulae and fillers.

Then, what we can conclude is the fact that the four skills (or macro-skills) are equal in importance. In real life, though we have explained each skill in isolation, they interact with each other (speaking, writing, reading and listening), and the majority of tasks (not all) that we do involve more than one of them. That is why we have to make our classrooms as similar as possible to real life. Whenever possible, although sometimes they will need to work on just one of them, instructors should integrate two or more skills while carrying out different tasks in the classroom.

2.7. Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to document some possible solutions to the existing problem with foreign languages in our country, that is, a very low level in comparison with the rest of the European Union. Although the origin of the problem, or what we think that is the origin of the problem – Grammar-Translation Method –, still prevails, it is in the last decades that several researchers and teachers are investigating and implementing different approaches in order to improve this situation. In our case, we support the idea of communicative classrooms – that is to say, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) –, letting learners experiment the language and let them practice and improve the four skills in the foreign language.

In order to illustrate it thoroughly, we have begun by analysing our country's circumstances according to some Spanish media to be completely aware of the *current* situation (as it has not changed over the years). The main CLT features have been then related, focusing on the relevant change of roles that we are experiencing in regard to our teachers and learners. After that, the place that grammar and vocabulary have in communicative classrooms has been explained, as it is one of the main concerns that critics, researchers and teachers have. Moreover, one of the chief characteristics of this approach is classroom contexts to seem as similar as possible to real life ones. In doing so, the integration of the four skills is almost obligatory, though there exist some tasks where it will be necessary the practice of just one of them.

Therefore, this dissertation hopes to have contributed at least to the idea that changes are necessary in order to improve what does not work. Numerous and different approaches exist for instructors to test, mix and even adapt them to their

necessities. CLT is defended here because of the main purpose of languages: communication. Thus, it is by teaching learners to communicate and by preparing them for what they will find outside the classroom that our goal as instructors will be accomplished.

3. Didactic Unit

3.1 Title

Unit 2: “How do you pass time?”

3.2 Contextualization

This didactic unit has been designed for students of 1st year of Compulsory Secondary Education, belonging to the private High School *Pedro Poveda*, in Jaén (Spain). The level of the students is varied: some of them are nearly to the A2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), whereas some others scarcely reach it. The students present interest and motivation in learning English as a Foreign Language, although they form a mix-ability group. In the group, there are 30 students: 17 girls and 13 boys, amongst them one is gifted and talented and two of them are slow-learners.

This didactic unit is programmed to be applied during the first term and corresponds to the second unit of the year. It will be carried out at the end of September.

The previous knowledge and recent work that these learners have studied in the preceding unit are grammatical notions like Present Simple and Imperative; vocabulary regarding everyday actions (wash your teeth, catch the bus, eat, do your homework, have dinner, sleep, etc.) and instructions. They also have learnt to describe and compare pictures and to give instructions to each other.

3.3 Justification

According to the Decree 231/2007, of July 31st, which establishes the arranging and the teachings corresponding to CSE in Andalusia, page 24, this unit bears in mind contents such as:

- “b) The interdisciplinary vision of the knowledge, emphasizing the connections among the different subjects and their contribution to the global understanding of the studied phenomena”.

- “d) The consideration of everyday life and of the near circle’s resources as an instrument to relate the learner’s experience with the school learnings”.
- “e) The use of the various sources of information, culture, leisure and study present in the knowledge society”.
- “i) The analysis and assessment of the most important contributions for the human progress in the health field, welfare, communication, knowledge diffusion, the government forms and how to satisfy the basic human beings necessities”.

Particularly, in this unit, according to the educational aims in the curriculum, the relevant contributions are the general knowledge and awareness of aspects of the society and everyday life events, at the same time that it is appealing and curious for the students. They will be involved in a context in which their imagination will be stimulated together with their creativity. In addition, this unit will boost the students to practice all the skills in a highly integrated way.

According to the CEFRL, we will foster the communicative competences consisting of the three sub-competences: linguistic competence, in relation to comprehensible messages; sociolinguistic competence, bearing with the use of appropriate language in a given situation; and pragmatic competence, according to the purpose of the use of language.

3.4 Competences

I. Linguistic communication

III. Digital competence

IV. Learning to learn competence

V. Social and civic competences

3.5 Didactic objectives, Key Competences and Evaluation Criteria

Didactic objectives	Key Competences	Evaluation Criteria
-To be able to use Present Simple to talk about a usual action which can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event or something that often happens.	I, IV	If they are able to use Present Simple to talk about a usual action which can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event or something that often happens.
-To be able to use the Present Continuous to	I, IV	If they are able to use the Present Continuous to

indicate that an action is or is not happening now, at this very moment.		indicate that an action is or is not happening now, at this very moment.
-To command, retrieve and use vocabulary related to different hobbies.	I, V	Whether they command, retrieve and use vocabulary related to different hobbies.
-To use the necessary connectors of sequence and time expressions in order to compose a well-structured narrative.	I, IV, V	If they use the necessary connectors of sequence and time expressions in order to compose a well-structured narrative.
-To be able to interact and to exchange information about the daily events of society.	I, IV, V	Whether they are able to interact and to exchange information about the daily events of society.
-To be able to listen and understand the content of a song.	I, III	Whether they are able to listen and understand the content of a song.

