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Trabajo Fin de Grado

The importance of language skills in L2 acquisition

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Abstract

Nowadays, the importance that the five language skills have in second language acquisition is critical. This project presents the complexity of learning a skill and introduces, among other things, the different stages of each skill, some techniques and subskills necessary for succeeding in teaching each of them and how these skills should be evaluated. In addition, with the aim of implementing and thus studying what has been acquired in the theoretical part, some activities of each skill will be presented, and these tasks will be our basis to state that the integration of the skills is necessary to provide learners with a completely successful education.

Key words: second language acquisition, skills, integration, education

Resumen

Actualmente, la importancia que tienen las cinco destrezas al aprender una segunda lengua es crucial. Este proyecto presenta la complejidad que tiene aprender una destreza e introduce, entre otras cosas, las diferentes fases de cada destreza, algunas técnicas y subhabilidades necesarias para tener éxito al enseñar cada una de ellas y cómo estas destrezas deberían ser evaluadas. Además, con el propósito de ampliar y de este modo estudiar lo adquirido en la parte teórica, se introducirán algunas actividades de cada destreza, y estas actividades servirán de base para decir que la integración de las destrezas es necesaria para ofrecer a los estudiantes una educación completamente exitosa.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, destrezas, integración, educación

1. Introduction

Second language acquisition is a concept which will appear many times during this project so it would be useful to introduce briefly what it refers to. As Saville-Troike (2006: 2) puts it, second language acquisition refers to the study of children who are learning a language subsequent to their first language as young children, and the process of learning that language. Traditionally, there has been two different classifications in terms of “learning” a second language. The first one is formal education, in which people attend specific lessons in order to learn a language in a classroom environment. On the other hand, informal education which is characterised by “learning” the language in a natural environment, for example parents who send their children abroad or just bringing a native speaker to the household.

1.1 Topic presentation and justification

This final project will consist in explaining the importance that language skills have in second language acquisition. By way of introduction, it could be stated that the five skills which we are going to study in detail are: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and interaction. We will analyse each of them deeply in order to get aware of the importance they have when learning a second language. It is also important to emphasize that they are sometimes connected and the learners will be able to improve their language level if they work properly on all these skills.

Normally, we tend to believe that when practising a skill, it is important to focus on the process just when doing it. Within this project we will notice that there are some things students should do before and after the task per se, and we find it essential in order to understand how learning a skill is a more complicated process than we can imagine.

We have chosen this topic because from our point of view, the knowledge of the influence that skills have when teaching a second language, is crucial. If a professor is not aware of the different resources available related to the language skills and the factors affecting L2 learning, he/she will not be able to provide the learners a completely successful education. Nowadays it is very common to study a second language, so if teachers insist on studying and implementing the different methods and resources that

language skills have, the students will have more facilities when learning a second language and in general more opportunities to improve this L2 in a better way.

1.2 Previous knowledge

Over the past four years, we have studied some useful topics related to the one which matters us at this moment. We have also worked on research projects dealing with the main points that we are going to develop in this final project work.

To begin with, in 2019 we studied a subject named “Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English”, which was carried out by professor Gloria Luque Agulló. The most useful topic we studied was “Factors affecting L2 learning” in which it was explained that there are two different types of factors affecting L2 learning. On the one hand, internal factors: age, aptitude, motivation and attitude, personality, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization and learning strategies. On the other hand, external factors such as learning and teaching contexts, and input and interaction (teaching a second language). The reason why we have explained some of content of this subject is because later on we will connect all these ideas with the five skills affecting L2 acquisition.

In 2020 we attended a subject called “Materials and Resources for the Teaching of English” which was also carried out by professor Gloria Luque Agulló. During this course, we had to work on a research project which consisted in analysing the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing, in that case) in detail within a unit in a student book (for higher education). Once we obtained the results, we explained our own conclusions and ideas.

Apart from these two subjects, we have also read an article related to the topic on which we are working. “Factors Influencing Second Language Acquisition” (Khasinah, 2014) was very useful in order to amplify our knowledge in the subject “Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English”.

1.3 Objectives

The main objectives of this final project work are the following:

- To analyse the five language skills and their importance when learning a second language in detail.
- To analyse in detail the five language skills and their importance when teaching a second language.

Dealing with specific objectives we could list:

- To differentiate the different stages of each skill.
- To explain requisites necessary for each skill.
- To describe how skills are evaluated.
- To provide some practical exercises for a better understanding of the theoretical part.

1.4 Structure

This project will be divided into different sections. Previously, the topic has been introduced: explaining why we have selected it, providing the previous knowledge we have and introducing the main objectives the work itself has. Then, the theoretical background will appear, in which detailed information about the five learning skills will be included. In this part there will be an introduction explaining some key terms, then each skill will be divided into different sections in which all the information will be found structured. We will continue with the methodology used and a practical application (in this case, a didactic unit). To end with, the conclusion will include some subsections: an extended summary of the project, the main findings or outcomes, implications and limitations and, finally, lines for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Within this section, the five communicative skills will be explained in detail. Previously, we believe that some key terms need to be put into context for a better understanding of the topic.

As Bueno González (2013: 43-44) puts it, “communicative competence is demonstrated in the skills that one person puts into operation in a language when he/she speaks, writes or is able to understand something that he/she listens to or reads, ultimately, what is known as skills, qualified as “communicative” in order to distinguish them from other previous skills also necessary to learn a language.” “These skills could be classified as “productive” (something is “produced” when speaking or writing) and “receptive-interpretative” (a message is received by an oral or written channel, which someone tries to understand or interpretate).”

Bueno González (2013: 44) suggests that if we take into account receptive-interpretative skills, it is important to explain what “comprehensible input” is. Since the person who listens to or read receives the information, aspects such as the content, the purpose, the expectations created and the relevance for the hearer or reader are essential: the more comprehensible that input is the easier the task will be. In addition, on person listens or read taking into account the task he/she has to do with this information.

At the same time, he refers to productive skills and reminds that communication was only associated with oral register some time ago, nowadays it is known that communication is also written and we could state that this tendency is increasing day by day (via email, social networks in Internet, text messages, etc.)

“Communication emerges from a desire on the part of the speaker or the writer to convey a message with a concrete purpose. Only then he/she selects the elements required within his/her linguistic repertoire [...]. From a didactic perspective, the creation of this communicative interest ensures the importance (and even the correction) of what is said or written. In addition, for this communicative necessity to be real, an “information gap” should be established between the interlocutors or between writer and reader.

Thereby an audience sense could be created, necessary for the linguistic exchange.”
(based on Bueno González, 2013: 46)

2.2 Listening

2.2.1 Introduction

As Bueno González (1999: 336) explains, listening to a message implies, at least, three assignments: listening per se, comprehending and applying this comprehension to a concrete task. It is especially difficult when learning a second language because students are required to do many things at the same time: identifying sounds and associating pronunciation with orthography, as well as isolating discursive sounds from the ones who are not; dividing the message into lexical and grammatical words and identifying them; assimilating the syntax and interpret speaker's intention; and providing a suitable answer.

In order to achieve what has been explained before, a set of conditions have to be successfully carried out and the teacher must take them into account, such as the following: the message should be perceived properly and explicitly, the message must be intelligible syntactically and semantically, the student cannot “disconnect” and he/she wants to listen (motivation is crucial). In addition, it is essential for students to be provided with a specific objective, a reason for listening: information exchange, holding a conversation, transferring information, reacting, identifying drawings, etc. (cf. Bueno González, 1999:337).

Similarly, it is advisable for the listening activities students practise in the classroom to deal with real life situations that the hearer could experience. As long as teachers are able to reproduce these situations in classroom, they will make sense of the oral comprehension practice.

2.2.2 Oral comprehension situations

Nunan (1989: 23-26), cited by Bueno González (1999), suggests that, to begin with, we should pay attention to the presence or absence of reciprocity. In the first instance we will be dealing with an activity done in two ways, normally live, with the

speaker and the listener face to face and the possibility to react. In the second instance the transfer of information is one-way, as when we hear the radio or a cassette. Lynch (1996: 92), cited by Bueno González (1999), makes also reference to this double-fold distinction explaining the many different roles the listener has in real life. It is evident that it is more complicated in the classroom and these roles depend on the specific situations the teacher could create. All in all, it is convenient to emphasize the necessity to boost reciprocity and listener's active feeling.

The second distinction to which Nunan refers, has to do with the kind of texts: conversational (informal oral discourse) or academic (lectures and other academic texts). Both of them should be practised in classroom, although it is convenient for students to be exposed to real life conversations, with colloquial or informal oral register.

