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ARTÍSTICAS Y DEPORTIVAS

# Analysis of an English Coursebook and Its Oral Activities

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**Alumna:** Alejandra Rodríguez Marco

**Tutora:** María Pilar Mur Dueñas



**Universidad**  
Zaragoza



**Facultad de Educación**  
**Universidad Zaragoza**



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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Knowledge of a foreign language is a fundamental part of current education. It is even more important since travelling and working possibilities seem to have no limits: business companies, private firms, and their employees deal with foreign business partners every day and a proficient command of any foreign language has a very important role. English has developed into the most used language for communication in professional contexts and, as a result, a very important part of the syllabus of educational institutions.

Learners at all proficiency levels are usually encouraged to talk and communicate in the foreign language they are learning by means of ice-breakers, prepared dialogues, and oral presentations among other types of activities. Students tend to participate in these interactive, communicative activities because they challenge them to further improve their skills. Naturally, choosing an appropriate coursebook and suitable activities would be essential. For that purpose, teachers should bear in mind that their decisions on these matters have to be the result of reflection and critical analysis, so that their decisions are informed by theoretical knowledge.

In this dissertation I will try to find out if a particular coursebook –*New English File: Intermediate, NEF<sup>1</sup>*– is an appropriate coursebook to foster students’ oral skills in general and in a particular educational context. For this purpose, I will analyse and evaluate the coursebook, and then I will analyse and evaluate those activities which develop oral skills –listening and speaking activities– according to a specific criterion which will be developed in the Method section. I will first review both input and output hypotheses in general terms, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using a coursebook in the EFL classroom, and reflect upon the most important factors for the selection of an appropriate coursebook and activities which foster the students’ oral communicative competence. Stephen Krashen and Merrill Swain have a very important role in language acquisition and learning and that is the reason why I find it necessary to review their theories. Similarly, Littlewood’s research on and classification of communicative activities is worth considering and they will certainly make the analysis easier. This particular theoretical part will not only be useful for this dissertation analysis, it is also a good reflection for any teacher on the design and on the characteristics of oral communicative activities.

I will try to answer the following questions in this dissertation:

- Is the coursebook well designed and organized in terms of the students’ development of oral skills?
- Are oral communicative activities appropriately designed for the learning goals of the syllabus?
- Do oral communicative activities develop progressively in terms of complexity and difficulty?
- Is there a correspondence between the level of the coursebook and students’ linguistic level?
- Is a wide range of oral activities provided so that different strategies and sub competences can be practiced by students?
- Do activities present real-life situations?

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<sup>1</sup> Oxenden, C. and C. Latham-Koenig. 1997. *New English File: Intermediate, Student’s Book*. Oxford University Press.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

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Second language acquisition –SLA– is the study of how second languages are learned and the factors that influence that process. Among other things, SLA researchers study how oral discourse and communicative competence develop in a second language (Ellis 1997; Celce-Murcia 2001). They pay close attention to the relations between language and structure, the use of spoken language, the ability to interpret the meaning of an oral message, to understand cultural references in it, to use strategies to prevent communication from breaking down, and to apply the rules of grammar at the same time (Savignon in Ross-Feldman 2003).

### 2.1. Research on oral discourse

There has been a lot of interest and research on both oral discourse and the students' development of communicative competence (Brown and Yule 1983; Carter and McCarthy 1997; Nation and Newton 2009). There has not been so much research on oral as on written discourse, mainly because oral language was usually considered secondary and complementary, as opposed to written discourse, which was also easier to analyse due to the ease to obtain material. However, nowadays the situation has changed: modern technologies have allowed researchers to consider and study oral discourse, which has been deeply analysed and classified. Dell Hymes (1974) sets up seven main concerns to bear in mind when dealing with oral discourse, which could also be applied to written discourse:

- the setting, *when* and *where* the oral production is happening;
- the participants, *who* is taking part in the conversation or interaction, as well as their relationship;
- the purpose of the communication, *why* it is happening;
- the key, which is the *atmosphere* surrounding the discourse;
- the channel, the *medium* through which the communication is taking place;
- the message content, *what* is transmitted;
- the message form, *how* is transmitted the content.

Analysing a piece of oral discourse trying to answer the questions proposed by Hymes does not only highlight the multiple differences between oral and written discourse, but it also allows to reflect upon the main characteristics of oral events and interactions, such as the need to share background knowledge, the simplicity of structures, turn-taking patterns, hesitation pauses, discourse markers, etc. (Brown and Yule 1983; Carter and McCarthy 1997). All these characteristics have been taken into account in the analysis and evaluation of the coursebook carried out in this dissertation, because studying them and exposing students to these features characteristic of naturally occurring language provide benefits for students' learning, facilitating comprehensible and contextualised interactions, learner's self-correction, and creating a collaborative learning atmosphere (Brown and Yule 1983; Lazaraton 1991).

### 2.2. Research on communicative competence

Researchers seem to be in agreement with the basic definition of communicative competence, a term comprised of two words whose combination literally means 'competence to communicate'. The idea of communicative competence is originally derived from Chomsky's (1965) distinction between

'competence' and 'performance'<sup>2</sup>, which Hymes found too narrow and idealized to describe language behaviour and competence as a whole. Hymes (1974) believed that a linguistic theory must be able to deal with a heterogeneous speech community, so he considered it was necessary to distinguish two kinds of competence: linguistic competence –that deals with producing and understanding grammatically correct sentences– and communicative competence –that deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate and acceptable to a particular situation. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) understood communicative competence as the combination of an underlying system of both knowledge and skills required for communication, where knowledge was based on the student's individual knowledge about certain aspects of the second language: the grammatical principles, the knowledge about how to use the language in a social context, and about how to combine communicative functions and discourse principles. Therefore, the relevance of communicative competence can be understood as the ability to use language knowledge as a means of creating meaning in and with language, thus establishing a close connection between communicative competence and language proficiency (Savignon 1991).

In addition, communicative competence has acquired a relevant position in current education and references to it can be found in almost every educational regulation. In general terms, all these documents specify that communicative competence refers to the skills that make possible students' participation in any type of communicative situation –which would be successful when all the aims of the interaction have been achieved. The regulation from the Community of Aragon for high schools<sup>3</sup> (2007: 3) justifies and describes the need to develop the communicative competence in the following terms:

Dada nuestra inclusión en un contexto de ciudadanía europea, adquiere una especial relevancia el desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas en lenguas extranjeras. [...]

Escuchar, exponer y dialogar implica ser consciente de los principales tipos de interacción verbal, ser progresivamente competente en la expresión y comprensión de los mensajes orales que se intercambian en situaciones comunicativas diversas y adaptar la comunicación al contexto. Supone también la utilización activa y efectiva de códigos y habilidades lingüísticas y no lingüísticas y de las reglas propias del intercambio comunicativo en diferentes situaciones, para producir textos orales adecuados a cada situación de comunicación. [...]

Comprender y saber comunicar son saberes prácticos que han de apoyarse en el conocimiento reflexivo sobre el funcionamiento del lenguaje y sus normas de uso, e implican la capacidad de tomar el lenguaje como objeto de observación y análisis. Expresar e interpretar diferentes tipos de discurso acordes a la situación comunicativa en diferentes contextos sociales y culturales implican el conocimiento y aplicación efectiva de las reglas de funcionamiento del sistema de la lengua y de las estrategias necesarias para interactuar lingüísticamente de una manera adecuada.

Therefore, it is essential to evaluate and make sure that the materials used in the second language classroom are in accordance to what has been explained in the previous quote. As a matter of fact, a communicative approach to language teaching should take as a point of departure the theory of language as communication, as exposed by Hymes (1972). In other words, for Chomsky linguistic theory focuses on learners' abilities to produce grammatically correct sentences in

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<sup>2</sup> By 'competence', Chomsky (1965) meant the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set in a homogeneous speech event. 'Performance', on the other hand, is concerned with the process of applying the underlying knowledge to the actual language use.

<sup>3</sup> Orden de 9 de mayo de 2007, del Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, por la que se aprueba el currículo de la Educación secundaria obligatoria y se autoriza su aplicación en los centros docentes de la Comunidad autónoma de Aragón.

language, whereas Hymes considered that linguistic theory needed to be seen as part of a more general theory where communication and culture were both included. In Hymes view (1972: 281), learners who acquire communicative competence acquire both the knowledge and the skill for language use with respect to:

- whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
- whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
- whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

Accordingly, learning a second language is equally seen as a process aimed at acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions. Canale and Swain (1980) are often reviewed when studying the communicative nature of language and their view on the relationship between a linguistic system and its communicative values, that is, its ability to use language for different purposes. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) identified four main dimension of the communicative competence:

- grammatical competence, concerned with the mastery of the language code itself, referring to what Chomsky considered linguistic competence and what Hymes referred to as 'formally possible';
- sociolinguistic competence, concerned with the ability to interpret the social meaning of the choice of linguistic varieties and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for the communicative situation. In other words, knowing and understanding how to speak given the circumstances one is in, including speakers' relationship, shared information, and the purpose of the communication, among other factors;
- discourse competence, which refers to the way ideas are linked across sentences –in written discourse– or utterances –in oral discourse. Therefore, discourse competence is concerned with the cohesion and coherence of sentences and utterances;
- strategic competence, which comprises verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that aim to avoid communication breakdowns, so enhancing the effectiveness of it. In other words, those strategies that speakers make use of in order to begin, maintain, and repair communication.



**Figure 1.** Model of communicative competence by Canale and Swain (1980).



Therefore, in order to promote the development of the communicative competence in the EFL classroom through efficient oral communicative activities, teachers should provide students with the necessary tools and knowledge that would allow them to become more proficient users of the language. For that purpose, it is necessary to review both input and output hypotheses.

### 2.3. Language exposure: input hypothesis

The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen 1982: 7).

