Universitat Jaume I

A pedagogical proposal to enhance the use of Linking Words in order to improve students' discourse competence

Laura Molina Ribes

Máster en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas. English Language Speciality.

Tutor: Nuria Edo Marzá

November, 2014

ABSTRACT

Linking words are extremely important linguistic items which help to make the connections between sentences and utterances clear and to integrate and establish relations within a whole text. As such, they are essential devices to create complete texts as well as to ease the conversation flow. Thus, they are directly linked with the speakers' discourse competence and they are key elements to be taught and learnt by our students if we want them to become competent users of a language.

This paper is aimed at presenting a pedagogical proposal to teach linking words and to improve and develop their knowledge regarding their effective use and functioning on the part of students. In order to do that, first of all, a preliminary study was carried out by means of observing three different aspects: the students' textbook, a set of written samples, and a questionnaire. The aim was to analyse the students' pre-instruction use of these linking devices considering the established parameters, and to identify their needs and perceptions. After that, from the results obtained, a didactic unit theoretically grounded on "modified inductive learning" and the development of the "communicative-discursive competence" was designed and implemented in order to obtain further results and to draw conclusions about the possible effectiveness of the didactic unit proposed and introduced.

Finally, the results of the students' post-unit (post-instruction) writings were firstly analysed by following the same parameters previously applied to the pre-unit (pre-instruction) written samples, and then, compared to the ones obtained in the preliminary study in order to test the efficiency of the didactic unit designed and its implementation. In sum, results suggest that the teaching-learning proposal on linking words was useful and helpful for the students, since their knowledge of linking words seemed to improve and they were able to integrate different categories, and a wider variety of linking words correctly used in their discourse.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of discourse and pragmatics in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has grown in importance over the last decades. On the one hand, discourse analysis examines and analyses language beyond the level of the sentence mainly focusing on textual aspects such as cohesive links and discourse coherence. On the other hand, pragmatics focuses on language use in a particular context (Alcón-Soler, 2013). The main objective of the present paper is to design a methodological proposal to promote students' use of linking words (hereafter LWs) in order to develop coherent and cohesive discourse, and effective communication.

In general, LWs are elements of the linguistic and discourse structure which are directly involved in the connection and relation between separated utterances (Schourup, 1999) and which contribute to the completeness and integrity of the whole discourse (Schiffrin, 2001 cited in Rahimi, 2011). Regarding writing, LWs are essential devices or linguistic items to create a compelling text. As regards oral language, they ease communication in the second language (L2). In fact, according to Rahimi (2011), discourse markers are a key component for the L2 learners to be communicatively competent and successful speakers of the language.

Despite the fact that they are supposed to be essential regarding text organisation, as Müller (2004; cited in Hellermann & Vergun, 2007: 158) pointed out, "they are an understudied phenomenon in studies of language learning". This fact, as Hellermann & Vergun (2007) noted, could be due to the fact that, traditionally, the main target in language learning has been "grammar" referring to accurate and appropriate use of syntax, phonology, morphology, and semantics. To better illustrate this, according to Svartvik (1980; cited in Müller 2004), a language learner may be more likely to be corrected if he/she makes an ungrammatical mistake rather than if he/she omits or uses a discourse marker incorrectly:

"if a foreign language learner says *five sheeps* or *he goed*, he can be corrected by practically every native speaker. If, on the other hand, he omits a *well*, the likely reaction will be that he is dogmatic, impolite, boring, awkward to talk to etc, but a native speaker cannot identify an 'error'" (Svartvik, 1980: 171).

Thus, the present paper focuses on the observation, analysis and development of language learners' knowledge of LWs in order to demonstrate how their use may improve the students' discourse competence. This study is carried out by means of a pedagogical proposal specially designed after some weeks of class observation during the teaching internship carried out at I.E.S Matilde Salvador and developed in subsequent sections. The hypothesis to depart from is: "The way in which linking words are taught in the students' textbook and by the teacher does not favour their proper learning and acquisition. Thus, a better approach can be designed and implemented."

During my observation period, I could notice that students did not seem to learn or to have learnt LWs properly. Hence, I examined LWs in the textbook used in class (*Contrast for Bachillerato 1*) and I found out that it devoted a page for linkers in units 4 (addition), 5 (contrast), 6 (purpose) and 7 (cause and result). That means that LWs were only present in four out of twelve units of the textbook, and always joined to a writing task. Besides, as it is shown in Appendix 1, the same structure to teach them was always followed: students were given the norms of usage of some target LWs and, afterwards they had to complete three activities: one to find connectors of a certain category in a text they had previously read, one based on multiple choice, and the other one to complete the sentences with their own ideas; and then, they had to do a writing task. So there was a need of change in the way LWs were taught. As a consequence, I decided to design a pedagogical proposal in order to accomplish the main objective of the study: to improve the students' knowledge of LWs in order to contribute to the development of their discourse competence.

At this point, it is important to note down that during the design and implementation of the unit, LWs used in formal written language were the main focus. However, LWs used in informal oral contexts were also minimally considered as there was a lesson out of four focused on them. Despite this fact, due to time pressure, I could only obtain data about the students' pre and post-instruction use of LWs to test the possible efficiency of the unit regarding written discourse. Nevertheless, in section 5 (Limitations of the Study and Further Research) this issue is further commented.

This study starts by presenting the theoretical framework underlying it. First, the nature of LWs is considered in order to provide a proper definition of the term and give an account of their main functions and characteristics. After that, there is a literature review of studies carried out on LWs in EFL contexts which reflect the importance and the benefits of LWs instruction. Then, there is a section to explain the teaching-learning approaches which have helped me to frame and plan the proposed didactic unit: modified inductive teaching-learning methodology and the teaching-learning of the communicative-discursive competence. Eventually, the focal LWs in this study are considered. Afterwards, the method followed is presented by explaining the characteristics of the participants, the materials employed, and the procedure followed to develop this study. In the next section, the results (including the didactic unit developed itself) are shown, discussed and analysed. After that, there is a section devoted to comment on the limitations of the study and further research, in which any possible changes or improvements are listed and commented. Finally, there is a conclusion which includes a brief summary of the whole process and some final reflections..

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.   The nature of linking words

First of all, before defining the term LWs, the issue of the terminology employed to name these linguistic items should also be noted. Along the different studies developed, what in this study is called LWs, has also been tagged as *discourse markers* (Fraser, 1989, 1990, 1999), *pragmatic connectives* (Van Dijk 1979; Stubbs, 1983), *discourse connectives* (Blakemore, 1987, 1992), *discourse particle s* (Schourup, 1985), *sentence connectives* (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) among others. In this particular case, although the preferred term by scholars is discourse markers, the term LWs is used since, as this study is addressed to secondary school learners, they may be more familiar with the nature of the term LWs rather than with any other found in the literature.

