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FINAL MASTER'S DISSERTATION: MODALITY 1

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE BY
DEVELOPING SPEAKING STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the most challenging skills in SLA (Second Language Acquisition), especially for teenagers learning English in high school due to teachers not tending to cover the oral production of the language. Consequently, this paper aims to provide a solution for young learners about how to improve their performance and discourse in such an environment. Several speaking strategies are introduced so learners may resort to whenever necessary to fill in those gaps appearing during their speeches. It is vital then to give answers to two main questions. Firstly, may the use of the speaking strategies improve the production of the language orally? And to what extent can these strategies be applied to real-life contexts?

A 6-lesson didactic proposal, whose methodology is based on recording an initial and final identical role-play to examine the performance of the pupils before and after the procedure, is suggested. This study is conducted with 5 participants. The results demonstrate that the implementation of these speaking strategies is beneficial for L2 learners regarding language production. Furthermore, to examine the participants' degree of satisfaction and recognise the experiment's success from their perspective, a questionnaire filled by the students is needed. This paper also contains a conclusion on the examination to gather the concluding ideas on the matter and additional thoughts for further implementation of the proposal.

Keywords: Second language acquisition (SLA), speaking strategies, L2 learning, speaking skill.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. In fact, according to Lane (2021), it is positioned as the third of the languages worldwide regarding its use, together with Chinese and Spanish. Consequently, it is expected that in high schools, students have to study this language for several hours a week and sometimes, a second foreign language as an elective.

Therefore, the main objective of this kind of teaching is that pupils can communicate fluently in the language. As perhaps a teenager in high school has to deal with English for 3-4h a week, they focus on mastering the four different skills: writing, speaking, listening and reading. Nonetheless, on several occasions, a specific teacher focuses more on the reception of the language (listening and reading) than on the production (writing and speaking). As a result, learners finish the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and have barely practised the production of the language, and when they are required to do so, their level becomes somewhat rusty.

For that reason, this paper seeks to provide a solution in which students can practise the language, following a real-life scenario and focusing on the production rather than the reception. Hence, it should be noted that this study also attempts to improve the speaking abilities of pupils, motivating them to acquire the target language.

In order to accomplish that goal, a didactic proposal has been designed to introduce the speaking strategies to learners, a resource that might aid them in improving their speaking abilities. Teenagers must find these tasks motivating and innovative, so they are willing to participate and get involved in the experiment.

Speaking is one of the essential skills in learning a new language. Learners should be aware that when they receive input (be it reading or listening), they should be able to provide an output (writing and speaking). Notwithstanding, high schools nowadays focus the input they provide to students on the reception rather than the production of the language. Thus, this proposal seeks to modify the learning process to motivate students and improve their speaking abilities.

Hence, this paper will introduce a didactic proposal implementing Douglas (2007) speaking strategies. These resources may be highly beneficial for students to resort to avoiding repetitions, awkward silences, or solely to make their speeches sound more natural. Therefore, the following sections will detail the experiment conducted in a class of the first baccalaureate with 5 students. The objective of the analysis is to provide a qualitative rather than a quantitative result.

Once the results are exposed, a detailed analysis will be provided to observe whether the procedure has been successful and the feedback provided by the students. As a result, two different aspects will be considered to determine the proposal's effectiveness. Afterwards, gathering all the results and the information aforementioned, a conclusion on the examination will be provided.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Communicative Competence

This paper aims to cover the speaking skill within a classroom in a high school. From what could have been observed during my internship, this ability is not generally preferred by the students nor encouraged by the teachers. In general terms, pupils often struggle when they are requested to perform a speaking activity, claiming that they are constantly feeling the

pressure of not being able to speak the second language fluently. Therefore, one of the concerns of this study is to discover where the obstacle is and provide an improvement regarding this ability.

Consequently, since speaking comprises the main core of this analysis, a definition of communicative competence should be provided. This term is embraced in the linguistic field, and several studies have tried to offer a proper definition of this competence. Nonetheless, some authors have been struggling to define it accurately.

For instance, Pasquali (1972) tried to define this competence as the interactional process in which two individuals are considered equals, share their own experiences and coexist in the same community in terms of a dialogue whose primary goal is the assembly of agreements. In other words, this approach can be understood as the interaction between native speakers of a given language coexisting in the same community. Thus, this competence is not comprehended as a unique resource to express something in your mother tongue but as a tool to initiate not only healthy relationships but also productive ones.

On the other hand, Savignon (1976) claims that communicative competence is not a method but a way to describe what a native speaker possesses to communicate with a fellow native speaker appropriately. In this context, this competence is not purely seen as a speaking activity but as interaction, i.e., the spontaneous and unrehearsed features that occur in a natural conversation. Commonly, the authors that conduct studies within this field coincide with the idea that communicative competence entails far more than merely the knowledge of the linguistic code of a given language. Hence, native speakers not only know how to say something but also when to say it. This perspective goes against the idea that to gain knowledge of a second language, you merely have to master the linguistic competencies of the given tongue (as it suggests the linguistic competence, which will be included in the following section).

Following the author's notions mentioned above, communicative competence also includes non-verbal communication cues such as distance, gesture, posture or facial expressions. Even if these aspects do not require any grammatical feature, they can say more than words in specific scenarios.

Besides, it is essential to mention that this competence can be measured, even if our standard language proficiency tests might not be the most accurate way to do so. Consequently, the main elements that are considered when assessing this competence could be pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Hence, these tests do not measure the speaker's knowledge but the ability to use the language accordingly compared with a native speaker. On the other hand, there is a massive discrepancy in the linguistic competence, where the fundamental aspects to be evaluated are grammar and vocabulary, excluding pronunciation.

Motivation also plays a vital role in the communicative competence. Students must be aware of the importance of appropriately using their second language to communicate fluently. It is essential to detach from the outdated grammar tests and focus on real-life situations to provide pupils with a distinct perspective of learning a language to increase their motivation in its acquisition.

It is also important to mention that Canale & Swain (1980) pointed out several models of communicative competence. This model was further developed by Canale (1983) and suggested four independent components of the communicative competence:

- *Grammatical competence*: it would entail the pure knowledge of the language code, such as the grammatical rules, pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary, among others.
- *Sociolinguistic competence*: could be understood as the mastery of the sociocultural standards of language use. This section would include the appropriate employment of vocabulary, politeness, tone and style.

- *Discourse competence*: the combination of language structures in distinct, cohesive texts (political speech, poetry, etc.)
- *Strategic competence*: the understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to enrich the efficiency of communication.

Afterwards, Bachman (1990) proposed another model of the communicative competence, which divided language into two main subcategories:

- *Organisational knowledge*: this subcategory mainly comprises the mastery of the components involved in the formal structure of the language production and the ability to identify precise grammatical structures. At the same time, further classifications should be made within this category:
 - *Grammatical knowledge*: Identical to Canale & Swain's grammatical competence.
 - *Textual knowledge*: Related to Canale & Swain's discourse competence.
- *Pragmatic knowledge*: Understood as the knowledge of all the elements that aid us in relating words and utterances to specific meanings. It is divided into:
 - *Lexical knowledge*: the words' specific meaning and figurative language use.
 - *Functional knowledge*: the knowledge of the relationship between utterances and their purposes.
 - *Sociolinguistic knowledge*: linked to Canale & Swain's sociolinguistic competence.

Moreover, a more updated classification of the communicative competence is provided by Celce-Murcia (2001). According to this author, this competence is divided into several subcategories: sociocultural, discursive, linguistic, formulaic and interactional.

Saleh (2013) understands communicative competence as utilising the right language in the appropriate context for the correct purpose. If speakers master these features, they are considered communicatively competent.

As quoted above, several authors have attempted to cover the communicative competence regarding acquiring a second language. Nevertheless, it should be noted that perhaps, Hymes' perception of the topic is preferred for the sake of this study. Hymes (1971) challenged the notion of Chomsky's linguistic competence and conceived communicative competence as a communicative action corresponding to the requirements of the surrounding environment. Hence, Hymes' definition separates this concept from purely linguistic aspects and includes the social and psychological features.

As a result, Hymes conceives this communicative competence as the unification of the grammatical, psycholinguistic and sociocultural aspects. In other words, to communicate suitably, the speaker must master these three attributes.

2.2. Linguistic Competence

The communicative competence arises from Chomsky's (1965) opposition to Skinner's (1957) perception of language acquisition. Chomsky (1965) presented the term 'competence' as the knowledge of the grammatical aspects of language concerning its use. On the other hand, performance might be defined as the actual use of a speaker's language in a particular situation.

Chomsky thus claims that the term 'competence' is related to the linguistic elements, such as grammar, that a native speaker of a given language has internalised, whereas 'performance' is linked to the psychological features incorporated in the production of speech. Following this perspective it may be asserted that the term competence merely contemplates a theory of grammar and is concerned with the linguistic rules associated with the sentences of a

language. Contrarily, performance emphasises the acceptability of utterances in a conversation regarding perception and production, combining the theory of grammar and nongrammatical psychological elements within this language use.

For Campbell and Wales (1970), the most relevant linguistic competence is being able to produce or comprehend statements that are not so grammatical but appropriate in a given context.

On this perspective, Jordan (2004) claims that Chomsky focused merely on a linguistic competence that allowed native speakers to create correct structures. Notwithstanding, this competence cannot be appreciated as the only objective when learning a language since communication entails a more complex process than just knowing how to create well-structured sentences (Thornbury, 2006).

On the other hand, more modern insights into this topic should be mentioned. Priyanto (2013) and Heidari and Alavi (2015) have suggested a correlation between pupils' grammatical competence and oral production. As a result, mastering a language is not solely linked to its linguistic competencies, it also entails much more. Wahyuni et al. (2015) continued with this viewpoint indicating a strong connection between grammar and learners' speaking abilities.

Araki (2015) claimed that grammar does not impede speaking performances. Instead, linguistic competence should be understood as the combination of the grammatical structures of the language and its correct use in the right context.

Pazaver and Wang (2009) and Saaristo (2015) conducted a study revealing that participants considered grammar an important element when learning a second language. Therefore, linguistic competence cannot and should not be underestimated during the learning process.

Contrarily, Tuan's (2017) investigation indicated that linguistically competent learners tend to write or speak with conviction about a certain topic.

These insights may indicate that to master a language, some other aspects apart from the linguistic competence should be considered. Nonetheless, these grammatical elements are vital for accurate oral production when learning a second language. Hence, a link between linguistic and communicative competence must be accomplished to master a second language.