Bueno González (1999: 340) indicates that, frequently, the kind of listening activity differs according to the specific objective proposed, so we could find different ways of listening and trying to understand the information in accordance with different purposes. It could be stated that there will be as many oral comprehension models as objectives we could present, understanding that in every case some skills and a specific way of listening are required.

2.2.3 Listening stages

Bueno González (1999: 345-346) proposes that it is generally admitted to focus the methodology of skills by contemplating, at least, three stages: before, while and after the practice itself of the skill. If contemplating a pre and post stage is advisable for every skill, it is imperative in the case of receptive skills; on the one hand, the previous preparation seems to be essential, due to the fact that the text (oral or written) is given to him/her, so the student will need orientation and contextualization; on the other hand, the monitoring allows integrating the productive skills and creating a text (oral or written) with what has been listened to or read.

Having explained the importance of the different stages, it is time to have a look at them in detail when facing a listening task. The information about the different stages has been extracted from Bueno González (1999: 346-347).

2.2.3.1 Pre-listening stage

The main purpose in this stage is to orientate students, getting them familiarized with what they are going to listen to and creating expectations for them to be willing to hear the text. In this stage, teachers should point out some general ideas to illustrate some content aspects, ask some questions to receive students' opinions, provide the meaning of key words and expressions, advance the kind of text they are going to hear and, specially, the main purpose of the task, indicating what they are going to be asked to do later on. We do not have to forget that we listen to and follow the text differently depending on the purpose.

We could also consider a stage which should take place before this warm-up, which has to do with the preparation of the different materials and the activity on the part of the teacher. Different aspects should be taken into account: the aim of the task, listening to the recording (if it is going to be used), preparing activities, checking the technique equipment (cassette, video or plugs, among others), etc.

2.2.3.2 Oral comprehension per se

If the teacher wants to ask students comprehension questions, it is convenient to ask general questions after the first hearing and more detailed in the second or third hearing. In any case, teachers must ensure that the activities proposed do not require writing a lot and in such a way being able to focus on the comprehension.

If students have the listening script in front of them, they could do some tasks while listening such as underlining the main information, reading (and answering) the questions while listening, underlining grammar structures and unknown words, or simply taking notes about the main ideas.

2.2.3.3 Post-listening stage

It basically allows students the intensive practice of structures, functions or discursive features which have appeared in the text and the integration with other skills, as speaking (opinion, discussion, debate) or writing (summary).

On the one hand, Underwood (1989: 28), as cited by Bueno González (1999), explains that although Underwood adjusts herself to the scheme previously exposed, she extends the three stages including some intermediate tasks: having listened to the text once (discussing the answers in pairs or in groups, repeating the playing if necessary, and then discussing the answers between the students) or considering the aspects in which comprehension failed, once the task finished.

On the other hand, Levy (1996: 40-41), as cited by Bueno González (1999), presents a possible scheme for a listening class which could be considered very complete and interesting. He also expands on the three basic stages:

- Pre-listening Activities
- Teacher Presents Text
- Teacher Pre-Checks or Pre-Teaches Essential Vocabulary
- Teacher Sets Task 1
- First Listening of Text or part of text
- Students Check Task 1 in Pairs or Small Groups
- Repetition of First Listening and Peer-Checking Stages if necessary
- Teacher Checks Task 1 with Whole Class
- Teacher Sets Task 2
- Further Listening of Text or part of text
- Students Check Task 2 in Pairs or Small Groups
- Repetition of Listening and Peer-Checking Stages if necessary
- Teacher Checks Task 2 with Whole Class
- Teacher Sets Up Post-Listening Task/Activities

2.2.4 Listening skills and sub-skills

At this point we are going to provide the different skills and sub-skills necessary to become an efficient listener. The following skills were extracted from Munby (1978), cited by McLaren (1995: 217-218).

On the one hand, we can mention “ear training” skills, which consist in being able to: discriminate sounds in isolated word forms, sounds in connected speech and stress patterns within words, recognize variation in stress in connected speech and the use of

stress in connected speech, and, finally, understand intonation patterns (uses of tone; interpreting attitudinal meaning through variation of tone, pitch height and range, etc.)

On the other hand, we can introduce “comprehension skills”, which comprise being able to understand: explicitly stated information, general meaning, the meaning of specific details, information in the text (not explicitly stated), conceptual meaning, the communicative value of different types of utterances, relations within the sentence and the relation between parts of a text. In addition, it is also important for the listener to recognize indicators (used for introduction/developing an idea, concluding, emphasizing, etc.), identify the main point, distinguish the main idea from details, extract salient point to summarise, among many others.

From all these skills there are two which we consider highly relevant when listening: skimming, and scanning. As Bueno González (1999) explains, skimming refers to the ability to recognise the principal idea of the text. It is very useful for global learning styles and allows students to understand without having to dominate all the individual lexical elements. The ability to understand specific information is known as scanning, and it is useful for analytic learning styles. Both terms can be also applied when dealing with the reading skill, as we will see in section 2.4.3.

Harmer (1991: 183), cited by Bueno González (1991), lays emphasis on the ability to predict, which defines the efficient hearer (or reader). It is stated that “for them the comprehension process consists on observing how the content of the text is adjusted to their predictions or how them have to change depending on the development of the text. The aim of the previous stage of the reading comprehension is, precisely, potentiate prediction skills.” (Bueno González, 1999: 341, my own translation)

From the discursive point of view, Anderson and Lynch (1988: 42), cited by Bueno González (1999), distinguish three skills: recognising the topic of conversation from the beginning, predicting the topic development and recognising and indicating where you may stop understanding (where you get lost).

2.2.5 Listening evaluation

Levy (1996: 48-58), cited by Bueno González (1999: 356), describes that the main problem a teacher may have when evaluating a listening task is doing it in the way that what he/she evaluates is exactly comprehension and no other skills such as speaking or writing or other grammatical or vocabulary issues. In addition, it is especially convenient that the evaluation does not become a memory test. When dealing with listening, it is important that the evaluation tasks have to reflect what is done in class, that is, being the same model which the students are used to doing. Similarly, teachers have to ensure that when practising a difficult text, the questions should be easier, and the other way round.

Bueno González (1999: 356) distinguishes two types of evaluation instruments: criterion-referenced (action scales are established, with comments, which allow students understand what they are able to do or not) and norm-referenced (just a mark which places the student at a particular point within the class group). Harris and McCann (1994), cited by Levy (1996: 59), propose the following scale:

5 Can understand complex messages. Can understand different oral presentations. Can distinguish between explicit and implicit information.

4 Sometimes has difficulty with some complex messages. Can understand most oral presentations. In general, can distinguish explicit and implicit information.

3 Has difficulty with complex messages. Has difficulty with some oral presentations. Cannot, in general, distinguish between explicit and implicit information.

2 Cannot understand complex messages. Has difficulty with most types of oral presentation. Cannot distinguish between explicit and implicit information.

1 Cannot understand simple messages. Cannot understand any type of oral presentation.

Rost (1994: 137-138), suggests an interesting three-fold scale (competent listener, listener of modest ability, listener of limited ability), with specific comments depending the comprehension level, strategies used, interaction level and the ability to apply the comprehension acquired.

2.3 Speaking

2.3.1 Introduction

As Bueno González (2013: 49) indicates, oral expression has two main functions: the transactional (information's transfer) and the interactive one (face to face oral exchanges), sometimes jointly. At the same time, it implies two types of skills: purely motor skills (sounds, accent, rhythm and intonation) and interactives or meaning's negotiation. Nunan (1989: 32), cited by Bueno González (2013: 49) refers to the following factors as constituents of expressive oral competence:

- The ability to articulate the phonological features of language in a comprehensible way, along with the prosodic features of accent, rhythm and intonation.
- An acceptable level of fluency.
- The domain of skills related to the information exchange (speaking time, meaning's negotiation, comprehension skills and the use of formulas and expressions)

The main aim of oral interaction is communication, so any activity proposed must have a clearly communicative purpose. Students should be provided with a reason for speaking.

Harmer (1998: 87-88) suggests three main reasons why students should be given speaking tasks which make them use all and any language at their command.

Rehearsal: students having free discussions gives them a chance to try out having discussions outside the classroom.

Feedback: speaking tasks provides feedback for both teacher and students. Teachers are aware of how well their class is doing or what the language problems they are having are; students get aware of what they need to do to improve. Speaking activities can give them great confidence and satisfaction.

Engagement: speaking activities should be highly motivating. If all the class participates constantly and the teacher sets up the activity properly and provides useful feedback, students will be highly satisfied. In fact, many speaking tasks (role playing, discussion, problem solving, etc) are entertaining in themselves (my own translation).

2.3.2 Resources for oral communication in the classroom

It is time now to provide some useful resources intended to develop oral interaction. They have been extracted from Tejada Molina and Nieto García (1996: 246-247).