Once terminology is clear, it is important to provide a proper definition of the term. LWs are linguistic items used to create relationships among sentences, clauses and paragraphs within a text. According to Trujillo-Sáez (2003), these linguistic items do not function at the sentence level, but are useful to frame and interpret a set of utterances as a whole, considering their morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties. In other words, they should not be considered as elements of the syntactic structure of a clause, since they work beyond the sentence level. For this reason, the use of LWs is usually marked by a comma in writing and by a pause in speaking. Besides, they can develop two different functions: they provide information about the connections existent between different utterances, or about the speakers' attitude, so that they facilitate understanding and decoding of the message. As Hellermann & Vergun (2007) state, they do not only establish connections between topics or grammatical units in discourse (as with words such as *but*, *and*, *because*, or *so*), but they also perform

4

pragmatic purposes when used to make comments about the information that the speaker has received or is going to express (with the use of *like*, *well*, or *by the way*). That means that they actually depend on and are related to the context in order to be properly interpreted.

In order to better understand the nature of LWs, it is important to examine the most crucial studies developed on this topic. Three different approaches on LWs which have been and still are significant in research carried out nowadays are briefly explained in the following sections: Halliday & Hasan's (1976), Schiffrin's (1987) and Fraser's (1990, 1998) one.

2.1.1. Halliday and Hasan's semantic perspective on cohesion

Halliday & Hasan's (1976) first objective was to find out the difference between a set of arbitrary sentences put together, and a text. For this reason, they defined a text as "not just a string of sentences" (1976: 291) claiming that coherence and cohesion had to be considered when writing a well-organised text so that the relationships within the text are present. In their book, *Cohesion in English* (1976), they identified five major cohesive devices in discourse: *reference*, *substitution*, *ellipsis*, *lexical cohesion* and *conjunction* (i.e. discourse markers). Even though they did not use the term markers, what they named as *conjunction* refers to the use of LWs in order to connect sentences, clauses and paragraphs to each other, and create a whole cohesive text. They identified four main types of discourse markers (mainly referring to written texts) depending on their function and meaning: *additive*, *adversative*, *causal* and *temporal* (1976: 238).

    i. Additive conjunctions show simple addition including negative and alternative (*and, also, nor, or*) and more complex additive relations (*furthermore, moreover, besides*).

    ii. Adversative conjunctions indicate "contrary to expectation" and are signalled by *but, yet, though*, or *however*.

    iii. Causal conjunctions express result, reason and purpose through items such as *so, thus,*

for this reason/purpose, or *as a result*.

iv. Temporal conjunctions are links which signal sequence of time through words like *first, then,* or *finally*.

2.1.2. Schiffrin's discourse perspective

Schiffrin's (1987; cited in Schiffrin 2001) approach to markers and discourse had two main interests related to her particular view of LWs both as units of language used in discourse, and also as elements with a function in interaction. So, she tried to find out which markers were used and why they were used, as well as their meaning in social interaction. Accordingly, she defined discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 2001: 57) as her approach principally focused on spoken discourse.

2.1.3. Fraser's pragmatic approach

Contrary to Halliday & Hasan's interest on the text as a whole, Fraser (1990, 1998) is concerned with the actual meaning of sentences, "specifically how one type of pragmatic marker in a sentence may relate the message conveyed by that sentence to the message of a prior sentence" (Schiffrin, 2001: 58). In opposition to Schiffrin, Fraser's starting point hinges on the difference between discourse markers with content meaning and the ones with pragmatic meaning (Schiffrin, 2001). From these two big groups, Fraser differentiated among six sub-classes of discourse markers (DMs) (1999: 946-950):

i. *Contrastive* DMs show contrast between two utterances: *but, however, although*, etc.

ii. *Elaborative* DMs signal a quasi-parallel connection between sentences: *furthermore, also, besides*, etc.

iii. *Inferential* DMs express that one sentence is taken as the conclusion of the prior one: *so, thus, accordingly*, etc.

iv. *Reason* DMs show that one utterance provides reason for the other one: *because, since, for this reason*, etc.

v. *Conclusive* DMs are used to draw a conclusion: *in conclusion, to sum up,* etc.

vi. *Exemplifiers* DMs are used to show examples of what has been previously stated: *for example, for instance*, etc.

Once the three most significant studies on LWs have been reviewed, it is important to note down that in this study I have not followed only one approach when analysing LWs in students' discourse as well as when developing my unit. I have worked on seven different categories based on the ones the authors above mentioned suggest:

i.   LWs to show contrast (but, although, whereas, while, despite, in spite of, however, ...)

ii. LWs to show addition (and, in addition, also, furthermore, moreover, besides, ...)

iii. LWs to show reason (because, as, since, ...)

iv. LWs to show consequence/result (because of, so, therefore, thus, as a consequence, ...)

v. LWs to structure a text (first of all, secondly, next, in conclusion, to sum up, ...)

vi. LWs to exemplify (for example, for instance, ...)

vii. LWs to emphasise (in fact, indeed, actually, ..)

2.1.4. Characteristics of linking words

According to Schourup (1999), there are generally three necessary features of LWs: (i) *connectivity*, (ii) *optionality* and (iii) *non-truth-conditionality.* Apart from these ones, different authors argue different attributes such as *orality* (see Brinton, 1996; Watts, 1989), m*ulti-categoriality* (Schiffrin, 1986), *initiality* (Schourup, 1999) or m*ultifunctionality* (Schiffrin, 2001). In this case, I am only going to comment on the three attributes mentioned above which are regarded as necessary by most scholars.

i.   *Connectivity.* The most outstanding characteristic of LWs is their usage to connect utterances or units of discourse. As many authors (Fraser, 1996; Hansen, 1997; Schiffrin, 1987; cited in Schourup, 1999) suggest, LWs are expressions, linguistic

items or elements which have a connective function and which indicate the sequential relations within the discourse.

ii. *Optionality.* According to Schourup (1999), this feature is claimed because of two main reasons. The first one is that they are seen as grammatically optional, since if they are removed from a sentence, the grammaticality of the sentence is not affected. The second reason is that they do not increase the possibilities for semantic relations between the elements connected. In other words, if we omit a LW, the connection between the utterances is still present even though it is not made explicit. That is, the hearer may understand it practically in the same way. Nevertheless, this claim does not mean that LWs are unnecessary, because they are essential to guide the hearer towards a particular interpretation of the speakers' words.

iii. *Non-truth-conditionality.* This characteristic is claimed because LWs are thought not to have and effect on the truth-conditions of utterances, that is, they do not contribute to the truthfulness of the proposition contrary to what occurs when content words such as manner adverbials are used (Schourup, 1999).

2.2.   *Native and Non-native speakers' use of linking words*

Mainly, there are three categories in which research on LWs can be classified: (i) studies which examine the frequency of LWs used in the non-native students' discourse; (ii) studies which investigate how LWs are used in the L2; and (iii) studies which compare the use of LWs between native and non-native speakers (Rahimi, 2011). In general, all these studies conclude that non-native speakers (NNSs) of the language do use LWs, but generally in a different way from that that native speakers (NSs) do, always depending on the speakers'

competence. Regarding writing, NNSs tend to use more LWs than native ones, and there is commonly an overuse of additive and contrast LWs (Alghamdi, 2014). However, with regard to oral conversation, studies reveal that NNSs use less LWs such as *well*, *like* or *you know* than NSs do. In this sense, Weinert (1998; cited in Hellermann & Vergun, 2007) suggested that this may be due to three main reasons: the fact that language learning materials may still be more addressed to the learning of the written skill, the differences between natural language acquisition and second language learning, and the most likely need of explicit teaching of cohesive items for oral discourse.

