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Master's Thesis/
Trabajo Fin de Máster

RESEARCH INTO TASK-BASED TEACHING: A TRIP TO LONDON

Student: Alonso Hernández, María Ángeles

Tutor: Dr. M^a del Carmen Méndez García
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Resumen

Este documento recoge la elaboración e implementación de la unidad didáctica “A School Trip to London” en 4º curso de ESO en el instituto de educación secundaria Leonardo de Chabacier (Calatayud, Zaragoza) durante el primer trimestre del curso escolar 2015/2016.

Esta unidad didáctica ha sido diseñada siguiendo el enfoque comunicativo y se basa en el aprendizaje por tareas.

La unidad didáctica va acompañada de un estudio que describe cómo se desarrolla dicha unidad didáctica a lo largo de las sesiones de las que consta, y al que analiza los resultados obtenidos de una encuesta cumplimentada por los alumnos.

Abstract

This paper analyses the design and implementation of the didactic unit ‘A School Trip to London’ in the 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) in the school ‘IES Leonardo de Chabacier’ (Calatayud, Zaragoza) during the first term of the school year 2015 / 2016.

This didactic unit has been designed following the communicative approach and it is task-based.

The aim of this study is to describe how this didactic unit is developed in the sessions it consists of and analyze the outcomes of survey the students completed.

Keywords: Communicative approach, task, task-based language teaching, task- based language learning, pre-task, during-task, post-task, group work.

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1. Introduction

English and its learning can be seen as a gateway for the understanding of other cultures. English is a tool of communication across cultures. Different people of different nationalities use English to communicate and interact with each other. It is a tool for social interactions, a tool which draws people closer together. Therefore, our main goal as teachers of a foreign language is to prepare students to live in a multicultural and plurilingual world. Our students' final aim is to achieve communicative competence, which implies being able to communicate effectively and to make themselves understood in different situations.

The communicative approach focuses on language use, emphasising functions, rather than form. The communicative approach is student-centered and promotes group interaction and, consequently, negotiation of meaning. It uses authentic material and provides a friendly environment for students, where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process. In the communicative approach, the teacher becomes a facilitator of the learning process. The *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR, 2001) itself adopts a communicative, action-oriented approach.

Task-Based teaching is used within the communicative approach. It relies on the fact that students learn best when facing the opportunity to communicate in real-life situations.

All these issues are taken into account in the elaboration and implementation of the didactic unit 'A School Trip to London', which is the object of my research study.

I work in the secondary school 'IES Leonardo de Chabacier in Calatayud (Zaragoza). The secondary school takes part in the project 'Programa de Potenciación de Lenguas extranjeras' (POLE). The Aragonese Government established this programme in the Orden de 9 de Junio de 2015, de la Consejería de Educación, Universidad, Cultura y Deporte por la que se convoca a los centros educativos no universitarios de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón para solicitar autorización para desarrollar Proyectos de Potenciación de Lenguas extranjeras (POLE). Its aim is to develop students' linguistic competence. In order to achieve this goal, a wide variety of activities can be implemented. These can be curricular, complementary or extracurricular activities but they do not only involve the teaching of a subject in the foreign language. Different departments take part in this programme. The English department participates with:

- The Blog of the English department.
- A stage play to bring students closer to the theatre.

- Activities with the library: Week of the Horror literature, which coincides in time with Halloween.
- The ‘English Week’, a stay with native English speakers in intensive programme which emphasises the importance of living and interacting with them. To practice English, students also perform a wide array of activities in a natural environment.
- The exchange programme, an experience which involves students improving their linguistic competence in English and learning to value and respect cultural differences.

The English department organizes an exchange programme in English with a Grammar School located in Maidstone, England, for students in the 4th year of CSE. The students who participate in the school trip and the exchange are selected according to the marks they obtained in the final term of 3rd year of CSE.

As a part of this exchange, there is a visit to London which is planned by students themselves through tasks carried out in the didactic unit ‘A Trip to London’, which was designed for this group of students. Therefore, the aim of this didactic unit is that students fulfil different tasks to achieve their final goal which is organizing a trip to London.

The objectives of this Master’s Thesis are:

- To look into the notion of task and task-based teaching and learning
- To describe the structure of didactic unit ‘A School Trip to London’.
- To describe the procedures and language tasks of the didactic unit.
- To explain the implementation of the didactic unit.
- To analyse the results of the students’ survey.

This Master’s Thesis is structured as follows:

- a. A literature review of the communicative approach, the notion of task and task-based learning and teaching.
- b. The didactic unit and the research tools, the students’ survey.
- c. A results and discussion section, which analyses the results yielded by the survey.
- d. A concluding section.

2. Task-based language teaching and learning

This section aims to provide a general overview of the communicative approach, taking it as a point of departure to focus on task-based teaching. Various definitions of the concept of task-based language and tasks are discussed, a three-stage framework consisting of pre-task, task cycle and language focus is addressed, and first, second and third generation tasks are described and differentiated. The rationale behind the use of tasks in the classroom is that they foster language learning. Task-based language learning is summarized considering aspects such as learning autonomy, cooperative learning, the use of authentic materials and the use of technology to carry out tasks.

2.1 Communicative Approach

Communicative approaches in language teaching appeared in the 1970s, influenced by the breakaway from the concept of method and the so-called “humanistic” new methods such as Silent Way or Suggestopedia.

The communicative approach concentrates on making learners do things with language, expressing concepts or ideas or carrying out communicative acts of different types.

CLT (communicative language teaching) is influenced by Chomsky’s (1965) linguistic competence and Hymes’ communicative competence. One of the key terms when talking about communicative approaches to language teaching is that of communicative competence. This term was coined by Hymes in 1972. The term communicative competence reflects the belief that language is always used in a social context or situation.

Swain’s comprehensible output (1985) claimed that to acquire a language, learners need not only comprehensible input but also need to be encouraged to produce language accurately. Therefore, in Swain’s view, learners need not only input, but output: they need to use language not only in a receptive-interpretative way but also in a productive way.

Another influential figure in the development of CLT was Halliday (1970), who also proposed a functional view of language. The idea that learning a language involves acquiring the means to perform different kinds of functions is one of the basic concepts of CLT, and of Halliday’s work.

A subsequent contribution to the theory behind CLT comes from Canale and Swain (1980). In their analysis of communicative competence, Canale and Swain identify four subgroups of competences which together make up communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence.

Richards and Rodgers summarise some of the theoretical bases of CLT as follows:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning;
- The primary function of language is for interaction and communication;
- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse. (1986: 71)

In other words, communicative approaches prioritise the communicative nature of language.

With the advent of CLT, the teacher became a facilitator, advisor or co-communicator. Another innovation for which the communicative approach was responsible was that of encouraging students to work in small groups or pairs. Collaborative learning is seen as fundamental in the development of competence in a language (Nunan, 1992).

Within the Communicative Approach language learning is seen as a social process of the construction of meaning, a view which is obviously at the root of communicative approaches to language teaching. Pair and group work is intended to maximize the time given to each student for communicating, and therefore for learning through the negotiation of meaning by using language.

The communicative approach has also become synonymous with the use of authentic materials in the classroom.

The task-based approach to teaching and learning language is perhaps the ‘strongest’ form of CLT and is usually related to the name of Prabhu. He believed that language, including both communicative and linguistic competence, is acquired through meaning, not through focusing on structure. Learners concentrate on the task, not on language, and if there is any focus on language it is only to complete the task. No rules of grammar are generally offered and correction is considered to be ‘incidental’ in that the correct form is given by the teacher with no subsequent focus on the rules of language lying behind it.

To sum up, CLT focuses on the learner as an individual, the view of language as including both a communicative and social facet as well as a purely linguistic one and the concern with language as related to real life. All these developments had a profound influence on task-based language teaching.

2.2. The Notion of Task

There have been many definitions of tasks.

Richards, Platt and Weber (1986:289) affirm that “a task is an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response)”. Within this definition, tasks may or may not involve the production of language. Therefore, as we can

infer from this definition, in order to perform a certain task we need to understand the language in which it has been expressed.

For Burden and Williams, (1997:167-168), “a task is anything that learners are given to do (or choose to do) in the language classroom to further the process of language learning”. From this definition, tasks are considered to foster language learning.