The first idea we find interesting is to emphasize that the practice of mechanical and meaningless drills should be avoided. The lexical items and functions to be covered must be of communicative interest. Taking this into account, meaningful drills should be preferred.

Secondly, dialogue memorization is “useful to facilitate discursive frames, besides providing syntactic development by means of the utterances employed. [...] Dialogues should be open, so that the pupils can take the initiative and introduce their own comments.” (Tejada Molina and Nieto García, 1996: 247)

Oral games in which students give directions or ask questions to elicit a response are very useful for oral communication development. Some support material could be used such as cards, pictures or texts.

The use of audio records is also an excellent opportunity for improving oral production. Recordings can be done as homework and then commented on in the classroom.

2.3.3 Speaking evaluation

Speaking correction is such a complicated task, which differs in some aspects with the way teachers correct mistakes made during a theoretical exercise. Harmer (1998: 94) states that a distinction should be made between speaking activities which consist in

repeating sentences with the aim of getting the pronunciation correctly, in which the teacher should correct every time there is a mistake, and activities in which the students are having a discussion and they are constantly speaking, in which the teacher should not correct mistakes so much because the dialogue could be destroyed.

Harmer (1998: 94) explains that what teachers often do is to listen and watch students while speaking. Teachers take notes about mistakes and good aspects of each one and once the activity is done, students are asked about how they thought it went before they receive teachers' feedback. It is also important not to focus on one particular student and give the feedback in a more general way.

Teachers might also participate and get involved in different activities but never having a principal role. It is more appropriate to listen and watch, but the participation of teachers would be useful in some cases, for example when someone does not know what to say, or if a debate is coming to an end, it is very useful if the teacher suggests some new ideas or adds some more questions.

2.4 Reading

2.4.1 Introduction

The first question that we may be asking ourselves is: why teach reading? We find many different reasons why getting students to read English texts; as a general assumption we could state that any exposure to English is a good thing for language students. More specifically, we could explain that reading texts also improve our vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraphs and texts. (Harmer, 1998: 68)

Reading is one of the two so-called receptive-interpretative skills, the other being listening. In both a considerable amount of -hopefully comprehensible- input (Krashen, 1985) is given for the text to be understood and interpreted. Starting from this commonplace characterization, reading can no longer be considered passive; although the material is provided, [...] readers have to do their best to make sense of it, to extract meaning from it, to read between the lines, to interpret the writer's intention and to go beyond the text, using that information to do something else, to name but a few of the many things one is supposed to do with texts. (Bueno González, 1992:65)

As Bueno González (1992: 67) suggests, a distinction should be made between bottom-up and top-down approaches to reading. On the one hand, we have *bottom-up* tasks (also named *data-driven*), in which the text itself becomes the starting input and this implies paying specific attention to content and form. On the other hand, in the *top-down* approach (*knowledge based* or *conceptually driven*) students rely on their background knowledge and then, they read the text for confirmation, refutation or exemplification: so, they are better prepared to face the reading activity and the text itself is not the starting point, as we have explained above, but somewhat a follow-up, contributing to the significant number of input students have.

Bueno González (2013: 53) demands that since reading is (or at least should be) a common activity in our life, it is important to motivate students to read in foreign language making them see the objectives achieved by doing so. It is important to begin with specific reading purposes in real life (reading newspapers, letters, emails, following instructions, just for pleasure, etc.), bring them to classroom's activities and then move on to what is considered as academic purposes (improving our vocabulary or grammatical knowledge, inferring meaning through context, answering questions, using texts for linguistic analysis, etc.).

2.4.2 Requisites for reading

Students should be able to do a number of things with a reading text. These requisites have been extracted from Bueno González (1992: 66-67).

Nunan (1989:35), drawing on Brosnan, Brown and Hood (1984) refers to *word attack skills*: readers are able to identify the correspondences between pronunciation and spelling, and get to know words through their morphology (prefixes, stems, derivational and inflectional suffixes).

Secondly, readers need to know how words and phrases are assembled to form sentences using different syntactic patterns. The knowledge of the syntactic and semantic roles of the elements in a sentence is a necessary step in order to understand their combinations and to understand the meaning of the text. The reader needs to be able to

identify logical connectors, discourse reference mechanisms (such as repetition, pro-forms and their referents), organization and division in paragraphs.

The third reading requisite has to do with vocabulary, with regard to quantity and variety. It is logical that the more vocabulary one knows the easier and more fluent the reading becomes, and the more we read the more lexical items we acquire.

When facing a text, it is rational that we do not start from zero. We are provided with the so-called *background knowledge* or *knowledge of the world*, that is our *schemas* or *schemata*. This is what Bernhardt (1991: 94-97) calls the *nonvisible in reading* and associates the term to others such as conceptually driven, implicit, internal, reader-based, and knowledge-based: “All of them imply the existence of information critical the reading process that does not appear explicitly as part of a written text” (pp. 94-95). She makes reference to three types of knowledge: *local-level knowledge* (idiosyncratic), *domain-specific knowledge* (about some particular subject areas) and *culture-specific* (it relates to the reader’s own culture). This means that apart from the information we already have about the topic, we bring our personal interpretation of it taking into account our way of thinking, culture and educational and family environment.

Finally, readers need to be aware of the rhetorical function of texts and the writer’s intention, which implies being able to recognize the writing genre (narration, description, exposition, argumentation, essay, etc.), the writer’s purpose in different places of the text (defining, explaining, summarizing, etc.), and the writer’s intention (being serious, ironical, humoristic, persuasive, etc.).

2.4.3 Reading subskills

In this section we will present some of the reading strategies students should practice when reading a text. Bueno Gonzalez (1992: 72-75) suggests the following:

- They need to be able to *scan* the text in order to search for particular bits of information. This subskill means that they do not have to read the whole text (every word and line). It is useful in texts containing an important number of data and facts followed by comprehension questions and also in detailed linguistic and/or literary analysis.

- Students should be able to *skim* a text with the aim of getting a general idea of what it is about. If they try to pay attention to every detail, they might not be able to get the general idea because they are concentrating too much on specific details. This subskill becomes essential when working with set readings concerning long chapters, articles or monographs.

Readers would scan or skim depending on the kind of text they are reading and what they want to extract from it. They might scan a computer manual to find the specific piece of information they need to use their machine, and they may skim a journal article to get a general idea of what it is about.

On the one hand, it is completely necessary that teachers have to convince learners of the advantages of skimming and scanning. On the other hand, teachers have to make them see that the way they read is exceedingly important.

- Students need to locate topic and comment, which allows them to recognize the formal and semantic structure of sentences and paragraphs and, accordingly, the different levels of importance and ranking of ideas in the text. Furthermore, students are able to read faster.

By encouraging the location of the topic (the main idea) and the supporting comments, students can understand how theme and rheme are connected, how given information is supported by new details. Support ideas or comments usually provide cause and reason justification, examples or additional information and, in this way, they constitute the development of the topic idea.

- Students should identify key words and phrases, which helps memory appreciably, principally in long texts, and it is commonly associated with marking those terms graphically (underlining, circling, using different colour marking, etc.).

- Students need to disregard unimportant information, that is, they should know how to skip over secondary information in order to focus on central. This subskill is highly related to skimming and to the ability to identify topics and comments.

- Students should be able to deduce meaning from context. Guessing the meaning of unknown terms through the context can be questioned, but it is true that both the situational and the grammatical context can help the reader, if not to become acquainted with new words, at least to deduce probable meanings in general terms or in terms of hyperonyms.

- Students have to *read between the lines (inferring)*. It is obvious that sometimes the reader has to read between lines in order to understand what the writer means, a subskill which is particularly applied in advanced level texts, as for example at the university. In the case of these texts, which have to be read for academic or other purposes, readers have to go beyond the superficial message of the text and interpret not only what is literally said but also what the author implies, that is, to make inferences.

- Students need to identify the different writing genres and their defining features, beginning with the distinction between writing genres or styles (narration, description, exposition, argumentation); the university students have to recognize types of texts (linguistic, literary, journalistic, legalistic, political, etc.); and the most important aspect, they need to associate common language features (typical structures, organization and particular vocabulary) with them.

- Students should understand the relevance of format, which means that they should be aware of the relationship between formal aspects such as the type of sentences most frequently used, length of sentences, use of asyndetic coordination, division in paragraphs, etc., and the meaning of the text and the message the writer has to transmit.

- Students need to locate discourse reference mechanisms: recognizing logical connectors and other linking elements, identifying the purpose of repetition and detecting pro-forms and their referents grant the reader to understand the different nuances proposed by the author, such as apposition, addition, enumeration, ellipsis, contrast, concession, consequence, cause and effect, result and inference.

- Students have to distinguish literal and figurative / metaphorical meaning. By doing so, they will be able to distinguish straightforward uses of the language from aesthetic or literary ones.