3.6 Contents

The contents of this didactic unit are:

- Listening, speaking and interacting
 - o Listening of a song they like
 - o Interacting and exchanging information about the different hobbies they know
 - o Speaking about new technologies
 - o Reciting a song or poem
- Reading and writing
 - o Discovering grammar (Present Continuous) in a text
 - o Reading of a text of opinion
 - o Writing a text of opinion following some tips for writing (*start with the film's title, then the type of film and when it was made, etc.*).
- Reflection upon the language and linguistic awareness
 - o Present Simple (V base form / V+s in 3rd person)
 - o Present Continuous (V to be – am/is/are – + V-ing)
 - o Mastering, retrieving and using vocabulary related to leisure in an appropriate context (such as *hobby, series and films, blog, social network, music, sports – football gymnastics... –, etc.*).
- Sociocultural aspects and intercultural awareness
 - o Interacting and exchanging information about the daily events of society (*competition, inequality, inclusion, etc.*).

3.7 Transversality/Cross-curricular issues LOMCE (-RD 1105/2014)

- Reading Comprehension (especially in session 2, with pre-, while, and post-reading activities).
- Oral and written expressions (in almost the whole unit: communicative activities, presentations, publications in a blog...).
- Information and communication technologies (creation of a blog).
- Entrepreneurship (creation of their own blog and publications).
- Equal rights and opportunities for disabled people (especially in session 4, when dealing with sports).
- Coeducation (equal rights and opportunities for men and women; prevention of gender-based violence: in session 4, regarding equality in sports).
- Education for Peace (this didactic unit promotes agreement, pacifism and neutrality through sports).
- Health Education (promoting sport as a principal way of being healthy).

3.8 Interdisciplinarity

This unit is related to some other subjects of the curriculum, namely Technology, Music, Literature and Physical Education. The former one has its relevance because we teach learners how to create a blog, as well as how to deal with new technologies. Secondly, Music is worked in an innovative and original way, discovering the song, its pauses and its rhythm. Besides, Literature is somehow included by means of the poems or songs students have to create themselves, bearing in mind rhyme and rhythm. Finally, Physical Education is included through the learning of some different sports and by promoting sport practice.

3.9 Temporalization

This unit will be developed in six sessions of 50/55 minutes each one.

SEPTEMBER	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 rd week	Session 1		Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
4 th week	Session 5		Session 6		

3.10 Attention to diversity

In the classroom, there are two students who are slow-learners and one student who is gifted and talented. For them, some additional activities have been prepared:

- Extension activities for the gifted and talented student, and possible potential fast-learners.

- Reinforcement activities for the slow-learners. These activities will be properly guided and the teacher will be a facilitator in every moment.

Extension activities:

1st activity: TALKING ABOUT FILMS (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 15 minutes
- Focus: Vocabulary review and learning
- Materials: two worksheets for each pair
- Skills: writing, speaking

This activity consists on a different “fill the gaps”. Students are divided into pairs, and each one receives a worksheet about films. On student will have the information that the other needs and vice versa.

Talking about Films (A)

1 Film genres

How many different kinds of films can you write in English? Make a list in the box below.

Film Genres
Action



2 Look at the table below.

Film Title	Place	Time	Actors
Titanic	on a ship		Leonardo DiCaprio
From Russia with Love	in Turkey	in the 1960s	
Casablanca			Humphrey Bogart
Gladiator	in Rome	in the 1 st century AD	
Bridget Jones's Diary			Rene Zellweger and Hugh Grant

Ask your partner questions to find the missing information. Use the following question and answer format:

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Place | Where is it set? | It's set (in New York). |
| 2) Time | When is it set? | It's set (in the 1950s). |
| 3) Actors | Who's in it? | It stars (Brad Pitt). |

Write the answers in the spaces. If you can't spell a word, ask: "How do you spell that?".

3 Writing Practice

Think of a great film you have seen. Write a few sentences about it below. Don't write the film's title!

Talking about Films (B)

1 Film genres

How many different kinds of films can you write in English? Make a list in the box below.

Film Genres
Action



2 Look at the table below.

Film Title	Place	Time	Actors
Titanic	on a ship	in 1912	
From Russia with Love			Sean Connery
Casablanca	in Morocco	during the Second World War	
Gladiator			Russell Crowe
Bridget Jones's Diary	in the UK	in modern times	

Ask your partner questions to find the missing information. Use the following question and answer format:

1) Place	Where is it set?	It's set (in New York).
2) Time	When is it set?	It's set (in the 1950s).
3) Actors	Who's in it?	It stars (Brad Pitt).