In the CEFR (2001:10), task is defined as “any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved”. The definition proposed by the CEFR encapsulates the notion that tasks are actions performed to obtain the desired goal, which is learning the foreign language.

Nunan (2004:4) defines a task as follows:

A piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and an end.

In Nunan’s (2004) definition the notion of focusing on meaning rather than form stands out. Indeed, what all these definitions of tasks have in common is that tasks are regarded as actions which foster language learning.

Nowadays, the most commonly used and therefore widely accepted definition of task is that of a language activity in which there is a focus on meaning over form. This type of task is often referred to as a communicative task.

Communicative tasks focus on meaning and they tend to be carried out in small groups, so that learner participation is maximized. They are usually equated with oral fluency activities, although a communicative task could also involve writing. A task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome.

It is important to consider the extent to which a learner is familiar with a topic to be dealt with in a task, since it will affect the language used by that learner. Consequently, if a topic is familiar to a learner, more attention can be given to the choice of language to be used. Familiarity with a topic is achieved through different strategies among which the most obvious one is a task which draws on their own life experiences, a topic with which each is familiar (Batstone, 1994).

With tasks focusing on life experiences and familiar topics, Batstone (1994:86) argues that “we are giving learners the chance to re-encounter and to develop particular language routines without the added pressure created by working with novel or unfamiliar material”. In this sense, it is necessary for learners to start from what they already know.

Nonetheless, for Legutke and Thomas (1991), the way a task functions is always subject to the specific context in which it is used. For them, two teachers may use the same task with a group of learners, the ‘theme’ component thus being stable, but the ‘I’ and ‘We’ components can never be the same. In fact, Legutke and Thomas claim that even the ‘theme’ ‘component’ is dynamic as it could be affected by interests and interpretations of both the teacher and learners.

Tasks need to be set up, carried out and explored by learners if we want them to benefit from them.

2.3. Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach which provides students with opportunities to actively engage in communication so that they can achieve a goal or complete a task. TBLT seeks to develop students’ interlanguage through a task and then using language in order to complete it. Selinker (1972) coined the term ‘interlanguage’ to refer to the language developed by learners of a second language, a language which is between the target language and the learner’s first language and which is constantly shifting as the learners’ competence in the target language improves.

In task-based language teaching, students are asked to forget that they are in a classroom setting and why they are there, and they have to act in a way which fosters language learning. Harmer (2007:71) states that:

Task-Based Language Teaching makes the performance of meaningful tasks central to the learning process. Instead of a language structure or function to be learnt, students are presented with a task they have to perform or a problem they have to solve.

Task-Based Language Teaching draws on several principles which formed part of the communicative language teaching movement. Among them we find:

- Activities which involve real communication are considered essential for language learning.
- Activities are selected in order to carry out meaningful tasks since they promote learning.
- Learning must be meaningful so that it supports the learning process.

Estaire and Zanón (1994:4) proposed a six-stage framework which teachers can use when planning a task unit of work:

- a) Determine the theme or interest area.
- b) Plan the final task to be done at the end of the didactic unit.
- c) Determine the unit objectives.
- d) Specify the contents which are necessary in order to carry out the final task.
- e) Plan the process.
- f) Plan instruments and procedures for evaluation process.

This implies the need to take into consideration students' interests, experience and level. Thematic aspects to be dealt with need to be made explicit, as they will determine the linguistic content and semantic content. When planning the process, it is necessary to select, adapt and produce appropriate materials to carry out the tasks, as well as structure the tasks and sequence them to fit into the class hours.

Willis (1996) advocates a three-stage framework for Task-Based Language Teaching, consisting of *pre-task*, *task cycle* and *language focus*:

- The *pre-task* stage introduces the topic of the task and activates learners' previous knowledge. The task cycle allows learners to communicate with the language they have at their disposal and then improve that language while preparing their reports for the class.

Ellis (2003) uphold that the purpose of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task in ways which will promote language acquisition. Therefore, students can be given information about what they will be required to do and the outcome they will have to arrive at. It is important to present a task in a way that motivates learners. In the pre-task teachers explore the topic with the class, highlight keywords and phrases and help students to understand task instructions.

Shekan (1996:25) refers to two broad alternatives which are at the disposal of the teacher during the pre-task phase:

An emphasis on the general cognitive demands of the task, and/or an emphasis on linguistic factors. Attentional capacity is limited, and it is needed to respond to both linguistic and cognitive demands... then engaging in activities which reduce cognitive load will release attentional capacity for the learner to concentrate more on linguistic factors.

Nunan agrees that these alternatives can be approached in four different ways. Firstly, giving support to learners to perform a task which is similar to the one they will perform in the during-task phase of the lesson. Then, asking students to follow a model of how to perform

the task. After that learners will be engaged in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task and finally they will be provided with a plan of the main task performance.

- The second phase, the *during-task* phase, focuses on the task itself. The methodological options available to the teacher in the during-task phase are of two basic kinds. These include task-performance options and process options. There exist three task performance options, the first one being whether to require the students to perform the task under time pressure or allow them to complete the task at their own pace.

Ellis (2003:24) found that:

Giving students an unlimited time to perform a narrative task resulted in language that was both more complex and more accurate in comparison to a control group that was asked to perform the same task under time pressure. When teachers want to achieve accuracy in a task performance they have to allow students to complete the task in their own time. Conversely, if they want to foster fluency they will set a time.

The second task performance option deals with access to the input data while students perform the task.

The third task performance option consists of introducing some elements of surprise into the task. These elements increase the amount of talk during task performance.

- The final phase is the *post-task* and involves procedures for following-up on the task performance. It has three main goals which are to provide an opportunity for a repeat performance of the task, to foster reflection on how the task was developed and to pay attention to form. Even though a task is completed, the learning process is not. The evaluation part is essential for students to become aware of the learning they have just gone through. Therefore there are two parts in the learning process of task based learning. The first part deals with the task itself, the second focuses on making students aware of what they have just experienced.

Nunan (1989) discusses task difficulty in three areas. These are the *input*, the *learner* and the *activity*. *Input* factors that affect task difficulty include grammatical complexity or the amount of support provided. Input refers to the data that form the point of departure for the task, which for a communicative task refers to any of a range of authentic sources. Task-Based Instruction proponents favour the use of authentic materials wherever possible, for instance using Internet to find an inexpensive hotel in London.

Among the *learner* factors we find confidence, motivation, prior learning experience, learning pace, ability in language skills or cultural awareness. Finally, *activity* factors include relevance, complexity or available help. Activities specify what learners actually do with the input.

Another aspect which is important to consider in the classroom context is the role of the task in promoting interaction. This is due to the fact that the task determines the type of language the individual receives and the language he / she produces. It has been claimed that the most appropriate task type for language learning is the one which demands mutual exchange of information and therefore fosters negotiation. Young and Doughty (1987), for instance, insist that this exchange of information among individuals should be ‘genuine’.

Ribé and Vidal (1993) provide a framework for the distinction between first, second and third generation tasks. First generation tasks refer to communicative tasks used in the classroom “to develop communicative ability in a specific area of the language being taught” (1993:2). Consequently, the task is structured around particular functions or a problem that needs to be solved. Their use in the classroom is dictated by the demands of the traditional structural syllabus.

Second generation tasks are more challenging than first generation tasks. In Ribé and Vidal’s words (1993:2):

Second generation tasks focus primarily on content, procedure and language. The learner is challenged mentally in these areas and the tasks aim at developing not only language skills, but also general cognitive strategies of handling and organizing information. Language becomes a vehicle for doing a real piece of work. This implies using not one, but a range of structures, functions and lexical sets. Language is then approached globally, not sequentially.

Third generation tasks are very similar to second generation tasks in the fact that they include the same language and cognitive strategies, but third generation tasks have a wider purpose. Again, if we follow Ribé and Vidal (1993) third generation tasks aim at developing the personality of the student through the foreign language. Their goals are to fulfil wider educational objectives (such as attitudinal change and motivation or learners’ awareness) and for this reason, they are particularly appropriate for the school setting, where motivation for the learning of the language needs to be enhanced. One of the main characteristics of third generation tasks is a high degree of task authenticity.

In the CEFR (2001), tasks in the action-oriented approach are opportunities for the learner to take action and achieve a result in a context outside the classroom which is characterized by its conditions and constraints.