2.3. Teaching approaches

This section is going to cover the teaching approaches that may appear within the educational contexts of any second language acquisition (SLA). Since English is the primary aim of this study, the following lines will deal with the recurring issues when learning the language and how teachers should address this matter.

It is worth mentioning that Martínez & Rubio (2008) acknowledge that the core of this failure when learning English might be the dread of the pupils when they are requested to communicate in this language. Skehan (1989) claimed that this malfunction is related to the attitude or intelligence of the pupil. Nonetheless, Martínez & Rubio point out that the main element affecting the learning process of the students is enormously related to the classroom and the methodologies employed in such context. That is, the role of the teacher is a significant feature in the learning process of any second language. Therefore, it should be analysed the different methodologies utilised by the professors within this field to determine whether any modification should be made.

To fully understand this context, a proper definition of SLA should be provided. According to Ellis (1997), second language acquisition is defined as the endeavour to acquire a secondary

language. This concept aims to solve the problems learners face when learning a new language. Thus, researchers centre their attention on the kind of language that these students produce when they speak or write in a non-native tongue. As Ellis (1997) and Tarone (1979) assert, these L2 pupils make mistakes in the production of the language, and these errors follow specific patterns. In consequence, one of the predominant objectives of this paper is to attempt to discover why and how these errors are made and provide a solution.

Ellis (1997) also suggested that the process of learning an L2 is not linear. Instead, it might be considered as a “U-shaped” process of development, and consequently, learners set a sequence of rules and significance to their linguistic experiences. That is why the customary perspective proposing a transfer between the L1 grammar to the L2 is not necessarily accurate.

In light of the above, Krashen (1985) proposes the comprehensible input hypothesis (CI), in which learners learn a second language by means of comprehensible input, that is, meaningful and contextualised language contributions. This data entry should be comprehensible, pertinent, stimulating and must be contextualised in a situation that triggers a low filter setting (meaning that comprehension is a key element). Krashen strongly believes that speaking is the outcome of acquisition and not the source. This process is rather unconscious and takes place when students attempt to relate this input with a structure.

Three main implications must be taken into consideration in this hypothesis. The teacher is the principal responsible (but not the only one) for providing this comprehensible input with visual assistance and lexical items. Furthermore, lecturers should pay more attention to listening and reading abilities and let speaking emerge itself. Lastly, a calm and relaxed atmosphere is capital to facilitate the learning process.

On the other hand, input alone is not sufficient to acquire an L2. Swain (1985) points out that learners should be able to practise the language to progress, giving birth to the output hypothesis. Within this theory, three functions play a vital role: 1) noticing/triggering function, 2) testing function, and 3) metalinguistic function. The first step would be directly related to learners noticing when they encounter a linguistic issue. Secondly, practising is essential to improve our knowledge of a given language. Finally, the last function is concerning the negotiation about form, which implies that under specific conditions, pupils will use language to reflect upon their hypothesis.

In sum, CO and CI are not confronted. Rather, the comprehensive output can be understood as an extension of the comprehensive input, as Swain (1985) pointed out.

Once having offered a suitable context of the teaching approaches, it is necessary to analyse the methods employed in the classroom regarding the language acquisition. To do so, Saengboon (2004) proposes the following illustration:

Traditional Methods	Communicative Language Teaching Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-centered • Grammar-focused • Rote-memorization • Non-authentic materials • Explicit and immediate error correction • Teacher as authority figure • Students as tabula rasa • Language in isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner-centered • Meaning-focused • Meaningful tasks • Authentic materials • Tolerance of error • Teacher as facilitator • Students as negotiators • Language in context

Table 1 Traditional vs Modern approaches

Table 1 (Sangboon, 2004, p.10) indicates that the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach contradicts the traditional L2 teaching methods. In these updated methodologies, some features should be highlighted, such as the learner-centred approach, the focus on meaning and the importance of meaningful tasks.

According to Al Asmari (2015), CLT is based on a theory that describes this methodology as the ability of learners to practise the language in a wide variety of contexts. This means that students of a second language are successful in their learning process if they have developed their communicative skills, which means the ability to apply the knowledge of the target language with proficiency enough to communicate.

Having considered the aforementioned theories, it might be claimed that when teaching a second language, CLT is preferred. That way, teachers will follow a learner-centred approach, focusing on meaningful tasks, and they will function as a facilitator rather than as an authority figure.

2.4. Speaking strategies

It is not a surprise that English is one of the most spoken languages around the world. In fact, it comprises the top 3 tongues uttered internationally, together with Spanish and Chinese. That is why the number of students learning it is steadily increasing every year.

Nonetheless, when pupils are requested to practise English orally, they struggle attempting to communicate fluently. It is claimed that students often go blank in a conversation, perhaps because they cannot find the proper word to express, they resort to their native tongue or even keep silent for a long period of time, being unable to express themselves. It has been mentioned that one of the main concerns of this study is to discover why these issues happen in conversation and how they may be solved.

This section will cover the strategies that might be employed in a spoken register to elude these awkward situations. The speaking strategies are magnificent devices that learners can turn to improve their fluency and communication skills in the target language. Oxford (1989) claimed that these language learning strategies aid learners develop a correct communicative competence. Hence, this approach might be useful for students to eliminate this stress when they are practising the language and reduce the anxiety during the early stages of the learning process.

Moreover, pupils claim that there are certain characteristics that are common in the production of the target language, such as: trembling while speaking, perspiring nervously, keeping silent for a long time, etc. With speaking strategies, the objective is aspiring to at least reduce the recurrence of these situations. Douglas (2007) proposed the following strategies so that students will be capable of communicating effectively:

- ❖ Asking for clarification (*What? / Why? / Do you mean...?*)
- ❖ Asking to repeat something (*Say again? / Can you repeat please? / Excuse me?*)
- ❖ Fillers (*Like... / I mean... / Well...*)
- ❖ Conversation maintenance cues (*Hm / Yeah / Right*)
- ❖ Getting the hearer's attention (*Hey / So / Say...*)
- ❖ Paraphrasing when you are not able to produce a given structure
- ❖ Requesting interlocutor's assistance (when you can't remember a word, for instance)
- ❖ Formulaic expressions (*Are you okay? / Can I come in? / How much does ___ cost?*)
- ❖ Non-verbal expressions (such as gestures)

- ❖ Circumlocution: the description of a word when speakers can not remember them (*It is a thing for... / It is a place where... / It is similar to...*)

The utilisation of these strategies might be helpful to solve specific issues that emerge during a conversation in a second language. For example, fillers are mainly used to fill in the silence when pupils are not capable of remembering a specific word or grammatical structure. Circumlocution may be extremely valuable to describe a given word or for unknown vocabulary. Besides, asking for clarification might be crucial to comprehend the meaning beyond words, especially if it is being dealt with different cultures or contexts, to avoid uncomfortable situations. Also, non-verbal expressions, like gestures, may be beneficial for beginners since it does not require a proficiency level of English.

Melendez et al. (2014) also considered that communication is one of the basic needs of every individual. They note that we do it in many different manners, but the most relevant one for us is to communicate orally. Doing so in a language which is not our mother tongue can be challenging if the speaker does not have a wide knowledge of the target language.

Consequently, one of the fundamental aims to be covered in this paper is to observe whether the use of the above-mentioned approaches is profitable in a real-life context. That is why this study will cover mainly the following strategies: fillers, asking for clarification and formulaic expressions.

2.5. Objectives and research questions

Once having introduced the appropriate theoretical background, it is essential to describe the objectives and the research questions of this paper.

As previously mentioned, speaking strategies will take a primary role in the development of this experiment. Therefore, the didactic unit designed for this study will focus on the

speaking strategies proposed by Douglas (2007). Being able to communicate fluently in the target language is one of the main goals in L2 learning. As a consequence, one of the principal objectives of this research is to improve students' speaking skills. Besides, pupils should be able to apply the aspects introduced throughout the lesson into a real-life situation, otherwise the learning process would be pointless.

Having introduced the objectives, two different research questions arise:

1. May the use of speaking strategies improve the students' speaking skills?
2. To what extent can students apply these speaking strategies in a real-life context?

Hence, the following lines will deal with the explanation of the didactic proposal, together with the results obtained after its implementation.

3. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

Once having introduced the appropriate theoretical background, it is essential to describe the objectives and the research questions of this paper.

The following lines are going to describe the didactic proposal utilised during the internship. To appropriately provide the necessary information within this section, the context and methodology will be exposed, containing the justification of the study together with its objectives and assessment.

It is worth mentioning that, as previously stated, one of the main goals of this proposal is that students improve their speaking abilities. Hence, pupils were requested to constantly interact with each other throughout the activities. The purpose of this methodology is that they practise the tasks orally, so the activities focused on this outcome.

Concerning the competencies, as it will be examined below, these varied depending on the activity, but the linguistic and digital competencies prevailed over the rest. Thus, learners would mainly receive linguistic input through different sources, and they were requested to produce an output with their classmates.

The methodology employed in this observation was primarily providing input to the students so they would be able to replicate it in further activities. Therefore, the core of this procedure was based on a role-play that students were requested to perform twice to study their development.

In terms of materials and assessment, some of the input required a computer and a projector, but the remaining activities could be performed with paper and pencil. Hence, this didactic proposal can be applied to any learning context. On the other hand, the assessment of the experiment was based on a checklist to examine whether the pupils utilised the resources previously introduced. To foster the production of the aspects introduced in class, it was essential to eliminate any kind of pressure and consequently, learners were not going to receive any numeric mark. Instead, the teacher would provide feedback on how their performances could be improved.

3.1. Context

As it has been analysed in the previous section, the didactic proposal is composed of 6 sessions of 50 minutes each. Consequently, the activities were implemented with five different students to examine and comprehend their speaking abilities in different contexts. It was the aim of this proposal to attempt to improve their speaking abilities by using different resources that could be beneficial for students in several situations.

Consequently, the context in which this study was conducted should be described. The internship was performed in the high school IES Broch I Llop. The institute is located in

Vila-real, specifically in *Av. Europa, 60, 12540 Vila-real, Castellón*. Pupils can study secondary education including different fields like science, arts or economics. It is worth mentioning that when students reach Baccalaureate level, they are able to choose something known as *Bachibac*, which allows them to study French as well as English. This was quite interesting in the study since it provided a pure linguistic context in the classroom.