2.3. *The importance of linking words instruction*

As has been explained, during the last decades, LWs have received different names and have been analysed from different perspectives and approaches. However, as Müller (2005: 1) claims "There is a general agreement that discourse markers contribute to the pragmatic meaning of utterances and thus play an important role in the pragmatic competence of the speaker". In fact, even though I could not find many studies which examined the effects of LWs instruction, I found specially two which are worth reading and commenting. The first study, carried out by Assadi-Aidinlou & Shahrokhi Mehr (2012), concluded that if students know more about discourse markers, their texts are proved to be more efficient and cohesive, since results showed that there were statistically significant differences between learners who received instruction and those who did not. In turn, the second study developed by Sadeghi & Heidaryan (2012), confirmed that English learners who receive instruction on metadiscourse, highly improve their listening ability. Therefore, it can be claimed that instruction is helpful and necessary, since two different studies which focused on two different skills, writing and listening respectively, have proved it to be successful.

2.4. Teaching-learning approaches

In the subsequent sections, the teaching-learning approaches which have been the framework of the pedagogical proposal suggested are theoretically considered and described.

2.4.1. Modified inductive learning

Language learning is normally associated with deductive methodologies when it is the teacher the one who gives an explicit statement of the rule which students later on apply on the given examples. On the contrary, inductive learning refers mostly to children's first language acquisition by inducing the rules through language exposure. In this sense, this unit proposes inductive learning through guided discovery techniques as students have to infer the norms or rules of use from the examples they are given (Gollin, 1998). The key aspect is that an element of discovery is introduced, despite being definitely guided by the teacher. For this reason, it is called "modified inductive", since the norm is made explicit by the students or by the teacher before putting it into practice. In this way, students are actively engaged mentally in the learning process, so autonomous and meaningful learning are promoted. For instance, it is more likely that students remember and understand what they "discover" rather than that that the teacher just says.

2.4.2. Communicative-discursive competence

Communicative competence applies to language for meaningful communication including the knowledge of language purposes and functions, knowing how to use the language depending on the context (i.e. formal or informal), the ability to produce and understand different text-types and applying different communication strategies to make communication fluent (Richards, 2006). In this sense, as Banciu & Jireghie (2012) state,

interest is directed to the students' needs and to the teaching of real language as it is used in context. Beyond this, an important aspect that this study takes into consideration is the *communicative-discursive competence* (Ruiz-Madrid, unpublished manuscript), which takes discourse as the main basis through which the rest of the competences may be completed. In other words, it aims at acquiring the communicative competence but taking discourse as the main basis to additionally develop the rest of the competences. That is, not only communicative competence but the rest of the competences (*linguistic competence, strategic competence, pragmatic competence, digital competence, generic competence* and *intercultural competence*) are going to be tackled in this study.

At the end of this study it was expected that students developed (i) their linguistic competence by incorporating new LWs and learning their norms of usage; (ii) their strategic competence, because they may use different strategies to infer the rules from the examples they are given, for example applying what they know about language structure to infer the rules of usage; (iii) the pragmatic competence since LWs depend on the context and have a pragmatic function; (iv) the digital competence as students are required to integrate ICTs as a teaching-learning tool; (v) the generic competence by working on text genre and its characteristics, e.g. opinion essay; (vi) the intercultural competence because the use of LWs relates to the target language culture in the sense that correct usage can avoid misunderstandings while non-usage can lead to wrong interpretations; and (vii) the communicative competence, since this unit promotes students' use of the four skills. They are required to read in English in all the sessions, to write (e.g. an essay), to speak while performing the role play as well as when participating in the debate, and to listen to the their partners, to the teacher as well as to watch some videos, as will be explained in the didactic unit itself (see section 4.3).

2.5. Focal linking words

In this unit, as has been previously mentioned, students were taught LWs to be used in formal contexts, mainly for their written assignments, as well as some LWs for oral communication. The focal LWs were carefully selected after data collection, which will be explained in the method section, and there were mainly two reasons for their choice: the target linking word was not (or rarely) present in the students' discourse; or the target linking word was used by the students only in its primary function, generally placed at the beginning of the utterance. The target LWs words and categories are described in the following sections.

2.5.1. LWs to show contrast

There are several LWs we can use to show contrast; however, as research shows, the most popular and frequently used is *but* (Liu & Braine, 2005; cited in Rahimi, 2011). For this reason, quite a large variety of contrastive LWs was introduced in order to reduce the repetition of *but* in students' writings.

- *Nevertheless* (= *However*). Both linkers are used to introduce a second statement which contrasts with the previous one. *Nevertheless* is more formal than *however*. Both are normally used in written English in an initial position always followed by a comma (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

  "There are serious problems in our country. **Nevertheless**, we feel this is a good time to return."

- *Although*/*Even though*. These linkers are used to show a contradiction or a statement which is going to be surprising. They are subordinators, that means that they introduce a dependent clause which needs to be attached to an independent one. They can be used in an initial position followed by a clause, or they can appear between the

12

independent and the dependent clause(Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"He's rather shy, **although** he's not as bad as he used to be."

"Even though he left school at 16, he still managed to become prime minister."

- *Despite/In spite of.* Their meaning is similar to *although* and *even though*, since they also express contrast between two things. On the contrary, their use is different as they can only be followed by a noun or by an *-ing* form (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"They arrived late **despite** leaving in plenty of time."

"He got the job **in spite of** his prison record."

- *Whereas/While.* They are used to connect two clauses in order to show a comparison between the two statements, that is, they are used to indicate a difference. They can be used at the beginning of the clause or in the middle of the two clauses, usually preceded by a comma (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"The south has a hot, dry climate, **whereas/while** the north has a milder, wetter climate."

2.5.2. LWs to show addition

As research shows, linkers to show addition are the most frequently used by learners (Jalilifar, 2008; Rahimi, 2011), specially *and*. However, as addition is really recursive, most students use other markers such as *also* or *furthermore*. However, there is a tendency to use markers only at the beginning of the utterance. For this reason, I decided to present students the different possibilities of *also*.

The linker *also* offers many possibilities of use, although its natural position is in the middle of the clause between the subject and the verb, after the verb "to be" or in the middle of a composed verb, we can use it at the beginning of the statement followed by a comma as

we do, for instance with *furthermore* or *moreover* (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"It's very humid. **Also**, you can easily get sunburnt."

"She works very hard but she **also** goes to the gym every week."

Additionally, we use the expression *not only X but also Y* in formal contexts.

"The war caused **not only** destruction and death **but also** generations of hatred between the two communities."

2.5.3. LWs to emphasise

Emphasis is a way of linking which is rarely used by students, although it is really useful to give importance to certain arguments and ideas present in a text. In written discourse we mainly use *indeed* or *in fact*.

