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Evaluation and design of EFL didactic materials. Audiovisual texts for the English class in primary education.

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INDEX:

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is based on the four main skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. So, throughout my project I have decided to practice speaking, (although the other threes skills are also practiced indirectly while communicating) but in an uncommon way. I have decided to practice speaking using audiovisual materials, or what is the same, using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), considering the current approach to teaching a second language "the communicative approach".

ICTs are the order of the day in each subject during Primary Classes, and obviously, English could not be less. They have become frequent especially with students in the 4th, 5th and 6th year because they are the ones that possess their own tablet or laptop.

As has been said, the project intends to join or mix the practice of the speaking skill with audiovisual materials, which could be a useful tool for children. Therefore, everything that is related to computers or tablets draws students' attention and this will make our job a bit easier and students will learn in a different and more enjoyable way.
The project will be a new resource in the EFL classroom, in order to acquire the target language.

Key words: *audiovisual materials; speaking; communicative; ICTs; EFL context; skills.*

1. INTRODUCTION

My intention is not to make a critique of what primary school teachers do right or wrong, because not all teachers are the same. Each one of them follows a different working methodology, and no one can be considered as the perfect one. Although, along the years, there has always been a methodology or an approach that it is supported or followed by most of the experts and therefore, carried out by most of the teachers. The current recognized approach, as I have mentioned before, is the -communicative approach-. This is the approach that will be found throughout all the work.

The four main skills –listening, reading, writing and speaking– will be practiced all together, but emphasizing the speaking skill. The other three skills are the most used during second language (L2) primary classes in Spain, but speaking could be considered as the missing one. As I have been able to notice during my English internships and sharing experiences with different classmates and teachers, I have come to the conclusion that it is hardly or barely practiced. It is almost forgotten (despite some exceptions as in every field) in the Spanish contexts. Why is it forgotten? A logical reason is not provided.

The reality is that there is a gap in the teaching of speaking in primary schools, and this gap is responsible for the absence of the multiple benefits that its use could promote in children. Therefore, it is necessary to tackle and to explore these benefits in order to make clear that there must be time allowed for speaking using audiovisual texts in the EFL classroom.

From my point of view and from the point of view of the majority of primary school teachers, speaking is the most difficult skill to teach and the skill that requires more time to practice. Some children fear from speaking, others just cannot be bothered, others mispronounce and so on. Whatever the reason is, it needs to be practiced and with time it will improve, just like the other skills do. Unfortunately, this almost never happens, and therefore, that is why I had decided to take it into account and do it myself, or at least try to do it while I carried out homegrown tasks with students, during my English Internships at a rural state school.

But due to the difficulty that practicing –speaking- entails, it does not mean that teachers should avoid it. It is easier for those teachers to instruct the other three skills, because Second Language Learners acquire and learn them faster and with less effort. Less effort for students while learning and less effort for teachers while instructing.

This factor is due to the way the L2 is taught in Spain, because if the natural development of learning a L2 were followed, speaking would be learnt after –listening-, and just before -writing and reading-. Although, the same language is differently taught from a L1, to a L2 or L3, and thus, the sequences of learning must be different. Yet, this is not an excuse and as future teachers, it is our duty to do our bit to help, and make this factor change as far as possible.

I have to clarify that every time I mention –speaking-, it is always in terms of communication, using a context and where meaning is primary.

With regard to the other important point or factor of the work a part from the one mentioned above, that is the communicative approach and its relationship with speaking, the use of ICTs in the L2 classes stands out. Throughout the tasks, children will work with audiovisual materials, and therefore, ICTs will take part in every task laid out.

Nowadays, the ICTs are breaking through the lives of children. Students find them enjoyable, and ICTs can be a useful tool for teachers to draw or elicit pupils' attention. Despite the fact that using ICTs can be helpful for children, it also has its drawbacks. The abuse of the use of ICTs could be hazardous. Therefore, they should be used as a possible resource, not as a matter of means.

In sum, in this project, an analysis of both the theoretical framework that collects the benefits of teaching English through ICTs, and of the materials used to teach speaking, as well as an adaptation or elaboration of these materials to make them suitable to the communicative approach, will be carried out.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The two main points which support the whole framework of my project are: the practice of the speaking skill and the use of ICTs, both guided by the principles of the –communicative approach-.

Scholars define the -communicative approach- or de –communicative language teaching- (CLT) as the approach which is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language. The -communicative Approach- claims that language must be contextualized and authentic. Therefore, the use of the speaking skill manipulating ICTs in the classroom seems to have sense.

Classroom tasks guided by the CLT are characterized by trying to produce meaningful and real communication, at all levels. As a result there may be more emphasis on skills than systems, lessons are more learner-centered, and there may be use of authentic materials.