Since its formulation, Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis has been widely evaluated and largely quoted in English as a Foreign Language research –EFL. This theory takes as a point of departure five basic hypotheses:

- The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, which states that students of a foreign language develop two different types of knowledge: unconscious knowledge that allows students to feel the correctness of the language, and conscious knowledge which is learnt in the classroom. According to this theory, the better way to learn a language is through natural communication. Second language teachers should, therefore, create situations where language is used in order to fulfil authentic purposes, as it will help learners to acquire language instead of just learning it.
- The Natural Order Hypothesis, by which learners acquire parts of language in a predictable order. For any given language, certain grammatical structures are acquired early while others are acquired later in the process. According to this hypothesis, teachers should start by introducing language concepts that are relatively easy for learners to acquire –or rather that learners are prepared for– and then use scaffolding to introduce more difficult concepts.
- The Monitor Hypothesis, which acts as a sort of link between acquired and learnt knowledge in order to focus on form and be grammatical correct. According to this hypothesis, the acquisition system initiates an utterance and the learning system monitors the utterance to examine and correct errors. Moreover, Krashen states that monitoring can make some contribution to the accuracy of an utterance but its use should be limited, as the monitor can sometimes act as a barrier, as it forces the learner to slow down and focus more on accuracy as opposed to fluency.
- The Input Hypothesis, which states that the input students receive has to be comprehensible. However, Krashen stated that this same input has to be slightly beyond students' knowledge – $i + 1$ – in order to promote students' learning process. This hypothesis highlights the relevance of using the target language in the classroom; by providing as much comprehensible input as possible, the teacher is able to create a more effective opportunity for language acquisition.
- The Affective Filter Hypothesis, which, according to Krashen, is an obstacle that is influenced by emotional variables that can prevent learning. This filter does not prevent acquisition directly, but rather prevents input from being acquired. As a result, it is always important to create a safe, welcoming environment in which students can learn, since they need to feel comfortable to produce language, to make mistakes, and to take risks.

Krashen's theory has been especially criticised due to its close and exclusive focus upon exposure to the foreign language, leaving aside production. Moreover, this theory claims that speaking cannot be directly taught and that it comes only as a result of acquisition. Even though a

silent period may be necessary, it may not be enough to gain communicative competence that should be encouraged so that its development may be quicker and more effective.

Lazaraton's (2001: 104) words well illustrate today's situation, which, for me, lays in between Krashen's theory and its criticism: "today we understand that students learn from teacher, from classmates, and from the world outside the classroom, and the more the learner seeks these opportunities, the more likely he or she will learn to use the language." In other words, students not only look for opportunities to be exposed to comprehensible input but they also seek to communicate outside the classroom, and, as a consequence, learners are not only exposed to but also ready to produce in the second language. Moreover, as previously stated, today second language learning is a very important part of everyday life and most learners are willing to learn English, so the affective filter hypothesis suggested by Krashen would not be a real obstacle for acquisition in those cases –e.g. adults–, although it would be certainly relevant in relation to children and teenagers.

#### 2.4. Language production: output hypothesis

The output hypothesis claims that the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, *part of the process* of second language learning. Furthermore, the processes involved in producing language can be quite different than [sic] those involved in comprehending language (Swain 2005: 471, my emphasis).

Swain's words call attention to one of the most important aspects of the output hypothesis: the change in meaning –and in word category– of *output* itself. In his article "The Output Hypothesis: Theory and Research" he offers the description and development of the term, until it has become "a verb, an action, or a process" (2005: 471). It is also important to highlight the three functions that Swain considers the term plays in second language learning.

First of all, there is the noticing function through which students become aware of "some of their linguistic problems" (Swain 2005: 474) while trying to communicate. Communication has made it evident that there is a still gap in their knowledge of the foreign language and so it promotes students' need to continue studying. Second, there is the hypothesis testing function: students try their linguistic and grammatical knowledge not being exactly sure about their efficiency. This function is completed with the feedback provided by teachers, validating or not students' hypotheses. Finally, there is the metalinguistic function, which triggers thinking and evaluation when students listen to their classmates, "solving *linguistic* problems and building knowledge *about language*" (Swain 2005: 478) together.

As a result, language production should be promoted in class as it is a very useful learning tool, raising students' awareness of their own linguistic lacks as well as making them feel they need to learn more, not to be frustrated while trying to communicate with their classmates. Similarly, Nation and Newton (2009: 115-116), in their *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*, bring to the surface the interesting term 'pushed output', which they develop and describe in the following terms:

Learners are "pushed" when, through encouragement or necessity, they have to produce spoken language in unfamiliar areas. These areas may be unfamiliar because the learners are more used to listening than speaking, or are not accustomed to speaking certain kinds of discourse, or are now expected to produce a higher standard of spoken language in terms of accuracy, precision, coherence and appropriateness. Pushed output extends speakers and in doing so heightens their awareness of the importance of particular grammatical features in productive use of the language.

Nation and Newton agree with Swain in that most learners will never become aware of their lack of knowledge and proficiency in oral production until they are not pushed to speak. Being pushed to speak will certainly encourage students to pay greater attention to and think about their lacks in knowledge when trying to communicate with other speakers, among other things: “there is value in building up receptive experience, but this needs to be seen as only a first step. Learners need to be pushed to turn their receptive knowledge into productive use” (Nation and Newton 2009: 116).

## 2.5. Designing oral communicative activities

Research on SLA has suggested that learning is more effective when students are engaged in relevant activities within a dynamic learning environment rather than in more traditional teacher-fronted lessons, where “the learner’s focus [is] more on *language forms to be learnt* than on *meanings to be communicated*” (Littlewood 1986: 16). As a result, in order to get the most of students’ outputs teachers have to find activities which promote communication, those that encourage and require learners to speak with and listen to other learners. This kind of activities usually has a very clear purpose: they need to be duly contextualized to provide practice, to improve students’ motivation, to allow for natural learning, to create a context which supports learning, etc.

Designing oral communicative activities also requires teachers to consider their students’ language level, the learning goal of the lesson, the language to be practiced, and the opportunities for the teacher to provide feedback (Littlewood 1986; Savignon 1991). Oral communicative activities deal with the use of language, implying that language is used as a tool for both sharing and processing information. Littlewood (1986: 22-42) suggests four main types of speaking communicative activities:

- Sharing information with restricted cooperation, where initial and more structured communication takes place; activities of this kind tend to follow a question-answer pattern.
- Sharing information with unrestricted cooperation, where the aim is to break down barriers and allow students to explore varied and different ways of communication: reformulating, compensating, etc.
- Sharing and processing information, where students are forced to share information in order to solve a problem; students also have to analyse the information they have.
- Processing information, where there is no correct answer; their aim is to promote students’ individuality and their ability to solve a problem together.

Within each of these classifications there is a wide range of different activities, as illustrated in the following table:

Sharing information with restricted cooperation	Sharing information with <i>unrestricted</i> cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying pictures</li> <li>- Discovering identical pairs</li> <li>- Discovering sequences or locations</li> <li>- Discovering missing information/features</li> <li>- Discovering ‘secrets’</li> <li>- Some variations in organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating patterns and pictures</li> <li>- Communicating models</li> <li>- Discovering differences</li> <li>- Following directions</li> </ul>
Sharing and processing information	Processing information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reconstructing story-sequences</li> <li>- Pooling information to solve a problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problem-solving situations outside the classroom</li> <li>- Presentation of unusual situations</li> <li>- Justification and persuasion</li> </ul>

(Littlewood 1986: 22-42)

To sum up, it is necessary that learners practice production in the classroom, guided by the teacher and through a great number and a wide range and variety of activities and opportunities that foster their oral production. Therefore, it would also be essential to analyse and evaluate teaching materials, more especially the coursebook, due to its prominent role in second language teaching and the extent to which it offers these opportunities.

## 2.6. The use of coursebooks in the EFL classroom: advantages and disadvantages

Research on coursebook selection and evaluation suggests that the process of selecting an English coursebook is a complex task; especially nowadays, when the market is flooded with hundreds of coursebooks for the teaching of EFL. Selecting a suitable coursebook becomes a critical process, since it surely has an impact on students' motivation, engagement, and language performance, and therefore, learning.

The most common element in the teaching of EFL is the coursebook, to the point that it has been widely argued that it is a necessary element in this type of teaching. However, it is very difficult for English teachers to select an appropriate coursebook, which has not only to suit their students' needs but it also needs to be in accordance with the curriculum.

Moreover, however accepted it is that the coursebook lies at the heart of any English class, many would still be wondering if they are really necessary or what use to make of them. Coursebooks have been widely criticized for many reasons (Cunningsworth 1995; Dalby 2009):

- they may contain non-authentic language, they are often artificial presenting the target language; models and dialogues are unnatural and far from communicative language teaching;
- they may distort the content to suit the learning goals of the curriculum, as they usually mirror the pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic biases of publishing houses;
- they may not satisfy students' needs;
- they may inhibit teachers' freedom and creativity, which most of the times find themselves obliged to follow the sequence of the coursebook;
- they may be expensive to buy.

On the other hand, they offer advantages to teachers and students alike, and they are a useful source of language contents and activities. As O'Neill (1982: 104) argued "[they are] a basis on which to mould the unpredictable interaction which is necessary to classroom language learning". Apart from this, there are several reasons that justify the use of coursebooks in the teaching of English: first, they are essential in the EFL context because it is usually difficult for teachers to create their own teaching materials, especially for inexperienced teachers, as Sheldon (1988: 238) explains: "it is a cruel paradox that for students, teacher-generated material [...] often has less credibility than a published textbook, no matter how inadequate that may be." In addition, they offer already prepared texts and teaching activities. More importantly, coursebooks are said to serve both as a syllabus and as a framework for classroom progress:

Coursebooks constitute an effective resource for self-directed learning and for presentation of material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who may be lacking in confidence (Cunningsworth 1995: 7).

These positive observations clearly state the effectiveness of coursebooks: they contain interesting materials and provide some sort of language progression, summarizing what has been learnt and allowing students to concentrate on their own learning process.