At university, the latter uses can be identified and studied not only in literary texts [...] but also in examples of everyday language present in newspapers and magazines. Literal meaning is to be found in purely informative texts and also in those dealing with science and technology. Frequent practice in both uses is recommended. (cf. Bueno González, 1992:75)

- Students should be able to spot irony, puns and double meaning. This subskill is associated with reading between lines, and has to be related to subtleties underlying some texts, which are sometimes difficult to outline. This is why this is only possible with advanced students who are fluent readers and imaginative. Once the reader locates the irony, the text will become more enjoyable.

2.4.4 Reading stages

During a reading lesson we can distinguish three different stages: *pre-reading*, *while-reading* and *after-reading*. Bueno González (1992: 76) supports that there are many methodological principles implied in this division: some kind of warm-up is necessary before students read the text, which helps them to think about the topic, be in the picture and be encouraged; something must be done while reading (active reading); going beyond the reading text doing follow-up tasks helps to consolidate and expand on what has been read before. Then, Bueno González (1992: 76-79) presents the different stages in detail as follows.

2.4.4.1 Pre-reading

In general, the warm-up is contemplated to link reading with previous classroom tasks, to adjust the readers towards the topic and make them consider it, to create expectations, to activate their previous knowledge, to engage them and to make them want to read. At this stage, additional information which can be provided may involve the aim of the task, the reason for the reading text, some orientation about the type of activities they are supposed to do with the reading tasks, and the presentation of key vocabulary.

Some effective proposal at the pre-reading stage can be the use of guiding questions or statements, introducing the text, brainstorming the principal ideas, previous

discussion or the use of before-questions (the true/false format is especially useful) to be answered before facing the text and checked later to confirm or reject assumptions.

2.4.4.2 While-reading

As we have explained in the introduction of this section, reading is an active skill which means that we are doing many things at the time of reading. Taking this into account, teachers have to boost students do at least some of the following things while reading a text:

- *Getting the gist*: in order to develop comprehension, it is fundamental to identify the main idea(s), which should be kept in mind up to the end of the text.

- *Taking down details*: by taking brief notes. Sometimes, only the person who notes down understands their meaning.

- *Word recognition*: useful strategies to recognize words which have similarity with mother tongue items (cognates), the morphological information the word provides (prefixes, stems, derivational and inflectional suffixes), collocation, synonymy, antonymy, the context and the reader's knowledge of the topic.

- *Becoming aware of syntactic features*: the reader should pay attention to features such as the particular arrangements of words and phrases into sentences, the use of coordination and subordination, the syntactic and semantic roles the different elements play in the sentence, structures of pre- and post-modification, marked word order, etc.

- *Recognising reference devices*: if readers want to extract the logical meaning of the text, they need to identify lexical devices (repetition, collocation, sense relations), connective device (linkers), pro-forms and their referents, paragraph organization and topic-comment structure.

- *Retaining the meaning while reading*: paying special attention to long texts, the reader should do a memory effort, which can be helped by taking down details (note-taking).

- *Reading aids*: using practical devices such as underlining, highlighting, double marking, different colours, marginal annotation, circling, drawing up a scheme, diagram or chart, will be useful to differentiate important from secondary information, to isolate topics and supporting comments, and to point out the main ideas of the text. By doing so, the reader will keep ideas in mind easily while reading and when coming backwards the useful information will be located quickly.

2.4.4.3 After-reading stage

We are going to present some of the tasks which can be practised after reading. Bueno González (1992: 78-79) propose the following:

- *Checking comprehension*: it can be performed using a variety of formats (*true / false / text does not say* statements, *yes/no* questions, *wh-* questions, multiple choice formats, incomplete sentences, sentences to be reformulated taking into account the text, etc.). If we pay attention to high educational levels (university), students are expected not to give short answers or answers copied literally from the text, but rather answers which imply connecting different ideas from the text, reaching conclusions, interpreting the writer's intention, disregarding unimportant information, providing some personal opinions, which usually implies long and reasoned statements. In essence, through their answers students have to demonstrate that they have clearly understood the text and are able to respond and react to it.

- *Reading aloud*: when dealing with poems or extracts from novels and plays, where features related to pronunciation and combination of sounds (particularly rhythm and rhyme in poetry) and intonation are practised.

- *Performing sketches / situations / dialogues / plays*: this is an extension of the text, which implies that oral skills are integrated together with gesture elements acting demands.

- *Literary reading*: concerning poems, drama and fiction so as to come up with practical examples of literary movements, periods and authors; in this regard, extensive reading becomes an essential instrument for literature subjects.

- *Reading culturally-loaded texts*: the main aim is to expand knowledge of English-speaking people and cultures.

2.4.5 Principles behind the teaching of reading

Harmer (1998: 70-71) suggests some principles that should be always present when teaching reading. They are the following:

“Reading is not a passive skill”: as we have explained at the beginning of this section, reading is an active occupation.

“Students need to be engaged with what they are reading”:

Logically, students who are not interested in what they are doing will not benefit from it. When they are engaged with the topic or the task, in this case a reading text, they get much more from it.

“Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language”:

It is obvious that the vocabulary, the language or the structure used in a text is for consistency important but we should go beyond and be aware of the message and the meaning of it. We should allow students to express their thoughts about the text and give a chance to respond to that message.

“Prediction is a major factor in reading”

When we read texts in our language, we usually have an idea of the content before we actually read. As example, book covers give us some ‘hints’ about what the book is about, as well as headlines and photographs in articles. Teachers should give students

‘hints’ so they can predict what the content of the text could be. It will make the task more engaging for everyone.

“Match the task to the topic”:

Once the teacher has selected the text that students are going to read, he/she needs to choose a good reading task connected with it. It is very important because a very interesting text could not be useful if teachers propose boring and inappropriate questions.

“Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full”:

It does not make sense for students just to read a text and then move on to something else. Good teachers exploit texts to the full, using the topic for discussion and further tasks.

2.4.6 Reading evaluation

Kaufman (2017) supports that when students deal with reading, it is relevant that teachers evaluate them in order to determine the problems they might have, which part of the reading process is problematic for them, where they are on the continuum of reading disabilities, and what can be done to help them achieve reading success.

We have found it interesting to share a table which could help every teacher when evaluating the reading skill. Levy (1996: 58) proposes the following:

X is capable of....	“Inability/ difficulty level”	“Coping level”	“With ease level”
- Identifying the main point or important information in a text			
- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details			
- Skimming			

- Scanning to locate specifically required information			
- Transferring information from text to a diagrammatic display or a box			
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items from context			
- etc., etc.			

(Levy, 1996: 58)

As we can see, in the table are indicated some of the most important aspects that a teacher should take into account when evaluating a reading task, but some other important aspects could be added if it is necessary or the teacher considers it is.

Levy (1996: 58) proposes some criteria for making overall judgements about the reading skill, which is the following (the higher mark being 5 and the lowest 1):

- 5 Can understand all necessary text types with no difficulty
- 4 Has minor difficulty with different text types
- 3 Has considerable difficulty with different text types
- 2 Cannot understand different text types
- 1 Cannot understand any text type

2.5 Writing

2.5.1 Introduction

“Each language has its own way to handle a topic, to put sentences together and to form paragraphs to construct a text” (Bueno González, 1995: 292). It is obvious that teachers want students to write entire texts, for which organization needs to be taught and practised. When they ask learners to write a text in English, teachers have to make students familiar with how English sentences are constructed, how paragraphs contain topic and comment sentences, the different referential and linking devices that make a

text coherent and cohesive, how we move back and forth from generalizations to specific details, how to punctuate in a useful way and how to be accurate in the selection of vocabulary.

2.5.2 Writing stages

Within this section we are going to develop the different stages we should take into account when writing a text.

2.5.2.1 Pre-writing

Bueno González (1995: 293) expresses that many people do not feel confident when starting out to write a text (even in our own language), mainly because we do not have anything to say or, if it is not the case, we do not have the linguistic elements to express it. This suffering is more noticeable if we (as students) are worried about our writing being corrected paying special attention to its form.

The pre-writing stage could initiate with the choice and introduction of the topic by means of a statement sentence and a demand for the students to note down everything they consider important to the subject-matter, which aids them to create expectations. It is better if students use the foreign language, nevertheless, it can be also done in the mother tongue. After that, teachers can ask students to write an outline of the topic.

The main idea is to make the students think, talk, take notes and work on the topic before writing about it. In short, it will help them to overcome the fear we referred to at the beginning of this part.