Indeed and i*n fact are* commonly used to centre attention towards the information which is going to be stated afterwards, or what has just been stated We can place *indeed* at the beginning of the statement as we do with *in fact*, or it can appear at the end of a statement usually preceded by a comma (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"Indeed, it could be the worst environmental disaster in Western Europe this century."

"We live in strange times **indeed."**

2.5.4. LWs to show consequence and/or result

As it occurs with additive and contrastive LWs, there is also a generally common linker for consequence which is *so.* Nonetheless, there are other interesting possibilities which can enrich students' discourse.

- *Because of.* This linker can indicate the result of something meaning "as a result of" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"Because of the rain, the tennis match was stopped."

- *Therefore/Thus*. They are used to show a logical consequence or result of what has been priorly said (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"We were unable to get funding and **therefore** had to abandon the project."

2.5.5. LWs to show reason

The most widely used linker to show reason is without any doubt *because*. However, overuse of this word in a text together with *and* and *but* makes the text repetitive and may not show a high communicative-discursive competence of the students.

- *Since* is used to introduce a subordinate clause to show the reason for something. It is used whether at the beginning of the utterance, or in the middle of the two clauses (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"They couldn't deliver the parcel **since** no one was there to answer the door."

- *As* can be used in the same way that *since* when it connects two utterances to show reason for something, having the same meaning as *because* (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"I went to bed at 9 pm **as** I had a plane to catch at 6 am." → *I went to bed at 9 pm **since/because** I had a plane to catch at 6 am.*

On the other hand, we also dealt with a few useful LWs to be used in oral contexts which require the use of spontaneous items to favour the flow of conversation. In this sense, eight LWs were selected considering the fact that students may not use them, and also considering their wide usage among competent language speakers in relaxed unplanned conversation.

2.5.6. Common LWs in spoken language

- *Like* focuses on the status of the information presented in a conversation, or as Hellermann & Vergun name it, it is "information-centered" (2007: 158). It has several uses conversation, for instance the two presented here: (i) as a filler to fill in the silence and allow us time to think what we want to say, and (ii) to focus attention on what is going to be said next.

(i) "I want to … **like** … I think we need to think carefully about it. It's … **like** … it's a very difficult decision for us to make.

(ii) "There were **like** five hundred guests at the wedding."

- *Well* is used as "reception marker" to mark coherence between the speakers' turns (Fuller, 2003: 23, in Hellermann & Vergun, 2007: 160) usually at the start of what we say (i), also to add more information to what has been said as it is believed to be insufficient (ii) (Hellermann & Vergun, 2007).

(i)   - How was your meeting?
      - **Well**, it's difficult to say. I think they liked our presentation but I am not sure.

(ii) - Have you found a house yet?
      - **Well**, we've stopped looking actually. Nadia's company has offered her another contract and we've decided to stay in Edinburgh for another year.

- *Though* the shorter version of *although* has got the same function but its usage is far more common than *although*, above all in oral conversations. In spoken discourse, it is usually placed at the end of a sentence to make the contrast even more surprising (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

- You have six hours in the airport between flights!
- I don't mind, **though.** I have lots of work to do. I'll just bring my laptop with me.

- *Too* and *as well*. In informal conversation the use of *too* and *as well* is preferred rather than the use of *also*, although they all mean the same. They both typically appear in

the end position of an utterance in spoken language (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"I'll have the mixed vegetables **as well**."

"Enjoy your evening **too**."

- *So* is a really common discourse marker in spoken discourse which is usually placed at the beginning of a statement for different functions. It is normally used to summarise what has just been said, or to change the topic (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"So, we've covered the nineteenth century and we're now going to look […]"

- *Right* and *okay.* These two linkers are mainly used to start or end a conversation, and also to change the topic of it (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

"**Right**, let's get started. We need to get the suitcases into the car."

"**Okay**, see you then, love."

3. METHOD

Taking into account the importance of LWs instruction in the EFL classroom, a methodological teaching-learning proposal has been designed, based on a modified inductive approach that promotes students autonomous and meaningful learning, and aims at facilitating the acquisition of the target LWs.

In order to develop the aforementioned proposal, two different stages were needed: a Preliminary Study and the subsequent creation and implementation of a Didactic Unit.

On the one hand, a Preliminary Study was developed to test and draw conclusions about the students' background knowledge about LWs as well as their attitude towards the learning of these linguistic items. This was done by means of the observation and analysis of students' writings, and a questionnaire.

On the other hand, departing from the results previously obtained, a Didactic Unit on LWs was designed specially considering the characteristics of the target learners, their needs and requirements (previously analysed).

Finally, in order to see the effectiveness of the proposal suggested, students had to hand in a piece of writing focusing on LWs for written language which was afterwards compared with previous written production. The development of these stages will be further detailed in the procedure section.

3.1. *Participants*

The present study was carried out in a group of first of Bachillerato in the secondary school I.E.S Matilde Salvador located in Castellón. The reason for choosing this group of students is because they were doing the optional subject "Practical English" (*Inglés Práctico*) and, therefore, LWs formed part of the curricular contents at this stage.

Looking at the group, it was formed by eighteen students who came from different groups of Bachillerato. They were studying different specialities: *Bachillerato in Humanities and Social Sciences*, or *Bachillerato in Sciences and Technology*, but they joined together in order to do their optional subject. The students had an average English proficiency level of A2/B1, which is the level achieved at the Spanish Bachillerato stage.

Although the students' level, learning styles, and learning strategies were quite varied considering the nature of the group, they all had a common objective which facilitated the teaching-learning process: they wanted to improve their English language competence and proficiency, and they all enrolled in this subject voluntarily.

3.2. Materials

A questionnaire (available in Appendix 2) was used as an initial instrument of analysis and study. It was designed and passed to students in order to serve as a proof of the students' knowledge of LWs, and as a guide from which to develop the unit, since they were asked not only about theoretical contents but also about their perspective on how they learn LWs and how they would like to learn them.

Samples of the students writings were also used. In total there were 18 writings collected before the design, development and implementation of my didactic unit, and 18 samples of writings collected after it, so that they could be compared and conclusions could be drawn.

The aforementioned didactic unit developed and implemented, included in section 4.3 and entitled: "Linking Words: a pedagogical proposal for the subject *Practical English* (*Inglés Práctico*)", was used to plan and carry out the different lessons.

3.3. Procedure

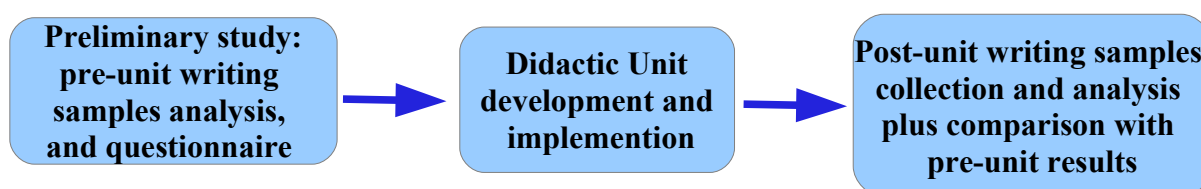| Preliminary study: pre-unit writing samples analysis, and questionnaire	→	Didactic Unit development and implemention	→	Post-unit writing samples collection and analysis plus comparison with pre-unit results

Figure 1: Visual to show the steps followed in the process.