Tasks link the user with the real world outside the classroom. Language is not used in order to study language in itself but it is used to allow learners to act as social agents and let them interact with others, to find their place in society.

The CEFR (2001) established different types of tasks depending on the learners' needs and the objectives of the tasks. Thus, 'real life / target/ rehearsal tasks' do consider the learners' needs in the real world, whereas 'pedagogic tasks' constrain the user's needs to the reality in the classroom. Furthermore, 'communicative pedagogic tasks' require planning the task so that it is feasible and has predetermined outcomes to facilitate the user's engagement in meaningful communication. Additionally, 'classroom tasks' engage users in negotiation and expression of meanings to reach a communicative goal, whereas 'communicative tasks' are specially designed to focus on the users' task completion and meaning when engaged in communicative exchanges.

Finally, tasks designed for language learning or teaching purposes focus on meaning and as well as the accuracy with which it is conveyed, for example, they consider aspects like form, fluency and accuracy.

2.4. Task-Based Language Learning and Cooperative Learning

Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) is an approach to second / foreign language (L2) learning where tasks constitute the main focus of instruction. Therefore, task-based learning is organized around tasks which students have to perform.

Task-based learning is student-centred and Willis (2004) summarises it as follows:

- Language learning develops independently of instruction.
- Teaching does not determine the way that the language of a certain learner develops.
- Learners do not acquire language as a structural system and once they have acquired these structures they learn how to use them in communication. On the contrary, what they actually do is to discover the system itself when communicating in the language.

Tasks can also reflect the contributions that learners can make to the learning process, since language learning has become more 'learner-centred'. Learners have a certain degree of control over the learning process and they assume a certain degree of autonomy, too. Learners are in charge of gathering or organizing information that will later present to others. They are involved in decision making and have to take risks in order to solve a problem or situation (task). Materials are personalized because they can positively affect the outcome of the learning process through their effect on motivation. It is vital that tasks are related to their needs and interests, therefore students would become more engaged in their learning process.

Specific classroom arrangements are needed, for instance small group work. Learners learn more in groups than individually, as Vygotsky (1986: 61) points out: “cooperative social interaction produces new, elaborate, advanced psychological processes that are unavailable to the organism working in isolation”.

Cooperative learning is used to promote interaction and to create an appropriate learning environment for students. Tang (1998:116) underlines that:

Co-operative learning provides a non-threatening learning context for interaction between students. During co-operative learning, students are exposed to other perspectives, they share and exchange ideas, criticize and provide feedback. Peer feedback can help students increase their awareness of their learning aims, and of the strategies to employ to achieve these aims. Collaboration provides “scaffolding” for mutual support and enables students to learn from each other.

Some guidelines for implementing cooperative tasks may include the following:

- Students need to understand the task and the value of it.
- They need to be given clear instructions to carry out the task.
- Students need to see the value of cooperative learning. Group size should be small. Four is regarded as ideal because all members have to do their share of workload.
- Teams or groups have to be heterogeneous. Mixed ability groups allow weaker students to see how better students deal with tasks and, conversely, strong students obtain a better understanding of the task thanks to teaching it to others.

In materials there is a tendency to real world, authentic activities visible in the use of authentic input and activity types that mirror real world uses of languages. This move towards authenticity is a consequence of the move away from strictly pedagogic materials. There is now recognition that language in use is the proper object of language study and that language has to be treated above the sentence level, that is, at the level of discourse.

In this context, the use of technology in education is addressed from a communicative point of view. Digital competence is one of the competences to be developed and it is defined in the Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning of the Council of the European Union (2006:13):

[Digital competence] Involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

Developing the Digital Competence in the English classroom involves analysing the way we communicate and interact in our current society as the Internet and digital environments provide a real context for language students.

I propose the development of the Digital Competence in teaching and learning taking into account the communicative approach which focuses not only on the use of the tool itself but on the exploitation of this tool to achieve communicative objectives. The main goal when using technology in second language education is to develop the basic communicative skills in the language the students are learning. As Lewis (2007:10-11) states, “teachers should encourage autonomous and discovery learning through technology usage in the lessons”.

In conclusion, the overall purpose of task-based methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and the development of skills thanks to collaborative knowledge building. In a task-based lesson the aim is to create a need to learn and use language. We take the focus away from form and structures and develop our student’s ability to do things in English. Students are given the opportunity to use English in the classroom context as if they were using their own language in everyday life.

Task-based learning focuses on the learner and it is the teacher’s duty to provide tasks which are interesting and meet the learners’ needs. Teachers need to ensure the selection of tasks with an appropriate level and be sure that students develop the strategies which will enable them to engage in task-based interaction. It is also important to set clear goals so that students are aware of the need to perform a certain task.

Task-based pedagogy sees language as a tool for communicating and the teacher and students function as language users. Task-based teaching requires students to forget where they are and why they are in a classroom. Ideally, they should learn language through communicating through it rather than through studying it. Teachers need to encourage students to adopt an active role in task-based lessons and be ready to experiment with language and this implies that they need to be willing to take risks.

3. Research into a task-based didactic unit ‘A Trip to London’

This section delves into the implementation of the task-based didactic unit based on a school trip which is part of a school exchange, gives students themselves the opportunity to plan various aspects of the trip as well as learning the language required. Besides, the preparation of the trip stimulates students’ interest in it.

During the pre-task stage, students are introduced to the trip / exchange and their previous knowledge is activated. Keywords are highlighted to help students to understand the steps they have to follow.

The task cycle allows students to prepare the task itself, the trip / school exchange. Aspects such as the itinerary, timetables, visits or other activities are covered.

The final phase is the post-task and it involves the reflection and review of the whole process to make sure students have assimilated all the information and language which they need.

Finally, Ballentine and Garvey (1994) highlight that the most common goal of exchange programmes includes improving language skills among students. Other goals involve promoting relationships with other cultures and societies since students live and learn in cultures that are different from their own.

3.1. Contextual Information

I work at a state secondary school run by the Government of Aragón. The 'IES Leonardo de Chabacier' is located in the town of Calatayud (Zaragoza). Calatayud has an estimated population of 20.000 inhabitants of whom about 30% originate from other countries.

The economy of the town is basically based on the service sector and agriculture (mainly fruit farming and wine production). Industry is not really developed in the area and with the global crisis many industries closed down.

The secondary school 'IES Leonardo de Chabacier' provides both academic and vocational teaching. There are about five hundred students in our secondary school of whom a substantial proportion are from other countries, mainly Romania.

3.2. Aim of the study

By taking Nunan's (1991 and 1992) and Seliger & Shohamy's (1989) framework we can define research according to different parameters: the general framework, the source of information, the approach, the purpose and the data.

The general framework of this piece of research is practical because it is centred on the classroom; in particular, this study has been carried out with 18 students who are studying the 4th year of CSE, and teaching materials, the didactic unit 'A Trip to London'. Therefore, this study includes the didactic unit (A Trip to London) and the tasks it contains. The study focuses on the subjects who carried it out and on how it was developed in the different sessions.

As to the source of information, this is primary research since it is derived from primary sources of information, for instance, the 18 students of 4th year of CSE who participated in this study. Its main advantage is that of being close to the primary source of information, that is, the 18 students. Besides,

this study is statistical due to the fact that it analyses the results of a survey on the evaluation of the task-based didactic unit answered by the 18 students who participated in this research.

As far as the approach is concerned, this research is analytic because it identifies and investigates a single factor or a cluster of factors which, at some level, are constituents of one of the overall system. In this study, I analyse the development and implementation of a task-based didactic unit in 4th year CSE. I take into account the context – a state secondary school in Calatayud, Zaragoza, the students, and the students' ages (all of them were born in the year 2000) and their marks in English (which range from 10 to 7). In addition, the results of the students' survey are analysed and discussed.

The purpose of this study is heuristic or inductive given that we propose to arrive at general principles relating to the development and implementation of a task-based didactic unit within a group of 18 4th year of CSE students.

Finally, as to the data gathered, relevant issues are:

The form of the data is quantitative because it is objective and factual. Data has been obtained from the analysis of the survey addressed to the 18 students. The values go from 1, the minimum value which is given to the statements proposed, to 5, the maximum value given to each of the statements in the survey.