Write the answers in the spaces. If you can't spell a word, ask: "How do you spell that?".

3 Writing Practice

Think of a great film you have seen. Write a few sentences about it below. Don't write the film's title!

2nd activity: SPORTING EVENTS (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>)

- Level: Elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: sports vocabulary
- Materials: sporting events worksheet
- Skills: writing, reading, (speaking)

This worksheet contains two different activities (picture matching and gap fill) about sporting events that they will be allowed to do individually or in pairs.

1. Check your vocabulary: picture matching

Write the correct words in the boxes below the pictures.

athlete	ticket	stadium	medal	bronze medal	flag
gold medal	spectator	team	silver medal	winner	

2. Check your vocabulary: gap fill

Write a word to complete the sentences.

1. A _____ can be gold, silver or bronze. You wear it around your neck.
2. A _____ is a big, open place for sporting events. It has seats for the spectators.
3. You need your _____ to enter the stadium.
4. Every country has a _____. It is made of fabric. It has colours and sometimes a picture.
5. An _____ is a person who is very good at sports.
6. A person who is watching the sporting event is called a _____.
7. The _____ is the person who finishes first or does the best.
8. The winner receives a _____ medal.



Reinforcement activities:

1st activity: ARE YOU A GOOD DIGITAL CITIZEN? (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 20 minutes

- Focus: Vocabulary review and learning
- Materials: worksheets
- Skills: reading, speaking

These worksheets contain a reading, with its pre- and post-reading activities to check their knowledge. They can do it individually or in pairs. The activities are a multiple choice ('pair-choice' in this case); a selection of sentences to define themselves; and a fill the gaps activity.

Preparation

Circle the correct definition.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|
| 1. | a digital citizen | a. a person who lives in a modern world
b. a person who is active online |
| 2. | polite | a. respectful and kind
b. disrespectful and rude |
| 3. | safe | a. in danger
b. protected from danger |
| 4. | to worry | a. to think about problems or fears
b. to feel nervous about meeting new people |
| 5. | sensible | a. acting in a practical way
b. reacting quickly to changes |
| 6. | privacy settings | a. special places where you can be private
b. controls to make your information private |
| 7. | laws | a. rules that each country has
b. information about how to behave |
| 8. | illegal | a. respecting official rules
b. breaking official rules |

Are you a good digital citizen?

Try the quiz and check your result at the end.

1 Do you believe all the information you see on the internet?

- A No! I always check that information is true.
- B I don't really think about the information being true or not.
- C I believe everything I see online.

2 Are you interested in modern technology?

- A Yes, I love learning and reading about all kinds of modern technology.
- B I'm interested in some modern technology but not everything.
- C I'm not at all interested in modern technology.

3 Are you nice to people online?

- A Yes, I always think carefully about what I am saying and doing online.
- B I think I am polite most of the time but I don't always think before I write.
- C I don't think much about what I say and do online.

4 Do you know how to stay safe online?

- A Yes, I am very careful about things like my privacy settings and passwords.
- B I think I am safe but I am not sure about things like privacy settings.
- C I don't think there are any dangers online so this doesn't worry me.

5 Do you think carefully before you share a photo?

- A Yes, I always ask myself 'Would I be happy to see this photo?' If the answer is 'yes', I share it.
- B I know that's probably important but I don't always stop to think.
- C I just share photos without thinking. I don't really worry about what people think.

6 Are you confident that you always follow your country's laws online?

- A Yes, I never download illegal files or copy other people's work.
- B I don't know much about the law, but I know not to copy other people's work.
- C Hmm ... I don't think laws are important when you go online.

Mostly As

Congratulations! You're a good digital citizen. You know how to use technology in a safe and sensible way. You also know how to enjoy technology for study and play. Well done!

Mostly Bs

You aren't a bad digital citizen but you could be better! Think carefully when you are online and ask questions if there are areas you don't understand.

Mostly Cs

Oh dear. You need to work on being a good digital citizen. Learn as much as possible about how to behave online or you may find you get into trouble one day.



1. Check your understanding: multiple selection

Which advice is true about being a good digital citizen? Tick (✓) six correct answers.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| ..... | You believe most of what you see on the internet. |
| ..... | You are interested in modern technology. |
| ..... | You don't worry about privacy settings. |
| ..... | You think about each photo before you share it. |
| ..... | You are polite to people online. |
| ..... | You share photos online every day. |
| ..... | You check information you read online. |
| ..... | You know there are dangers online. |
| ..... | You don't care about your country's online rules. |
| ..... | You follow your country's online rules. |

2. Check your vocabulary: gap fill

Complete the sentences with an appropriate word.