Besides, roughly 800 young students attend IES Broch I Llop in order to be formed for higher levels with the aid of a fully capable team of educators. Regarding the teachers, there are several departments in the school, including subjects such as English, Latin, French, Maths, Valencian, Physical Education, etc. Nonetheless, since the investigation was conducted in the English subject, it must be noted that around ten teachers form this department.

With regard to the students, the analysis was developed in a class of 5 students of 1st Baccalaureate (around 17 years old), studying the aforementioned *Bachibac*. Thus, the study had its limitations in terms of the number of pupils, which will be described in further detail. Taking into account the number of teenagers, it must be mentioned that a qualitative analysis is preferred.

In addition, the subject attempted to boost the speaking abilities of the students since the activities were performed mainly orally. Hence, pupils were allowed to share in pairs their thoughts and the explanation of the vocabulary and grammar of the unit. This context was extremely favourable for this study since its main objective was to improve the speaking skills.

3.2. Methodology

This section contains the methodology utilised throughout the different sessions of the didactic proposal. As seen in the tables above, the didactic proposal is formed by six sessions of 50 minutes each. The main task of this proposal is a role-play, in which students had to

perform a specific character in a given situation. The scripts were not provided, so the objective was that students performed this context as they wanted to, producing their speeches from their own knowledge. This way, it would be a suitable scenario to examine their abilities and suggest how these could be improved.

Since the main goal of this project was to improve their speaking skills, several resources were provided to achieve this aim. Therefore, in the first and last session of the proposal, pupils were requested to perform the same role-play to observe whether they utilised the techniques implemented in the classroom.

To accurately investigate the outcome of both role-plays, their performances were recorded. Therefore, with this information, a detailed examination of their outcome could be conducted. After examining the first role-play, it was concluded the aspects in which students should improve and design the activities accordingly.

It was vital that the tasks considered the motivation and emotions of the students. Consequently, an innovative approach was followed to enhance the participation of the pupils since the activities were something absolutely original to them. Besides, it is worth mentioning that an active learning was preferred over the traditional master class, so students are the base of the learning process and not the teacher.

3.2.1. Justification

Concerning the justification of this study, during the first period of the internship, it could have been observed that one of the main deficiencies of students was that they found it extremely troublesome to express themselves in English. Not merely in terms of grammar and vocabulary, but also in terms of fluency. When students wanted to express themselves,

first they formed the structure in their native language and then it was transferred into the second language.

Therefore, it was absolutely necessary to introduce several resources for them to be able to speak fluently in this second language and explain that these would help them sound more natural in English. It was time then to observe their speeches and identify the main tools they could resort to whenever they practised the language. Since the classes were mainly designed to be performed orally, this was a huge opportunity to implement the speaking skills.

Once the issue was identified, it was also crucial to design a didactic proposal whose activities were directed towards the aforementioned goal and motivated them in their performances. That is why the six lessons contain tasks that would make students practice the language orally at the same time they received the appropriate input to aid them accomplish the objectives.

Furthermore, the assessment of the study was not intended to be qualitative but quantitative. For the purpose of this analysis, it is more adequate that pupils utilised the resources in distinct contexts, so they were able to apply them whenever necessary.

As the results section will detail, the outcome of this process was quite positive and the students' satisfaction with the experiment was, in general terms, satisfactory.

3.2.2. Objectives

As previously stated, the main purpose of this research is to attempt to improve the speaking abilities of the students in their second language. Furthermore, the interaction among students was a primordial step in the process since that would be the way in which they practice the input previously introduced.

Consequently, the activities suggested in the didactic proposal contained some speaking strategies that pupils could utilise to make their speeches sound more natural. These strategies might benefit them in terms of time “buyers” like fillers, asking for a further explanation like the clarification checks or solely to acquire basic and useful expressions that can be used in their daily lives.

Thus, the first activity of the lesson was devoted to learning about the starting point of the students, to check their knowledge about the language at that point; and also to practise the interaction among students. The main objective of the second lesson of the proposal was to continue with the observation of the interaction among students, but also to practise the vocabulary about the unit since the activities should also be beneficial regarding their coursebook. In the third lesson, it was time to provide input on useful features to utilise during their speeches. In this case, different speaking strategies were introduced with several examples so pupils could observe and utilise them in the appropriate context. Afterwards, they were requested to practise these features so that they were able to put them into practice in the last lesson. Concerning the fourth lesson, the principal goal was to practise their speaking abilities, bearing in mind the features previously introduced. Moreover, teenagers were able to express their feelings and emotions in the second language with the aid of visual resources to strengthen their speeches. Already in the fifth lesson of the proposal, students were requested to perform the final role-play. The objective this time was to observe the interaction among students and to practise the vocabulary about the unit, recalling all the features that had been introduced during the previous lessons. That way, it could have been observed whether they had acquired the necessary competencies and whether, in general terms, the research had been successful. Finally, in the last lesson of the proposal, it was essential to examine the outcome of the students and to acknowledge if the methodologies had been successful. Therefore, pupils provided some very useful feedback about the

procedure, and they had the opportunity to self-assess themselves regarding their performance.

3.2.3. Materials

Concerning the materials utilised, the tables in the didactic proposal contain the resources that were necessary to conduct the activities. It must be noted that the school was fully equipped with the latest technology, something that facilitated the procedure.

Nonetheless, the materials employed in the sessions were quite simple to obtain. During the first lesson, which might be considered as the pre-task, students worked on the unit of their coursebook. Consequently, they only needed the books, pen and pencil. Afterwards, some pictures of the topic were displayed to create a discussion and review the vocabulary.

In the second lesson, the first role-play took place. Thus, it was required to provide the pictures and cards with the information of the context. After that, teenagers only needed a mobile phone to look for information on the internet, pencil and paper to note anything relevant for their performances. Also, a recorder was capital for a proper observation of the resources they have utilised.

Besides, since the third lesson was devoted to theoretical input, students only required a pencil and paper to write down their notes, and the teacher utilised the computer to display some examples. To practise this theory, the teacher provided some sheets so pupils could put the theory into practice.

On the other hand, the fourth session was more practical. Since students had to investigate around the high school to take a picture, they needed their mobile phones. Later on, they had

to prepare their exposition, so they were in need of paper and a pencil. Finally, to give a proper presentation, the computer was vital to display their pictures.

The fifth session was devoted to repeating their role-play. Since this task was similar to session 2, they required the exact same materials.

Concluding with the materials, the sixth session was dedicated to the post-task, meaning that they had to provide feedback on their experience with the experiment. First, the teacher gave students some feedback on their performances, so paper and pencil were necessary to write down these notes. After that, it was their time to give feedback to the teacher through a Mentimeter. Consequently, a computer and mobile phones were essential for this task. As a final activity, teenagers had to perform their self-assessment. They were able to do this freely, with more traditional means such as paper or on their own devices.

As mentioned above, this didactic proposal could have been applied to any context without the need of special or distinct materials since all the resources introduced are nowadays available in every classroom. Notwithstanding, some of the activities may be improved with the aid of technology for a more visual outcome. Having mentioned this, the final result of the experiment was, in general terms, quite successful.

3.2.4. Assessment instruments

This section will describe the assessment followed during the procedure. As mentioned above, the assessment of the analysis was not devoted to grading the students. Instead, it was interesting to observe whether the pupils utilised the resources that had been introduced in class throughout the didactic proposal and if they could apply them appropriately to a real-life situation.

Therefore, to properly assess the learners during this process, two different resources were necessary: a checklist and a questionnaire. The checklist will focus on whether the students employed the resources or not, whereas the questionnaire will gather feedback from students and their self-assessment.

3.2.4.1. Checklist

One of the tools employed to study the development of the pupils was a checklist. This list contains several resources that learners should resort to examine if they comprehended the lessons comprising the didactic proposal. Consequently, with the aid of the table below, it could be monitored the performance of the teenagers and consider the degree in which the objectives had been accomplished.

CHECKLIST	
Resort to native language	
Use of fillers	
Use of formulaic expressions	
Use of silence	
Asking for clarification	

Table 2 Checklist

Observing the table, the aspects that were followed to investigate the performance of the students were mainly the aforesaid speaking strategies. Some of these features denoted a positive development of the pupil whereas others solely indicated that in certain instances,

they were blocked.

For instance, if learners resorted to their native language rather than using formulaic expressions or asking for clarification, it signified that teenagers did not correctly comprehend the lessons. Furthermore, the use of silence in this specific context was not precisely beneficial for their speeches. Instead, they should use fillers to buy some additional time if they are thinking about a specific word or grammatical structure.

3.2.4.2. Questionnaire

On the other hand, during the last lesson of the proposal, students were kindly requested to complete a brief questionnaire on their performance and the procedure. It was vital to acknowledge if the experiment had been successful in terms of the outcome gathered from the final role-play, but also to observe if learners found it valuable and beneficial for their speeches.

Thus, through Mentimeter, they were able to answer anonymously to different questions to provide their own answers. Students could answer freely since there was no fixed answer. The objective was that the feedback was as constructive and specific as possible.

In further sections, it will be detailed the responses from this questionnaire with illustrations for a better understanding of the results. Nonetheless, some of the questions are the following:

“How would you define your experience throughout the process?”

“How do you think it could have been improved?”

“How would you rate the procedure? (1-10)”

“Do you think the speaking strategies helped you to improve your speaking skills?”

The following part will contain detailed information about the didactic unit, with illustrative

tables to follow each lesson exhaustively.

3.3. Didactic Unit

Having explained the procedure of the analysis, it is necessary to describe the way in which it was conducted. It is worth mentioning that the six lessons for this procedure had the intention of being motivating and beneficial for the students. Therefore, the activities designed should be entertaining and engaging, so pupils do not lose interest in the procedure.

The following tables contain the sessions designed for the didactic proposal, with the timing for each activity, a brief description of the tasks conducted and the objectives for each of them. Notwithstanding, the following illustration will summarise the number of lessons, main competencies and objectives followed throughout the proposal.

CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE PROPOSAL	
SUBJECTS/GROUP	5 students from 1 Baccaalaureate (16-17 years old)
SUBJECT AREA	ENGLISH
MAIN OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To learn about the starting point of the students. - To practise the interaction among students. - To observe the interaction among students. - To practise the vocabulary about the unit. - To provide input of useful features to use during the speaking process. - To practise the aforementioned features. - To practise their speaking abilities. - To express their feelings and emotions in the second language. - To analyse the final outcome of the students.