2.5.2.2 Drafting

Bueno González (1995: 294) suggests that when we try to write a text for the first time, it should not be considered the finished product. This is considered a draft, not yet polished. In fact, this is common when we write in real life, even good writers do it because an appropriate writing does not flow finished and perfect. Taking this into account, teachers should allow students to do the same, in other words, to try many times

before handing in the writing assignment. Drafting has to do with revision and rewriting, since after each revision a new draft could appear.

2.5.2.3 Editing

At this point the writer, after the different drafts, should be able to compile everything, to refine his/her previous attempts through the inclusion of the suggestions received and to hand a final written product to reader. The text is then ready to be read, so the writer has to ask her/himself whether the reader can follow the ideas clearly. The text is ready for publication in any of the forms which can be considered appropriate (exchanging papers with peers, sticking it to classroom walls, in the school newspaper, etc.). If the assignment is meant just for the teacher, it will be submitted for final marking and grading.

2.5.3 Resources and techniques for the development of writing in foreign language

Within this section, Bueno González (1995: 295-302) provides a structure for the methodology of writing skills. To start with, he explains some kinds of possible resources.

2.5.3.1 Resources

It is evident that in real life the skills do not appear in isolation. Actually, it is usual for two or more of them to appear together. In the case of writing this is what happens. In this section we will refer to some resources which have to do with the integration with the other skills, on the one hand, and the functionality of visual aids, on the other.

Readings

It is logical that people who read a lot are usually good writers, and that reading texts serve as sources of information and models for writing. We can distinguish three levels: recognition, parallel writing and text-related tasks.

At the recognition level, students can get familiar with punctuation morphological features, sentence arrangement, cohesive links, recognition of supporting comments and, in general, everything to do with the organization of paragraphs and the general layout of the text.

Parallel writing implies the writing of a text similar to the one given changing some information items and maintaining the original layout. Despite the fact that creativity is limited in this sense, it is evident that students benefit from the written model and they feel motivated because it allows them to write in English with fluency.

Text-related tasks can be classified into controlled (closely connected with the text) and free (the text is used as starting point, which could be useful at the pre-writing stage). Among controlled tasks we can find note-taking, summarizing, defining items in the text and information-transfer activities.

Freer text-related tasks comprise the following: expanding form “block language” formats, widening the information contained in the text by making use of additional readings, completing an incomplete text, writing personal opinion, speculating or reacting towards the text, writing letters after scanning small ads, replying to letters and postcards or project work. (Bueno González, 1995: 296)

Oral input and output

The use of the oral skills, listening and speaking, is highly recommended when the writing skill is the centre of attention, not only because of the integration of skills previously mentioned but because the oral register can fulfil a two-fold function in relation to writing. Firstly, listening to a text or speaking about it can be very useful at the pre-writing stage; secondly, listening and speaking can take place as follow-up tasks after writing, which helps to retain facts and opinions more precisely and to widen the information in the written text. (Bueno González, 1995: 296)

Taking the previous quote into account, he expresses that it is useful to listen to a text dealing with a particular subject-matter, or considering it orally before asking students to write about it. This helps them not to begin without anything to say, i.e., it prevents them from getting stuck, as we have explained above when dealing with the pre-writing stage. Simultaneously, it is easier for students to understand the writing process

as a device of interaction between writer and reader if they have previously interacted orally as speakers and/or listeners.

Listening to further information after writing about something or discussing about that topic helps students to see the aim of their previous writing and reinforces the subject-matter in a different way.

To end with, the combination of oral and written registers allows both students and teachers to become aware of two facts: firstly, communication is both oral and written; and secondly, there are clear differences between both registers. To be alert of those differences will help writers improve their writing.

Visuals

As Bueno González (1995: 296) puts it, “there is nothing more meaningful than images; in this respect, writing profits very much from any visual support”. It can comprise many different forms: pictures, photographs, tables, charts, diagrams, a program on TV, etc.

Writing itself is a visual skill. As we can notice, many writing activities are supported with pictures or illustrations, which help to put the task into context and to provide the setting.

2.5.3.2 Techniques

Once we have explained some of the possible resources, techniques for using them should be provided. This is what we are trying to do in this section, in which there will not be given all but at least some of the most relevant techniques.

The use of individual, pair and group techniques

As Bueno González (1995: 297) supports, writing has usually been considered an individual activity. It is true that frequently, the image of the writer is that of a solitary

person, who often writes alone. But this makes reference to personal writing. Writing as a learning activity (both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language), must also be practised in pairs or in groups. It is important to emphasize the fact that peer collaboration activities can take place at different moments of the writing process: before, while and after writing.

When dealing with before-writing activities, it is evident that the collaboration of different peers, by expressing their ideas or comments can help us with the problem of not having anything to say. Pre-writing techniques, to which we will make reference soon, could help us with the process of starting to write a text. Suggestions for organization can also be provided by our classmates.

Students can also write together, both in pairs and in groups. Some possible examples are the following: in pairs, student A provides ideas for content and form and student B writes them on the paper, or student A writes one paragraph and student B another; in groups, many students contribute ideas and one has to write them, or each member of the group writes a paragraph.

After writing, students can give their opinion about the content of what their mates have written and can also suggest improvements for their writings as far as correctness is concerned, once the original text is read by peers or the original writer reads it aloud for them. This is called *peer editing*, *peer-group editing* and *peer review*.

Pair and group work give the opportunity to weak students to benefit from their mates' help and offers the bright ones the possibility of helping the other and of taking responsibility. Peer work needs to be carefully planned and carried out for it to be successful. We should be aware of the possibility that some students could not like to work in pairs or in groups and that most of them just do not know how. The teacher has to play an important role here.

Pre-writing techniques

We have already referred to the importance of the pre-writing stage. Now, we are going to provide some possible pre-writing techniques. "They help to activate the

metacognitive strategy of *planning* and *preparation*". (Bueno González, 1995: 298). The majority part of these techniques has been extracted from Oluwadiya (1992), cited by Bueno González (1995: 298). They are the following:

- *Brainstorming*: "this can be oral or written, individual or in groups. The purpose is to make students think about the topic, either by means of questions or by asking them to provide any idea that comes to their mind in connection with the subject matter."

- *Clustering*: highly related to brainstorming but in this case the appearing ideas "take the form of a brain pattern with different clusters, responses radiating from nuclei."

- *Looping*: non-stop writing. "After writing for a while, the writer stops, reflects and summarizes what has been written in one sentence; the writer is able to focus on content and to forget about form, at least temporarily."

- *Cubing*: "the topic is addressed from six points of view: description, comparison, association, analysis, application and argument."

- *Classical invention*: "based on the Aristotelian notion of topics and intently linked with cubing: topics / objects / words are defined and compared to others and relationships of cause and effect are expressed."

- *Debating/ discussing*: "presenting orally the two arguments of a topic in pairs or in groups".

- "*Mutual Interviewing* among students about the subject-matter."

- *Experiencing the topic*: by speaking about personal experiences in relation to it or visiting places before writing about them.

- *Fantasizing / Meditating / Mind Transportation*: "free thinking about the topic."

- *Lecturing*: "oral input is given and the use of note-taking is emphasized."

- *Reading*: see previous explanations on resources.

Organization techniques

“These techniques have to do with the metacognitive strategies of “organization” and “planning and preparation” and with the cognitive strategies of *transferring inference* (from information taken from written texts).” (Bueno González, 1995: 299). The techniques we are going to present in this section are borrowed from Raimés (1983: chapter 8), cited by Bueno González (1995: 299).

Firstly, we are going to present awareness-building techniques, which are techniques present in a previously written text that is read and analysed in order to obtain details of text organisation. They are the following:

- Writing an outline
- Identifying topic and comments from a given paragraph or sentence
- Providing the starting or concluding sentence
- Answering questions about the organization of a text
- Distinguishing between generalizations and specific details
- Sorting out the differences between important and secondary information
- Differentiating facts from opinions, objective from subjective statements
- Identifying pro-forms and their referents
- Locating linkers and explaining their meaning
- Studying pairs of model passages

Then, we should move to the application of some of these techniques to students’ own texts:

- Writing outlines before writing the extended texts
- Writing topics and comments paragraphs
- Comparing what they have written with a model and extracting conclusions
- Ordering scrambled sentences and paragraphs and providing linking elements
- Analysing their own texts from the organization point of view

Nevertheless, we have to take into account that when we write and speak, we move from meaning to organization, so communication of ideas comes first. This means that pre-writing techniques should come before organization ones.

'While writing' techniques

Bueno González (1995: 299-300) explains that when writing, students apply what has been acquired from pre-writing and organization techniques. These techniques activate affective and communicative (problem-solving) strategies, as for example:

- *Cooperation*: writing in pairs or in groups.

- *Asking for help or for clarification*: either by demanding mates or the teacher or by recovering information from reference books (grammars, dictionaries, books dealing with the topic, etc.).