1. The questions are to check whether you are a good _____ citizen.
2. They ask you if you believe everything you see on the _____.
3. Other questions are about being kind and _____ to people online.
4. You should check your privacy settings to make sure your information is _____ and you stay _____.
5. Good digital citizens always think carefully before they _____ a photo online.
6. You should never _____ illegal files or copy other people's work.

2nd activity: TECHNOLOGY (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>)

- Level: Elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: technology vocabulary
- Materials: technology worksheet
- Skills: writing, (speaking)

This worksheet contains two different activities (picture matching and another matching activity: a word with its definition) about technology that they will be allowed to do individually or in pairs.

1. Check your vocabulary: picture matching

Write the correct words in the boxes below the pictures.

laptop	Wi-Fi	computer	touchscreen	game	text message
email	mouse	mobile	keyboard	website	screen

2. Check your vocabulary: matching

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a-j next to the numbers 1–10.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1..... An electronic machine. You use it for going on the internet, storing information and playing games. | a. laptop |
| 2..... An electronic letter. | b. game |
| 3..... You can play this on the computer for fun. | c. keyboard |
| 4..... You use this to write on a computer. It has letters or characters on. | d. mobile |
| 5..... A computer that you can travel with. | e. email |
| 6..... Your personal telephone. | f. screen |
| 7..... You use this to move and click on a computer. | g. computer |
| 8..... The part of your computer where you see the pictures or words. | h. website |
| 9..... Google, YouTube and Wikipedia are types of ... | i. Wi-Fi |
| 10..... Internet connection without wires or cables. | j. mouse |

3.11 Materials

The materials used in this unit are:

- Blackboard
- Digital interactive whiteboard
- Computers (Youtube)
- Dictionaries (monolingual and bilingual if necessary)
- Worksheets
- Prepared texts and activities

3.12 Lesson Plan

UNIT 2: “How do you pass time?”

Session 1: Hobbies (55 min)

1st activity: VOCABULARY BRAINSHOWER (taken from The Standby Book, page 46)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 15 minutes
- Focus: Vocabulary review and learning
- Materials: None
- Skills: writing, speaking, listening

This activity is based on the classical *brainstorm*, however, it is called *brainshower* because it is more restricted. Students will recall well-known words about hobbies or leisure in order to build their confidence, but it will end with words that they want to know about the topic in question. First of all, the topic of the lesson and unit will be introduced. Then, learners will be asked to take a piece of paper (one for each student) and to rule into three different columns. The first column is headed ‘words I know’, the second ‘words I’m not very sure about’ and the third ‘words I would like to know’. What they have to do is to write 3-5 words in each column and, for the last one, they will be allowed to write the word in their own language (in our case, Spanish), to draw it or to write a definition in English if they are able to do it. After that, students will be divided into groups of two or three and they will compare their lists and try to check the middle column and complete the third column, using dictionaries if necessary. The board will be filled with words from columns two and three.

2nd activity: DISCOVER GRAMMAR (taken from Communicative Ideas, pages 35 and 40)

- Level: Elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: observation and discovery of structural patterns; deduction of descriptive grammatical rules
- Materials: a text in which the verbs appearing are in the Present Continuous

- Skills: reading, speaking, writing

The first thing that the teacher has to do is to prepare the Present Continuous text and, in the class, deliver it. He or she asks the students to find a pattern, rule or relationship in the text. The students are allowed to work in groups of two or three in order to solve the task and formulate the rule or find the pattern so that they get involved in the activity. They finally check with the teacher and will be asked to create sentences with the pattern themselves with the same groups.

Text:

Mary: Hey, John, what are you doing?

John: I'm studying for tomorrow's exam. And you?

Mary: Me too! Well... I'm just uploading some photos to Facebook and I'm sending a message to Mike... Oh! And I am downloading the new DNCE album and I'm having a coffee too. It's tiring all this studying!

3rd activity: CONCEPT WORD PICTURE (taken from The Standby Book, pages 218-219)

- Level: Elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: conversation, team building, vocabulary review
- Materials: several flash cards
- Skills: speaking, listening

First of all, the instructor needs to prepare a set of flashcards, each bearing a different hobby or something which has to do with hobbies. Then, now in the classroom, the class is divided into two teams. Each team has to select a representative who goes to the board and has to stand opposite his or her team. The teacher shows one of his or her cards just to the two representatives, but not to the rest of the class. Thus, the representatives will have to make gestures or to draw for their teams to guess which hobby is. The first team to shout out the correct hobby wins.