	- To acknowledge if the methodologies had been successful.
CONTENTS	Coursebook + Real content materials + Role-play
TIMING	6 sessions of 50 minutes
KEY COMPETENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCL - CD - CPAA - CSC - CEC - SIE

Table 3. Proposal's contextualisation

SESSION 1			
Pre-task			
OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To learn about the starting point of the students ● To practise the interaction among students 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCL ● CSC ● CD 	
TIMING		DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 session of 50 minutes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group work 	
DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS

Start unit 6	10'	Students covered the beginning of unit 6 which deals with the natural world. Consequently, during the first ten minutes of the lesson it was necessary to activate their knowledge about the topic. To do that, they had to answer the questions included in the coursebook and discuss about the topic.	-Pen/Pencil -Paper -Pictures
Vocabulary	15'	After introducing the topic, it was time to cover different expressions and vocabulary useful for this unit. Therefore, students worked on several activities from their coursebook in which they had to practise with phrasal verbs, adjectives, expressions, etc. to be used in the discussion later in the session.	-Paper -Pencil
Discussion	20'	<p>The main idea of this project was to improve the speaking skill of the pupils when learning a second language. Thus, it was capital to analyse their starting points to identify the elements that should be improved or introduced. To do so, students were asked to discuss about a topic for the remaining of the lesson. They were asked different questions about animals (since that is the main topic they were dealing with in the unit) that did not require any previous knowledge. Hence, they should be able to merely speak about the topic. This will help the researcher gather information about their interaction and speaking abilities in the second language. Some of the questions that were included: “Some people say animals do not have feelings, do you agree?” or “animals are only led by instincts, do you agree”?</p> <p>The main idea of this activity is to create a discussion among students to practise their speaking skills in English. Also, it was necessary to examine the difficulties they encountered when speaking in their second language, to plan the activities accordingly. It must be said that the discussion was recorded so further elements could be studied in detail afterwards.</p> <p>If a student did not agree with a classmate, they were kindly requested to show disagreement, which was essential to observe their interaction abilities.</p>	-Paper -Pencil

COMMENTS

During this session, both the linguistic and communicative competences were employed. Firstly, related to the linguistic competence, it was essential to provide theoretical input to the students to practise the grammar and vocabulary from the unit. This part followed a traditional teaching method in which the teacher was the provider of the information and the students were solely the audience. Afterwards, during the discussion activity, the communicative competence prevailed, since they had to interact with each other to practise the theory previously introduced. Therefore, this second half of the lesson would belong to a CLT approach since learners were the core of the learning process and they had to put the language in context.

Since this was the first lesson of the proposal, speaking strategies were still not introduced. However, it was vital to examine how they managed the silences, whether they resorted to their native language or not, how they asked when they did not comprehend a certain aspect, etc. These features would be afterwards improved with the aid of the speaking strategies.

ASSESSMENT

Regarding the assessment of the first lesson, it must be noted that the speaking strategies had not been introduced yet and consequently, it was not expected that students already used them. Nonetheless, it was vital to observe the production of the language of these pupils since in 1st of Bacallaureate, it was assumed that they were able to speak without major issues. Following their achievements from the previous course (4th ESO), they should be able to produce orally instances like dialogues, monologues of a medium length about general topics in both formal and informal registers. In addition, they should be able to conduct their speeches considering the sociolinguistic aspects related to daily life.

These aspects are vital for a proper development of the proposal since learners would cover them in the following sessions. Therefore, in this first lesson, the assessment was devoted to the examination of these features.

SESSION 2 Role-play	
OBJECTIVES	KEY COMPETENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe the interaction among students To practise the vocabulary about the unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCL CD CSC CPAA CEC SIE
TIMING	DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 session of 50 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work

DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS
Explanation	10'	<p>During the second lesson of the didactic proposal students were requested to perform a role-play related to the topic of the unit. It must be mentioned that the exact same role-play will be performed in the last lesson to observe the improvement of the students regarding their speaking abilities and analyse whether they have acquired the features implemented in the didactic proposal.</p> <p>Consequently, it was essential to explain the task to be conducted. The teacher asked the pupils whether they had ever performed a role-play before to identify whether they would be able to properly develop the activity. Furthermore, students were introduced the topic of the role-play and explained that it would be related to the unit they were covering in their coursebook.</p> <p>The role-play is a debate among different inhabitants of Vila-real to decide whether one specific activity will be included in the local festivities: bulls. Therefore, a meeting must be held to provide the upsides and downsides of this activity in the festivity.</p> <p>Students will need to perform a given character to fulfil this necessity.</p> <p>Additionally, the teacher provided several web pages to resort to in case pupils required further assistance regarding their role, with ideas to utilise in their speeches.</p>	<p>-Pen/Pencil -Paper -Pictures -Cards with information</p>
Role distribution	5'	<p>After introducing the task, it was time now to distribute the different characters that would take place in the role-play. To do that, the teacher handed in specific cards with crucial information about each character (see Annex 1). With these details, a proper background for each role could be prepared.</p> <p>The characters that have been included in the role-play are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cattle breeder: The local cattle breeder of the town, invited to the meeting to provide his/her point of view on the topic. - City councillor: The representative of the city hall organising the local festivities of the town. - PACMA/PETA: Representative of the animalist party attempting to fight for animals' rights. 	<p>-Cards with characters</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veterinarian: A well-known veterinarian in the town attending the meeting to support the prohibition of the activity. - Neighbourhood association: The head of the neighbourhood association whose main objective is to stop this celebration, since it disturbs the peace of the citizens. <p>It must be mentioned that the roles had a specific position in the debate (for or against) and the students should stick to that belief.</p>	
Preparation	15'	Once the roles were distributed, pupils were given fifteen minutes to prepare for the activity. They should not make a script to merely read it during the role-play. Instead, the main objective was to arrange different ideas to be utilised during the task. Hence, the webpages introduced beforehand were highly useful to plan their speeches.	-Mobile phones -Paper -Pen/pencil
Role-play	20'	During the last part of the lesson, the role-play was performed. The objective of this section was to study the interaction between students and to observe the difficulties they faced when speaking in their second language (similar to the pre-task phase). Thus, the role-play was recorded to study the speaking process in detail.	-Notes -Recorder

COMMENTS

During the second session the communicative competence was preferred since the entire lesson was devoted to the interaction among students and the production of the language orally in a specific context (role-play). In this case, a theoretical explanation was not needed since students had to prepare their speeches according to certain characters. Thus, CLT approach was employed since students were the base of the learning process and the teacher was merely a facilitator and errors were tolerated. This session could be considered the starting point of all the experiment since it was crucial to observe students' production of the language orally. Speaking strategies were still not introduced but on very rare occasions fillers could be noted: "Em...Um..."

After this session, the strategies will be introduced to help them improve their discourse.

ASSESSMENT

During the second lesson, since pupils were requested to perform an initial role-play, the assessment was based on the employment of the aforementioned features that they had acquired in the previous course. More specifically, it was interesting for the study to observe how they developed in this sociolinguistic context (a debate) and whether they utilised the proper register (formal). Besides, interaction is essential within this context, so it was also part of the assessment to analyse how students interacted with each other.

SESSION 3 Theoretical input			
OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide input of useful features to use during the speaking process. To practise the aforementioned features. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCL CD 	
TIMING		DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 session of 50 minutes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual & Group work 	
DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS
Fillers	10'	<p>The main goal of this lesson was to provide a specific input for students regarding their speaking abilities. Once having observed their discourses and having recognised the issues when speaking their second language, it was essential to offer tools they can resort to whenever they feel necessary.</p> <p>Consequently, the first part of the lecture was devoted to fillers. Pupils needed to comprehend that when they do not know how to utter a specific word in English or they are thinking of the proper structure to say something, the use of fillers is a magnificent tool to help them.</p> <p>In this case, the teacher handed in a sheet with several examples of fillers so they would be able to practise them with their partners repeating them out loud and saying an example of each of them (See Annex 2).</p> <p>Besides, a video was displayed in which they were able to study the speech of an influencer and the frequency in which she used the fillers. (See Annex 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pen/Pencil -Paper -Sheets -Computer
Useful expressions	15'	<p>Once the fillers were covered, it was time to cover several useful expressions that would be helpful to utilise in their speaking (see Annexes 4-5). Therefore, students were requested to translate specific expressions that were employed in debates, so that they would be able to replicate them in English.</p> <p>The idea was to make them realise that sometimes, the expressions that they would naturally use in Spanish to argue about something,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pen/pencil -Sheets

		<p>changed slightly in the second language. For example, they had to translate utterances such as “Estoy de acuerdo contigo” or “No, de ninguna manera” to observe how the structure of the sentences, the syntax, changed in this second language.</p> <p>Therefore, the sentences that would be translated into “I agree with you” and “Not at all” respectively, would be incredibly helpful towards the last task of the didactic proposal, which was the role-play.</p>	
Debate tips	20’	<p>Apart from merely providing input of the grammar and syntax of the language, it was also necessary to offer an accurate explanation of other elements that are present during a speech.</p> <p>In this case, pupils will learn some features appearing in a debate such as the turn-taking, how to start and end a conversation and the politeness. Similar to the previous activity, the teacher asked the students if they knew the procedure of a standard debate and provided the missing features that should appear in such instances.</p> <p>Afterwards, a video was displayed to offer a more detailed example on a debate in their second language. That way, a more natural instance of a debate in English could be provided.</p>	-Pen/pencil -Paper -Sheets
Agreeing / Disagreeing	5’	<p>To conclude with the lesson, pupils were arranged in pairs to practise the aforementioned features. Hence, the teacher wrote on the whiteboard some statements and they had to agree or disagree with their partner.</p> <p>For example, one statement was:” Animals are way more protective than humans”. Once having analysed the sentence, they had to agree or disagree with their partner in a proper and suitable way.</p>	-Pen/pencil -Paper

COMMENTS

This third lesson of the didactic unit was related to the theoretical input necessary after observing students’ performances in the initial role-play. Hence, the vast majority of the lesson followed the linguistic competence, since the introduction of the speaking strategies and some debate tips was essential. Consequently, a more traditional teaching approach was employed in which the learning process was centred on the teacher rather than the students.

However, in the last activity of the lesson, learners were requested to assemble in pairs to practise the agreeing and

disagreeing techniques. Thus, in this case the communicative competence prevailed, following a CLT approach.

In the last activity, students should use the strategies previously introduced to agree and disagree (formulaic expressions) and fillers as part of their discourses.