- *Positive transfer* from the mother tongue: with ideas about the topic and those organization techniques that are also accurate in English.

- *Avoidance*: disregarding unknown structures and words and replacing them by those with which one can feel confident or paraphrasing difficult expressions; sometimes students write poor compositions because they take many risks and they experiment with the language in a very free way, generally above their level; it is evident that some risk-taking is necessary, but not in excess, you cannot invent how things are written in a foreign language.

Editing techniques

They mainly deal with revision. As we have explained before, editing is the last step in the process of writing a text. In this step, Bueno González (1995: 300) describes that student have to polish the text and for that reason teachers should provide them useful checklists to be aware of what aspects they have to look for and revise at this stage. The checklist previously mentioned could include, among others, the following aspects:

- The message is rendered unambiguously
- Clear division in paragraphs
- Topic and comment can be distinguished
- Proper use of connectives
- Agreement of subject and verb
- Use of verb forms according to time sequence
- Use and omission of articles
- Word formation and parts of speech
- Syntactic structures
- Word order
- Spelling and punctuation
- Are sentences complete?
- Any mistake(s) you keep on making

Responding techniques

As Bueno González (1995: 300-301) puts it, “the writing process is not finished until the text reaches the reader”. By stating that, the author means that a reader must exist and that this reader has to react in some way to what has been written; otherwise, the written text is virtually useless. The reader can be the writer itself, the teacher, a friend, the members of the group, the rest of the class or any other reader outside the classroom.

Responding implies not only correcting and marking, but also something which is apparently more important: reacting, as a “reader looking for meaning” (Dixon, 1986:5). The response should include suggestions about how to improve or what to do next.

We are going to have a look at some responding techniques. “Guided revision” is the first one we are going to focus on, Bueno González (1995: 301) explains that once the writer (at that point reader) reads and improves the different drafts, he or she is responding to what has been written. For this response to be effective the student needs some help or guide on the part of the teacher. This technique has also been called “self-editing” (Raimes 1983b:149) and “self-monitoring” (Charles 1990). We could state that interaction takes place in this technique with advantages both for the students and the teacher. Raimes (1983b: 143-150), cited by Bueno González (1995), adds other

responding techniques, such as “written comments” on the part of the teacher, “talking about the paper” or “conferencing”.

Another responding technique is “peer review” or “peer feedback”, in which students read their classmates’ drafts and provide suggestions for improvement. This technique is considered highly useful due to the following advantages: students’ interaction, the sense of audience, the sense that they are writing for more than just the teacher, it improves reading and communicative writing power, students feel responsible for the process of writing and it integrates written and oral skills. This technique can also take the form of “proof-reading exercises” and “class discussion”.

2.5.4 Writing evaluation

As Harmer (1998: 84) explains, the first thing to take into account when evaluating written work is to adopt a positive attitude towards the students’ written work. There are some possible recommendations in order to achieve a positive attitude:

- Do not overpass the use of red pen, which is usually associated with failure and mistake.
- Emphasize the positive things of the students’ work and comment on them in the correction.

In order to evaluate the negative aspects of students’ written tasks, several procedures can be used: (based on classroom notes in the degree subject “Planning and evaluation in English” by professor Ana María Ortega Cebreros, unpublished material).

- Full teacher correction: it is the most frequent and intuitive technique. However, some problems have been assigned to this practice: (1) this way of correcting seem to encourage the teacher to include a big amount of writing that sometimes even exceeds the actual amount of text written by the student, this makes the practice (2) very time-consuming for the teacher and (3) a little bit discouraging for the student. The effectiveness of this procedure has been questioned in the sense that we do not know how much attention the students pay to their mistakes.

- Peer-correction: we have previously explained this procedure in 2.5.3.2 (responding techniques), emphasizing the positive point it may have when evaluating written works. In addition, we find it interesting to remark some possible negative aspects: (1) teachers cannot expect to receive a clean version of the text; (2) the method assumes that students are going to be able to correct each other properly when that may not be the case; (3) the technique can actually make students feel lost and confused; (4) students may feel uncomfortable when being corrected by their mates (they may feel inferior in the comparison); (5) it is difficult for the teacher to do an individual assessment of students' difficulties.

- Errors simply indicated but not corrected: this technique attempts to encourage the student to feel responsible for the correction of his/her own errors. Within this category we find several degrees of students' involvement:

- Indicating the line where there is a mistake, using a symbol or signal without indicating the exact place.
- Underlining but not identifying the nature of the mistake.
- Underlining and a symbol indicating the nature of the mistake.

Taking into account the use of a code of symbols, there are several points to consider: (1) students must be made familiar with the terminology and the meaning of every symbol used during the academic year; (2) it is recommendable for teachers of the same school to use the same symbol system in order to make the task easier for the students; (3) symbols should be as self-explanatory as possible; (4) categories should be exclusive (avoid overlapping categories).

Harmer (1998: 84) explains that correction is not useful if students do not revise their corrected writing. Teachers have to ensure that learners understand the problem and then rewrite the work correctly.

2.6 Interaction

As Bueno González (2013: 61) expresses, for some time, along with the four traditional skills, people have been talking about a “fifth skill”, called “interaction”,

usually related to oral interaction (just because of the fact that in real life and in the classroom, comprehension and oral expression are integrated and occur in order to achieve communication). It is evident that, as communication is not only oral but also written, the concept of interaction is also applied to written skills, with real formats in which reading precedes writing; in fact, a text can be read because someone wrote it before (interaction writer-reader). It is true that oral interaction is commonly more direct because usually (although not always) the issuer and the receiver are face to face and the exchange is produced at the moment, while time can elapse between the moment someone writes something and when the other person reads. Anyway, these parameters are changing, and social networks have made it possible to interact by writing in real time, which supports the fact that interaction affects both registers, oral and written.

The concept of interaction is not recent, during decades professors and researchers have emphasized on the necessity to integrate the different skills, as is the case of comprehension and oral expression (both necessary for communication) or reading and writing (for written interaction). From a methodological point of view, the necessity to integrate skills in the classroom for the sake of interaction has been pointed out.

3. Practical application

3.1 Introduction

In this part of the project, we are going to introduce some activities which could be practised in the classroom related to the skills previously presented. Firstly, we are going to put into context the educational centre in which these activities are supposed to be carried out and then we will explain them in detail.

3.2 Contextualization

Within this section, we are going to present some important aspects of the high school where the activities are supposed to be carried out. The educational centre is called “IES Las Fuentezuelas” and it is placed in Jaén (Jaén). This high school is fitted with secondary education as well as “*bachillerato*” and different training modules having to do with mechanics and electronics.

Nowadays, the educational centre has multiple facilities such as: classrooms (all equipped with projector and digital blackboard), a music classroom, a special needs classroom, a laboratory, a library, three sport fields, a gym, etc.

The different activities are supposed to be carried out in a classroom with projector and digital blackboard, apart from the traditional one. The number of students per class is high, between 23-28, encouraging cooperative work, whose results could be highly beneficial for the students.

Having enumerated the different facilities the centre has, it is important to emphasize that the use of new technologies (smart boards and projector) facilitates the teaching and learning processes, making it less monotonous and more innovative and dynamic. The library could be interesting in the sense that students are able to search for information or do group work.

3.3 Activities

SESSION 1

During the first session, we will focus on listening. At the beginning of the class, we will ask students if they have any doubt about the previous lesson and we will continue explaining some theoretical contents (grammar). It will take 10 or 15 minutes approximately. Then, paying special attention to listening aspects, we will begin with a pre-listening task, as warm-up. Afterwards, we will practise listening by doing a multiple-choice exercise. To finish with, we will do a speaking task related to what has been done before, in order to integrate the listening skill with oral production. The methodology used during this lesson will be the one of presentation, production and practice (PPP), for the first and second exercises. Cooperative learning will be applied in the third task.

<i>Activity 1</i>	
Procedure	The task consists in thinking of five different questions students could ask someone about his/her family. Once students prepare these questions, they share them with the rest of their classmates (brainstorming). For example, I would ask the following questions:

	“Where does your eldest brother live? How old is your sister? Which is your father’s job?”
Objectives	- To get familiarized with vocabulary related to family - To create expectations - To engage students
Contents	- The structure of questions - Vocabulary related to the family context
Methodology	PPP
Timing	10’

<i>Activity 2</i>	
Procedure	Students have to listen to a recording and then answer some multiple-choice questions. The recording will be played twice (three times if it is extremely necessary). (See appendix 1)
Objectives	- To understand a conversation between two people talking about their family - To increase vocabulary - To improve pronunciation - To improve oral and written expression
Contents	- Listening related to family context
Methodology	PPP
Timing	15’

<i>Activity 3</i>	
Procedure	In pairs, students have to ask each other five questions about their family. Then, they have to introduce their partner to another student using the information they have learnt about that person.
Objectives	- To integrate listening and speaking skills - To consolidate what has been practised during the lesson
Contents	- The structure of questions - Vocabulary related to the family context
Methodology	Cooperative Learning
Time	10-15’

SESSION 2

During the second lesson, students will be focused on the reading skill. The same as in the first lesson, the teacher will explain some theoretical aspects and then he/she will begin with the reading warm-up activity. Once students do it, they will go on doing an activity in which they will have to answer some questions related to a text (while-reading task). To end with, students will prepare a brief sketch related to the topic they have been dealing with during the class (post-reading activity).