It can be concluded that both advantages and disadvantages need to be considered when selecting a coursebook and when deciding whether or not to use a coursebook. If the coursebooks used in EFL classrooms are judged to have some negative aspects –students have no motivation in it, it makes use of numerous non-authentic texts, etc.– there has to be a solution: adapting the coursebook to students' needs and interests, providing additional materials and not focusing on the coursebook exclusively, and, above all, the teacher has to be critical with the coursebook, be able to evaluate it, and find the best ways to use their coursebook and never let the book use them. However, the role of coursebooks should not be overestimated. A foreign language does not need to be taught only with the help of coursebooks, since there are plenty of other materials that can be used in class: a workbook, photocopiable materials, audio recordings, internet, etc.

In this literature review several points have been reviewed. First, second languages acquisition clearly states the need to pay closer attention to the material used in the classroom; through Hymes, Canale and Swain's research and theories the relevance of both oral discourse and communicative competence has been established. They are essential for students' development of successful outcomes. Later, Krashen and Swain's input and output hypotheses have laid the more theoretical foundations, and Littlewood's classification of communicative activities has paved the way for the analysis of the coursebook selected. Finally, O'Neill, Sheldon, and Cunningsworth studies have been reviewed to reflect on the main advantages and disadvantages of using a coursebook in the classroom. All these references are going to be used for the design of my own evaluation checklists and for the subsequent analysis, in order to reach the aims of this dissertation.

### 3 METHODS

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#### 3.1. Corpus

In this section I will briefly present the coursebook chosen and analysed in this dissertation. In the same way, I will also justify why I have chosen this particular coursebook to carry out the analysis and its main characteristics.

The coursebook analysed in this dissertation is *New English File* and the main reason why I chose it is that I worked with it during my teaching placements. New and experienced EFL teachers alike rely on Oxford's *NEF* multiple level coursebooks for their classrooms, being reference books for adult education; therefore, it is worth analysing one of these coursebooks in order to have an idea of its popularity. This coursebook is both teacher and student-friendly: it is easy for the teacher to use and it has many interesting teaching ideas and students can easily find information and contents in the table of contents presented at the beginning. Therefore, it is worth analysing the validity of its activities, going beyond its appealing appearance. In addition, units are usually short –no more than four pages long– but there are a lot of activities usually covering all four skills. Thus, it is important to make sure that there is a balance among the skills and that all are given their due importance. In the same way, pronunciation issues are dealt with in almost every unit of the coursebook, which makes a difference in respect to other coursebooks. However, it is necessary to make sure there is a connection between these sections and the rest of the activities of the unit that contains them. Finally, this coursebook –along with the other *NEF*– attempts to combine grammatical sections and activities with more practical for everyday life ones, such as those named 'Practical English', in which the aim is to provide students with the necessary tools and skills to deal with multiple everyday life situations in an English-speaking country –i.e. introductions, in the office, renting a property, etc. I find this combination relevant in a second language class and so worth of consideration.

Regarding the main characteristics of *NEF*, first it is important to highlight it is the intermediate Student's Book, which would correspond with a B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages –CEFR. It is divided in 21 units, grouped in 7 main blocks; each of these units is divided into three main sections focused on language: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. These sections are complemented with other sections focused on skills, especially listening and speaking, being writing exercises the less frequent. Moreover, all through each unit there are continuous references to both Grammar and Vocabulary Banks at the end of the coursebook, where there are grammar explanations and extra vocabulary exercises for students' practice. In addition, every three units there are other three interesting sections: 'Practical English' –previously explained– 'Writing' –where writing exercises complement the contents and the activities seen through the previous three units–, and 'Revise & Check' –where students can check their learning progress through an extra series of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation exercises, as well as other activities which further work on skills. Finally, at the very end of the coursebook the following sections can be found:

- 'Communication', where a number of pair work exercises and material are developed and explained.
- 'Listening', where students can find the transcripts of the audios.
- 'Irregular verbs', with a sample of the more frequent irregular verbs in English.
- 'English Sounds', with the English phonemic alphabet –vowels, diphthongs, and consonants.
- 'Sounds and spelling –vowels and consonants', where students can find the most and the least usual spellings of English phonemes, with several examples.

In general terms, it gives the impression that *NEF* is a very complete and inclusive coursebook, with a great number and a wide range of activities, covering all four skills. However, it is important to carry out an analysis on the validity of its oral communicative activities and of its appropriateness for a particular teaching-learning context.

### **3.2. Participants**

I completed my teaching placements in the School of Arts of Zaragoza, an institution which offers both the Bachelor's Degree in arts and several artistic Vocational Training courses. The School consists of 80 teachers –from different specialities– and 600 students, approximately. The usual teaching style followed by the English Department is mainly based on two different coursebooks: *English in Context 1* and *2* and *NEF*, for the Degree and the Vocational Training courses respectively. However, these coursebooks were used as a guide, not as the only material to be used in class.

I had the opportunity to design and implement a series of lessons in both courses but I was responsible for the students in the vocational course dealing with Graphic Design, with whom I spent two hours a week. These students' age ranged from 18 to 26 years old and their level of English was quite uneven, ranging from a beginner's A1 to a B1. However, they took part in every activity and tried their best when asking for doubts or carrying out any kind of activity. It is worth mentioning they were not used to talking in English and used to talk in Spanish with each other and also with the teacher. During my second teaching placement I tried to change that, encouraging them to speak in English, even if that implied to slow down the rhythm of the lesson a little bit. I was allowed to do this because the syllabus for these courses is not as strict as the one in the Bachelor's Degree.

The teachers of the English Department used to follow the syllabus of the coursebook, although they were free to alter its organization. For instance, the tutor I was with changed the order of some units at the beginning of the year so as to teach students modal verbs first as she thought that it was a quite difficult grammatical point for them. Moreover, I could see that all teachers worked with additional materials: extra photocopies, longer readings, etc. However, the most interesting thing was that the School relied on a native speaker –from the United States– to be with the students once a week. These lessons were mainly based on North American culture and encouraged students to participate on a regular basis. Although students were not so participative as in the other lessons, they were exposed to the language all the time, and they seemed to understand the native speaker without many problems.

### **3.3. Methodology**

It has already been stated in the introduction that nowadays market is flooded with hundreds of coursebooks for the teaching of EFL. As a result, selecting an English coursebook remains a challenge and a complex task. However, it has also been explained that quite a lot of research has been carried out on the issue –Cunningsworth 1995, Ellis 1997– and that it is crucial to create evaluation criteria not only to make a decision, but also to be able to critically analyse a coursebook, evaluating its strong and weak points to determine what needs to be adapted, supplemented, etc.

In this process of coursebook use and analysis I have relied on Littlewood's "Communicative Activities: Some General Considerations" (1986), Cunningsworth's *Choosing Your Coursebook* (1995), Ellis' *Second Language Acquisition* (1997), as well as on Peacock's "Choosing the Right Book for Your Class" (1997). In all these texts a system of evaluating criteria for the analysis, evaluation, and selection of a coursebook is provided. In fact, they all propose detailed research on additional materials, language content, subject content, and, more importantly, on communicative skills.

In addition, bearing these principles in mind, I designed two different checklists, in order to analyse and evaluate the selected coursebook in general and its oral communicative activities in particular<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.3.1. Checklist 1: selection of a coursebook

In the process of evaluating and selecting any teaching material or coursebook there are a number of factors to be considered, such as the suitability for the group age and linguistic level, the kind of activities, and how skills are covered. In his 'Quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection', Cunningsworth (1995: 3) proposes eight different criteria for the analysis and selection of a coursebook: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teachers' book, and practical considerations. Each criterion is supported by numerous questions that help to make a more thorough analysis and subsequent decision. It is important to bear in mind every criterion, so the checklists designed take all of them into consideration and the coursebook is analysed by answering questions such as the following, among others:

- Are the contents of the coursebook well displayed and organized in a table of contents?
- Are different varieties of English represented?
- Are contents and language focus in line with the curriculum?
- Are materials in the coursebook adjusted to the specific purposes of the course –Graphic Design?
- Does the coursebook promote students' communicative competence?
- Is there enough emphasis on pronunciation?

In fact, this last question is very important, since it highlights the relevance to reflect upon the pronunciation activities and sections of the coursebook. In other words, students' knowledge of English phonemes and their multiple possible spellings allows them to work, develop, and have a good command of their oral skills. Nation and Newton (2009: 76) focus on pronunciation and grammar alike and state:

For second language learners it is likely that the size of their working memory in the second language is affected by their knowledge of patterns of pronunciation and grammar in that language. It is thus important that attention is given to pronunciation in the course so that learners can quickly develop a stable pronunciation, and become familiar with the patterns and rules that work within the second language.

Therefore, in the checklist for oral communicative activities I have displayed a series of questions considering this issue –see section I from Checklist 2, question 8.

Moreover, attention will also be drawn to the skills criteria suggested by Cunningsworth (1995: 129): questions 14 and 15 from Checklist 1 will reflect upon the relevance of developing students' oral skills.

### 3.3.2. Checklist 2: analysis of oral communicative activities

Apart from all the general factors that have to be observed for the selection of an appropriate coursebook, I believe it is also essential to design a suitable checklist to analyse and prove the validity of its oral communicative activities. Quite a lot of research has been conducted on the issue – Littlewood 1986, Cunningsworth 1995, Peacock 1997– and most researchers agree that this type of activities has many advantages: students receive a greater and varied exposure to the foreign

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<sup>4</sup> These 'Checklists' are included in *Appendix I*.



language, they are offered more opportunities to use the language, they are allowed to interact with their classmates, and they are engaged in conversations and debates. According to Ellis (1997), the evaluation of teaching materials is usually carried out in relation to activities, especially if these have a correlation to real-life situations and are assessed depending on students' performance, as it is the case of oral communicative activities.

In addition, it is also important to set up which of the activities of the coursebook selected are going to be analysed and justify this selection. I have decided to focus on the analysis of oral communicative activities, that is, both listening and speaking activities, since both types of activities encourage students' oral comprehension and production, and I have perceived that these teaching materials are usually poor and inadequate. Leaving aside both reading and writing activities, the analysis focuses on activities focused on oral skills, where students work and develop their communicative abilities through oral interaction.