Session 2: Series and Films (55 min)

1st activity: Pre-reading: DO YOU KNOW THIS WORD? (taken from The Standby Book, page 47)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 15 minutes
- Focus: Vocabulary revision, specific reading focusing on words
- Materials: Text about a film review

- Skills: speaking, reading

The instructor has to look for a text according to what he or she wants to teach. In this case, we will focus on a film review (The Hunger Games). First of all, the teacher delivers copies of the text to the students; they are not allowed to read anything but the title. They are asked about what they know about the film. After that, the teacher asks them to use their highlighter pens in order to mark every word that they already know. In pairs, they compare what they have marked and discover the words that they do not know but their classmate does. Thus, they are allowed to mark these new words they now know. In this way, students are motivated when they see what they know instead of what they do not know. The teacher, at the end, will explain the words they have not marked.

2nd activity: Silent Reading: FILM REVIEW (taken from:
<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 10 minutes
- Focus: silent reading, general understanding of the text
- Materials: Text about a film review
- Skills: reading

It is the time for them to read. Although the integration of several skills is here defended, there are moments in real life in which just one skill is worked, as when we read a critic or some news. This is the case. The instructor will let the students read alone and in silence for them to concentrate and understand the text. There is no need to translate, as they know the words because of the previous activity.

FILM *Review*

- ① **The Hunger Games**
- ② **Sci-fi adventure, 2012**
- ③ **In the future** the USA is a new country called Panem. Every year the Capitol of Panem chooses 12 boys and 12 girls to go on a TV show called *The Hunger Games*. In this TV show the teenagers have to fight until there is only one person left. Katniss goes on the show and she has to run fast and fight to save her life.
- ④ **I love the actors** in this film. Jennifer Lawrence, Liam Hemsworth and Josh Hutcherson are fantastic as Katniss, Gale and Peeta. My favourite character is Katniss because she is very good at running and fighting. Also, I think that the film is good because it is exactly the same as the book.
- ⑤ **I give *The Hunger Games* ☆☆☆☆☆, go and watch it soon!**

Marta (13 years old, Mexico)

☆☆☆☆☆ Fantastic!	☆☆ Bad
☆☆☆☆ Really good!	☆ Terrible!
☆☆☆ OK	

Top Tips for writing

1. **Start with the film's title.**
2. **The type of film. When it was made.**
3. **Explain the film's story but don't explain the ending!**
4. **Your opinion of the film.**
5. **Should people go and watch the film?**

3rd activity: Post-reading activities (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 25 minutes
- Focus: to strengthen knowledge, in this case, the knowledge about the text
- Materials: activities coming with the text
- Skills: reading, speaking, writing

The text comes with several activities which are the post-reading ones. The first one consists in vocabulary: there are three columns (types of film; people in films; words to describe films) and nine words, three words for each column. They will do this activity individually (5 minutes).

Preparation

Write the words into the correct group.

comedy	drama	director	fantastic	good
terrible	sci-fi	actor	actress	

Types of film	People in films	Words to describe films

The next activity is a multiple choice about the text that they will do in pairs. There are three options for each sentence, and 6 sentences (10 minutes).

1. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle the best option to complete these sentences.

1. *The Hunger Games* is a [sci-fi adventure](#) / [comedy](#) / [drama](#) .
2. The USA is a new country called [Capitol](#) / [The Hunger Games](#) / [Panem](#) .
3. [Each day](#) / [Each month](#) / [Each year](#) boys and girls go on a TV show called *The Hunger Games*.
4. In *The Hunger Games* the boys and girls have to [win a running race](#) / [fight until they are the last person left](#) / [fight the new country called Panem](#) .
5. Marta's favourite character in this film is [Katniss](#) / [Gale](#) / [Peeta](#) .
6. Marta thinks you should [watch this film](#) / [wait for the DVD to be released](#) / [not watch this film](#) .

After that, with the same groups, or in threes, they will have to decide whether each of the 8 following sentences is a fact or an opinion. It is important that they understand this distinction for them to be able to do the final project (10 minutes).

2. Check your understanding: true or false

Circle *Fact* or *Opinion* for these sentences.

- | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1. I think you should go and watch it soon! | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 2. Katniss goes on the TV show. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 3. In the future the USA is a new country called Panem. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 4. My favourite character is Katniss. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 5. I think that the film is good. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 6. I love the actors in this film. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 7. It's a sci-fi adventure film. | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |
| 8. The film is called <i>The Hunger Games</i> . | <i>Fact</i> | <i>Opinion</i> |

Finally, we will devote the last 5 minutes of the lesson to speak about their favourite film or series and why they like it. There will not be time for everyone to speak,

however, this is just a preparation for the last project, so that they will be asked to think about it and write it on a paper for the next lesson.

Session 3: Social Network (50 min)

In this session, the first 5 minutes, the instructor will explain the final project: in groups of 5 (6 groups of 5 people) they are going to create a blog, and each member we will write about a different topic: two members will create it and, in the first publication, they will speak about nowadays hobbies and what they think about it; another entrance will be carried out by another member, who will speak about his or her favourite film or series just like what they learnt the lesson before. The job of the other two members will not be discovered yet, but they will have more days to publish it.