The method of collection is (quasi-)experimental research representative of the natural conditions that are present in the classroom setting. In this case, a group of 18 4th year of CSE students who participate in an exchange programme which includes a trip to London.

The time of collection is cross-sectional because data are collected during the sessions of this task-based didactic unit.

The method of analysis is objective as it includes the real data collected from the students' survey.

3.3. Competences, objectives and evaluation criteria of the didactic unit

The inclusion of key competences in the curriculum is a guide to the teaching process, since it allows teachers to identify the essential competences, contents and assessment criteria which need to be present in the teaching-learning process. Competences are useful in the sense that they integrate different types of learning into our discipline and do not depend on a concrete subject in order to be developed. Some of the basic competences are likely to be more extensively developed in the English class than others. These are the eight Key Competences listed by the European Commission (2006):

1. Competence in Linguistic Communication. (C1)
2. Mathematical Competence. (C2)
3. Knowledge and Interaction with the physical World. (C3)

4. Digital Competence and Information Treatment Competence. (C4)
5. Social and Civic Competence. (C5)
6. Culture and Artistic Expression Competence. (C6)
7. Competence on Learning to Learn (C7)
8. Competence on Autonomy and Entrepreneurship. (C8)

Linguistic competence is the most important competence to be developed in the English class because it is the competence to use language as the tool for both oral and written communication, for the representation, interpretation, and understanding of reality, or the building up and communication of knowledge.

Learning a foreign language encourages the competence of dealing with information and digital competence. As students learn to understand a text (oral or written) and to extract valuable information they are developing this competence. Likewise, digital technology provides the chance of communicating in real time and accessing information that sometimes can only be found in English. Dealing with social and citizenship competence we can assure that the learning of a foreign language also encourages the learning of other cultures. Normally the texts used as a tool for learning, explore English culture. Similarly, with cultural and artistic competence we could say that many resources used during the class come from art works (cities or architecture) from the culture(s) associated to the English language. Learning to learn is the competence that allows students to be autonomous learners. Learning a foreign language offers different resources to understand, interpret and express our feelings; this way students are able to identify how they learn. Finally, being an autonomous learner means to be able to acquire knowledge and personal attitudes and to act according to these. Last but not least, learning a foreign language contributes to team work, social abilities, planning, or organising.

The main objective of this didactic unit is to help students fulfil different tasks so as to fulfil their final goal, which is organizing a trip to London. In addition, other objectives of this didactic unit ‘A Trip to London’ are listed below. Their relationship with the key competences is expressed in brackets:

- To value the foreign language as a means of communication and understanding among people from different origins, languages and cultures. (C1 C3 C4 C7 C8)
- To appreciate foreign languages as a means to access information about London. (C1 C3 C5 C6)

- To listen and understand general and specific information of oral texts about London, getting to London, accommodation in London and food and drink in London. (C1 C3 C5 C8)
- To express oneself and interact orally in situations of communication such as getting to London, accommodation in London, and food and drink in London. (C1 C5 C8)
- To read and understand various texts about London (getting to London, accommodation in London, and food and drink in London) with the goal of extracting general and specific information. (C1 C5 C6 C8)
- To use information and communication technologies, to obtain, to select and present oral and written information about London (getting to London, accommodation in London, food and drink in London). (C1 C4 C7 C8)

The assessment criteria of this didactic unit indicate whether students are able:

- To value the foreign language as a means of communication and understanding among people from different origins, languages and cultures. (C1 C3 C4 C7 C8)
- To appreciate foreign languages as a means to access information about London. (C1 C3 C5 C6)
- To listen and understand general and specific information of oral texts about London, getting to London, accommodation in London and food and drink in London. (C1 C3 C5 C8)
- To express oneself and interact orally in situations of communication such as getting to London, accommodation in London, and food and drink in London. (C1 C5 C8)
- To read and understand various texts about London (getting to London, accommodation in London, and food and drink in London) with the goal of extracting general and specific information. (C1 C5 C6 C8)
- To use information and communication technologies, to obtain, to select and present oral and written information about London (getting to London, accommodation in London, food and drink in London). (C1 C4 C7 C8)

Since it is a didactic unit developed only with the 18 students who participate in the school trip and the exchange, the students do not have a formal exam on it. This didactic unit forms part of the exchange program and it is not translated into marks, nor does it appears as part of the formal syllabus for the year 2015-2016.

3.5. Didactic unit sessions

The didactic unit ‘A Trip to London’ was developed throughout 4 weeks in the month of October and the first week of November 2015 during one weekly session of one hour. This didactic unit consists of 5 sessions. Ellis (2003) proposes a three-stage framework for teachers

to use while planning a task unit of work, which has been followed during the lessons: the pre-task, during task and post-task. The following is an outline of the five sessions:

Session 1: **Presentation of the didactic unit. Facts about London.**

Session 2: **Getting to London.**

Session 3: **Accommodation in London.**

Session 4: **Sightseeing in London.**

Session 5: **Food and Drink in London. Buying tickets for a musical.**

Session 1: Presentation of the didactic unit. **Facts about London**

The first part of the session is devoted to the presentation of the didactic unit. Students are given the outline and the different webpages in order to acquire the information they need.

The teacher explores the topic with the class, planning of a school trip to London, highlights keywords and phrases, helps students understand the instructions. Some aspects worth emphasising are that:

- This didactic unit consists of 5 sessions.
- Students have to work in groups of six students each.
- They have laptop computers as an aid.
- Further instructions to complete the tasks are given in the descriptions of the sessions 2, 3, 4, and 5 below.

Webpages:
www.heathrowexpress.com
www.gatwickexpress.com
http://www.ryanair.com/es/
http://www.easyjet.com/es/
http://www.booking.com/
http://www.trivago.es/
http://www.gatwickairport.com/to-and-from/gatwick-to-london/
http://www.stanstedairport.com/to-and-from-the-airport/train/
http://www.heathrow.com/transport-and-directions/trains
http://www.mylondonmap.com/
http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/buy-tickets/

During the second part of the session some relevant images¹ have been chose to capture students' interest, to activate previous knowledge, to provide them with the necessary tools to develop the didactic unit, and to create a pleasant atmosphere for students to learn and to interact orally. We start activating vocabulary about The United Kingdom, The United Kingdom countries, symbols of the United Kingdom and London. Before we start talking about the school trip to London it is paramount first know, for example, how many countries form the United Kingdom, what the biggest city in Britain and in Europe is, what the name of the United Kingdom flag is, what the symbol of England is, how many square miles London occupies, what the population is, or where London is.

This is a summary of the tasks to be carried out:

Task: Students do the task in groups of 6 students, while the teacher monitors. One computer is needed per group. These activities will make them explore (communicative purpose), express and exchange (as they work in small groups).

Planning: Each group prepares to report to the whole class how they did the task and / or what they discovered and decided.

Report: Each group exchanges information and compares their results in order to reach an agreement. This is pattern is followed at the end of sessions 2, 3, 4 and 5 as well.

The European Union



England



Scotland



¹ <http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries>
<http://www.weretheenglish.com/gifts-accessories/car-accessories>
<http://projectbritain.com/britain/england.htm>
<http://projectbriatin.com/geography/unionjack.html>
<http://www.flags.net/ENGL.htm>
<http://forolondres.com/mapa-londres/>

Wales



Great Britain



UK



London is the capital city of UK which is a European Union country.
The United Kingdom is formed by 4 countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
The Union Jack is the flag of the United Kingdom.
The Rose is the symbol of England.
London is the biggest city in Britain and in Europe.
London occupies over 620 square miles.
London has a population of 8,538,689 (2014)
About 12 per cent of Britain's overall population live in London.
London is in the southeast of England.
London is the seat of central government in Britain.
David Cameron is The Prime Minister.
People elect Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons in London at a general election. Most MPs belong to a political party, and the party with the largest number of MPs in the House of Commons forms the government.

(Retrieved from <http://www.projectbritain.com/london/government.htm>)

How many countries form the United Kingdom?
What is the biggest city in Britain and in Europe?
How many square miles does London occupy?
What is its population?
Where is London?
What is the name of The United Kingdom flag?
What is the symbol of England?