As regards the Preliminary Study, as it is shown in Figure 1, the first step taken in it was to collect and analyse some of the writings that students had been doing during the academic course. At this stage, eighteen essays were analysed, specially according to the following parameters, and evidence from them was collected to proceed with my research and pedagogical proposal:

19

i. Number of linking words in a text around 100 words length.

ii. Variety of linking words used within the same essay.

iii. Categories used.

iv. Appropriate and accurate use concerning grammar.

v. Correct spelling.

The next step was to create a questionnaire so that students could show in a more directed way their real knowledge of LWs and their attitude towards the teaching-learning of these linking items. The questionnaire, available in Appendix 2, consisted of three different parts. Part 1 was designed in order to test their knowledge on LWs regarding the different categories and their use. There were three different activities included in it: the first and the second one presented students different LWs and they had to relate them to the category to which they belonged; the third activity focused on grammatical use, that is, students had to choose the correct linker for a specific utterance, among the options given. Part 2 was designed in order to analyse students' perceptions on their own knowledge of LWs and on the awareness of the teaching process. In this part, they were offered ten statements and they had to decide whether they agreed or not with them taking into account the grading grid available. Finally, Part 3 focused on the students' thoughts and believes about their learning process regarding two main parameters: how they learn LWs, and how they would like to learn them. In this section, they also had to grade the options presented according to the grading grid available, in the same way they did in the previous section.

According to the results obtained in the preliminary study (see section 4.2) and carrying out the needs' analysis, the second main part of the method was developed: the Didactic Unit (in section 4.3) addressed to the specific students' needs and requirements was designed and implemented.

Finally, after the implementation of the didactic unit, some other eighteen written

samples were obtained to compare with pre-instruction writings so that conclusions could be drawn about the effectiveness (or not) of the pedagogical proposal.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into four different subsections corresponding to the results and conclusions drawn from the pre-writing samples, the questionnaire, the didactic unit itself and the post-writing samples.

4.1. *Pre-unit results from written samples*

While observing some of the students' writings, I realised that the students' knowledge of LWs might be poor as those items looked quite repetitive in their writings. Obviously, as the diagram below shows (see Figure 2), the coordinators *and*, *but* and *or* appeared in all the writings as well as the subordinator *because* which was also commonly used. Apart from these, as can be observed, some students seemed to be familiar with other LWs of addition apart from *and*, being the most common *in addition*, *furthermore* and *moreover* always used at the beginning of the sentence. Another common additive linker used was *also*, which tended to be used in the initial position. Additionally, the diagram illustrates the difference between when *also* was used at the beginning or in the middle of the utterance, being used in the middle position fewer times. As may be observed, students used the exemplifier *for example* quite often in their writings. They also used LWs to structure a text such as *first of all* when introducing the first idea in their writings, and *in conclusion, to sum up, finally* or *eventually* to conclude them. A few students used the discourse maker *so* to show consequence or result, though its use was not really frequent. The contrastive marker *although* was found only once, being *but* the most used linker to show contrast.
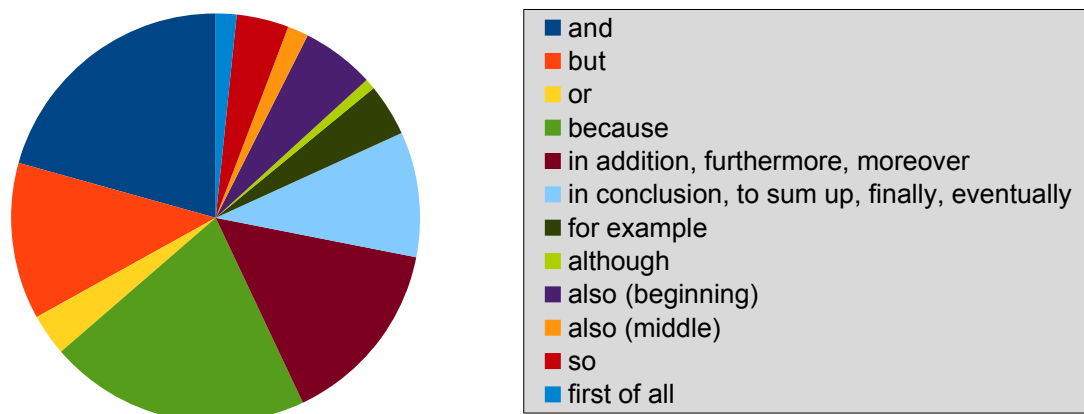
Figure 2: Use of LWs in students' pre-unit writings per 100 words.

Focusing on the parameters, the average number of LWs in an essay of around 100 words was nine. However, the variety of LWs used was actually around five, meaning that students tended to repeat several LWs within the same text. As has been previously mentioned, the categories which appear in the students' writings are: (i) contrast (*but, although*), (ii) reason (*because*), (iii) addition (*and, also, in addition, furthermore, moreover*), (iv) example (*for example*), (v) structure (*first of all, in conclusion, to sum up*) and (vi) consequence and result (*so*). Thus, as may be observed in Figure 3, except LWs to emphasise, students used the rest of the categories in their writings, although in very different proportions, being LWs to show addition the most highly used, and including a few variety of LWs in each of them.
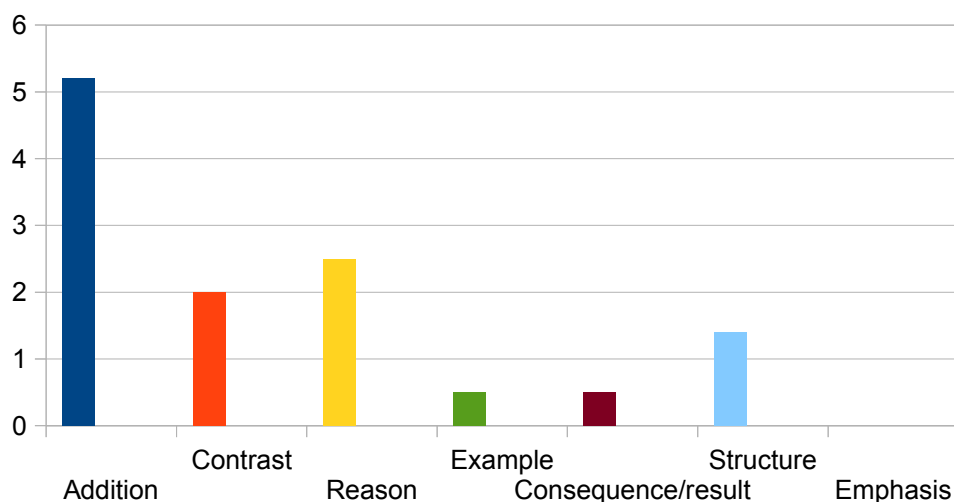
Figure 3: Pre-instruction use of linking words categories.

Another parameter focused on the appropriate use of LWs. Below there is some evidence of the types of errors that the students made in the pre-unit writings collected:

"*As well as* there are a lot of bike lanes in Castellón."