ASSESSMENT

In this lesson, pupils received the theoretical input that would be indispensable towards their next lessons. Hence, the assessment of this third lecture was based on the last activity in which they had to practise the resources previously introduced. Solely with a checklist, the teacher observed whether learners resorted to the appropriate tools for agreeing/disagreeing (mainly the formulaic expressions).

SESSION 4 Fotopalabra			
OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practise their speaking abilities To express their feelings and emotions in the second language. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCL CD CSC CPAA 	
TIMING		DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 session of 50 minutes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work 	
DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS
Explanation	10'	<p>The fourth lesson of this didactic proposal was devoted to an activity named 'Fotopalabra'. The main goal of this activity is to make students be able to practise speaking in their second language without the need of having a previous knowledge in the subject. Thus, by solely displaying specific pictures as in the example (see Annex 6), pupils should express their feelings towards the situation or circumstance depicted in the picture.</p> <p>Ideally, a debate would be created so that students are able to share their opinions regarding the photos of their classmates and freely discuss about the topic.</p> <p>Consequently, since this is perhaps a challenging and different activity from the ones that they are accustomed to, the first ten minutes of the lesson were strictly devoted to a thorough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pen/Pencil -Paper -Pictures -Computer

		<p>explanation of the activity.</p> <p>Besides, for a more accurate practice, the teacher displayed different photos related to the unit and the students were requested to express their emotions.</p>	
Investigation	10'	<p>Once the activity was comprehended, pupils were allowed to move freely within the high school in order to find a picture that transmitted them a strong feeling or emotion.</p> <p>As soon as they spotted the image, they just needed to take a picture of it and send it to the teacher's email to be displayed to the rest of their classmates.</p>	-Mobile phone
Preparation	10'	<p>After sending the pictures and returning to the classroom, pupils were requested to prepare their speeches to share the picture they have selected to the rest of the class.</p> <p>To do that, they were allowed to investigate on the internet whatever they required to and make a short presentation resuming the main ideas of the feeling transmitted.</p>	-Paper -Pen/pencil
Presentation	20'	<p>One by one students showed their pictures to the rest of the class expressing the emotions they have felt when analysing the image. Although the duration of the presentation was merely a couple of minutes each, the classmates had to ask questions to the presenter creating a debate on the topic.</p> <p>Once the pupils finished the presentations and their feelings were expressed, the teacher provided feedback regarding their speaking abilities and whether they have utilised the features introduced in the previous lessons or not.</p>	-Pictures -Computer

COMMENTS

In this lesson, a communicative competence was preferred. Students were requested to take a photo of something that affected them and share it with the rest of the pupils. Thus, a CLT approach was followed since errors were tolerated and the teacher was just an instructor and not the core of the learning process. Learners should employ the previously introduced speaking strategies such as fillers, formulaic expressions, asking for clarification, etc.

ASSESSMENT

In the fourth lesson, students were requested to perform a very specific activity: Fotopalabra. Since they had to express the feelings that a certain picture provoked, the oral production of the language was key. As mentioned above, it was expected that pupils would arrange their monologues with the proper structure (acquired during their previous course, 4th ESO), following a formal register since they were giving a presentation about that picture.

Additionally, with the aid of a checklist, it was necessary to examine whether learners resorted to the speaking strategies, like fillers or formulaic expressions, that would help them to make their discourses more fluent and natural.

SESSION 5 Final role-play			
OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe the interaction among students To practise the vocabulary about the unit 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCL CD CSC CPAA CEC SIE 	
TIMING		DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 session of 50 minutes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work 	
DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS
Explanation	10'	<p>During the second lesson of the didactic proposal students were requested to perform a role-play related to the topic of the unit. It must be mentioned that this is the exact same role-play that was performed in the first lesson. The main objective of this task was to observe whether pupils acquired the knowledge we had been implementing during the previous lessons and if so, if they were able to apply it into a real-life context.</p> <p>Consequently, it was necessary to refresh the procedure of the task to be conducted. The teacher asked the pupils whether they recalled the task and the protagonists and provided any relevant and necessary feedback. Since the role-play was closely related to the unit they were covering in the coursebook, all the contents were familiar and no difficulties were found.</p> <p>Additionally, the teacher reminded the students about the use of several web pages regarding debates that were introduced in the first lesson of the didactic proposal. In this case, they had to utilise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pen/Pencil -Paper -Pictures -Cards with information

		them for a proper preparation of their speeches, without the assistance of the teacher.	
Role distribution	5'	<p>After reintroducing the task, it was time now to distribute the different characters that would take place in the second role-play. To do that, the teacher handed in specific cards with crucial information about each character (see Annex 1). With these details, a proper background for each role could be prepared.</p> <p>The characters that have been included in this second role-play are the same as the initial task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cattle breeder: The local cattle breeder of the town, invited to the meeting to provide his/her point of view on the topic. - City councillor: The representative of the city hall organising the local festivities of the town. - PACMA/PETA: Representative of the animalist party attempting to fight for animals' rights. - Veterinarian: A well-known veterinarian in the town attending the meeting to support the prohibition of the activity. - Neighbourhood association: The head of the neighbourhood association whose main objective is to stop this celebration since it disturbs the peace of the citizens. <p>These roles had a specific position in the debate (for or against) and the students should stick to that belief.</p>	-Cards with characters
PREPARATION	15'	Once the roles were distributed, pupils were given fifteen minutes to prepare for the activity. It was necessary to remind them that the idea was not to make a script just to repeat what they wanted to say. Instead, they were requested to write down a few notes so they could resort to them in case they lacked of ideas. Therefore, their speeches should be spontaneous and they truly practised their speaking ability.	-Paper -Pencil -Mobile phones
Role-play	20'	During the last part of the lesson, the role-play was performed. The objective of this section was to study the interaction between students and to observe whether they employed the methodologies and abilities previously introduced. Again, the final role-play was recorded to study the speaking process in detail and the assessment would consider both their speeches and the use of the	-Notes -Recorder

		methodologies implemented in class.	
COMMENTS			
<p>Similarly to the second lesson, during the fifth lesson the communicative competence prevailed over the linguistic one. Students had to perform the final role-play in which they had to put in practice the aspects learnt throughout the proposal. Again, the CLT approach was employed since students were the base of the learning process and the teacher was merely a facilitator and errors were tolerated.</p> <p>In this case, they had to employ the speaking strategies for a successful outcome of the experiment, such as the fillers “Uhm...Err...”, formulaic expressions (Shall I start?) or asking for clarification (Sorry, could you repeat that?).</p>			
ASSESSMENT			
<p>This lesson was the core of the analysis, since students were requested to perform the final role-play which would indicate the development of the participants. As aforementioned, they were expected to produce a dialogue with their classmates in which they had to debate about a certain topic. Therefore, the proper structure and register should be used. Besides, sociolinguistic elements were extremely relevant and should be carefully considered, together with the interaction among students.</p> <p>On the other hand, speaking strategies should be employed. Again, with a checklist, the teacher observed whether participants employed these resources or not, since they should introduce at least fillers, formulaic expressions and asking for clarification techniques.</p>			

SESSION 6			
Post-task			
OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyse the final outcome of the students. To acknowledge if the methodologies had been successful. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCL CD CPAA 	
TIMING		DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 session of 50 minutes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual work Group work 	
DEVELOPMENT			
ACTIVITY	TIMING	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS

Feedback	10-15'	<p>During the last lesson of the didactic proposal, it was time to provide students with some feedback on their performances. Hence, the teacher prepared some instances of their speeches in which pupils were able to analyse how they completed the task and how to improve it. It must be mentioned that this feedback was not merely based on pronunciation and grammar, but also on the methodologies and aspects that were implemented in class, such as the use of fillers, useful expressions, agreeing and disagreeing, etc.</p> <p>Afterwards, students were able to ask about any uncertainties they had and to clear doubts about the procedure.</p>	-Paper
Mentimeter	20-25'	<p>Once the feedback was provided, it was imperative to be informed about their opinion on the process. In these circumstances it is not solely the teachers who have to provide feedback, they also need to receive it.</p> <p>Consequently, through a Mentimeter (see Annex 7), pupils were able to express their thoughts and their experience and also, to describe their experience in class. Additionally, students explained whether they considered the methodology useful and if they have learnt useful resources.</p> <p>This activity allowed the teacher to create a debate in which students were able to express themselves and talk freely about their experiences. They were informed that this debate would not be part of the assessment, so they were able to freely utter their opinion.</p> <p>It is worth quoting that according to pupils, they felt that their fluency in English has improved considerably and they enjoyed doing something different in class.</p>	-Mobile Phones -Computer
Self-assessment	15'	<p>It was also interesting to comprehend the assessment of the students to their own performance. Apart from their perspective of the activities themselves, they should be able to grade and assess their own participation and development in the tasks.</p> <p>Consequently, fifteen minutes were devoted to this procedure, in which learners, individually, were able to provide their own perspective of the learning process. It was required that they provided an explanation and reasoning behind this assessment, not only in terms of the use of the language, but also participation and engagement in the tasks.</p> <p>With this information, the teacher was able to analyse from a different perspective the success of the methodologies and bear in mind the necessities and contribution of the participants.</p>	-Pencil -Paper

COMMENTS

On the last lesson of the proposal, new theory was not introduced and consequently, it was utilised the communicative competence. The aim of these activities was that students assessed their own performances (they had to do it orally). Besides, they had to provide feedback on the procedure and they were able to do it through Mentimeter and debates. It could be said that the CLT approach was followed since the focus remained on the students since their feedback was capital. Throughout the activities, students should use some of the strategies introduced like the fillers or formulaic expressions for an accurate discourse.

ASSESSMENT

During the last lesson of the proposal, it was time to provide feedback on their performances. Not only the teacher should be able to provide this feedback, but also participants regarding the experiment. Thus, the assessment considered the production of well-structured dialogues with the appropriate register.

Concerning the speaking strategies, even though this section of the proposal did not focus on assessing the students, it was highly appreciated if they resorted to the speaking strategies previously introduced. A checklist was not necessary but the teacher was able to observe the development of their speaking skills with these resources. Hence, this lecture focused more on the feedback of the experiment than on its assessment.

4. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The following section is going to describe the results obtained in the experiment. As claimed above, one of the main objectives of this study was to improve the speaking abilities of the students. After the observation sessions, it could be noted the lack of the pupils in their speeches. Consequently, this was a magnificent opportunity to introduce the speaking strategies which might assist them in their speaking.