In the following Results and discussion section a detailed classification, an analysis, and an evaluation of the oral communicative activities of the coursebook will be carried out. For that purpose, my proposal is to reflect upon the oral activities of this particular coursebook, according to questions such as the following:

- Does the activity reflect authentic, real-life situations?
- Do activities make use of real, authentic materials?
- Are students well prepared to carry out the activity successfully, that is, is there a pre-listening/pre-speaking activity?
- Is the activity well and appropriately sequenced?
- How does the activity contribute to students' language acquisition and development?

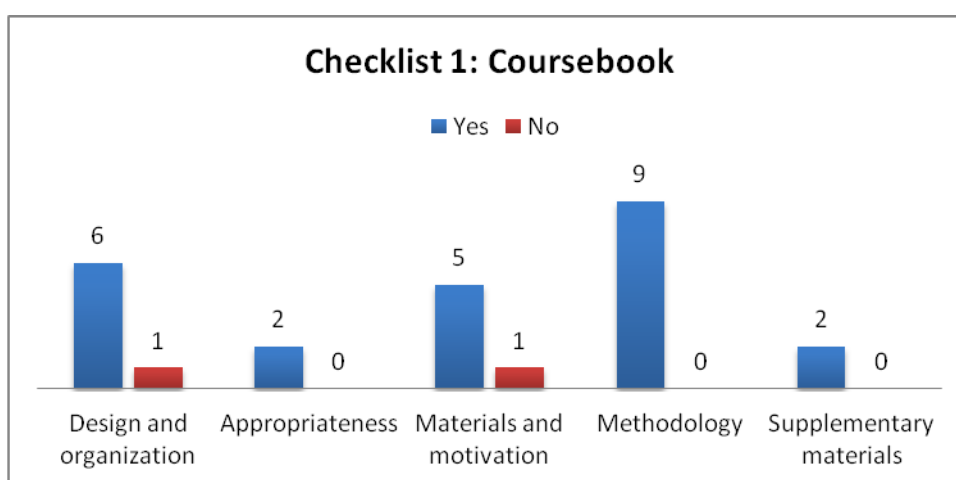
Finally, to secure the validity of any type of activity teachers should regularly evaluate, throughout the year, which of the activities and materials have been positive, so that changes can be introduced for the next year.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

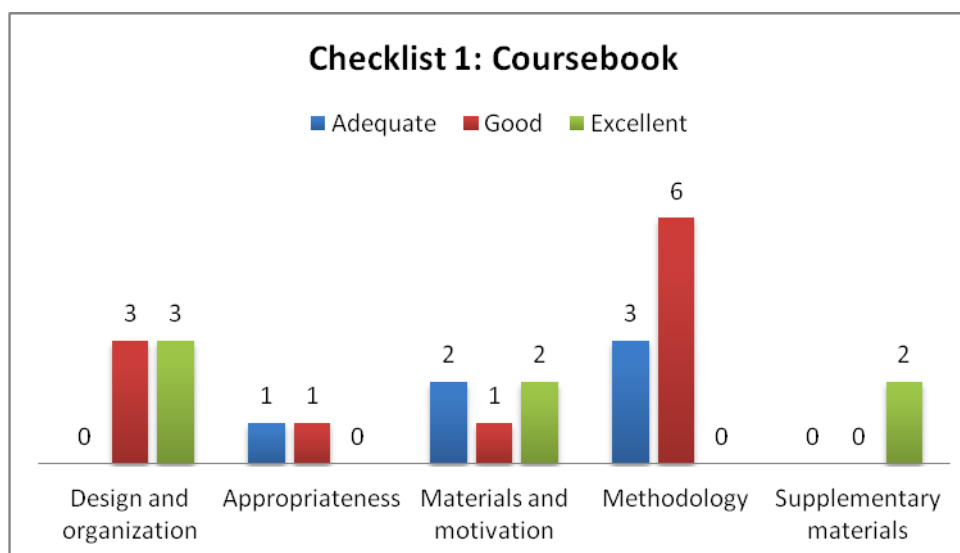
In this section, I will present the analysis of the results obtained from applying the two checklists designed for this dissertation –included in *Appendix II*. First, I will deal with the results obtained from applying the general coursebook checklist and then with those from the oral communicative activities one<sup>5</sup>.

### 4.1. Results and discussion from the checklist of the coursebook

The results obtained from applying the checklist designed for the analysis and evaluation of *NEF* are represented in the following two figures. As it can be observed in Figure 2, with the exception of two questions, the rest of them are affirmative. In the same way, Figure 3 makes clear there is a majority of ‘good’ answers (11) and also a significant number of ‘excellent’ answers (7).



**Figure 2.** Yes/No answers from Checklist 1: Coursebook.



**Figure 3.** Adequate/good/excellent answers from Checklist 1: Coursebook.

<sup>5</sup> The detailed results from applying both checklists are included in *Appendix II*.

#### 4.1.1. Design and organization

In relation with the design and the organization of *NEF* it is important to highlight the excellent organization of the table of contents present at the beginning of the book. This table divides the contents in 21 units –grouped in 7 main blocks– with different colours, which help to visualize divisions easier. Moreover, contents are classified into ‘Grammar’, ‘Vocabulary’, and ‘Pronunciation’. The table of contents also makes reference to three sections that appear every three units: ‘Practical English’, ‘Writing’, and ‘Revise & Check’. There is also reference to other sections that can be found at the end of the coursebook: ‘Communication’, ‘Listening’, ‘Grammar Bank’, ‘Vocabulary Bank’, and ‘Sound Bank’, which will be further explained later on.

Units in this coursebook are not organized thematically: the topics of each unit are varied and have no relation with the one dealt with in the previous or the following unit. Some sort of grammatical organization can be distinguished: the grammatical contents of each group of units seem to be related—for instance, the units in the first group deal with present, past, and future tenses –main and essential tenses– as a sort of introduction; those in the third group deal with modal verbs; those in group four deal with verbs and expressions of probability, etc. Nonetheless, there are some other groups in which there is no clear connection among the units, that is, there is neither grammatical nor thematic connection within the units –for instance, in the second group of units unit 2C deals with ‘comparatives and superlatives’ after two units reviewing verbal tenses. All in all, grammatical contents seem to be organized in such a way that complexity increases as students advance in the syllabus.

Finally, a ‘Grammar Bank’ is included at the end of the coursebook, where the main grammatical contents of each unit are explained, together with some extra exercises and references to the Oxford University Press webpage to continue practising the grammatical contents. There is also a list of English sounds and phonetic symbols –vowels, diphthongs, and consonants– and another section where the multiple and varied spellings each sound can have are explained. All the transcripts of the listening found throughout the coursebook are also included at the end.

Taking all this into account, I consider *NEF* is a well designed and organized coursebook, where contents are easy to find and well explained, providing a good source of learning and practice to students.

#### 4.1.2. Appropriateness

Two questions refer to the appropriateness of the chosen coursebook, in order to know if other varieties of English are represented and if the language contents of the coursebook are in line with the curriculum. There are examples of other varieties of English; however, these are very scarce ones and are only present through listening activities, being British English the dominant variety through the whole coursebook.

Concerning the second question, and as previously explained in the Corpus section, the coursebook *NEF* would correspond with a B1 in the CEFR. Therefore, taking this document as a point of departure and having analysed and studied the contents of the coursebook, it can be confirmed that a great part of the functional, grammatical, and lexical contents, as well as those that promote oral and written comprehension and production for a B1 level are covered in this particular coursebook. In the same way, *NEF* it is in line with the regulations included in the curriculum of the Community of Aragon in relation to the teaching of foreign languages. This coursebook covers all the required language contents and promotes the development of communicative skills to some extent, as explained and described in the curriculum: by means of communicative activities that would allow

students to develop a greater understanding of the language, not only as a means of communication but also as a way of understanding the surrounding world.

However, as it has been explained before, this coursebook was used in a Graphic Design course and none of its contents deals with a more specific kind of English language –grammar, key expressions and vocabulary, situations and contexts, etc.– that would certainly be useful for these students and their studies. In other words, *NEF* covers the language and the contents appropriate for a B1 level according to the CEFR and follows the regulations in the curriculum but it is not fully appropriate for this particular group of students.

#### 4.1.3. Materials and motivation

As far as the Materials and motivation section of the coursebook checklist is concerned, this coursebook can be considered good in general terms. The very first question –Are the materials used updated in terms of the topics proposed?– refers to whether or not the topics proposed in the units are close or somehow related to students’ surrounding world, which most of the times is not the case. For instance, topics such as sports, travel, mobile phones, or cinema are and always will be popular among students, but the examples offered in this edition of *NEF* belong to a recent past which is not students’ present world; in other words, examples are quite out-of-date for students using this coursebook. Moreover, as already stated in the previous Appropriateness section, bearing in mind these students’ studies I cannot but conclude that the contents and the materials of this coursebook are not adjusted to the specific purposes of the course, so a more specific type of coursebook and materials are to be expected, at least in terms of the topics and vocabulary and grammatical contents to be dealt with in the classroom. Therefore, it would be more appropriate and useful for students to look for a coursebook dealing with the real contents of a vocational course in Graphic Design, a coursebook of English for Specific Purposes –ESP– or at least to supplement this coursebook with some such materials.

Furthermore, there is a great number of activities in this coursebook that make use of a wide variety of materials, ranging from texts and listening activities that seem to be specifically designed for a foreign language classroom, to interviews, pieces of news, articles and reviews, letters, quiz games, extracts from books, TV shows, etc. that pretend to be authentic materials and so are adapted, and which can help improve students’ understanding of real life situations. However, it could be argued that this wide range of activities only addresses students’ use and understanding of English and not the possible connections of the language with their studies and specific professional interests.

The coursebook offers opportunities for individual, pair, and group work. Individual work and group work are less frequent than pair work, which is present in every single unit, promoting students to do activities together and to exchange opinions and points of view. Individual work is mainly fostered through the activities presented at the end of the coursebook –‘Grammar and Vocabulary Banks’– and group work is fostered through most speaking activities and the communicative sections, almost exclusively.