Session 2: **Getting to London**

The first part of the session is devoted to revising the main issues discussed in the previous lesson. This way the vocabulary related to Great Britain, England, London is activated. Visual support in the form of power point slides is provided. The images used the previous session that showed a map of The European Union, England, Scotland, Wales, Great Britain, United Kingdom, The Union Flag, or The Rose are displayed again.

Additional images² are now showed: a double-decker, a London taxi, the Tube, a train and an airplane in order to activate the vocabulary they need in order to carry out the first task, buying plane tickets.

Students are given links of Ryanair and Easyjet³ and a chart asking them to complete the information they need to buy a plane ticket. In addition, a text is also available to students to provide support and to help them to find the information.

Another chart is given to them to fill in with information related to travelling to London from London Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports⁴. Once each group has gathered all the information, each of them prepares to report to the whole class how they did the task and / or what they found. Each group exchanges information and compares their results in order to reach an agreement.

Students need to bear in mind that the journey takes place the third week of March (from 12th March to 19th March) from Zaragoza airport to London Stansted. Once there, the best option is taking the bus to central London.



² <http://projectbritain.com/london/transport/airports.html>

³ Links: <http://www.ryanair.com/es/>

<http://www.easyjet.com/es/>

<http://www.heathrow.com/transport-and-directions/trains>

⁴ <http://www.gatwickairport.com/to-and-from/gatwick-to-london/>

<http://www.stanstedairport.com/to-and-from-the-airport/train/>

These charts are given to students to complete:

Ryanair	Easyjet
Date:	Date:
Price:	Price:
Departure:	Departure
Arrival:	Arrival:
Insurance:	Insurance:

Travelling to London from London Heathrow	Travelling to London from London Gatwick	Travelling to London from London Stansted
Underground:	Bus:	Bus:
Train:	Train:	Train:

The following text is also given to them to provide detailed information about each of the airports.

GETTING TO LONDON

London is a major port. It has three airports, which are all located outside the city area: Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. London is the hub of the United Kingdom's rail network, with about a dozen mainline railway terminuses.

Travelling to London from London Heathrow

Heathrow is 15 miles (24 km) from central London via underground train, train, bus or private transfer.

Underground

Heathrow Airport has three underground stations – one shared by Terminals 1, 2 and 3, one at Terminal 4 and a third at Terminal 5. Trains run every 4 to 9 minutes and the average journey time is 50 minutes.

The underground trains use the Picadilly line. Travelling by underground gives you more flexibility for your destination than “normal” trains.

Tickets

A single paper ticket from Heathrow (Zone 6) into Central London (Zone 1) costs £5.50. If you are travelling after 9.30am a One –Day Travelcard between Heathrow and central London costs £6.30 and gives unlimited travel on London Underground trains, the DLR and buses.

Train

The Heathrow Express is the fastest train service running from Heathrow Airport into central London. Its destination is London Paddington train and Tube station. Trains are non-stop. The journey takes approximately 15 minutes from Terminals 1, 2, 3 // 27 to 32 minutes from Terminal 4 // 21 minutes from Terminals 5.

Tickets

Standard adult fares are £ 22 for a single ticket purchased online or at a ticket office/ machine (or £27 when purchased onboard)

www.heathrowexpress.com

Taxi

A black cab taxi holds up to 5 people and can be picked up from outside the airport. The journey time by taxi into central London is 50-75 minutes. Price: A metered trip in a black cab to / from Central London generally costs £50 to £80. A ‘meeting fee’ of approximately £ 7 is often required for journeys from the airport, to cover parking and waiting times.

Travelling to London from London Gatwick

Gatwick is 28 miles (45km) from central London. You can travel to central London via train,

taxi or private transfer.

Train

The Gatwick Express is the fastest train service running from Gatwick Airport's South Terminal into central London every day from 4.35 am to 1.35 am. The trains are non-stop and run directly into London Victoria train and Tube station. The journey takes 30 minutes (35 minutes on a Sunday)

Tickets

Standard fares are £19.90 single and £34.90 return. 10% cheaper when booked online <http://www.gatwickexpress.com/>

Taxis

Checker Cars is Gatwick Airport's official concessionaire. The journey time into central London is 60 – 70 minutes. The average cost from the airport into central London ranges from £78 - £98. Credit cards are accepted, although there is a 10% handling charge. A 'meeting fee' of approximately £7 is often required for journeys from the airport, to cover parking and waiting times.

Travelling to London from Stansted airport.

The train station at Stansted Airport is ideally located directly under the airport terminal in the designated underground rail facility. Rail services operate not only to central London, but to all major city destinations across the UK. Stansted Express offers the fastest way to travel between Stansted Airport and London. The railway station is just a 2 minute walk from the airport Arrivals with easy access via lifts, escalators and ramps.

Stansted Express trains depart every 15 minutes and take just 47 minutes to London Liverpool Street. Train tickets start from just £8 per person each way when purchased in advance

National Express Stansted Airport provides regular bus and coach services between London and the Airport, stopping at many of London's main underground and bus stations (140 services daily from 38 pick-up points). National Express coaches stop right outside the terminal doors and provide an affordable, comfortable and quick service to and from London to the Airport, with fares from £5 one-way.

(Retrieved from: <http://projectbritain.com/london/transport/airports.html>)

Session 3: **Accommodation in London**

The first part of the session is devoted to revising what we did during the previous lesson, including the vocabulary that appears in the charts.

We activate vocabulary related to accommodation thanks to the several images⁵ that are given to the students.

We provide the students the links about Booking and Trivago⁶ and the chart with the information they have to include.

Once they have completed it each group reports to the whole class and exchanges and compares the information; in order to do it they have to reach an agreement.

ACCOMMODATION IN LONDON

HOTEL



BED AND BREAKFAST



HOSTEL



The selected accommodation is 3 six bedroom rooms at the Acacia Hostel. They are booked with breakfast included from 12th to 13th March.

⁵ <http://www.bed-breakfast-world.com>

<http://www.eleconomista.es/evasion/tendencias/noticias/5058261/08/13/Los-cinco-mejores-hoteles-de-España.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostel>

⁶ <http://www.booking.com/>

<http://www.trivago.es/>

This chart is given to each group to complete.

HOTEL	BED AND BREAKFAST	HOSTEL
Date:	Date:	Date:
People allowed per room:	People allowed per room:	People allowed per room:
Meals included:	Meals included:	Meals included:
Price per night:	Price per night:	Price per night:
Type of room:	Type of room:	Type of room:
Address:	Address:	Address:

Session 4: **Sightseeing in London**

The first part of the session is devoted to the revision of the previous session.

We provide students with visual support in the form of power point slides showing Tower Bridge, The Tower of London, The London Eye, Saint Paul's Cathedral, The Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square.

Besides, a link⁷ to "my London map" a chart to be completed about each landmark to be visited and a text to provide them with additional information is also given to each group.

At the end of the session each group needs to agree on the order to visit each of these famous London landmarks.

⁷ <http://www.mylondonmap.com>

TOWER BRIDGE



THE LONDON EYE



THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER



BUCKINGHAM PALACE



THE TOWER OF LONDON



SAINT PAUL'S CATHEDRAL



WESTMINSTER ABBEY



TRAFALGAR SQUARE



Students have to complete this chart with information about these famous places in London.
This is the chart students need to complete. It is followed by a reading text about sightseeing in London:

Buckingham Palace
Where is it? When was it built? Can you describe it? What is it famous for?
The Palace of Westminster
Where is it? When was it built? Can you describe it? What is it famous for?
The Tower of London
Where is it? When was it built? Can you describe it? What is it famous for?
The London Eye
Where is it? When was it built? Can you describe it? What is it famous for?
St. Paul's Cathedral
Where is it? When was it built? Can you describe it? What is it famous for?
Westminster Abbey

Where is it?

When was it built?

Can you describe it?

What is it famous for?

Trafalgar Square

Where is it?

When was it built?

Can you describe it?

What is it famous for?

Tower Bridge

Where is it?

When was it built?

Can you describe it?

What is it famous for?

Sightseeing in London

Buckingham Palace is one of the most popular landmarks in London. It is the London home of the British Royal family. The 600 room palace is surrounded by a 40 acre garden.

The Palace of Westminster, known also as the Houses of Parliament, is where the two Houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (the House of Lords and the House of Commons) conduct their sittings. The Palace lies on the north bank of the River Thames in the London borough of the City of Westminster.