In some cases, it was not that the linking word was not appropriately used, but that the words used reflected really simple structures connected with the linkers *and*, *but* and *because*, or even unconnected sentences which showed that the students' were not highly communicative-discursive competent:

"Also, it is easier to park the bike that the car. *And* it is cheaper."

"Only one person can go with the bike. *(-)* It is less comfortable. *(-)* You can have a road accident easily."

"The bike, in my opinion, is not the best transport, for example when you are riding a bike in the street, the cars do not respect you *and* there had been accidents *because* cars crash with the bikes *and* normally the rider has serious injury *or* the rider may die."

Finally, analysing the spelling of linking words, I found two isolated spelling mistakes. The only student who used the word *although* did not spell it right. She wrote "althought"; and a few students wrote "aslo" instead of *also*.

23

4.2. Questionnaire results

As regards the questionnaire, after analysing the students' answers the following results were obtained. In the first section of Part 1, which aimed at identifying the students' level, a 66,6% of the students was able to identify the function of all the given linking words, while the rest failed some of them. A repetitive error pattern could be identified since the categories which lead to more errors were LWs to add new information, to show contrast, to emphasise and to structure a text. Therefore, more than a half of the students could recognise and match LWs to their category, but results showed that there were some categories which were quite confusing for an important part of students. In the second section of Part 1, only a 22,2% was able to complete the task without making any errors; that means that the great majority could not relate a linking word to its category. The average number of errors was between two and four wrong answers, and the category which was mostly failed was contrast. In the last section of Part 1, nobody was able to give a right answer for the six proposed utterances. That is, nobody could choose the linking word which matched in a specific utterance. For this reason, I am going to focus on each utterance to comment the particular results: for utterance 1, a 66,6% of the students was able to identify the appropriate linking word; in utterance 2, only a 38,8% answered correctly; in utterance 3, 27,7% of the students chose the correct answer, whereas a 72,7% failed; only 22,2% selected the correct option for utterance 4, meaning that 77,8% chose a wrong one; finally, in utterances 5 and 6 the same results were achieved, a 38,8% of the students got the right answer. In this case, the average number of wrong answers was between two and four.

As results show, more than a half of the students could not give a right and correct answer to most of the activities proposed in the questionnaire although some positive and relevant results about the main objective of the study can also be noted. Results suggest that

many students were aware of LWs and their categories regarding their main function. However, when it came to use, they did not know about the relation between LWs and grammar, regarding the type of clauses or phrases that are suitable and appropriate after the use of certain LWs. Hence, it can be claimed that my initial hypothesis about LWs not being taught in the right way for these students was confirmed.

In the second part which focused on the students' perceptions on their own knowledge and the way they are taught, 77,7% of students were quite unhappy with their knowledge about LWs. Regarding the way they are taught LWs, only a 33,3% of the students was happy with the way they were taught them, while the rest of the students were either doubtful and hesitant or unhappy with it. Most of the students, 83,3%, agreed or absolutely agreed that more theory on the use of LWs was needed, and acknowledged that more practice was necessary as well. Besides, the majority of them seemed to have doubts about approving or not the way LWs are taught in the textbook. All the students agreed or absolutely agreed that they would like to know more about LWs, and they also acknowledged that they ended up using the same LWs in their essays. Indeed, they confirmed that LWs were useful. A 38,8% of the students thought that grammar was related to the use of LWs, whereas the rest were not sure about it. Finally, all of them agreed that they needed to learn more LWs to be competent English speakers.

Accordingly, from these results we can comment that most students realised about the importance of LWs in order to improve their discourse competence and be competent English speakers, and they also acknowledged the necessity to be taught further information about their use.

The last section (Part 3) was about the students' learning process, and it was divided into

two sections, the first one referred to the actual way students learn LWs. More than half of them acknowledged learning LWs by translating them from Spanish connectors that they already knew by looking them up. The great majority agreed that they also learnt from real language use, that is from books, texts, etc. Some of the students agreed that they learnt from the textbook used in class, while some of them completely disagreed. In the same way, some students agreed that they learnt from the teacher's explanations, some disagreed and the majority were quite doubtful about it, claiming that they were not sure about it. The second section referred to the way they would like to learn LWs. The great majority, 83,3%, completely agreed that they would like to learn in an interactive way and by reading real texts samples. A 55,5% of the students agreed that they would like to learn by being told by a teacher, while the rest were not sure about it. Finally, having a look at their own ideas, some of them stated that going abroad is the best way to learn a language, as well as watching TV and listening to music in the target language, and reading texts that may be of their interest.

Thus, the results extracted from the last part of the questionnaire served mainly to design the didactic unit which was going to be developed afterwards, trying to develop it according to the students explanations and perceptions and making sure not to repeat the same errors that the textbook and the teacher of the English subject were committing. As a consequence, I decided to include interactive work, videos, as well as real English texts.

The next section (4.3) presents thus the resulting didactic unit designed and developed according to the preliminary study results. Besides, in Appendix 3, there is available the didactic unit booklet with which the students worked during the development of the unit, and which shows how the unit was presented to them.
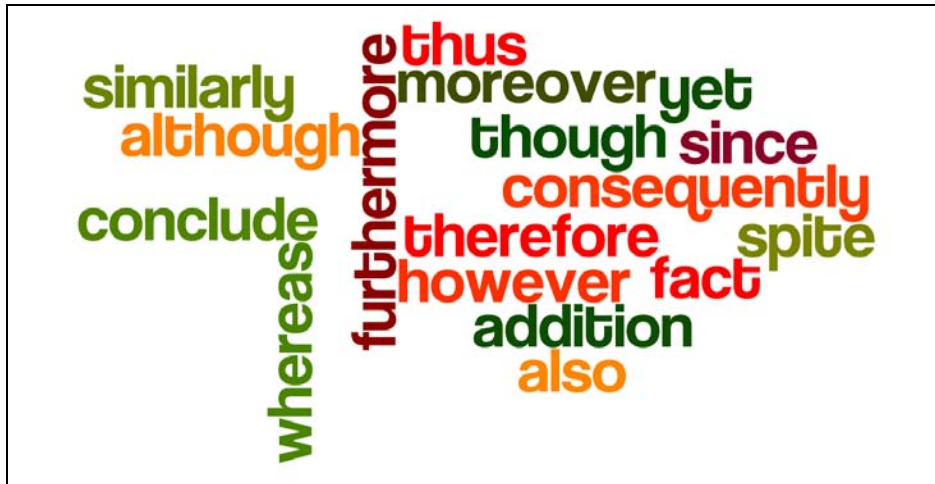
LINKING WORDS: a pedagogical proposal for the subject "Practical English" (Inglés Práctico)

Academic Year: 2013/2014

I.E.S. Matilde Salvador

A.   Contextualisation

The present didactic unit has been designed for the students of 1ˢᵗ of Bachillerato doing the optional subject "Practical English" (*Inglés Práctico*) at I.E.S. Matilde Salvador, located in Castellón de la Plana. Our target group is formed by 18 students, who have an A2-B1 level and who come from different groups of Bachillerato. They are studying different specialities: *Bachillerato in Humanities and Social Sciences*, or *Bachillerato in Sciences and Technology*, but they join together in order to do their optional subject, "Practical English". That is, they have their compulsory English class and besides they also have the *Practical English* subject which helps them to improve the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