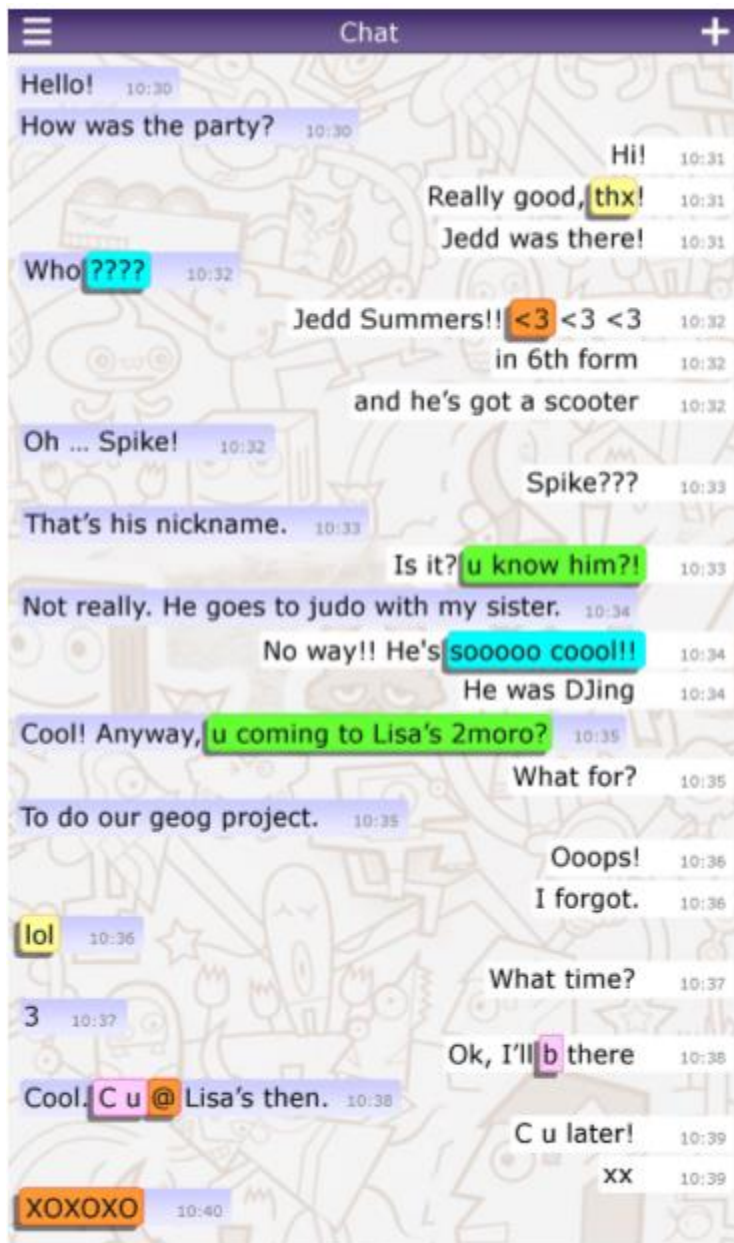
Thus, today, they are going to learn the 'Internet language'.

1st activity: WHATSAPP CONVERSATION (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 10 minutes
- Focus: to learn Internet language
- Materials: WhatsApp conversation
- Skills: reading, speaking

The instructor now delivers a WhatsApp conversation containing abbreviated language and symbols used in the English language. They will be asked to read it a try to figure out what each symbol and abbreviation means. They will work in groups of two or three and will discuss about it.



2nd activity: GUESSING SYMBOLS (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 10 minutes
- Focus: to learn Internet language
- Materials: WhatsApp conversation exercises
- Skills: speaking

They will have to do a matching exercise. In the first column, they will find the meanings; in the second one, the abbreviations and symbols. They can do it with the same groups.

Match the phrases with the common abbreviations. and write a–f next to the numbers 1–6.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1..... at | a. Lisa's |
| 2..... Lisa's house | b. u |
| 3..... (hearts =) love | c. @ |
| 4..... you | d. lol |
| 5..... kisses | e. <3 <3 <3 |
| 6..... laughing out loud | f. xxx |

3rd activity: FILLING THE GAPS (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: to learn Internet language
- Materials: WhatsApp conversation exercises
- Skills: reading, speaking

They will do two 'gap fill' exercises. The first one will contain options, the second one will not. They will do these exercises with the same groups and will be allowed to discuss and decide the options and answers. Students will finally comment them with the teacher and he or she will ask them some questions, such as whether or not they know some other abbreviations or symbols in English and how they prefer to write in chats and on the Internet in general.

1. Check your writing: gap fill

Complete the text message with a symbol from the box.

<3<3<3!!! soooooooooo	Cu XOXOXO	@ Bob's U
--------------------------	--------------	--------------

Hey!