Tower of London. This royal fortress, on the north banks of the River Thames, was built by William the Conqueror, following his successful invasion in 1066. It has been added to over the years by the various monarchs.

The London Eye, next to County Hall, is another of London's most modern landmarks. It is the world's biggest ferris wheel, and will carry 800 passengers at a time on a thirty-minute ride. From its highest point of 450 feet, it promises views of up to 25 miles.

The dome of St Paul's Cathedral is the second biggest dome in the world, after St Peter's in Rome. The first St Paul's Cathedral was built in 604 AD but burnt down in 675. The rebuilt cathedral was again burnt down in the Great Fire of London in 1666. On 2nd September, 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed a large area of the city including St. Paul's

Cathedral. Sir Christopher Wren was given the task of designing and rebuilding St. Paul's - a task that was to take him thirty-five years to complete. The most dramatic aspect of St. Paul's was its great dome. It was the second largest dome ever built (the largest was St. Peter's Basilica in Rome).

Westminster Abbey is just to the west of the Palace of Westminster. It is one of the oldest buildings in London and one of the most important religious centres in the country. The Abbey was built by Edward the Confessor, and William the Conqueror was crowned in it on Christmas Day

Every King and Queen has been crowned in Westminster Abbey since William the Conqueror in 1066.

Trafalgar Square is named in honour of the British victory, led by Admiral Lord Nelson, at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Tower Bridge has stood over the River Thames in London since 1894 and is one of the finest, most recognisable bridges in the World. It is the London Bridge you tend to see in movies and on advertising literature for London. The middle section can be raised to permit large vessels to pass the Tower Bridge. Massive engines raise the bridge sections, which weigh about 1000 tons each, in just over a minute. It used to be raised about 50 times a day, but nowadays it is only raised 4 to 5 times a week.

(Retrieved from: <http://projectbritain.com/landmarks.htm>)

Session 5: **Food and Drink in London / Buying tickets for a musical**

In the warm up the previous session is revised. Session 5 starts with the analysis of some images⁸ about food and drink in England) in the form of power point slides. Besides, further information is presented in a text about this topic.

Finally, a link⁹ to buy tickets for a musical is provided to students. Each group chooses three different options and, at the end of the class, the one that better suits the timetable is the selected choice. In this particular case, the selected musical was *Jersey Boys* on 13th March 2016 at Piccadilly Theatre, London.

⁸ <http://www.projectbritain.com/food/meals.htm>

⁹ <http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/buy-tickets/>

Food and Drink in London



English Breakfast



Roast Dinner



Apple Crumble

Traditional London Food: London's food doesn't come any more traditional - or tasty - than good old pie and mash. Locally caught eels were the usual pie filling but they have been gradually replaced by minced beef. Pie, mash and eel houses have been around in London since the 18th Century. Today, eels are still served, either stewed or jellied, and with or without pie and mash. The essential accompaniment is green 'liquor' - a salty, parley-based 'gravy' - or chilli vinegar for extra pep.



F. Cooke's pie and mash restaurant on Hoxton Street, Shoreditch, London. F. Cooke's pie and mash restaurant on Hoxton Street is one of the many restaurants still serving hot jellied eels today. Tube (Old Street Tube Station (0.9 km) / Old Street Station (1.0 km))

World Foods: Thanks to the capital's multicultural population, you'll find more than 60 different national cuisines from French, Italian and Spanish to Thai and Japanese. Indian food is especially popular in Britain and many people often eat at their local 'curry house'.

Vegetarian Food: Vegetarianism is an accepted part of London's restaurant scene and most places offer at least a couple of dishes for those who do not eat meat.

Take-Away Food: London's fish and chip shops are part of a uniquely British take-away tradition. The city also has thousands of burger and chicken fast-food restaurants. It also has many Indian, Chinese and pizza take-aways. Pies are becoming a popular take-way food.

Tea and Coffee: Londoners are famous for their love of a good cup of tea, at home, at work and in cafes. Coffee has been drunk in London since the 17th century, when coffee houses were hotbeds of political discussions and debate. Now-a-days American-style bars such as Starbucks are everywhere.

Public Houses: London is packed full of pubs (public houses), where people go to drink beer or wine, and perhaps have a bar meal.



(Retrieved from: <http://projectbritain.com/food/index.>)

Buying tickets for a musical:

Musical:	Musical:	Musical:
Time:	Time:	Time:
Address:	Address:	Address:
Price:	Price:	Price

3.5. Research Tools

In order to analyse the implementation of the unit ‘A Trip to London’, I designed this students’ survey reproduced below. It was delivered to students on 19th April 2016 at the end of the exchange programme and the trip to London.

The survey consists of 8 statements which are given from 1 to 5 points, 1 being the lowest value in the scale and 5 the highest. The statements were read aloud and explained and in some cases translated into Spanish to solve possible doubts. Students answered the survey individually; speaking among themselves was totally forbidden.

1. The didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable				
1	2	3	4	5
2. I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units				

1	2	3	4	5
3. I learnt things that I didn't know previously				
1	2	3	4	5
4. The contents were useful and adapted to my level				
1	2	3	4	5
5. Group work was useful and interesting				
1	2	3	4	5
6. The materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the tasks				
1	2	3	4	5
7. The didactic unit prepared me to successfully complete the final task				
1	2	3	4	5
8. The didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations				
1	2	3	4	5

3.6. Subjects

The research has been carried out in a 4th year of CSE group comprising 18 students, 12 girls and 6 boys, all of them born in the year 2000. Most authors agree that a teenager is a young person aged twelve to nineteen. Following Lewis (2007), most experts in the field divide this age range into three different subgroups:

- Young teenagers, aged 12-14.
- Middle teenagers, aged 14-17. The group of students in this research belong to this stage.
- Late teenagers, aged 17-19.

The 18 students selected to participate in the exchange programme joined together during 5 sessions, 4 sessions in the month of October and 1 session in November to carry out this didactic unit. These lessons took place during the tutorial hour, when I worked with these 18 students, and the tutor of 4th year of CSE B was in charge of the rest of the students.

The weekly meetings with the head of the counseling department and my own observation as the tutor and teacher of group 4^oA led me to draw the following conclusions related to the main characteristics of adolescence.

- They are in a period of confusion. They are experiencing deep physical changes, which affect their personality. They make a great effort to adapt themselves to these physical changes which sometimes causes a stormy reactions and stressful circumstances.
- They look forward to independence and freedom and they try to escape all that represents authority.
- They start to develop abstract thinking, and they work with hypothetical data.
- They are in search of autonomy and new experiences.
- They attach great importance to and are influenced by their friends, sometimes at the expense of losing concentration or interest in their studies.
- They are easy targets for advertising, fashion, the media, and social network sites.

Students who participate in the trip to London and the exchange are selected according to the marks they obtained in the final term in 3rd year of CSE.

The 18 students who take part in this study are 12 girls and 8 boys are presented in Chart 3.3.1. There is a greater number of girls because they obtained higher marks in English than boys. In addition, in both groups, 4th year of CSE A and 4th year of CSE B there is a greater number of girls than boys. In 4th year of CSE A there are 15 boys and 17 girls, and in 4th year of CSE B there are 11 boys and 18 girls. The fact that there are more girls than boys does not influence the development of the didactic unit or the dynamics of group work.