B.   Justification

The following pedagogical proposal entitled "Linking words", as its name indicates, focuses on the teaching-learning of a list of selected LWs or discourse markers which can be very useful for the aforementioned students. LWs are part of the curricular contents set for the period of Bachillerato and, although they are present in four units (unit 4, 5, 6 and 7) of the textbook the students use in the compulsory English subject: "Contrast 1 for Bachillerato, Burlington Books", they still mean a gap as the students' knowledge and use of these words and their use is sometimes incomplete. For instance, as can be seen in Appendix 1, their book only focuses on LWs for writing purposes, and the same teaching-learning strategy is followed all throughout the book. That is, an explicit explanation of their use is provided in a content box, and later the students can practise their use by doing three activities in each unit: looking for connectors in a text, multiple-choice and completing with their own ideas. Therefore, my aim is to take into account both, LWs for written and spoken purposes, as well as to teach them from a different perspective, and to provide different types of activities.

According to the *DECRETO 102/2008, de 11 de julio, del Consell, por el que se establece el currículo de bachillerato en la Comunitat Valenciana*, one of the most relevant aims of this period is to develop the communicative competence progressively: "ampliar la competencia comunicativa significa capacitarse para comprender y producir discursos más complejos mediante la consolidación de los procedimientos de comprensión y la puesta en práctica de las estrategias de producción tanto oral como escrita" (Decreto 102/2008: 71325). In this sense, we can claim that LWs play a key role in regard to written and oral text organisation and as such their study and understanding must be enhanced at this level.

The present proposal has been designed to cover the students' need of writing coherent and cohesive texts in order to be competent in the target language, as well as part of their training for the PAU (Prova d'Accés a la Universitat) which is a test that students will have to set when they finish Bachillerato. For this reason, students will be asked to write their own text, e.g. an opinion essay. Besides, students will analyse and produce oral messages and utterances considering the new strategies acquired on linking words, and they will listen to and try to comprehend the messages that their partners produce. The need to work on existent texts and to produce their own ones is also reflected:

> "es necesario ampliar la competencia gramatical mediante el trabajo sobre textos orales y escritos que presenten estructuras morfosintácticas y contenidos léxicos más complejos. A partir de la observación del material propuesto, así como de las propias producciones, se puede llegar a la construcción de un saber explícito que permita sistematizar los conocimientos sobre el código de la lengua" (Decreto 102/2008: 71325-71326).

It is not only that students need to learn how to write a specific text, but it is also important for them to read real texts in order to analyse and reflect upon their main features. In this regard, they have to carry out different activities all throughout the unit both on reflection and on production of oral and written texts.

This unit has been designed considering that the students are already familiar with different text-types and genres, their formal structure, organisation, etc. and that they have received formal instruction on it as well as on the use of LWs. That is, the students' background knowledge has been considered. Thus, what I, as the teacher, aim to do is to clarify the use of certain linkers which have been previously identified as problematic looking at the results obtained from the questionnaire and from their writing samples, and to widen their knowledge about them, their use and function both in written and spoken language.

C.   Theoretical framework of the didactic unit

As it is explained in section 2.4, this proposal has been designed mainly taking into account modified inductive learning and the development of the communicative-discursive competence. In general, modified inductive learning refers to the use of guided discovery techniques so that students are able to infer the norms or rules of use from the examples given (Gollin, 1998). Students are in the centre of the teaching-learning process as they have to actively participate and work in class. I, as the teacher, take the role of a guide, that is, I am the one giving and offering all the necessary information and resources so that the students are able to discover and find out the answers by themselves. Thus, autonomous and meaningful learning is also promoted (For a more detailed explanation see 2.4.1). Regarding the communicative-discursive competence (Ruiz-Madrid, unpublished manuscript), it is based on the development of all the competence throughout and by means of discourse as it is expected that students work on all the competences in this unit (For a more detailed explanation see 2.4.2).

Besides, when designing the unit, a multimodal approach has been considered since students work with paper (texts) and online (videos, online activities) materials. Realia plays

an important role in the development of the task as all the examples and materials that are shown to the students have been taken from real sources and reflect real English use.

Finally, peer-assessment is included as a post-writing technique. In this unit, the writing task is approached as a cyclical process comprised by four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing (Seow, 2002). Accordingly, there is a key aspect which is responding to the students' writing between the process of drafting and editing, since feedback should not be only given at the end of the process but throughout the process. Given that it is usually difficult for the teacher to check all the students' works before they hand them in because of time and work load reasons, it is a good idea to introduce other techniques so that the students can receive feedback. In this case, the technique selected is peer-assessment in which the students exchange their works and their partners give them feedback by means of comments. According to the document entitled "Assessment, Articulation and Acountability" (1999), peer-assessment is extremely useful as it engages students in the editing task of the writing process and it contributes to foster the development of analytical and evaluative skills.

D.   General curricular objectives

According to the *DECRETO 102/2008, de 11 de julio, del Consell, por el que se establece el currículo de bachillerato en la Comunitat Valenciana*, the development of the English language subject should contribute to foster the following skills:

- Producir textos escritos con diferentes finalidades, planificándolos y organizándolos de manera coherente y adecuada a la situación de comunicación.
- Leer textos pragmáticos y de ficción de temática general y específica, identificando los elementos esenciales de cada tipo de texto, captando su función y organización discursiva con el fin de comprenderlos, interpretarlos críticamente y, en su caso, disfrutarlos.
- Reflexionar sobre el funcionamiento lingüístico-comunicativo de la lengua extranjera

para poder llegar a producir mensajes más complejos y correctos, adaptados a las diversas situaciones y comprender las producciones ajenas, en situaciones cada vez más variadas e imprevistas.

- Utilizar la lengua extranjera para comunicarse en situaciones interactivas cada vez más diversificadas y auténticas, oralmente y por escrito, empleando estrategias comunicativas y discursivas adecuadas.

E. General curricular contents

In this part, we can find the general curricular contents present in this unit divided into conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents taken from the *DECRETO 102/2008, de 11 de julio, del Consell, por el que se establece el currículo de bachillerato en la Comunitat Valenciana*.

Conceptual:

- Reconocimiento de las variedades de uso de la lengua: diferencias entre lenguaje formal e informal, hablado y escrito.

Procedural:

- Uso autónomo de recursos diversos para el aprendizaje: informáticos, digitales y bibliográficos.

- Planificación del mensaje que se desea transmitir, cuidando la coherencia, la cohesión y el registro.

- Producción de mensajes orales dotados de una razonable corrección gramatical y de una pronunciación, un ritmo y una entonación adecuados sobre temas de interés general o personal y articulados a modo de textos descriptivos, expositivos o narrativos.

- Lectura comprensiva y autónoma de textos contemporáneos pragmáticos y de ficción empleando las estrategias de lectura para identificar los elementos textuales y paratextuales, la organización de la información y el propósito comunicativo.