1. We're _____. (at Bob's house)
2. _____ (are you) coming?
3. Getting pizza!!! _____ (We love pizza!!!)
4. ... from Big Al's. It's _____ (really really) good!
5. _____ (See you) later!
6. _____ (Hugs and kisses)

2. Check your writing: gap fill

Write the sentence again in text message style. Use symbols, abbreviations, letters and numbers.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. See you later. | _____ later. |
| 2. I'm at school. | I'm _____. |
| 3. How are you? | How _____? |
| 4. I'm fine, thanks. | I'm fine, _____. |
| 5. I love pizza. | I _____ pizza. |
| 6. We're going to Sam's house. | We're going _____. |
| 7. I'll be there at 5 pm. | I'll _____ there _____. |
| 8. See you tomorrow. | _____. |

At the end of the class, the last 5 minutes will be devoted for the teacher to show them an example of how to introduce themselves on a blog. The two members of each group in charge of creating the blog will have to introduce themselves and their group mates as well.

Session 4: Sports (55 min)

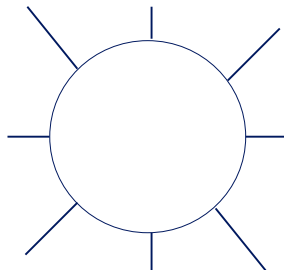
The teacher explains the next hobby and the topic of the blog's next publication: sports. Each group have to choose some other member to speak about his or her favourite sport and whether he or she is practicing it and how. Thus, this lesson will be devoted to sports.

1st activity: HOOKS (Taken from Communicative Ideas, page 91)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: sports vocabulary

- Materials: none
- Skills: speaking, writing

The instructor asks the students to draw a circle and, in the middle, write a word he or she will give to them, in this case SPORTS. After that, they will draw eight hooks off the circle, for instance:



Individually, students will write in 5 minutes on the end of each hook one word that they associate with the central word. Subsequently, they will form groups of three and will compare what they have 'hooked'. Learners will underline the words they have in common and will be allowed to write new words. Each group counts the number of words, although they are allowed to write a maximum of 24. At the end, the class will discuss their words and their particular associations. Probably, they will speak about such words as participation, collaboration, inclusion, equality or competition; so that they will comment these words and the teacher will ask them about what they think.

2nd activity: MATCHING SPORTS (Taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 10 minutes
- Focus: sports vocabulary review
- Materials: worksheets on sports vocabulary
- Skills: writing, speaking

Students, in pairs, will have to match the vocabulary (from 'a' to 'j') with its correct definition (from 1 to 10). They will discuss in order to decide the correct option.

2. Check your vocabulary: matching

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–j next to the numbers 1–10.

- | | | |
|---------|--|---------------|
| 1..... | Sports that include running, jumping and throwing. | a. boxing |
| 2..... | Two people fight just using their hands. They wear special gloves. | b. athletics |
| 3..... | Jumping or falling into water. | c. rowing |
| 4..... | Two people fight using swords. | d. diving |
| 5..... | Similar to dancing. You need a lot of strength, balance, co-ordination and flexibility. | e. hockey |
| 6..... | A team sport. You have to move the ball into the opponent's goal with a stick. | f. marathon |
| 7..... | A long-distance running race. It's 42.195km! | g. fencing |
| 8..... | Athletes race in boats on rivers or lakes. | h. swimming |
| 9..... | Athletes race in the water. | i. volleyball |
| 10..... | A team sport with six players on each side. You hit the ball over the net with your hands. | j. gymnastics |

3rd activity: PICTURE MATCHING (taken from:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 15 minutes
- Focus: to learn Internet language
- Materials: worksheets on sports vocabulary
- Skills: reading, speaking

In this case, they will have to match again, but they will match football vocabulary to a picture. The activity will focus on football as it is the most popular sport in our country and the one that students most know. This activity will be done by the same groups. At the end, all the class will speak about whether they are a football fans or not and why, as well as which is the club that they support.

1. Check your vocabulary: picture matching

Write the correct words in the boxes below the pictures.

cup	goal	team	fan	penalty box	centre circle
referee	corner flag	kit	whistle	pitch	linesman
					
					
					

4th activity: FIND THE QUESTIONS (Taken from Alternatives, pages 36-37)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 10 minutes
- Focus: revising Present Continuous
- Materials: a square of random words (one worksheet for each pair of students)
- Skills: speaking, writing

The teacher creates seven different sentences or questions which exemplify the structures that he or she wants the students to revise (in this case, Present Simple and Continuous) on the same topic (in this case, 'hobbies'). The instructor writes the words from the seven sentences or questions in a random scatter pattern on a plain white sheet of paper, without using punctuation or capital letters. Students will have to find the seven ones and write them correctly.

Questions:

- Do you play football?
- He is writing on his blog.
- My mom hates American series.
- We don't practice any sport on Fridays.
- Are they listening to their favourite song?