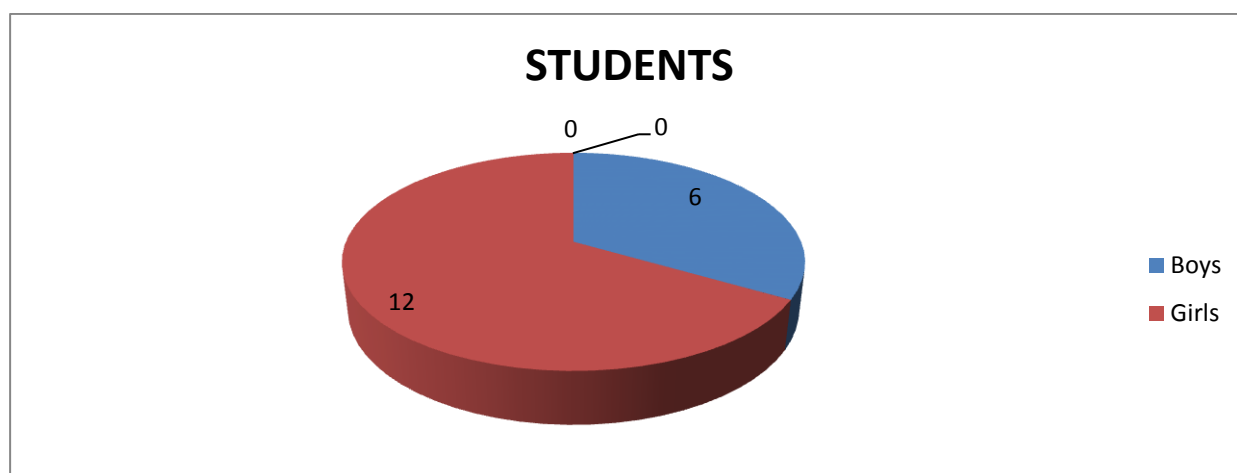


Chart 3.6.1. Number of boys and girls participating in this research.

The 18 students belong to 4th year of CSE A and 4th year of CSE B. 5 students belong to 4th year of CSE A and 13 students belong to 4th year of CSE B.

The development of this didactic unit also provided the opportunity of joining students of both groups together so they were able to interact and get to know each other. This is an important consideration since they were going to share this experience.

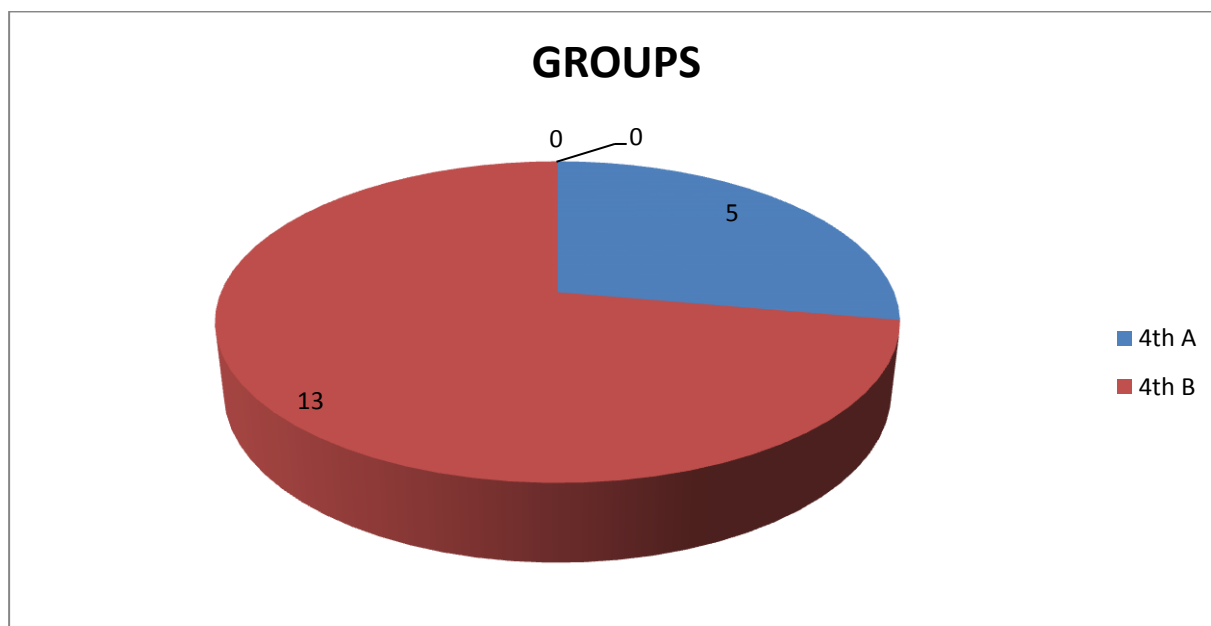


Chart 3.6.2. Number of students from 4th CSE A and 4th CSE B.

As previously mentioned, students who participate in the school trip and the exchange are selected according to the marks they obtained in the final term in 3rd year of CSE. 2 students obtained 10 (the highest grade), 3 students got a 9, 6 students obtained an 8, and finally 7 students got a 7.

It is important to point out that most students who are in the 4th year of CSE would like to take part in this trip and in the subsequent exchange; nevertheless the selection of Spanish students limited by the number of English students who want to participate in it. Only 18 English students wanted to participate in the Spanish exchange programme this year. Otherwise many more Spanish students would have taken part. The result is that students are left on a waiting list just in case any new English student wishes to enroll.

It is also worth mentioning that for 16 students it was their first time in a foreign country. Therefore, they were eager to take part in this programme and were willing to do any task related to the preparation of their trip to London and the exchange.

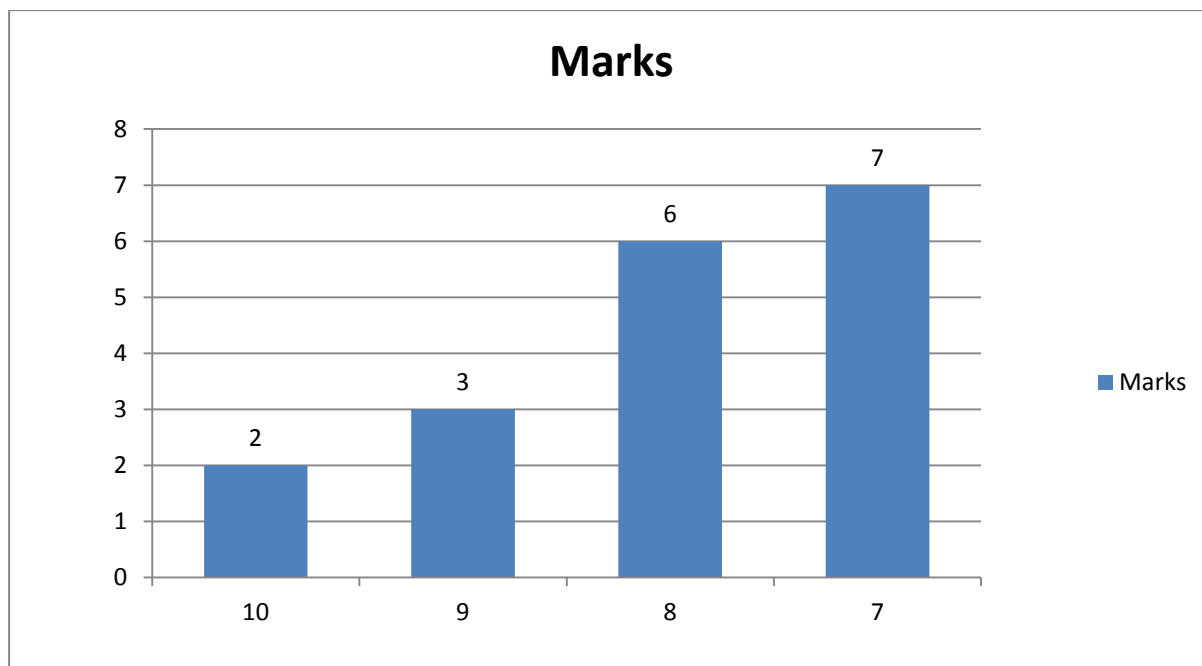


Chart 3.6.3. Students' marks in the 3rd year of CSE

4. Results

The following table shows the results of the students' survey and their opinions about the didactic unit. The table shows the 8 statements students answered and V.1, V.2, V.3, V.4 and V.5 which represents the value. The number that appears in each grid refers to the number of students who gave this score.

The mode (Mo) is considered as the value that appears most frequently in a set of given data. The median (Me) is regarded as the number that separates the higher half of a data sample from the lower half. Finally, the arithmetic mean (X) or just the mean or average is the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the amount of numbers in the collection.

	V.1	V.2	V.3	V.4	V.5	Mo	Me	X
1. The didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable	0	0	2	4	12	5	5	4.55
2. I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units	0	0	0	0	18	5	5	5

3. I learnt things that I didn't know previously	0	0	3	10	5	4	4	4.1
4. The Contents were useful and adapted to my level	0	0	3	11	4	4	4	4.05
5. Group work was useful and interesting	0	0	0	3	15	5	5	4.8
6. The materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the tasks	0	0	3	11	4	4	4	4.05
7. The didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task	0	0	0	3	15	5	5	4.8
8. The didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations	0	0	3	0	15	5	5	4.6

Figure 4.1. Results of the students' survey.