To sum up, the materials used in this coursebook are neither updated nor specific for these students in a vocational training course in Graphic Design, although the coursebook deals with a wide range of different types of materials –although most of them are specifically created for an English course and so pretend to be authentic. On the other hand, the coursebook is good in terms of students’ individual, pair work, and group work, constantly promoting students’ interaction in different ways, and fostering students’ communicative competence through speaking activities and pair work.

#### 4.1.4. Methodology

Several questions have been included in relation with the methodology of the particular coursebook being analysed, trying to analyse and evaluate it in terms of grammar, vocabulary, oral skills, and pronunciation. There is a great number and a wide variety of activities that allow for different teaching and learning styles. First, activities and grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation explanations allow the teacher to become the formal authority in the classroom on some occasions, whereas some other time s/he becomes just a model for students to follow –as in the repetitions of pronunciation activities– or even some other cases when s/he becomes a facilitator or a consultant, helping students in their own learning –as in discussions or role-plays. Second, the coursebook partially promotes different learning styles, presenting activities suitable for visual and auditory learners –like those in which pictures, diagrams or mind maps are offered and in organized conversations, respectively–, as well as proposing activities for those students whose learning process requires collaborating with their classmates or being independent from them –as in interviews and role-plays or writing activities. However, the coursebook does not take into account all the different learning styles proposed by Howard Gardner (Smith 2002, 2008; Gardner 1983 and 2011)<sup>6</sup>, like the spatial and the bodily-kinaesthetic ones, as students are never asked to represent things in their minds or use their bodies to solve an activity or a problem.

*NEF* partially promotes students' communicative competence –oral production and understanding: there are many activities apart from those in the 'Speaking' and 'Listening' sections where students are encouraged to comprehend and communicate, individually, in pairs, or in groups. However, most of these activities are guided or controlled in such a way that they offer few possibilities of a freer and more real type of communication, something to be dealt with in following questions –see section I from Checklist 2, question 2.

There is certainly emphasis on pronunciation in this coursebook. As already explained in a previous question, most of the contents presented in *NEF* are in line with the curriculum, and it is the same with pronunciation contents. A 'Pronunciation' section can be found in the table of contents, in every unit, and at the end of the coursebook; however, these sections may not be, in some cases, as prominent as the other ones in the unit –reading, listening, speaking, etc.– or contents and explanations may not be as specific and precise as it would be expected in a B1 level coursebook. However, it is not only a matter of not covering pronunciation contents, since pronunciation contents and activities are usually isolated from other types of work –listening, dialogues, role-plays, etc. Pronunciation activities are nevertheless related to the unit in which they appear in terms of vocabulary content: for instance, in the very first unit –Food: fuel or pleasure?– the pronunciation activity deals with the difference between the phonemes /ʊ/ and /u:/ and it does it through vocabulary related to food –i.e. *butcher, cook, soup*, etc.

*NEF* covers the four main skills –reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, the development of each skill is not usually fully integrated with the development of the other three, but only with one or two of the other three skills. As a result, this is how skills are usually developed and linked together:

- Reading is often developed together with speaking: students are usually asked to read a text and then answer or discuss a series of questions with their classmates. Reading strategies and subskills fostered in *NEF* are skimming –in activities where students are

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<sup>6</sup> The 'Theory of Multiple Intelligences' was proposed by Howard Gardner in his *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), where he articulated nine different types of learning styles: logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential. These different learning styles should be also considered in EFL teaching and by EFL teachers.

asked to read a text quickly to get an idea of what it is about—, scanning —especially when students are asked to read the title and headings of a text to obtain particular information—, predicting and inferring to a lesser extent —in activities where students learn to guess the meaning of the text from the context—, and questioning —mainly in activities that try to encourage students’ reading comprehension, as also encouraged by the other strategies and subskills.

**6 READING**

a Can you think of anyone you know or a famous person who has been successful in very difficult circumstances?

b Work in pairs. A read about Natalie, B read about Bethany. Complete the chart.

	Natalie	Bethany
1 How did she lose a limb?		
2 When did she start her sport again?		
3 How did she feel?		
4 What has she achieved since then?		
5 How does she see her future?		

c A use the chart to tell B about Natalie. B complete the chart. Then swap roles.

d Now read the other text. Underline five words / phrases in either text that you want to remember.

e What have the two women got in common? What's different about them?

**Figure 4.** Reading activities from Unit 3C, page 47, *NEF*.

- Listening is most of the times linked to reading and speaking, since students are usually asked to read a text or discuss about a particular topic before the listening and then are asked to answer a series of questions and discuss with their classmates. In general terms, the input provided in these listening activities is comprehensible and appropriate to students’ level, although it is also slightly beyond their knowledge —Krashen’s (1982) Input hypothesis:  $i+1$ —, thus challenging students and promoting their learning. Different listening strategies and subskills are fostered in *NEF* to a wider or lesser extent: listening discrimination and comprehension, intensive and extensive listening, elaboration, inference, and note-taking, which will be further discussed in following sections.

**6 LISTENING & SPEAKING**

a Read sentences A–F below. Now listen to three people talking. Which sentences are they talking about? Write 1, 2, or 3 next to the sentence.

A Men keep their friends longer than women.  
 B It's more difficult to keep in touch with friends than it used to be.  
 C It's impossible to stay 'good friends' with an ex-partner.  
 D You should never criticize your friend's partner.  
 E You should never lend money to a friend.  
 F You can only have two or three close friends.

b Listen again. Do they agree or disagree with the statements? What are their reasons? What examples do they give?

c Now look at the sentences and tick (✓) the ones you agree with and cross (✗) the ones you don't agree with. Think about your reasons.


d In groups, compare opinions. Try to give real examples from your own experience or of people you know. Use the phrases below to help you.

**Useful language**

**Agreeing**  
 I agree with that. I think that's true.

**Disagreeing**  
 I don't agree with that (at all). I don't think that's true.

**Giving examples**  
 For example, I have a friend who...



"Sorry, Frank, but I can no longer go on with this charade. Not only am I not your best friend, I'm not even sure I like you at all."

**Figure 5.** Listening and speaking activities from Unit 4C, page 63, *NEF*.

- Writing is developed together with reading, almost exclusively: students are asked to read some texts that will later serve as a model for students to produce their own texts. Students are usually presented a context —journeys, friendship, living in the city, employment, cinema, etc.— and then they are encouraged to produce the same particular

type of text that has been presented in the ‘Writing’ section: telling a story, an informal letter, formal letters and CV, an article for a magazine, etc. Moreover, these ‘Writing’ sections can be found at the end of a block of three units, offering some emphasis on the writing process and providing writing tips and useful language expressions.

a Read the story once. What happened in the end? Then correct the six grammar mistakes with the verbs (wrong tense or wrong form).

b Read the story again and complete with a connecting word or phrase.  
after although because but (x2) in the end so (x2) when

c Look at the list of possible travel problems in the **Useful language** box below. Mark them C if they refer to a car journey and P if they refer to a plane journey.

**Useful language: travel problems**

the flight was delayed	there was a traffic jam
you broke down	you got a puncture
you got lost	you forgot your passport
you missed your flight	your flight was overlooked

**WRITE** about a nightmare journey you've had (or invent one).

**PLAN** what you're going to write using the paragraph summaries below. Use the **Useful language** box and **Vocabulary Bank Transport and travel p.148** to help you.

**Paragraph 1** When was the journey? Where were you going? Who with? Why?

**Paragraph 2** What went wrong? What happened?

**Paragraph 3** What happened in the end?

**CHECK** the story for mistakes ( **grammar** , **punctuation** , and **spelling** ).

Figure 6. Writing activities from Units' block 2, page 33, NEF.

- Speaking is usually developed either with reading, listening, or writing. Reading and writing give students the possibility to structure their ideas and thoughts before actually speaking, and listening usually serves as a model to follow, or as a source of language and content input. In following sections, I will deal in more detail with oral activities: listening and speaking.

**6 SPEAKING**

a In groups, each choose one different topic from the list below. Decide if you agree or disagree, and write down at least three reasons.

- Private schools are usually better than state schools.
- All schools should let children wear whatever they want at school.
- Cooking and homework should be taught at all schools.
- Physical education should be optional.
- Girls study better without boys in the class.
- School summer holidays should be shorter.
- Boys study better in a mixed class.

b Explain to the rest of your group what you think about your topic. The others in the group should listen and say if they agree or disagree with you and why.

**Useful language**

First of all... My first point is that...

Secondly... Another important point is that...

Finally...

Figure 7. Speaking activities from Unit 4A, page 55, NEF.

Moreover, it is also possible to find sections in the coursebook where two of these skills are directly linked together; that would be the case of ‘Listening and Speaking’ sections –see Figure 5. However, all in all, skills could be further integrated.

NEF is a rather complete coursebook in terms of the opportunities it gives students to revise and test their knowledge on the contents they have studied. As mentioned in the Design and organization section, every three units students are allowed to check their learning through a series of activities that cover the contents of the units seen so far. These sections, entitled ‘What do you remember? What can you do?’, quickly go over the main contents in three different parts: ‘Grammar’, ‘Vocabulary’, and ‘Pronunciation’. However, it may be argued that these revision sections only focus on form and not on skills, so creating and using revision material really covering contents and skills, as well as offering students more opportunities for (self-)assessment, would be advisable.

To come to an end with the Methodology section of the coursebook checklist, it is important to highlight that the materials and the activities presented in *NEF* really progress in terms of complexity and difficulty both in the focus on form and in the focus on skills: the very first units deal with multiple verbal tenses, in what it seems some sort of revision, and the following blocks of units deal with more complicated grammatical and phonetic issues, like modal verbs, first and second conditionals, intonation, and linking. The last two blocks deal with the most difficult contents in a B1 level: reported speech, passive voice, relative clauses, third conditional, etc., so a language content progression can be really appreciated. In the same way, a progression in the development of skills is perceived: in the first units of the coursebook activities usually require students to work skills individually and in the following units pair and group work is more frequently promoted, thus engaging students in more complex interactional activities, which would require a further development of students discourse skills. Different strategies and subskills are practiced and developed in *NEF*, although no progression can be appreciated: there is a similar kind of work in reading, listening, writing, and speaking strategies and subskills at the beginning and at the end of the coursebook, as it will be discussed later in following sections. Similarly, there is no sense of progression in terms of the topics dealt with in *NEF*, that is, they do not progress into more abstract topics or into subjects detached from the students' world, which would allow them to further develop their language knowledge.