- Henry is watching Games of Thrones today.
- You aren't answering on WhatsApp now.

Learners will work in pairs to re-form the original sentences or questions, or even to find new ones. The rules are that they must neither change or add words nor use words which appear in the collage more than once or leave any out. They can do it in pairs in order to help each other.

play blog aren't do practice their thrones writing hates any is now favourite American you is mom Fridays listening watching whatsapp football he series don't song today on you his my sport to answering henry we on they games are on you of

Session 5: Music (50 min)

1st activity: WHAT IS THIS? (Taken from Alternatives, page 34)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 20 minutes
- Focus: to be able to read 'intelligently', discovering the beginning and ending of sentences
- Materials: a re-written song
- Skills: reading, listening

The instructor looks for a song and rewrites it as if it were one very long sentence, without any punctuation. Without explaining anything to the students, the teacher hands out the copies of the text and asks for volunteers to read it aloud. If the learners don't make sense of it at the beginning, the teacher has to persevere until they grasp the fact that they have to space the text and until they realize that it is probably a poem or a song. Once this has happened, the instructor plays the song and tells the students that they, individually, have to mark the line and verse endings as they listen. Then, in pairs, they can compare their results before listening again for confirmation and checking.

SONG:

"I don't know it's just something about ya got me feeling like I can't be without ya anytime someone mention your name I be feeling as if I'm around ya ain't no words to describe you baby all I know is that you take me high can you tell that you drive me crazy 'cause I can't get you out my mind think of you when I'm going to bed when I wake up think of you again you are my homie, lover and friend exactly why you light me up inside like the 4th of July whenever your around I always seem to smile and people ask me how well you're the reason why I'm dancing in the mirror and singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada singing in the shower all I want, all I need is your loving baby you make me hot like an oven since you came you know what I've discovered baby I don't need me another no, no all I know (know) only you got me feeling so (so) and you know that I got to have ya and I don't plan to let you go think of you when I'm going to bed when I wake up think of you again you are my homie, lover and friend exactly why you light me up inside like the 4th of July whenever you're around I always seem to smile and people ask me how well you're the reason why I'm dancing in the mirror and singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada singing in the shower (water) there ain't no guarantee but I'll take a chance on we baby let's take our time (singing in the shower) and when the times get rough there ain't no giving up 'cause it just feels so right (singing in the shower) don't care what others say if I got you I'm straight you bring my heart to life yeah you light me up inside like the 4th of July whenever you're around I always seem to smile and people ask me how well you're the reason why I'm dancing in the mirror and singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada (hey) singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada you got me singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada singing in the shower ladade ladada ladada"

2nd activity: RHYME TIME (Taken from: Communicative Ideas, page 92)

- Level: elementary
- Time: 30 minutes
- Focus: vocabulary review, being able to rhyme
- Materials: none
- Skills: writing, speaking

The teacher asks students to remember the activity they did the day before called 'HOOKS': they are going to do a similar task. Now that they have seen all the hobbies they were going to revise, the instructor tells them that this time the topic is LEISURE. Each student writes again 8 words they associate with this topic but, now, their job changes. They have to find another 8 words that rhyme with the words they have chosen (one word, one rhyme). After that, in pairs or groups of three they will write short songs (or poems) with the help of the rhyming of their words (poems should not be too long). Each group will read their poems at the end of the class and, if there is no time for some group, they will read it the next day (the day in which the blogs have to be finished).

The instructor also tells them that, obviously, the last publication of the blog will be about music, and they can speak about whatever they want: whether they like to sing or not, or whether they sing well or not, about their favourite song, singer or band, about the song they have written or the best song of the class, etc.

Session 6: Presentations (55 min)

Learners will finish reading their songs or poems (if there is some song left) and, after that, each group will have 5-8 minutes to present their blogs and to speak about their publications (each member will explain his or her own publication).

3.13 Assessable Learning Standards

If they are able to use Present Simple to talk about a usual action which can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event or something that often happens.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No
If they are able to use the Present Continuous to indicate that an action is or is not happening now, at this very moment.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No
Whether they command, retrieve and use vocabulary related to different hobbies.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No
If they use the necessary connectors of sequence and time expressions in order to compose a well-structured narrative.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No
Whether they are able to interact and to exchange information about the daily events of society.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No
Whether they are able to listen and understand the content of a song.	Yes – Almost – So-so – No

3.14 Marking Criteria

Participation and effort	10%
Classwork, homework	20%
Songs and poems (writing and speaking)	20%
Final project (blog)	25%
Exam	25%

There will be a short written exam and, at the end of the term, some of the contents of this unit will be tested in a final exam.

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4.1 Didactic Unit Bibliography and Resources

Royal Decree 1105/2014, where the core curricula corresponding to both CSE & NCSE are established.

Resources:

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Worksheets on hobbies:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills>

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises>

[Retrieved: May 2016]