Besides, since the class in which the experiment was conducted contained a reduced number of students (5), this section will focus on the development of each individual rather than merely providing a general outcome of the procedure. Taking this into account, the results will be presented in different tables, each of them containing the individual performance of each student. With the aid of this information, it will be possible to examine the development of teenagers individually regarding their speaking abilities. Additionally, it will also be

feasible to observe whether the procedure has been successful and if pupils achieved the established goals.

Moreover, it is important to mention that this project is based on a case study methodology. As Crowe et al. (2011) suggest, it is a research approach conducted to reach a comprehension of a complicated issue in a real-life situation. The main principle of this approach is to explore a phenomenon in detail in its natural context. Following this idea, Green and Thorogood (2009) defined it as the study of one particular case to comprehend in detail its nature and context.

Consequently, it is an extremely valuable resource to employ when it is imperative to observe a matter in its natural and real-life environment. Besides, there are three different types of case studies that should be considered within this approach: an intrinsic case to learn about a particular scenario, an instrumental case to explore a situation broadly and a collective case to study different matters at the same time.

Hence, this investigation will follow an intrinsic case study technique to thoroughly examine a particular situation and to provide a solution for this matter.

4.1. Students' outcome: a case study

This section contains the most relevant instances from students gathered both from the initial and final role-play. Therefore, a thorough comparison will be made to examine the first and last outcome and determine each students' development.

Student 1

In this section it will be detailed the development of each of the speakers throughout the process. Therefore, a brief description of each student is essential to contextualise the procedure.

Regarding student 1, initially she resorted to her native language every time a word was unknown or to express something imitating the same grammatical structure. The vast majority of the formulaic expressions introduced were not familiar to the students, and neither were the fillers. Additionally, asking for clarification was not a technique that was utilised during her speeches, and consequently, the speaking strategies were barely employed. In general terms, the English level was not poor, but sometimes the discourse was inaccurate. Having mentioned this, the initial role-play indicated that the lack in her speech could be improved with the introduction of some speaking strategies. Besides, the use of silence that was emerging during the talks could be replaced by fillers to make the discourse sound more natural. In terms of grammar and vocabulary, it must be noted that since the students were in first of baccalaureate, they were able to maintain a conversation without major issues. Nonetheless, some grammatical structures and vocabulary from the unit should be introduced to improve their abilities.

Some of the examples that were observed during the first role-play are the following:

“Empiezas tu?”

*“As I’ve been in charge of this... ***silence***... local festivities for many years... ***silence***...I know that... ***silence***...bullfighting is a very positive tradition...”*

*“What do you think?... **Alguien?**”*

In the previous instances, speaker 1 resorted to her native language whenever she wanted to ask something that was unclear in English. Some of these expressions might be replaced by the formulaic expressions that, afterwards, would be introduced in the lessons. Instead of the *“Empiezas tú”*, students should use *“Shall I start?”*. On the other hand, when she was asking for opinions and nobody answered, a specific person should have been addressed directly,

such as: “*What do you think, Speaker 2?*”. These techniques may aid their speeches to sound more natural.

On the other hand, silence can be extremely helpful in specific situations. However, in the role-play where they had to perform a meeting to decide on the activities to take place in the local festivities, perhaps it was not the best resource to resort to. Therefore, in this specific situation, fillers would assist speakers to fill in those gaps when they are thinking of a specific grammar structure or when a word is not recalled.

After completing the planned sessions, as a last task, participants were requested to perform a final role-play. As it has been exposed, it was the exact same role-play as the initial activity, but this time the main objective was to observe whether students utilised the resources and tools previously introduced. Thus, student 1 uttered the following:

“Speaker 2, do you want to start?”

*“So I have been in charge... *er*... of these local festivities for many years... *er*... I know that bullfighting...”*

“What are your thoughts on this, Speaker 3?”

Comparing these examples with the initial role-play, in this case the participant employed some of the resources that were introduced throughout the lessons. Fillers were utilised whenever some silences had to be filled and that might make their speech more natural. Additionally, it could have been examined that the use of formulaic expressions aided them to start the conversations, ask for opinions, etc.

Nonetheless, in this instance in specific, some other speaking strategies such as asking for clarification were not used, perhaps because this technique was not remembered or simply was not needed. In general terms, it could be claimed that Student 1 resorted to the techniques and its discourse was fluent and sounded fairly more natural.

Student 2

The following lines will contain some instances regarding student 2's performance. In general terms, this participant had a decent level of the language, but in some circumstances, like student 1, she felt it necessary to resort to her native language. Also, during her speech, whenever she did not know how to utter something, or a given word was unknown, she remained silent. Besides, whenever it was needed to ask for clarification, the way she asked it might have been too direct. Probably, this is due to the influence of their native language, but in English, it sounded in some cases, impolite. Some examples of speaker two would be the following:

*“As a representative member of... *silence*...an association for saving animals... *silence*... PACMA...”*

“Animals should have the same... ¿derechos? ... rights as humans”

“Speaker 3: But money can be provided in many ways... [indistinguishable]”

Speaker 2: What, what?”

Consequently, similarly to student 1, the use of silence could be replaced by the use of fillers. That way, the conversation would be more natural and fluent among speakers. On the other hand, utilising the native language is something that is reasonably common in this context whenever a specific word is unknown. In this scenario, fillers could be helpful to buy some time or also circumlocution to describe that word. Moreover, as described above, that way of asking for clarification might sound a bit too rude and direct. Hence, the use of the speaking strategy, such as asking for clarification, would amend it. To investigate the development of Student 2, some specific instances should be noted:

“Well, I am a representative member of PACMA, so I think...”

“To be honest... I think animals should have the same rights as humans”

“Speaker 3: There is this metallic structure that you can use instead of a bull.”

Speaker 2: Can you repeat that?

Speaker 3: Yes, I mean there is a metallic structure that we can use instead of a bull...”

It is observed in the previous instances that in the final role-play, some speaking strategies were employed to assist them in their speeches. In this paper, only those who were significant for the study are gathered, like the ones above.

Thus, student 2 resorted to the use of fillers to replace the awkward silences that appear in a normal conversation. By doing this, it could be noted that the discourse sounds more innate and fluent. Furthermore, asking for clarification was essential to comprehend the specific instance that the classmate was introducing. In that case, it was used to understand this metallic structure that is common in local festivities to resemble a normal bull. Also, in some situations from these examples, fillers were beneficial to buy some time when she was recalling a specific word. On the other hand, some cases of formulaic expressions could not have been gathered since perhaps, this certain strategy was not necessary.

Broadly speaking, similarly to student 1, student 2 employed some of the speaking strategies that were introduced throughout the didactic proposal, and it might be assumed that the discourse was natural and fluent. However, if additional strategies would have been utilised, it would have certainly aided her to amend some mistakes in her performance.

Student 3

Regarding student 3's performance, despite being all participants in the same class and, on average, on the same level of English, it must be said that sometimes she struggled during her speech. Probably, not because the level was insufficient, but in some cases, perhaps the discourse was somehow poor. Thus, in this specific context, the speaking strategies might assist the learner in the production of the language, as it did with her classmates. Some instances of the performance of this pupil can be analysed below:

“No, that is not true”

“But the... ¿ayuntamiento?...”

“Speaker 4: But it is an exception, it is not what always happens

*Speaker 3: **What?**”*

Observing in detail the performance of the pupil, sometimes the language utilised was too direct and rude (“that is not true / What?”), something that may be improved with the assistance of the formulaic expressions. Furthermore, since most of the words that were uttered in the role-play had been introduced throughout the unit, they did know what they wanted to say, but they needed some time to recall how they wanted to express themselves. For that specific scenario, the use of fillers is an extraordinary resource that they can resort to whenever buying time is necessary. On the other hand, when something was unclear or confusing, the way the student asked for clarification may sound too harsh or direct. Hence, some formulaic expressions could be introduced to improve her performance.

Notwithstanding, some relevant examples of student 3’s improvement are studied below:

*“I don’t really **agree** with you...”*

*“**Actually**, the city council did not...”*

“Speaker 4: If something happens you need to pay for it

*Speaker 3: **You mean** like a compensation?”*

Some speaking strategies were employed in the final role-play. For example, to show disagreement with a certain statement, the student uttered some of the formulaic expressions for this purpose (I agree with you, I do not agree with you...) which made the speech more natural. On the other hand, fillers were also used as time buyers to recall a specific word or expression, as it is observed in the examples above. Additionally, since during the second role-play, some specific examples were again confusing, asking for clarification was resorted to in order to comprehend what the other speaker was attempting to express.

Consequently, in this discourse, the speaker resorted to the speaking strategies that had been implemented in the didactic proposal. As a consequence, the discourse seems to have improved considerably, and the performance was, in general terms, prosperous. Besides, it should also be noted that this specific student tried to use the words and expressions from the unit, something that surely adds extra value to her speaking development. Therefore, similarly to the previous learners, this student also experienced a magnificent development in her speaking abilities following the didactic proposal and the tips introduced throughout the lesson.

Student 4

This section will be devoted to the performance of the fourth participant in the experiment. In this case, she had in general terms a fantastic level of English and consequently, the performance was acceptable. Moreover, it was a teenager who was always participating in the lessons and always eager to learn about the language. Nonetheless, some instances should be noted to try to improve the discourse of this pupil:

“But if the city council pays for the... molestias”

“What did you say?”

“Yes, and also bullfighting can...”

Concerning the performance of this learner, some similarities are found with the previous speaker. In some contexts, when she required to recall a specific word, instead of buying some more time, she resorted to her native language. Sometimes the word may be unknown to students, but in this case, it was part of the unit and the example was uttered in the initial role-play. Instead of attempting to remember the word, she requested some assistance uttering

the word in Spanish. Thus, fillers would have helped her remember the term, buying some more time. Furthermore, the asking for clarification methodologies analysed in the first role-play may sound too rude. In a real-life context, the expression “What did you say?” could be interpreted as a defiance and it should be replaced following the formality of the situation. Finally, when a new topic was introduced, students did not have the knowledge of how to do that appropriately or fluently. Hence, some strategies could be used to improve that situation. Hereby, it will be detailed with specific examples the development of the performance of this speaker:

*“I think the city council should not pay for the... **um**....inconveniences, because...”*

*“Sorry, **could you repeat that?**”*

*“**In addition to that**, bullfighting can also...”*

In this final version of the role-play, some instances of the speaking strategies were introduced which surely should be worth mentioning. To start with, the learner utilised fillers to fill in those silences whenever she was recalling a specific word. It was essential to make them aware of the fact that this resource might be beneficial for their speeches and they should employ it whenever possible. Besides, it is examined an example in which the speaker did not comprehend what was being said. In that case, fairly politely she asked for a clarification and to repeat the instance. This expression was truly natural and the conversation continued smoothly. Moreover, adding an extra idea was appropriately performed as seen in the example:” In addition to that...”