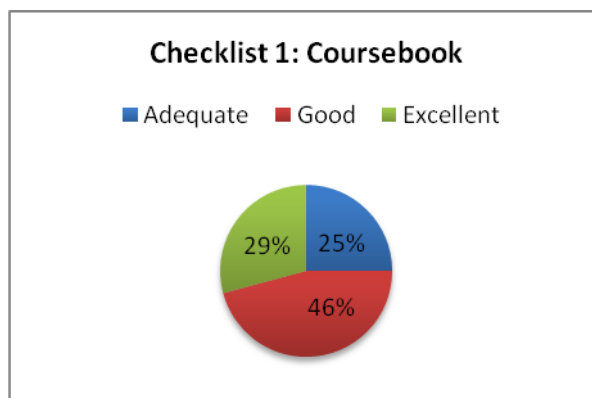
In general terms, the methodology followed in this coursebook can be considered appropriate and adequate to a B1 level, although some of the issues dealt with through the questions in the checklist are poorly covered –like the segmental and suprasegmental features–, which would make it relevant to find a more complete coursebook covering the contents of a B1 level and also addressing students' specific needs, or supplement it with activities focused on these aspects taken from other sources.

#### **4.1.5. Supplementary materials**

Finally, the supplementary materials provided together with the student's book are very complete. They include: (I) three teacher's books –where units are further explained, more activities on grammatical contents and the development of skills are suggested, and the solutions to the students' workbook are provided–, (II) a student's workbook –where units and language contents are further practiced–, and (III) a set of CDs –where all listening are recorded. Moreover, there are also references to the Oxford University Press webpage, especially in the last sections of the coursebook. These 'Study Links' direct both teachers and students to the coursebook webpage, in which they can find interactive exercises, games, and downloadable material, trying to make both teaching and learning more effective. As a result, *NEF* offers an excellent range of supplementary materials, which help both teachers and students alike, offering different kinds of opportunities for language practice.

The following pie chart summarizes the overall results obtained from the general checklist designed and applied for the analysis and evaluation of *NEF*. It can be observed that there are a great number of 'good' answers, followed by an important percentage of 'excellent' ones. However, there are still opportunities to improve the coursebook, since 25% of the items proposed for analysis were just adequate. Moreover, it is clear from the discussion above which aspects should be improved. The teacher using this coursebook should be aware of these and try to add or supplement those particular points.

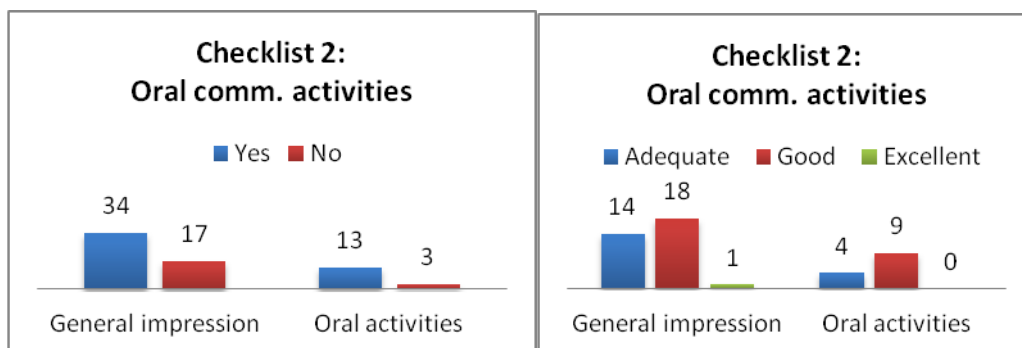




**Figure 8.** Percentages of adequate, good, and excellent answers from Checklist 1: Coursebook.

#### 4.2. Results and discussion from the checklist of the oral communicative activities

Up to this point in this dissertation, I have dealt with the results obtained from the checklist designed to analyse the coursebook in general; from this point onwards I will present the results of my evaluation of the oral communicative activities following the checklist designed for this purpose, which are summarised in Figures 9 and 10. In Figure 9, it can be seen that there is a majority of affirmative answers, although it also highlights that there are many other questions that are not dealt with in the coursebook, which will be further explained in the following sections. In the same way, Figure 10 shows that there is a balance between ‘adequate’ (14) and ‘good’ (17) answers in the General impression section, as well as in the Oral activities section: 4 ‘adequate’ and 9 ‘good’ answers.



**Figure 9.** Yes/No answers from Checklist 2: Oral communicative activities.

**Figure 10.** Adequate/good/excellent answers from Checklist 2: Oral communicative activities. \*Question 2 in the ‘General impression’ section is not graded.

First, I will deal with questions related to the General impression on the work promoted of the oral skills, and then, I will provide the results of the listening and speaking activities.<sup>7</sup>

##### 4.2.1. General impression

The first question in this General impression section deals with the appropriateness and variety of the listening and speaking activities. Most activities in *NEF* are appropriate to the students’ level,

<sup>7</sup> An analysis of sample activities is included in *Appendix III*.

although it is true that they may not always offer the right challenge for a B1 level, since the development of skills is not always complete, that is, they do not encourage students' development of their oral skills as it should be expected in a B1 level. Therefore, these activities would need to be further developed to fully cover B1 language contents and skills practice.

The next two questions in the oral communicative activities checklist make reference to both listening and speaking activities. The very first one –Are activities balanced in format, going from controlled to freer practice?– was included because well sequenced lessons would benefit both teachers and students. It is, therefore, essential to plan and create an order to help and promote students' learning, although there has to be variety in lesson planning. In fact, the same kind of consideration has to be done when designing activities of any type: a well-sequenced activity would allow students to identify a logical relationship between and among a series of activities, which would probably increase in difficulty. As a result, a well-sequenced activity should present the following structure (Savignon 1991; Ellis 2003; Nunan 2004):

- An initial pre-listening/speaking activity, which is basically a preparation for listening/speaking, where students are usually introduced to the topic to be dealt with, thus allowing them to start familiarising with the vocabulary and the language contents to be learnt or necessary to be successful in the main activity. In the case of the listening skill, students' schemata and prior knowledge are activated and they are prepared to better understand what they will listen to –making predictions, reviewing key vocabulary, etc. In the case of speaking is important to provide learners with content and language input and allow them to have time to think about how to do the following activity, although this may depend on the aim of the following activity –whether the focus is on spontaneous or planned discourse.
- A while-listening/speaking activity, which would try to develop students' attention as it would relate directly to the activity. In the case of the listening skills, the focus of the activity is on comprehension through exercises that require selective listening, gist listening, sequencing, etc. (Richards 2008). In the case of speaking, students have the opportunity to use whatever language they already have to express themselves and say whatever they want to say, which is usually in response to the reading of a text or a recording (Richards 2008). At this stage, the emphasis is on spontaneous discourse, as well as on building students' confidence in their speeches, or the type of speech event.
- A post-listening/speaking activity, usually to embrace all the work on language content related to the activity and also to integrate it with other skills' work. In the case of listening, it typically involves a response to comprehension and may also require students to give opinions about a topic. Moreover, it can also include an examination of the text or parts of the text in detail, focusing on sections that students could not follow (Richards 2008), and which may include oral discourse features –simplicity of structures, normal dysfluencies, adjacency pairs, etc. In the case of speaking, the main concerns are related to the conclusion and the solution of the activity, and to receive comprehensible feedback from the teacher, thus knowing which aspects have to be improved and further practiced and developed.

In general terms, both listening and speaking activities in *NEF* are rather well-sequenced. Most listening and speaking sections include a number of activities that usually progress in difficulty, but not all of them go from a more controlled practice –promoting students' focus on a particular language content– to a freer practice –in which students would experiment with the language, incorporate the new contents, and focus on meaning rather than on form. In other words, most of these activities are still controlled to some extent: they do not end in a real free meaning-focused practice, they are just controlled or semi-controlled practice. Therefore, it would be necessary to

complement these sections with activities that would force and challenge students to use their language knowledge and skills, in order to complete the process of learning.

As it is usually the case, all listening materials are exceptionally well recorded and audio tracks are easily found in the CDs that are provided together with the coursebook. However, these listening materials are not authentic, that is, they do not reflect real-life situations, where speakers would certainly make use of several interactional features and normal dysfluencies –like hesitation pauses, repetitions, and simplicity of structures, among other features (Brown and Yule 1983). Moreover, these recordings are usually studio ones, so there are no background sounds or noises interrupting or making interaction a little bit more challenging, as it would happen in a real-life situation. This lack of authenticity may be due to the need to provide students with clear examples and models to follow, although in fact in doing so they are depriving students of the opportunity to listen to truthful and realistic models, which would help students become used to a realistic pace of speech, as well as to different accents. These listening activities are usually an extension of the topic dealt with in the unit, so they are usually built upon a text or a previous activity, allowing students to easily associate that particular listening activity with certain background knowledge.

The most frequent types of listening activities consist of filling in the blanks, ticking the right answer in a multiple choice exercise, and filling information gaps. This kind of activities may provide little or no real challenge for students in a B1 level, since they only have to write down the piece of information missing, which, in most of the cases, are just one or two words. This type of activities promotes rather the testing of the skill, rather than its teaching; therefore, the role of the teacher is essential in their implementation. Moreover, it is also possible to find activities where students have to focus on global understanding and others where they have to extract some specific information from the listening in order to answer a series of questions. This kind of activities do not only develop students' writing skills, but also their active listening and summarising skills, together with their focus on understanding the details, so as to get the answers right. Other types of listening activities –like dictations, jigsaw listening, following a route on a map, etc.– are not covered by *NEF*. Activities are related to comprehension and some other listening skills such as intonation patterns, understanding of non-verbal language, and distinction between formal and informal registers should also have to be promoted. Therefore, it would be highly interesting and recommended to complement *NEF* and further expand all these aspects, thus promoting students' listening skills and comprehension, since sometimes students may understand what they listen to but may not understand the activity or the question or may fail to write the answer appropriately.