<i>Activity 1</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will tell the students the title of the work they are going to read ("The mysterious spy"). From this, they have to guess and predict the main themes and ideas of the text.
Objectives	- To create expectations - To activate students' previous knowledge - To engage students - To make students want to read
Contents	- Future tenses for predictions (will/going to)
Methodology	PPP
Timing	10-15'

<i>Activity 2</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will hand the text in to the students. After reading it, they will have to choose the correct answer (multiple-choice) and answer some questions according to the text. (See appendix 2)
Objectives	- To be able to get the gist (identify main ideas) of a text - To take down details in order to be aware of specific information - To recognise reference devices
Contents	- Past tenses - Descriptions of stories
Methodology	PPP
Timing	10-15'

<i>Activity 3</i>	
Procedure	Students will have to prepare a brief sketch related to the main theme of the text they have read before. Then, they will have to perform it in front of the class.
Objectives	- To integrate reading and oral skills - To exploit the text to the full
Contents	- Linking devices connecting oral speech
Methodology	Cooperative Learning
Timing	15-20'

SESSION 3

During this third lesson, students will pay attention to the speaking skill. In order to start with, they will do a warm-up activity which consists in learning some new vocabulary related to the topic of the speaking activity. Once they do this warm-up activity, students will have to speak in pairs by using the vocabulary previously learned and they will end up with a writing activity in order to integrate oral and written production.

<i>Activity 1</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will project some flashcards (related to travelling) on the smart board and students will be given some papers with words or sentences which describe the pictures on the board. Then, the teacher will ask the students to match the flashcards with the definitions they have. Finally, the teacher will check the answers and he/she will pronounce those words or expressions properly and students will have to repeat it. (See appendix 3)
Objectives	- To learn some words and expressions related to travelling - To pronounce different words and phrasal verbs related to travelling properly
Contents	- "Travelling" vocabulary
Methodology	PPP
Timing	10'

<i>Activity 2</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will give the students a piece of paper, including some questions having to do with any journey students made in the past. In pairs, they will have to ask these questions to each other and then they will answer them by using some of the words and expressions previously showed on the blackboard.
Objectives	- To talk about situations which happened in the past - To use past tenses - To use vocabulary related to travelling
Contents	- Past tenses - “Travelling” vocabulary
Methodology	PPP
Timing	15’

<i>Activity 3</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will ask student the following question: “Do you consider yourself a frequent traveller?”. Then, students will have to write a short paragraph according to their own experience.
Objectives	- To integrate speaking and writing skills
Contents	- Past tenses - “Travelling” vocabulary - Expressing one’s own experiences about the past
Methodology	PPP
Timing	15’

SESSION 4

The main aim of this final session will be practising students’ writing skills. To begin with, students will be asked to note down and share with their mates everything they consider important to the subject-matter of the writing they are going to do later on. Then, students will be given some questions and they will have to answer them (guided

writing). To finish with, students will have to write an essay (free writing), giving their opinion and personal views of the topic.

<i>Activity 1</i>	
Procedure	The teacher will provide students with the title (“healthy lifestyle”) of the writing they will have to do later on. Students will have to note down and share with their partners everything they consider important to the subject-matter. Finally, they will have to write an outline of the topic.
Objectives	- To overcome the fear students may feel before writing a text - To make students think, take notes and work on the topic before writing on it.
Contents	- Vocabulary related to food - Vocabulary related to sports
Methodology	PPP
Timing	10-15’

<i>Activity 2</i>	
Procedure	Students will be given some questions to help them to write a description of their food habits and their feelings about it. The number of words will approximately be 100 words.
Objectives	- To be able to express yourself properly in a written task - To be able to focus on the information you are asked to provide
Contents	- Vocabulary related to food - Vocabulary and expressions related to feelings - Connectors - Present simple and present continuous
Methodology	PPP
Timing	15-20’

<i>Activity 3</i>	
Procedure	Students will be asked to write an essay on one of the following topics, presenting both sides of the argument, and then giving their own views with reasons. The topics are: - “Healthy lifestyle” - “The importance of sport in our lives”
Objectives	- To be able to write in a free way about one topic
Contents	- Vocabulary related to sports and food
Methodology	PPP
Timing	20-25’

SESSION 5

In this lesson the main aim for students is to be able to integrate skills. The first activity will integrate listening and speaking, students will have to play a game called “The telephone”. Then, the second activity will consist in integrating the reading and writing skills, by reading a text and then writing a composition related to the main topic of the text previously read. To finish with, students will do an activity which integrates the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

<i>Activity 1</i>	
Procedure	The task is called “The telephone”. Students will have to sit in a circle and pass a message by whispering in their classmate’s ear; when the final student is reached, they stand up and repeat the message they heard. Then, they will have to compare it to the start and see how well the message got relayed from person to person. In this particular case, students will have to pass a message related to a future plan.
Objectives	- To integrate the listening and speaking skills.
Contents	- Future tenses - Expressions for indicating future plans
Methodology	- Role-play
Timing	15-20’

<i>Activity 2</i>	
Procedure	Students will be given a text called “Meteorology”. After reading it, they will have to answer some questions related to the text and then they will have to write a short composition (150-200 words) about student’s favourite weather. (See appendix 4)
Objectives	- To integrate the reading and writing skills. - To be able to use connectors in order to make cohesive and coherent composition.
Contents	- Present simple - Vocabulary related to city life - Linking devices (connectors)
Methodology	PPP
Timing	25’

<i>Activity 3</i>	
Procedure	Students will have to do a sequence of activities. Firstly, they will have to listen to a recording about a Tennis Club. Then, they will have to discuss with all their classmates and the teacher the main information they have understood. Later on, the teacher will provide the students a poster that they will have to read in order to check if the information previously listened is correct. Then, students will make up a dialogue between the club secretary and a person who wants to join the club. To finish with, students must complete a membership application form for the Tennis Club.
Objectives	- To integrate the four skills.
Contents	- Past, present and future tenses - Connectors - Vocabulary related to sports
Methodology	PPP
Timing	35’

4. Conclusions

4.1 Extended summary of the project

Within this project we have explained the importance of the five different skills when learning a second language. The skills are divided into productive (speaking and writing) and receptive-interpretative (listening and reading).

Dealing with the listening skill, we have described what listening itself means, and the different oral comprehension situations. Then, we have illustrated the different stages when teaching the listening skills (pre-listening, oral comprehension per se and post-listening). Lastly, we have analysed the skills and subskills necessary to become an efficient listener and how the listening skills is evaluated.

Paying attention to the speaking skill, we have explained the two main functions speaking has (the transactional and the interactive one, sometimes jointly). At the same time, it implies two types of skills: purely motor skills (sounds, accent, rhythm and intonation) and interactive skills or meaning's negotiation. Finally, we have described the evaluation of the speaking skill.

Focusing on the reading skill, we have described the difference between bottom-up and top-down approaches to reading. Then, we have explained some requisites for reading and some of the reading strategies students should practise when reading a text. Subsequently, we have pointed out the different stages we can distinguish in a reading lesson (pre-reading, while reading and post-reading), the principles behind reading and how the reading skill is evaluated.

The writing skill has been introduced by explaining how teachers should encourage students when writing a text. Then, the three different stages that students should take into account when writing (pre-writing, editing and drafting), have been described. Afterwards, we have analysed the resources and techniques for the development of writing in foreign language. To end with, we have explained how writing tasks should be evaluated.

Dealing with the fifth skill, we have described what interaction consists in and its necessity when learning a second language.

The last point of this project has to do with a practical application of the five skills. We have provided some different activities which could be useful in the classroom when learning a second language.

4.2 Limitations

We have found all the theoretical contents having to do with the five skills very interesting. However, focusing on the practical application, we believe that having a real experience with students in a high school would be totally beneficial because you can apply all the theory previously learned to real life situations which, at the end, is the main purpose.

4.3 Lines for future research

We consider that the fifth skill, interaction, is the one which has been less investigated. We have a lot of information and studies about listening, speaking, reading and writing but if we pay more attention to the integration of skills, the acquisition of a second language will become an easier task.