In general terms, the performance of this student improved in the final version of the role-play and the introduction of the speaking strategies seems to have aided her to accomplish the objectives previously established.

Student 5

To conclude with the description of the participants involved in the study, this last section will deal with the features of student 5. This learner also showed eagerness to learn and participate and it should be noted that her level of the language was, in general terms, acceptable. However, in the same way as her classmates, some aspects should be discussed to attempt to improve the performance of her speaking. Some of the examples spotted in the initial role-play are the following:

“Madre mía...”

*“The.... *silence*...the... *silence*...the only thing a bull can do is...”*

*“Yeah festivities but without **making...making...these kind of activities**”*

Some instances were uttered straight in her native language, whenever the pupil wanted to express disagreement on something that someone else mentioned. In this case, there are certain formulaic expressions to express disagreement that could replace the Spanish expression. Besides, as it has been previously mentioned, the silence was still present in this discourse. Again, silence might be fairly beneficial in a normal conversation but not in this context since it was used to recall a given grammatical structure. Thus, fillers would be a more natural strategy to fulfil this purpose. On the other hand, repetition of the same word was observed just to express a specific grammatical structure. Again, fillers should be employed to avoid this repetition and make the discourse more natural and fluent.

Student 5's final performance is observed in detail highlighting the following examples gathered from the final role-play:

*“No, **I am not sure about that...**”*

*“Yeah, **actually that is another thing, why do you put fire in the horns of the bulls?**”*

*“**To be honest, I don't think that these activities....**”*

As pointed above, solely the instances worth examining should be detailed in this section. Following this premise, in the final role-play of the fifth participant of the study, a general improvement is sensed. The first example is directly related to showing disagreement, an aspect that was mentioned earlier and that had to be improved. Furthermore, since fillers were unfamiliar to students and were introduced after the initial role-play, some examples of this strategy are found in the examples above. Out of the several examples of fillers gathered in her discourse, the instance included in this section may demonstrate a fluent and natural manner of stating a topic. Another example of a properly utilised filler was employed when the speaker wanted to give her opinion on something, as it can be seen above: “To be honest...”

The final performance of this learner could be defined as successful since, in her speech, she introduced a great number of speaking strategies. Considering this, the discourse was notably enriched and the objectives were accomplished.

After introducing the speakers and their instances, the following table will briefly summarise the strategies employed by each individual in the final role-play:

Learner	Strategies
Student 1	Fillers / Formulaic expressions
Student 2	Fillers / Asking for clarification
Student 3	Fillers / Formulaic expressions / Asking for clarification
Student 4	Fillers / Formulaic expressions / Asking for clarification
Student 5	Fillers / Formulaic expressions

Table 4 Strategies employed

As examined in table 4, the strategy that was resorted the most was the fillers, since in specific situations, learners needed some additional time to recall a specific word or expression. On the other hand, formulaic expressions were remarkably valuable to agree or disagree, open and close a debate, asking for opinion, etc. Lastly, asking for clarification was utilised by 3 of the speakers. Despite not being so recurrent as the previous strategies, it was highly effective to clarify any matter that seemed confusing.

Having exposed the performances of all the students involved in the study, it should be mentioned that in general terms, they all resorted to the speaking strategies introduced in the didactic proposal. Since one of the objectives of this paper is to observe whether the use of these resources aided to improve the speaking skills of the students, it should be concluded that the objectives of the experiment were accomplished and were satisfactory.

Nonetheless, the following section will describe the satisfaction of the students with the procedure to examine whether the feedback was positive or negative. Additionally, these results will assist in comprehending if the outcome has been satisfactory and if any aspect, in particular, should have been implemented to improve the procedure.

4.2. Questionnaire results

As mentioned above, this section will contain the results gathered from the test during the post-task session. This time, it was essential to obtain feedback from students considering their satisfaction with the procedure, how it could have been improved and whether they considered it was beneficial for their speaking skills or not.

To perform this task, students were requested to answer some specific questions through the platform Mentimeter. It must be mentioned that pupils were able to answer the questions anonymously, so the teacher would not know who gave a specific answer. This was a relevant

aspect of the process, not because students were marked according to their answers. Instead, the main objective was to allow teenagers to answer freely and without any kind of pressure.

In Annex 7 it is examined the questions that were directed to the students. The goal of these interrogations was to discover if learners were satisfied with the activities introduced and if they considered them to be helpful. Hence, some examples of the questions with their answers are the following:

How would you define your experience throughout the process??

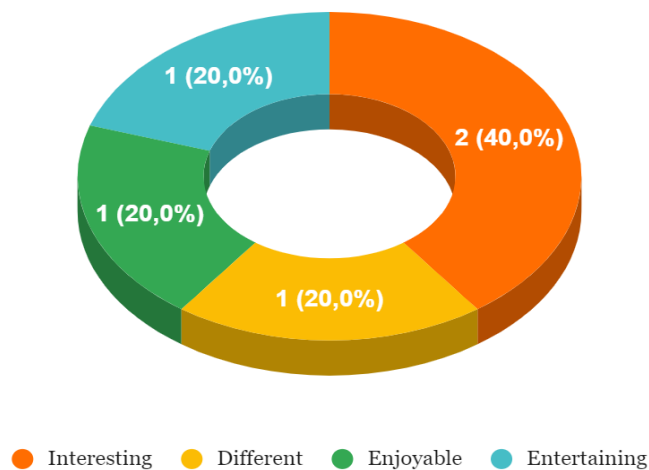


Figure 1 Students' experience

This interrogation was devoted to monitor the feelings the students had towards the procedure, to acknowledge whether they felt content and satisfied with the investigation and their performances once having finalised it. As it has been previously quoted, it was vital that learners felt comfortable with the activities so they would be more likely to participate and engage with them. Observing the answers, it might be concluded that in general terms, all the participants were satisfied with the activities proposed in the didactic proposal.

How do you think it could have been improved?

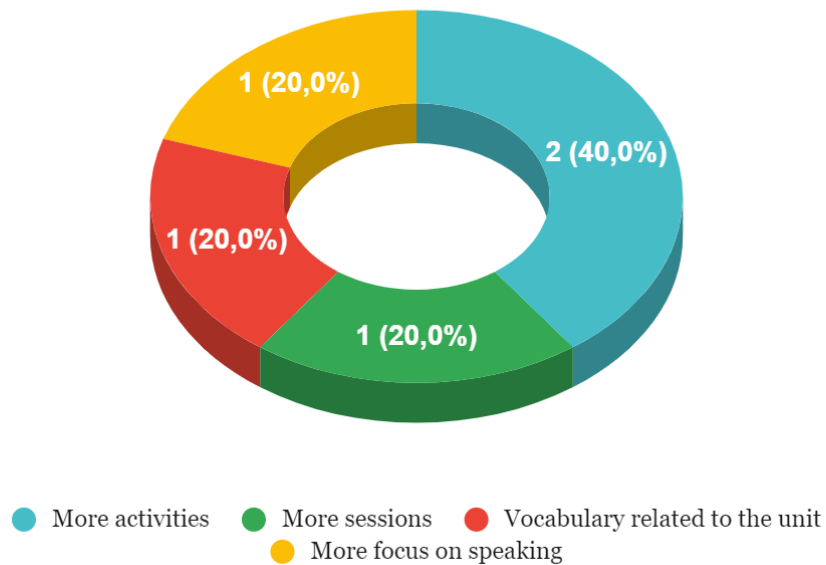


Figure 2 Improvements

Despite the positive results gathered from the previous question, it was also necessary to comprehend how this investigation could be improved. Hence, the second question was directed right at that objective. Learners suggested doing more activities, dealing with more vocabulary related to the unit, doing more sessions and focusing more on their speaking skills. It is significant to receive this feedback to improve the activities designed in the didactic unit in further investigations.

How would you rate the procedure? (1-10)

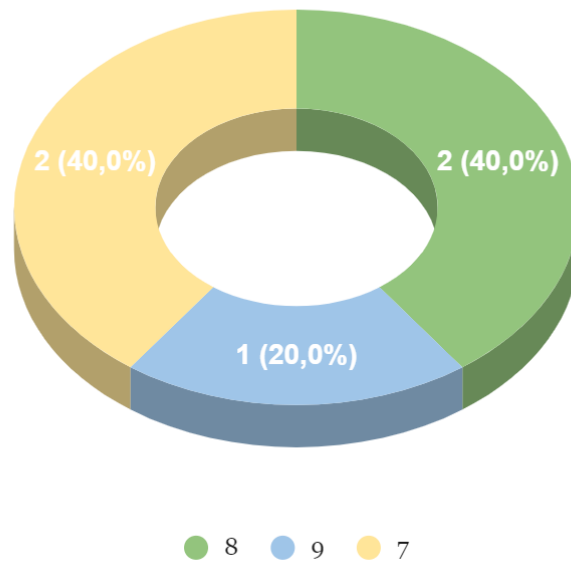


Figure 3 Procedure

This third question had the intention to receive a numeric value from the experiment. Therefore, learners had to mark the procedure from 1 to 10, being 1 the least satisfactory outcome and 10 the most satisfactory one. This interrogation is similar to the first one, but in this case it was important to observe the numerical satisfaction, to recognise if the project had been successful from the perspective of the students.

Do you think the speaking strategies helped you to improve your speaking skills?

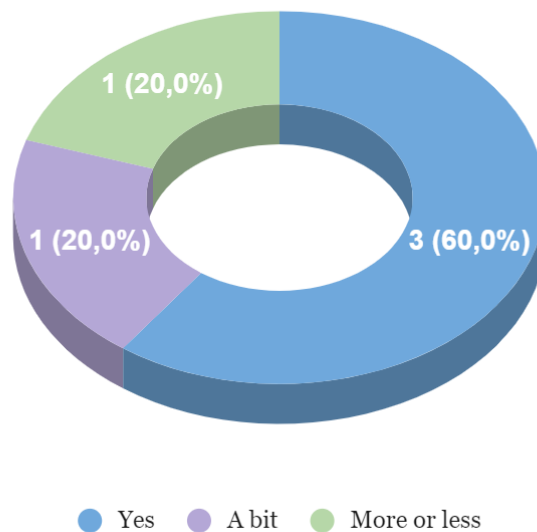


Figure 4 Contentment

The last question directly answers one of the research questions. This time, apart from the results examined in the previous section, it was relevant to observe the degree of satisfaction according to the participants. Thus, when they were asked if they considered the speaking abilities beneficial for their speeches, the answers proved that they were. Therefore, comparing the results from their performances and their perspectives, a match is appreciated meaning that in general terms, the procedure was successful.