The results of the students' assessment survey show that none of the statements obtain 1 or 2 points. This is a summary of the results obtained:

- The didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable: 12 students give 5 points, 4 students give 4 points and 2 students give 3 points.
- I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units: The 18 students give 5 points to this statement.
- I learn things that I didn't know previously: 5 students give 5 points to this item. 10 students give 4 points and 3 students give 3 points.
- The contents were useful and adapted to my level: 4 students give 5 points to this item. 11 students give 4 points and 3 students give 3 points.
- Group work was useful and interesting: 15 students give 5 points and 3 students give 5 points to this item.

- The materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the tasks: 4 students give 5 points, 11 students give 4 points and 3 students give 3 points to this item.
- The didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task: 15 students give 5 points and 3 students give 4 points to this statement.
- The didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations: 15 students give 5 points and 3 students give 3 points to this item.

The mode is 5 in 'the didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable', 'I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units', 'group work was useful and interesting', 'the didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task' and 'the didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations'. The mode is 4 in 'I learnt things that I didn't know before', 'the contents were useful and adapted to my level' and 'the materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the tasks'.

The median is 5 in 'the didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable', 'I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units', 'group work was useful and interesting', 'the didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task', 'the didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations'. The median is 4 in 'I learnt things that I didn't learn previously', 'the contents were useful and adapted to my level', 'the materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the task'.

The arithmetic mean is 4.55 in 'the didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable', 5 in 'I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units', 4.1 in 'I learn things that I didn't know previously', 4.05 in 'the contents were useful and adapted to my level', 4.8 in 'group work was useful and interesting', 4.05 in 'the materials and resources were appropriate for carrying out the tasks', 4.8 in 'the didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task', 4.6 in 'the didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations'.

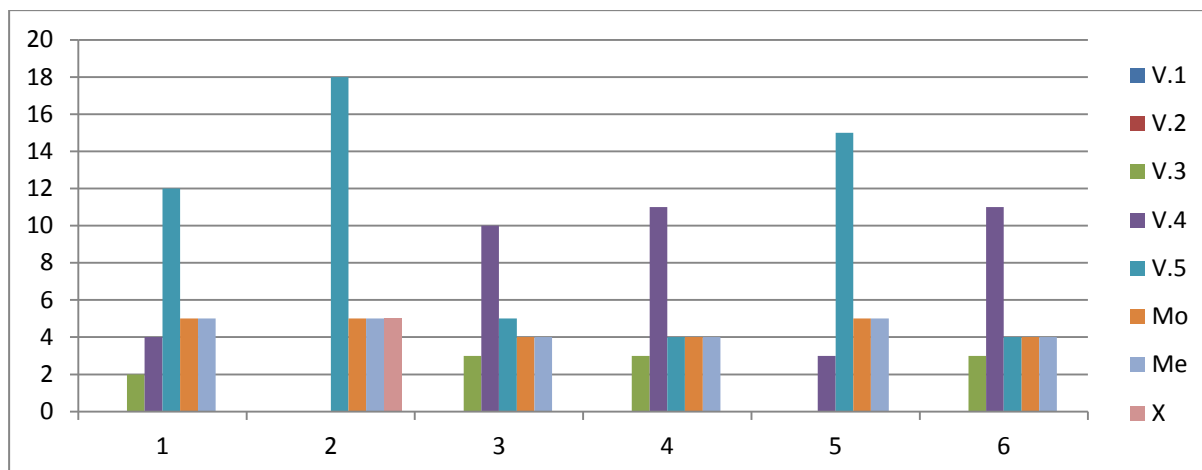


Chart 4.1. Values obtained in the students' survey

4.1. Discussion

The results obtained in the students' survey of the didactic unit show that the score that learners give goes from 3, being the lowest, to 5, which in fact is the highest. None of the students give 1 or 2 points in any of the statements. This implies that students gave a high score to all of the statements in the survey.

All 18 students give five points to statement 2: 'I paid more attention and participated in the activities more than in previous didactic units'. This shows that the participants in this task-based didactic unit recognize having paid more attention and have increased their participation in comparison to the rest of the didactic units done to date.

15 out of 18 students give 5 points to statements 1, 5, 7 and 8. Statement 1 says 'The didactic unit was motivating and enjoyable'. This means that students enjoyed doing things which may be useful in their real life. In addition it was motivating because they had to fulfil different tasks so as to achieve their final task, organizing a trip to London. Statement 5 states, 'Group work was useful and interesting'. Group work was successful because they managed to fulfil all the tasks and all members of the group did their share of the workload. There were no complaints in this respect and they all made their contributions to the group. Statement 7 is 'The didactic unit prepared me in order to successfully complete the final task'. Learners recognised the fact that with this didactic unit they had been able to organize their trip to London. Finally, statement 8 refers to the usefulness of the unit: The didactic unit has helped me to use English in real situations. Learners had to use English in order to buy a plane ticket, to make a reservation in a hostel, to buy tickets for a musical or to prepare sightseeing in London. Besides, when they had to put their findings in common they had to use English and to negotiate in English.

The results demonstrate that using a task-based didactic unit is a motivating experience for students. It is an experience which gives them the satisfaction of seeing their learning progress and achieving a final task which has practical relevance and value.

4.2. Limitation

One of the limitations of my research is that the didactic unit was implemented with a relatively small sample size of students. The sample size could have been expanded if a larger number of students had had the opportunity to participate in the school trip to London and the exchange.

Furthermore, as it is my first year at this secondary school, I cannot compare this experience with previous years when trips were planned by the English teacher alone without students' involvement. In previous years the plane tickets were bought in a travel agency. There was no visit to London by the students who only stayed in Maidstone and visited Leeds castle and Canterbury.

This research would probably have benefited from earlier planning because it would have allowed me to gather and analyse additional information, for example, if the different sessions had been recorded.

4.3. Future research

I would like to develop this didactic unit in the future with a larger number of students. I would like to allow students who do not obtain such good marks to be able to take part in this exchange programme as well, since it would help them to improve their communicative skills and their motivation for learning the language. Besides, they would create a bond with English students who participate in the exchange; they could keep in contact through social networks, and they would have the chance to continue using the language in real situations.

In addition, I would like to develop a similar didactic unit with the groups of 1st year of Bachillerato (non-compulsory post-secondary education) when their school trip takes place. Almost every single student goes on the school trip, (in 2016 they have gone to Prague), but these students have not contributed to the organization of the school trip and therefore lost an excellent opportunity to learn and practice their English with a practical objective.

I would like to record the different sessions and take note of the grammatical structures, the lexical variety of nouns and verbs that learners use and the mistakes they make. This would require an authorization letter for the students' families asking them for permission to record

the sessions. Such recordings would provide evidence of the implementation and success of the task-based didactic unit.

4.4. Implications

Based on the results of the study, here I include some recommendations which could improve the 4th year of CSE curriculum in our secondary school. Task-based didactic units could be prepared with other members of the English department. This would involve preparing materials and resources from which our students could benefit and to which all members of the English department would have access for use with the different groups and at different levels.

As the study reveals, motivation through working with the different tasks to prepare the trip to London has led to students' involvement. For students interested in expanding their knowledge about London, London landmarks, way of life, history, etc. a power point presentation, a selection of videos, links and bibliography is also available on the school blog. This type of teaching process, using a task-based didactic unit which manages to engage students helps the teacher to get away from more traditional teaching approaches in which the teacher is heavily dependent on a textbook and the students' role is largely passive.

5. Conclusion

The present Master's Thesis exemplifies the importance of including task-based didactic units in the curriculum. It displays how they work when tailored to a specific group of students. The results of the students' survey reveal that the implementation and development of this didactic unit led to the successful completion of the final task, that is, to involve students in the organisation of a trip to London.

The results of the students' questionnaire show that students benefited from working in groups, and from the use of laptop computers during the development of the didactic unit. In addition, the actual trip to London, enhanced students already high degree of motivation and willingness to meet otherness.

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