4.4 My contribution and personal learning with this project

We believe that this project is useful for teachers and learners in many respects. It could help by reminding teachers that when teaching a skill, they should be aware of the different stages each of them has, which implies practising the skills step by step in order to succeed. We have provided multiple techniques and subskills which could be useful when teaching. Finally, evaluating a skill is not such an easy task and, in this project, we have described some suggestions to do it as well as possible. Paying attention to students, they will be aware of how they could improve their skills and some techniques they could use in order to do it.

With this project we have learnt the complexity of each skill. We have considered the integration of skills the most relevant aspect we have learnt, because although we have been doing it since we started learning a second language (English in that case), we did not know how to apply it and the different mechanisms used.

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6. Appendixes

Appendix 1

Recording transcript:

A: Hi! My name is Carl nice to meet you

B: Nice to meet you too, my name is Francisco

A: What?

B: Francisco, but all my friends and family in Peru call me Pancho

A: Okey Pancho, so tell me about your family

B: Well, I have seven brothers and six sisters

A: Wow! That is a big family, so are you the older Pancho?

B: No, I am the second oldest in my family

A: So, what do your parents do?

B my father is a taxi driver on Lima, Peru, it is hard job but he works hard to support the family

A: How about your mother?

B: She has run a small family store with some of my older brothers and sisters

A: What kind of store?

B: We mainly sell food like bread, eggs, rice, sugar and cookies, things that people buy everyday

Multiple-choice questions

1) Where is Pancho from?

- a) Peru
- b) Paraguay
- c) Portugal

2) How many brothers and sisters does Pancho have?

- a) 12

b) 11

c) 13

3) What is his father's job?

a) police officer

b) taxi driver

c) dentist

4) What does his mother do?

a) She owns a beauty salon

b) She runs a small family store

c) She works at a bread shop

5) Who works at the family business?

a) Neighbours

b) Friends

c) Family

(Extracted from <https://www.esl-lab.com/easy/family-relationships/>)

THE MYSTERIOUS SPY

What famous fictional spy is intelligent, well-dressed and highly attractive to women? James Bond, of course. The character, now known mainly through the many James Bond films, was created by English novelist Ian Fleming when he began writing the Bond books in the 1950s. Some people say that Bond was partly based on the real spy known as Sidney Reilly.

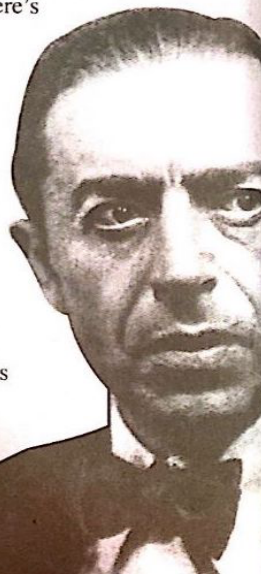
Reilly's real name was Sigmund Rosenblum. It is believed that he was born in the Ukraine in 1874 and studied chemistry at university there. In the early 1890s, he moved first to Paris and then to London. Depending on which version of Reilly's life you believe, he might have briefly spent some time in Brazil as well.

What is definite is that Reilly was a British spy, who used various disguises and names. He had many love affairs and marriages, was charming and persuasive, and often acted recklessly. It is also known that, following the Communist Revolution in 1918, he spied mainly in Russia, gathering intelligence on the new regime and working to overthrow it.

Although Reilly was given a military award for his work in Russia, some spy historians think it was actually given to secretly honour his work as a British spy in Germany during the First World War. Reilly claimed that, in this capacity, he had impersonated a German officer in order to obtain battle plans. This allowed him to work in a German arms factory and learn what weapons the country was producing.

Historians have not yet uncovered the full truth about Reilly's activities. But there's little dispute about his death.

After a brief absence, Reilly returned to Russia in 1925 to work with a new anti-Communist group. In reality, this group was fake and was organised by the Russian military intelligence service. When he entered the country, Reilly was arrested and imprisoned. He was executed in November 1925.



Multiple-choice questions

1. Reilly worked in a German factory
 - a) during World War II
 - b) to learn what arms the country was making
 - c) so he could learn about the country's battle plans
 - d) before he began spying for Britain

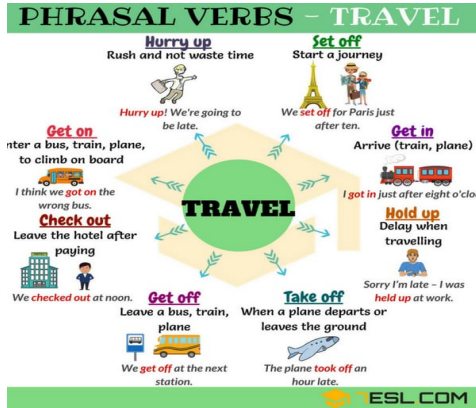
2. Reilly returned to Russia in 1925
 - a) to join its military intelligence service
 - b) to work for the Communist regime
 - c) because he was fooled by a fake group
 - d) to be arrested

Questions

1. What is the connection between James Bond and Sidney Reilly?
2. What is said about Reilly's personality?
3. What did Reilly do as a spy in Russia?
4. How do some spy historians think Britain honoured Reilly for his work during the First World War?

(Grant, E. & Payne, K. (2019). *View Points for Bachillerato 1*. Limassol: Burlington)

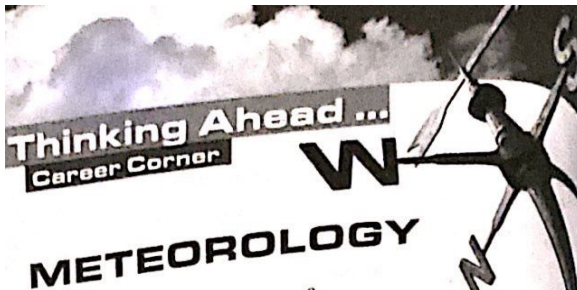
Appendix 3



Set off	= Start a journey	
E.g.	We set off for Paris just after ten.	
Get in	= Arrive (train, plane)	
E.g.	I got in just after eight o'clock.	
Hold up	= Delay when travelling	
E.g.	Sorry I'm late - I was held up at work.	
Get off	= Leave a bus, train, plane	
E.g.	We get off at the next station.	
Check out	= Leave the hotel after paying	
E.g.	We checked out at noon.	
Get away	= Have a holiday or vacation	
E.g.	We're hoping to get away for a few days at Easter.	

(Extracted from <https://7esl.com/phrasal-verbs-for-travel/>)

Appendix 4



Thinking Ahead ...
Career Corner

METEOROLOGY

Why is meteorology important?

Will there be snow for skiing in the mountains this weekend? Is it going to be warm enough to go to the beach? Should I take an umbrella or a jacket when I go out today? For answers to these questions, we check the weather forecast on the radio or television, in the newspaper, or online.

While knowing what the weather's going to be is a convenience for most of us, it's absolutely vital for transport industries, the military, road authorities, and providers of electricity, gas, water and the phone service. Having accurate and reliable weather information is crucial for these essential services because it allows them to prepare for potential weather-related problems.

What do meteorologists do?

Meteorologists are responsible for collecting, analysing and updating weather data. The majority of meteorologists work in forecasting. They make predictions about the weather based on complex analyses of information from satellite photos and monitoring devices throughout the world. These meteorologists provide both general weather reports to news organisations and consumers, and highly detailed speciality reports for specific industries, such as air travel.

However, forecasting is not the only career option for meteorologists. Some specialise in analysing hurricanes and other specific weather phenomena. Others monitor climate change, or research weather in particular areas, such as the Antarctic.

Where do meteorologists work?

Most meteorologists in Britain work for the Meteorological Office (the Met), but others are employed by electricity and other utility companies, environmental firms and the agriculture industry.

How can you prepare for a career as a meteorologist?

Meteorology requires strong maths skills. For this reason, if you want to study meteorology, you should plan to take an A-level in maths. You will also need a university degree in maths, meteorology or another science. In addition, further specialised study of meteorology is required.

Next week: Careers in law enforcement

Exercise 1. Read the text and choose the correct answer

1. Monitoring devices

- a) are used to analyse satellite photos
- b) help meteorologists make forecasts
- c) are used to taking satellite photos
- d) provide general weather reports

2. Utility companies

- a) employ most of Britain's meteorologists
- b) work for the Met
- c) employ fewer meteorologists than the Met
- d) don't employ meteorologists

Exercise 2. Write true or false for each sentence. Find information in the text to support your answer.

1. Very few meteorologists are forecasters

2. A university degree is not the only requirement for becoming a meteorologist

(Grant, E. & Payne, K. (2019). *View Points for Bachillerato 1*. Limassol: Burlington)

Exercise 3. Write a short composition about your favourite weather and justify why (150-200 words).