- Ordenación lógica de frases y párrafos con el fin de realizar un texto coherente, utilizando los elementos de enlace adecuados.

- Redacción clara y detallada de diferentes tipos de texto y en diferentes soportes sobre temas personales y académicos o de interés general con una razonable corrección gramatical, un vocabulario y un registro adecuados al tema.

- Participación y contribución fluida y eficaz en conversaciones, discusiones, argumentaciones o debates, de manera espontánea o preparados previamente, sobre diversos temas, exponiendo un punto de vista, argumentando y contrargumentando, y produciendo un discurso que consiga exponer su intención comunicativa.

- Aplicación de las estrategias de auto-corrección y auto-evaluación para progresar en el aprendizaje autónomo de la lengua.

Attitudinal:

- Utilización de la lengua extranjera como lengua vehicular en clase.

- Uso de fórmulas lingüísticas adecuadas a las situaciones comunicativas.

F.   Methodology

During the proposed unit, lessons have been designed as a combination of teacher's explanations together with individual, pair and group work:

- Teacher explanations: at the beginning of the class the teacher introduces new information, makes students reflect upon their background knowledge, gives theoretical explanations and explains the functioning of the lesson. (This can be observed in "Warming up and theory" in lesson 1, and in "theory: spoken language" in lesson 3.)

- Individual work: students are required to do and complete the activities proposed by the teacher in class and outside the class as they have to finish their writing task as homework. (This can be observed in "activity 2: Hotpotatoes and online quiz", "activity 5: writing task" and "activity 6: peer-assessment" which can be considered an individual activity since students have to check their partner's work individually.)

- Pair work: work in pairs is present in this unit as they have to develop some activities in pairs and they also have to prepare and perform a dialogue about a daily-life

situation, making special emphasis on the use of appropriate linking words in spoken language. (This can be observed in "activity 3: linking words in a text", and "activity 7: dialogue".)

• Group work: students always have to be actively participating in class since lessons tend to promote cooperative learning. Hence, they have to participate in all class activities. In groups they have to order a text which has been previously unscrambled , they also have to participate in a group brainstorming/debate and contribute with their opinions and ideas. (This can be observed in "activity 1: essay jumble" and "activity 4: brainstorming".)

G.   Timing

This unit has been designed to cover four sessions of 50 minutes taking into account that the lessons occur successively so that students have the information taught and acquired fresh in their minds and they can put it into practice with ease. As will be detailed and explained in the Lesson plan section, the first session is devoted to the teacher's explanation and online activities, the second session focuses on linking words in context, the third session is focused on writing and peer-assessment, and finally the last session is focused on speaking.

Below we can find a chart which includes the relation between the activities carried and out and the time to be spent on each of them:

Lesson/Session	Activity	Timing
Lesson 1/Session 1	Warming-up and Theory	20 min
	Hands on work. Activity 1: essay jumble	10 min
	Hands on work. Activity 2: Hotpotatoes	20 min
Lesson 1/ Session 2	Hands on word. Activity 3: Linking words in a text	50 min

34

Lesson 2/ Session 3	Pre-writing stage. Activity 4: brainstorming	15 min
	Writing stage. Activity 5: writing task	25 min
	Post-writing stage. Activity 6: peer-assessment	10 min
Lesson 3/ Session 4	Theory: spoken language	15 min
	Role Play. Activity 7: dialogue • Preparation • Performance	35 min
		TOTAL: 200 min

H.   Materials

This pedagogical proposal uses realia, that is, real English texts and materials, in order to ease the teaching-learning process. When referring to texts, it is important to note down that all kinds of texts are considered, that is, paper resources like printed texts, and online resources such as videos which are used to introduce some activities, online activities which are used to practice what has been learnt, and online dictionaries which are the source of the theory and the examples presented to the students. Additionally, access to a computer connected to an over-head projector and a screen is necessary in order to show the presentation slides and the resources, and in one session a computer lab is required as students need a computer to perform the proposed tasks and activities.

I.   Spaces and rooms

The first lesson (sessions 1 and 2) is carried out in the ICTs classroom as there is an interactive board and there are some computers available so that students can do the required activities.

The rest of the lessons (lessons 2 and 3) are developed in the normal classroom where I have a laptop computer, an over-head projector and a screen available. There is also wi-fi

connection but it is not really reliable as sometimes it does not work, therefore I have to make sure that everything which is needed does not depend on the net. In this particular case, I had to download the video I was going to use so that we could watch it without problems.

J.   Lesson plan

Lesson 1:

The first lesson involves a theoretical part and a practical one. First of all, the unit is presented to students, and the methodology that is going to be followed during the first lesson, (which corresponds to a modified inductive approach) is explained. As has previously been mentioned, modified inductive learning means that students have to find out the rules and norms of usage from the examples that the teacher presents. As students are not used to this type of teaching-learning process, it is important to carefully explain them that they are going to see some examples on the screen and that they are required to infer the grammar rule or norm of use of a series of linking words from this scope. In this way, the students are required to actively participate in class and they have to try to construct and build knowledge cooperatively, always with the teacher's aid. After seeing and commenting on the examples shown and the rules inferred, they will have time to practise (the activities are explained below).

Lesson 1 **Linking words: starting up with theory and practice**
OBJECTIVES **Conceptual:** • To know what linking words are. • To define the term "linking words". • To know about the different categories of linking words. **Procedural:** • To identify linking words in a text.

- To infer rules/norms from the examples given.
- To use the target linking words in a proper way.
- To identify the proper order of a text focusing on linking words.
- To participate in class activities by using the target language.
- To integrate the ICTs by using them as the main tool to teach and as a resource to work with.
- To develop autonomous learning, always guided and supervised by the teacher.

Attitudinal:
- To respect their partners' speaking time and contributions.
- To use the class materials and the computers properly.
- To accept that making errors is part of the learning process.

CONTENTS
Conceptual:
- Linking words as a tool for text organisation and cohesion.
- The definition of the term "linking words".
- Categories of linking words.

Procedural:
- Identification of linking words in context.
- Deduction of rules/norms from the examples given.
- Use of the target linking words in a proper way.
- Identification of the proper order of a text by focusing on linking words.
- Class participation in the target language.
- Integration of the ICT's as a tool to teach and a resource to work with.
- The development of autonomous learning, taking into account teacher's guidance and supervision.

Attitudinal:
- Respect to their partners' speaking time and contributions.
- Proper use of the class materials and computers.
- Acceptance of the error as part of the learning process.

COMPETENCES
Communicative-Discoursive Competence
- *Communicative competence*: students work on their oral expression and written comprehension. Language is used for communication and as a vehicle to learn.
- *Linguistic competence*: students work on the basic elements of communication: phonology, grammar and vocabulary.
- *Strategic competence*: students make use of different plans in order to face the new teaching-learning situation proposed.
- *Digital competence*: students interact with digital sources.

Basic competences
- *Competence in linguistic communication in the foreign language*: language is used as a means of communication.
- *Competence in learning to learn*: students integrate and use different strategies during their learning process.
- *Mathematic competence*: students show logical and deductive reasoning.

LESSON DEVELOPMENT