The next question in the oral communicative activities checklist is concerned with the different listening strategies and subskills that can be practiced in an English classroom. Most of the items displayed in this question –listening discrimination and comprehension, intensive and extensive listening, elaboration, inference, summarizing, and note-taking– can be found in this coursebook. First of all, listening discrimination is especially developed in pronunciation sections: students are promoted to identify and learn the difference between two similar sounds, in order to understand the meaning that is expressed by such differences –exercise on pronunciation in Unit 1A, page 6, *NEF*: it deals with the difference between /ʊ/ and /u:/. Similarly, students should also be trained in the subtleties of emotions and intonation in other people's voice, so as to get the correct meaning of their speech.

In the same way, both intensive and extensive listening are also practiced in this coursebook. Most listening activities proposed to students involve either a detailed analysis of the language used or listening for specific information –intensive listening–, or invite students to get the general

meaning of the listening –extensive listening<sup>8</sup>. These two types of listening are supported by a series of well sequenced pre and post-listening activities, which have already been mentioned in a previous question. To promote intensive listening *NEF* makes use of activities where students have to fill in the gaps of a text, fill out a table with the information provided, or allow students to follow the transcript in order to identify a certain grammatical or vocabulary item. To promote extensive listening this coursebook makes use of activities where students have to think and discuss the topic of the listening: some pre-listening activities prepare students for what they are going to listen –generating general ideas about the topic– and other post-listening activities allow them, most of the times, to agree or disagree with the general idea discussed in the listening, thus focusing in the general ideas of the listening, not on its details.

Elaboration, inference, and note-taking –from the last items in this question– are also taken into account and covered in this coursebook. Elaboration –which makes reference to the connection between previous and new knowledge– is mainly developed in terms of the grammatical and lexical issues that have already been learnt in the previous units, especially in activities where writing or speaking are also required. In other words, students are continually asked to review the contents and skills that have been previously covered in the coursebook in order to solve an activity: students' development of their listening skills is fostered for the better understanding of the next listening. On the other hand, inference –that is, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words or filling in missing information– and note-taking are equally misrepresented in *NEF*, mainly because listening activities are not related to the inference of contents but to comprehension and because listening activities do not promote note-taking while-listening. These may be important subskills to be developed –especially in adult learning– because they promote learning and help students develop their skills: inference activates students' minds and helps them to make connections between different aspects of their language knowledge and note-taking helps students analyse, evaluate, and summarise main ideas.

As far as speaking activities are concerned, it is remarkable the number of activities where students are asked to practice language items through repetition, create a dialogue and role-play it with their classmates, perform an interview already structured, and discuss their ideas about certain topics. The first types of activities –repetitions, role-plays, and interviews– are usually quite controlled and restricted to the items already seen in the unit, so, although they provide good opportunities for speaking, they do not offer students the possibility to express their own meanings or further develop their speaking skills to complete the activity. In other words, it seems that these activities make a strong emphasis on using whatever language focus has been covered –as in Unit 2C which deals with transport and travel and asks students to ask their classmates a specific range of questions: *what kind of public transport is there?, what time is the rush hour?, are there often traffic jams?, what's the speed limit?,* etc. Therefore, this type of activities should be included in the 'sharing information with restricted cooperation' section of Littlewood's classification of oral communicative activities –structured type of communication. On the other hand, discussions allow a freer outcome, because students are only provided with one or two ideas exposed in sentences or a text and so they try to promote students practice of production within the classroom. This is usually developed in activities where students are asked to say if they agree or disagree with a set of sentences and then discuss their opinions with their classmates –as illustrated in the activities analysis in *Appendix III*. In Littlewood's classification, these discussions would be included in the 'processing information' section –there is no correct answer, the most important thing is to promote students' ability to communicate. Therefore, these are the activities which seem to be more appropriate for a B1 level, as they develop students' speaking skills in a better way and use language for a specific purpose: since they are not provided with any particular language content to use,

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<sup>8</sup> An analysis of sample activities is included in *Appendix III*.

students are compelled to complete the activity with their own language knowledge. In other words, there is usually no control over language contents and interactional skills are promoted. What is even more interesting, most of the times, this kind of speaking activities are found as pre-listening exercises, thus allowing students to expose their ideas and opinions and to prepare to better understand an oral text.

Regarding segmental features, there is much work, material, and focus on individual sounds – vowels, consonants, and diphthongs– and to a lower extent on sound sequences. These pronunciation contents are reviewed through the coursebook, and there is also a ‘Sound Bank’ at the end of it, where all English sounds are reviewed and exemplified. In this same ‘Sound Bank’ there is a section called ‘Sounds and spellings’ where the main letter-pronunciation associations –of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs– can be found, together with some examples and several exceptions. However, there is no work with minimal pairs: some of the pronunciation sections in the coursebook deal with similar individual sounds, even with similar sound sequences –<-eigh, -aigh, -igh>, in unit 3C; <-ough, -augh> in unit 5A– although there is no real work with minimal pairs, which would help students to develop essential pronunciation skills and would also them to produce them accurately. Suprasegmental features –which are included in the curriculum as contents to be learnt in a B1 level– are dealt with in this coursebook to a lower extent. It is possible to find contents and activities about:

- word and sentence stress, usually in activities to underline stressed syllables –in simple words such as *apply, contract, employee, overtime, permanent, resign*, etc.–, discriminating stress in compound nouns –*traffic lights, car crash, road works, seat belt, speed limit*, etc.– or in suffixes – *-ous, -able, -ible, -ive*, etc.–, distinguishing words carrying meaning in a sentence, etc.;
- weak and strong forms, which allow students to distinguish between the same word when it is stressed and unstressed in English, thus having more or less relevance in the sentence. However, weak and strong forms are not much practiced in *NEF* and when they are practiced it is only in relation to definite and indefinite articles –Unit 5A. It would be desirable to adapt or supplement *NEF* in order to provide a more extensive and detailed account on weak and strong forms, since it is an essential form of speech that would help students to sound more natural in their speeches.
- rhythm patterns, in activities where students have to listen, repeat, and copy the rhythm of a number of sentences, such as those found in Unit 1A, page 6, *NEF: the first course on the menu is lettuce soup, what vegetables would you like with your steak?, sausages and biscuits aren't very good for you*, etc.;
- intonation, only present in Unit 7B which deals with the intonation of question tags: students are asked to listen to a dialogue and to copy and repeat the intonation of the question tags they have listened to;
- linking, which is only dealt with in Unit 7C, where students are asked to listen to a number of sentences and distinguish where the linking occurs and which were the missing sounds: *there's a towel on the floor, I hate this music, your jacket's on the chair*, etc.

However, there are not sections dealing with the features of connected speech such as segmentation, assimilation, elision, intrusion, juncture, and the pronunciation of contractions (Carter and McCarthy 1997), although these pronunciation issues are equally important and present in everyday English usage, and which are included in the B1 level of the CEFR.

*NEF* hardly includes materials that reflect upon the nature of communicative interaction. The question included for this purpose in this checklist takes into account a rather appropriate and reasonable range of features for a B1 level, and it is only possible to find four items out of the ten outlined in this question. The coursebook only reflects upon shared background knowledge –in

activities in which the students are encouraged to create a dialogue or an interview, for instance—, some interactional features —such as turn-taking patterns in structured interviews—, adjacency pairs —specially in the ‘Practical English’ sections, where the students can find useful expressions for routines, patterns of questions and answers related to everyday life—, and some interactive particles —when they are encouraged to express their own ideas. As a result, there is little reflection and few activities focusing on the constraints on language use when talking under real-time production —such as normal dysfluencies like hesitation pauses, repetitions, and false starts — since students are always allowed to plan their speeches, where this type of features do not usually appear. In addition, there is also no practice on co-constructed units, since the type of speech event practiced in *NEF* presents fixed turn-taking patterns, respecting each other’s turn. In other words, activities do not draw students’ attention to all these features and provide few opportunities to practice interactional or conversational skills, so students will probably not set enough practice on features of spontaneous oral discourse, which are neither present in the input that students receive.

These features of communicative interaction should be, then, proposed to be practised and developed in discussions and debates, for instance. Therefore, it would be advisable to complete *NEF* with additional materials and worksheets to make students aware of the different and essential features of communicative interaction. Moreover, it is possible to work these features giving them more opportunities for free meaning-focused oral practice.

#### 4.2.2. Oral activities

Checklist 2 contains specific questions related to listening activities —7 questions— and to speaking activities —10 questions. The first seven questions in each section —listening and speaking— are the same, and they focus on the authenticity of both situations and materials, and the appropriate sequencing of activities. I will deal with these questions first, as the results are the same, and I will then focus on the rest of questions focused on listening and speaking activities respectively.

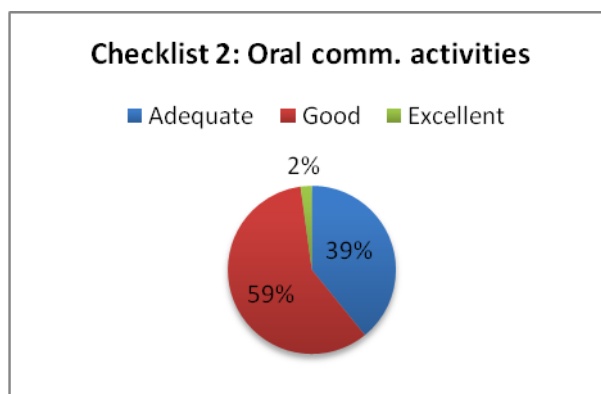
In general terms, both listening and speaking activities reflect authentic, real-life situations, in terms of the topics they deal with; these topics are updated —as already mentioned in this discussion— but they allow students to practice language contents and skills related to everyday life and communication. This is especially the case of the ‘Practical English’ sections of the coursebook, which deal with topics such as working in an office or renting a flat. However, both listening and speaking activities do not make use of authentic materials, since the materials used in *NEF* are especially prepared for an English lesson. As a result, these activities lack some of the features of real communication and deprive students from learning and developing oral discourse characteristics —as commented above. Therefore, these listening and speaking activities offer just an adequate model for students to follow, in my view. The kind of input students receive and the kind of output that is required from them are acceptable: they are encouraged to promote and develop their oral skills — more especially listening comprehension and accuracy— but the input models they are offered and the expected outputs can be greatly improved, including listening samples illustrating the features of spontaneous oral discourse, and allowing students to reproduce them in speaking activities. In this way, students would receive comprehensible and challenging input —as Krashen theorized— and would probably be more prepared to produce more complex and elaborate outputs —as suggested by Swain—, thus really focusing and developing their communicative competence.