The platform allowed them to provide a free choice answer and consequently, they could give the feedback they wanted to. Besides, it was anonymous, so if any learner in particular had any feeling of discontent, it could be expressed voluntarily.

Analysing the answers from the questionnaire (see Annex 7), in general terms it can be claimed that students were content with the proposal. They found the procedure interesting,

fun and different. Therefore, since they were asked to do something unusual in class, they were extremely motivated to perform the tasks. On the other hand, learners agreed that it could have been improved with more sessions containing several activities. Nonetheless, since the study was conducted during an internship, the number of lessons available was limited. All pupils rated the procedure from 7-10, which may show a degree of satisfaction favourable. Additionally, one of the key questions was to discover whether the speaking strategies introduced in class had been effective towards improving the speaking skills of the students. According to the learners, these strategies were extremely helpful and they were not hesitant to use them permanently in their discourses.

Considering the aforementioned and analysing the instances from the final role-play, it might be claimed that the didactic proposal introduced in this specific context was successful. In the examples above, learners introduced some of the strategies introduced in class. Those made their speeches sound more natural and fluent in English. Besides, pupils were satisfied with the results and that is an aspect incredibly relevant for the results of the study. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct the same study in a different context to observe if similar results would be achieved.

5. LIMITATIONS

The following section will describe the limitations of the study. First of all, it must be mentioned that in general terms, the observation was conducted successfully and some results were achieved. Nevertheless, some limitations were found that should be included in this part.

First of all, as mentioned above, the class in which the study was conducted belonged to *Bachibac* and consequently, the students had additional French hours in their schedules. Thus, in some situations they had to travel abroad and were absent for several days. This meant that some lessons of the didactic proposal had to be postponed. Consequently, when pupils returned to school, some concepts and aspects of the experiment had to be refreshed and at the beginning of the activities, learners were a bit lost. However, students were quick learners and after a brief introduction they were able to continue with the planned activities.

On the other hand, merely 5 students participated in the experiment. This is due to the fact that this class had a reduced number of students, since only a few chose the *Bachibac*. Thus, the results that could be gathered from the study were limited. It would be interesting to perform the same study in a different context to analyse if the outcome would be similar or on the contrary, if the results would have been completely distinct.

Finally, the activities had to be developed in their last lesson of the day. As a result, students arrived considerably exhausted and it was necessary to warm them up. However, pupils were always willing to participate and to learn and this made the procedure much more pleasant.

All things considered, though some limitations were encountered during the procedure, it must be noted that in general terms, the experiment was performed successfully and the results were satisfactory.

6. CONCLUSION

Speaking may be considered one of the most relevant skills when learning a new language. Being able to communicate fluently and effectively in the target language is a goal that learners are constantly pursuing during their learning process. Nonetheless, it is also

considered to be the most challenging feature to master in the process of learning a new language.

If an individual has a broad knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of the language, why cannot he/she speak it fluently? Perhaps because one speaker who has been learning the language for a long time has never had the opportunity to produce it orally. Notwithstanding, one matter can be claimed without any hesitation, the output of the language (writing and speaking) is indeed the most relevant aspect to consider when learning a second language.

The aforesaid is not an exception in high schools. When pupils are requested to produce the language orally, they often struggle to do so appropriately. Maybe they may find no problem with the written production of English, for instance, but they consider particularly difficult to produce it orally.

For this reason, one of the main objectives of this study is to aid students to enhance their speaking skills by using specific speaking strategies in their speeches. Therefore, it was essential to analyse whether learners may be able to improve this specific skill by following a didactic proposal making use of innovative tasks. These activities had a specific goal: to make pupils practice the language orally in a natural way within a real-life context.

Having observed the results from the didactic proposal, considering the instances from the final role-play and the questionnaire from students, it might be concluded that speaking strategies are indeed beneficial for an L2 learner. In fact, it was necessary to comprehend that the use of fillers, for example, made the speech sound fairly more natural when speakers are buying time to recall a specific word or expression.

On the other hand, there are certain expressions that are easily misinterpreted in a language that is not your native. To avoid these misunderstandings, it is capital to fully comprehend

what the speaker is trying to say. To do that, asking for clarification is a reliable resource that students can resort to whenever this situation arises.

Furthermore, dealing with specific situations may sometimes be challenging for pupils. For instance, when they must cover a debate, it might be difficult to know how to open and close it. These are scenarios that would be common in a real-life situation. Hence, there are fixed expressions that can be employed to open and close a debate, change ideas or topics, agreeing or disagreeing, etc.

Focusing on the research questions, it was vital to know whether the methodology employed would help learners to improve their speaking abilities, and it has been concluded that they are indeed beneficial for them. By using these strategies, learners produced a speech more complete, fluent and natural, as it has been mentioned above (fillers were used to buy more time, formulaic expressions to initiate and finalise a debate/conversation and asking for clarification was essential when a sentence seemed unclear or confusing).

On the other hand, it was also crucial to comprehend to which extent students could apply these strategies to real-life situations. Considering that the role-play imitates a debate that can easily resemble a real and natural context and the remaining activities within the didactic proposal, it should be claimed that the strategies above are valid for this environment. As it has been mentioned in this paper, one of the major goals is that pupils are able to apply what has been learnt throughout the lessons to several other contexts. Thus, the debate performed may lead to the implementation of the strategies in other environments in their daily-lives.

All the strategies were introduced to students and it might be stated that they were extremely useful for learners. Thus, following the results from the study and the satisfaction of the participants, it could be affirmed that speaking strategies do improve the speaking abilities of learners of a second language and the objectives initially established in this paper were

accomplished. Nevertheless, it would be gripping to conduct the experiment in a larger class to observe if similar results would be obtained.

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8. ANNEXES

1.

FOR	
<p>Cattle breeder:</p> <p><i>You are the local cattle breeder of the town. You have been invited to the meeting to provide your point of view regarding the topic. This business has been running in your family for decades.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business ● Tradition ● Quality of life of the animals

FOR	
<p>City Councillor</p> <p><i>You are the party councilor organizing the local festivities of the town. You have been in charge of the festivities for over 20 years. Your opinion on the topic is that bullfighting is a very positive tradition.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Money ● Tourists ● Enhance quality of human life

AGAINST	
<p><u>PACMA/PETA</u></p> <p><i>You are the representative of the animalist party attempting to fight for animals' rights. You consider that this activity is immoral and cruel for the animals.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Animal rights ● Old-fashioned tradition ● Animals are equal to human beings

AGAINST	
<p><u>VET</u></p> <p><i>You are a well-known veterinarian in the town, attending the meeting to support the prohibition of the activity for several reasons.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Animals are sentient ● Animal torture ● Hurting animals for entertainment

AGAINST	
<u>NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION</u> <i>You are the head of the neighborhood association whose main objective is to stop this celebration since it disturbs the peace of the citizens.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise • Smell • Crowd

2.

BUYING TIME: FILLERS

Well...	Pues...	+IN MY OPINION, IN MY VIEW... (en mi opinión)
Ummm.../er...	(sonido dubitativo)	
In fact	De hecho,...	
Actually...		
As a matter of fact...		
You know/You see	O sea	
Let's see...	Veamos	
Now let me think, errrrr	Bueno, déjame pensar un poco...	
ummm, give me a minute to think about that...	Dame un minuto para pensar sobre eso...	
Let's say...	Digamos que...	
Frankly	En verdad/ verdaderamente, /con toda franqueza/Si te digo la verdad...	+ I THINK THAT (Yo creo que...)
To be (quite) honest		
To be (quite) frank		

3.



Filler Words in English (from an interview with Ariana Grande)

4.

Phrases to present the most important point	Conceding an argument
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The most important argument for ... is ... ■ The main idea/thing is ... ■ The most important idea is... ■ Most importantly, I want to mention that... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It's true/obvious/evident that ... ■ However, ... ■ I agree with you that ... On the other hand, ... ■ I can understand that... ■ Nevertheless, ...
Sequencing a list of arguments	Adding an argument to strengthen your point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First of all, I'd like to state ... ■ Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ... ■ The second argument in favor of ... ■ To begin with, ... ■ The next argument I'd like to comment on is... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In addition to that,... ■ You also have to consider... ■ Furthermore,... ■ Moreover,... ■ What is more,...
Concluding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ My final thought is ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To sum up, ... ■ Finally, ... 	

5.

CLARIFYING FORMULAE: ASKING SOMEONE TO REPEAT SOMETHING

	(I'm) sorry ? (I beg your) pardon ?	¿Sí?, ¿qué?, ¿eh?
+ FORMAL → + INFORMAL	(I'm) sorry but I couldn't/ didn't hear the last part/the last part about/ the last or the first word/what you said... (I'm) sorry but I couldn't/ didn't understand the last part/the last part about/ the last or the first word... (I'm) sorry but I couldn't/ didn't get the last part/the last part about/ the last or the first word... (I'm) sorry but I couldn't/ didn't catch the last part/the last part about/ the last or the first word...	Perdona pero no he podido oír/entender/ coger...Perdona pero no he oído/ entendido/ "cogido" la última parte/la última parte sobre/ la última palabra/ la primera palabra/ lo que has dicho...
	Would you mind repeating that, please ? Sorry, would you mind speaking more slowly? Sorry, would you mind talking louder?	¿Te importaría repetirlo, por favor? Perdona, ¿te importaría hablar más despacio? Perdona, ¿te importaría hablar más alto?

6.





7.

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 4089 2444

How would you define your experience throughout the process?

 Mentimeter

Interesting and different

It was very nice to do something different in class

At the beginning I felt a bit lost but it was very interesting

It was very funny

I enjoyed it a lot



Go to www.menti.com and use the code 5961 7182

How do you think it could have been improved?

 Mentimeter

Maybe some more activities

With more sessions

Outdoors activities

More vocabulary related to the unit

More focus on speaking



Do you think the speaking strategies helped you to improve your speaking skills?

Yes, they helped me a lot	More or less.	Yes
A bit, yes	Yes, they are very useful	



Go to www.menti.com and use the code 4002 9049

How would you rate the procedure? (1-10)

8	9	7
7	8	