It has already been pointed out in a previous question —see section I from Checklist 2, question 3— that activities, in general, are well-sequenced, so that a gradual learning process is promoted. It is very frequent to find several activities in the listening and speaking sections of this coursebook surrounding a main activity, so students are usually well prepared to carry out the listening and speaking activities. There are usually one or two pre-listening or pre-speaking activities that allow

students to be prepared for the main activity; these pre-activities usually function as a warm up, focusing students' attention on the items to be learnt, preparing them with key words, and getting them ready to focus on the topic to be dealt with in the activity: setting the context, generating interest, activating previous grammatical or vocabulary knowledge, making students predict the content of the listening, allowing them to plan their speech, etc. (Canale 1983; Celce-Murcia 2001). This is usually done by means of a set of questions to be answered at the end of the activity that already point out to the topic to be dealt with –in the case of listening activities– and through the reading of a text –in the case of speaking activities. In the same way, there are also several post-listening or post-speaking activities, which usually reflect upon the listening and promote students' speaking skills and involve summarising ideas to other classmates, comparing opinions, focusing on the language items learnt, etc., that is, they tend to promote skills integration and/or focus on form work.

Regarding the last three questions in the speaking activities section –see section III from Checklist 2, questions 24, 25, and 26 in *Appendix II*– it is important to highlight that speaking activities in *NEF* usually involve interaction between and among students. As it has already been pointed out, most of these speaking activities involve the creation and the role-play of a dialogue or an interview, so interaction is frequently promoted. In the same way, most of these speaking activities invite students to produce an outcome, which are usually rather controlled, so there are few activities in which a real, free outcome is required –see section I from Checklist 2, question 7 in *Appendix II*. Finally, most activities in *NEF* promote the repetition of language items and expressions, so speaking activities in this coursebook mainly focus of accuracy rather than on fluency.

Figure 11 summarizes the results obtained from the checklist designed for the analysis and evaluation of the oral activities in *NEF*. It can be observed that more than half of the questions in this checklist are 'good' and that a significant 40% of the questions are just 'adequate'. Therefore, improvements are to be expected in this respect, especially on the nature of the materials used and the students' further development of oral skills.



**Figure 11.** Percentages of adequate, good, and excellent answers from Checklist 2: Oral communicative activities.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

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Foreign language teaching is trying to answer the need of our current society to prepare our youth for a future in which language skills will be in great demand, due to globalization and the internationalization of professions. Realizing the need to make the most of learners' foreign language abilities, the national education administration changed its regulations in order to promote and develop learners' oral communicative competence. In doing so, the focus of the national curriculum shifted from an extensive knowledge of grammar to oral proficiency and communicative competence in the target language, which does not only entail knowing the language code or the form of the language, but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation or context. As a result, the main aim of foreign language teaching is to facilitate students' development of communicative competence so as to use the foreign language in work, in life, or when necessary. Accordingly, foreign language lessons should teach those contents of the language that will be used in communication, as well as the language strategies that are used in the real world. However, this is not always the case in foreign language teaching practice: more than often, there is a gap between the use of language in real life and the more traditional methodology used in foreign language lessons, usually based on a coursebook which does not cover the need to provide enough opportunities to practice interaction and communication.

In language teaching research one of the important theories was formulated by Chomsky in his *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965, although his theory did not fully explain everything a native speaker knows about his/her own language. Unlike Chomsky, Hymes –in his research “On Communicative Competence” (1972)– coined the term ‘communicative competence’, arguing that apart from grammar rules, there are other rules of use and that Chomsky’s term of ‘competence’ was not enough to explain a native speaker’s knowledge of the language. Therefore, as it has already been said, learning a language involves not only acquiring the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, but also understanding which sentences are appropriate in a particular context. That is the reason why the main aims of most language teaching courses are usually defined with reference to the four language skills –reading, listening, writing, and speaking–, thus classifying activities into two major categories: input and output activities, which are equally necessary. According to Krashen (1982) the only way to acquire language is by receiving a comprehensive input: the more the learner listens to the language, the more likely s/he will be able to produce a comprehensible output. However, in actual teaching practice, by pushing students to communicate and use the language to interact, their development of oral skills can be enhanced, as explained by Swain in his “The Output Hypothesis: Theory and Research” (2005).

In this dissertation, I have carried out an analysis of the oral communicative activities –listening and speaking ones– of a particular coursebook –NEF– which usually works skills in isolation rather than together. The results obtained from applying the checklists designed based on previous work have pointed out that, in general terms, both listening and speaking activities are focused on the development of the grammatical and lexical contents dealt with in the unit, rather than on the development of oral subskills, which would have required comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in a greater way in order to offer activities that prepare students to be successful in their use of the language in contexts outside the classroom. Students should have been engaged in activities related to their studies –Graphic Design–, developed in a dynamic environment where students would have been encouraged to speak with and listen to their classmate in a greater way – so as to have more opportunities for freer outcomes–, and in a context that would have supported learning. This would have been possible to be carried out with the students I had during my teaching placements, as they were clearly oriented to a professional career and were already looking for more specific language learning: NEF needed to be complemented with language contents related to visual



communication, photography, multimedia, website design, market research, etc. and with a wider and more varied range of communicative activities that would have promoted their oral skills.

Listening and speaking activities in *NEF* usually include listening to texts, repeating what is heard, answering a series of questions according to what is heard or read, and producing answers based on the listening or the reading, thus offering just an adequate kind of input for a B1 level, as it does not reflect upon the nature of spontaneous oral discourse. Figure 11 –at the end of Results and discussion section– summarized the results of the analysis of the oral activities in *NEF*: nearly 40% of the questions were ‘adequate’ and more than half were ‘good’, thus pointing out that *NEF* activities need to be improved, so as to promote students’ development of their oral skills. It is clear that these activities involve the use of language in a completely different way from how language is used in real life. Therefore, both listening and speaking activities should be redefined in terms of real communication usage, in order to give students the chance to listen and produce meaningful, authentic, and unpredictable contents. On the one hand, listening activities should promote active listening –ensuring that students are involved in the activity–, encourage listening strategies –such as looking for specific information, identifying predictable words or sentences, discussing what they expect in particular forms of speech, etc.–, ensure that students know the goals of the listening activity, and provide opportunities for reflection, so that students can share what was learnt and the methods they have used for the better understanding of the activity. On the other hand, speaking activities should follow an input–input and output–output structure: first, new language contents should be introduced by the teacher with controlled techniques –such as asking questions, drilling, etc.; then, students should be asked to use the new language contents in different situations and contexts, encouraging communication while guaranteeing that the new contents are introduced and practiced; and, finally, students would gradually develop strategies for communication, making use of all the language they know. In this final output stage, instead of concentrating on accuracy, the focus will be on fluency, meaning, and the success of communication.

To put an end to this dissertation, I would like to add that the communicative approach has expanded the areas of language teaching: integrating functions with language contents, developing information processing to the learning process, and promoting the development of language skills in order to create a meaningful product. It implies that language should be taught and learnt according to language use in real life, so that learners will develop communicative competence successfully, being able to use language appropriately in any kind of situation. In real practice, to develop students’ communicative competence means to develop their language skills –reading, listening, writing, and speaking– although these skills should be combined with some focus on form –grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. However, traditional methodology has emphasized the teaching of these latter language contents and has neglected the training of language skills. In the coursebook under analysis, many activities are aimed at developing language skills, but fail to do so and it has been proved that *NEF* coursebook does not succeed in doing so, thus making me agree with the reasons Cunningsworth and Dalby provide for not using a coursebook in the EFL classroom –lack of authentic language, unnatural models, distorted contents to suit the learning goals of the curriculum, unable to meet students’ needs and interests, etc. Nonetheless, it is true that different contexts would provide different answers for the checklists designed for this dissertation and for their analysis, since the evaluation presented in this dissertation has been made taking into account the particular context of my school placements.

Personally, in this dissertation I have learnt the complex process of selecting an appropriate coursebook and suitable communicative activities for the foreign language classroom, covering the four skills and equally developing them. First, the aim of finding out if *NEF* is an appropriate coursebook has given me an insight into the multiple aspects that have to be taken into account for the selection of a coursebook: design, organization, appropriateness to students’ level, methodology

used, and supplementary materials provided, which all need to complement the students' book in such a way that a logical, progressive, and complete learning takes place. Second, analysing and evaluating *NEF* oral communicative activities have allowed me to realize the need to design well sequenced and balanced in format activities, going from more controlled to freer practice –something *NEF* needs to improve–, as well as the necessary development of different listening and speaking strategies and subskills that would build up students' communicative competence. Finally, I believe that I am in a better position now to evaluate and select the materials to be used in an EFL classroom and that these analyses are essential for the teaching-learning of an EFL, since they have a crucial impact. Therefore, I think it is important and essential for every EFL teacher to develop a critical attitude concerning the teaching materials s/he is using in her/his classroom. In my future teaching I would make use of a coursebook, because I think it is a valuable tool –as authors claim, especially Cunningsworth–, and even more for inexperienced teachers. However, as I have shown in this dissertation, it would be necessary to approach any coursebook analysis with criticism and supplement it to the extent it would be necessary to make it an appropriate and suitable teaching material.

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