For example, Nunan (1991:12) highlights that "it has been accepted that language is more than a simply system of rules. Language is now generally seen as a dynamic resource for the creation of meaning. In terms of meaning, it is generally accepted that we have to distinguish between 'learning that' and 'knowing how'. In other words, we have to distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating.

This view has underpinned communicative language teaching (CLT)."

The –communicative approach- principles which my project is supported by are: "learner centered", "task based", "meaningfulness" and "communicative".

The "meaningfulness" principle declares that language must be used in a way that results motivating, realistic and useful for students. This will support the "learner-centered" principle, which suggests that learners must be motivated and willing to participate in the designed activity. "Motivation" is the tool used nowadays to keep the students attention. The "learner-centered" techniques must focus on or account for learners' needs, styles, and goals. Hence, in all my tasks, motivation tries to be elicited,

either with real-life materials, authentic texts (such as cartoons) or taking part during the EFL class.

Widdowson (1990:67) regards "it has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic." In the project, the use of authentic materials is provided within the tasks (*The Simpsons* ppt, customized texts and prepared questions), as will be seen and explained in the sections below.

Authentic text have been defined by Wallace (1992:145) as "…real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes." They are therefore written for native speakers and contain "real" language. Peacock (1997) believes that they are "…materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community." In contrast to non-authentic texts, which are especially designed for language learning purposes.

The "task-based" principle claims that the L2 is always used to achieve an outcome, a purpose. A task is defined as an "activity which is based in doing things, where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome". Therefore, in all my tasks, the expected outcome is described, and the term "task" will be used instead of "activity" or "technique".

Long (1985:89) describes a task as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, finding out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline observation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across the road. In other words, by "task" is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between."

The "communicative" principle suggests using the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts. Thus, the task prepared will all be planned to use the speaking skill productively (focusing in meaning) and using a context.

Clark (1987:227) describes the "communicative" goal as "establish and maintain interpersonal relations, and through this to exchange information, ideas, opinions,

attitudes, feelings and to get things done." This principle for instance can be seen in the project in the videoconference task (Task 4).

Furthermore, the CLT points out that there must be some negotiation of meaning in the classroom. There must be a gap to fill in, an information gap. In this project, the negotiation of meaning can be found in the project for instance in the videoconference (task 4) when learners ask questions to a native speaker in order to fill in the gaps with information they were ignorant of.

Another important issue is the use of technology in EFL. An investigation carried out by Rahimi (2011) explored the effect of EFL teachers' personal and technology-related characteristics in ICTs use in English classes. Two hundred and forty-eight full time teachers participated in the study and filled in the personal information form, computer anxiety rating scale, computer attitude questionnaire, ICTs use rating scale, and computer literacy questionnaire. The results of data analysis revealed that digital portable devices were used more than computer or network applications/tools in English classes and teachers used technology most frequently in teaching oral skills. It was also found that ICTs use correlated inversely with teachers' age, years of teaching experience, and computer anxiety.

It just so happens that using the ICTs in the tasks, the most frequent skill used or the one that the project wants to improve is the oral or speaking skill, such as the investigation mentions. It must be said that this is an unexpected coincidence; none of this information was known before selecting the topic.

Emerita Bañados (2006:535) believes that "technologies would give learners more opportunities to L2 input and interaction, with the possibility of many hours of independent work at their own pace. Students need to achieve not only the goal of learning English effectively but also mastering the use of ITCs". This fragment supports my idea of using ICTs during the EFL classes.

The last important issue of the project is the use of the speaking skill. Speaking is crucial to achieve the communicative goal, and thus, accomplish the –communicative approach- principles.

One of the strong points to bear in mind while speaking, is pronunciation. A research done by Attapol Khamkhien (2010:187) in Thailand showed that "pronunciation is one of the major problems claimed to be impeding or contributing to the lack of speaking competence of Thai learners. This is because English has a distinct set of sounds, while Thai does not. To successfully learn another language, particularly to achieve the target-like pronunciation and minimize foreign accents that can result from a negative L1 transfer, learners need to know what sounds are available in the target language but not in their own mother tongue, and vice versa". These same lines could be also used in the Spanish context to explain pronunciation mistakes or problems, due to the fact that English is considered as an L2 for both Spanish and Thai learners.

As will be seen in the sections below, pronunciation is taken into account, since the message has to be comprehensible (meaningful), grammatically correct, coherent and appropriate. This defines what is known as "pushed output" (Swain, 1985).

The other strong point when speaking is meaningful communication. Again, Attapol Khamkhien (2010:188) suggests that "it is undeniable that learners must be conscious of the structural or grammatical features of the target language; however, this process should enable the learners to associate those features to their functional usage in producing their own language in communication. Moreover, the learners should have the ability to use both forms and functions properly for establishing meaningful communication." When talking about meaningful communication, both "meaningfulness" and "communicative" principles are being borne in mind using the speaking skill, as well as learners will do in the planned tasks.

3. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Before the project was developed, I had to take an early decision. I had two possible options: the first one was to evaluate tasks from different publishing houses, and the second one was to design and evaluate new tasks. I thought the second option was in greater amount complete (-design and evaluation- not only –evaluation-), so I opted for the second one.

The four main created tasks of this project will be exposed below. A quick explanation will be given at this point, in order to be explained in the following lines more deeply detailed and more thoroughly. These tasks are not just prepared for a future class, where the result is yet to come, and where conclusion cannot be drawn or where a feedback cannot be given to the students. Instead, they have been carried out, and thus, my intention is to give these tasks a meaning through the elaboration and assessment, re-elaboration and re-assessment.

The English teacher of the school where I did my English internships gave me permission to carry out these tasks during the EFL classes. Furthermore, she thought they had been very interesting and helpful for students, and I have to confess she gave me some advice to come up with new ideas in order to enhance these tasks.

My belief is that if a teacher wants to elicit speaking from his/her students, he/she has to be the first one using the target language as much as possible, and therefore, my intention was to speak or give instructions in the L2 as far as I could. Hence, I chose the elder courses, so as to be understood, or more likely understood by almost all the students (as known, every student has a different L2 level). The courses selected were 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th year. One task was planned for each year, depending on the degree of difficulty of each task.

In addition, the school has a medium-low purchasing power. It must not be forgotten that the school is placed in a rural neighborhood, and therefore, there are fewer students and fewer classrooms than in an ordinary school. As a result, the money that the school receives from the council is much less. Thus, the internet connection, the computers and the tablets are faulty so I had to take into account this important pitfall and ensure that the multimedia source I wanted to use worked properly. Consequently, the timing of

each task is given approximately, discounting the time wasted due to all these unforeseen problems.

To sum up, the purpose of the project is not to create lesson plans, but to create tasks. Despite the fact that they are tasks and not lesson plans, it does not mean that one task cannot last for more than one class. Moreover, some of them last for more than three classes. Besides, these tasks are not isolated tasks. They are related to what has been studied in previous unit/s, to what is being studied at the moment, or to what will be studied in the following unit/s.

Task 1: learning the alphabet

Student's age: 8-9 (3rd year of Primary Education)

Materials: a 5 minute video from the English channel BBC from the internet webpage https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xj_Zr9SbH6I, a poster with the alphabet and how each letter is pronounced (annex 1), a Microsoft Office Word document with photos of the vocabulary to learn that day (annex 2), an interactive whiteboard (IWB), a beamer and a computer or laptop.

Description:
The first part of the tasks consisted in a cartoon video from the BBC using the well-know internet webpage YouTube. In this video, the alphabet is explained in a funny way, with jokes and riddles. Students' attention is drawn thanks to this funny way of teaching the alphabet.

The following part of the task comprises the explanation of the alphabet more thoroughly and in detail, using a poster. In this poster, students could recognize each letter, and how each letter is spelt. The use of phonetic symbols is avoided due to the difficulty that this would bring. Instead, common letters are used, in order to make it understandable and meaningful for the students. For instance: Letter "A" = "EI" or "U" = "YU".

The next part of the task served to prove if students had learnt the alphabet, and to prove if all I had done up to then, had been useful or useless. This part of the tasks covered the students' participation. In the other two parts of the task students' participation had been almost none.

I asked the teacher if she had any vocabulary to teach in the following unit, because I wanted the vocabulary taught that day to be useful for them in the near future, not just learn isolated vocabulary, that was not going to be used afterwards or that was going to be forgotten. I was told that in this unit the vocabulary about the beach was going to be taught. Therefore, my purpose was to try to work cooperatively with the L2 teacher and indirectly with the text book. "Indirectly", because one of the main points of the task was to make the vocabulary in the text book clear, using an unknown and new manner for the students.

In order to explain the vocabulary, I used a Microsoft Office Word document with photos in it (annex 2). My duty was to tell the students what each picture was, and pronounce the word. The students had to repeat –use of drills- once or twice after me and guess which letters formed each word, using the alphabet learnt a short while ago. This seems quite difficult for their age, but most of them already knew how to write down those words. This reason facilitated the task, and thus, I took advantage of it.
Each word was written in their personal notebook (properly or improperly) at the expense of being corrected.

The last part of the task was the correction. In other to correct what students had written, I picked up students randomly and asked them to come to the IWB. Another peer, spelt the word, and the student chosen had to write it down (using the special IWB's pencil), just beside the picture. Once the peer had finished spelling, the chosen student had to evaluate if the spelling had been correct or not. If it had been correct, the chosen student left it as it was, and if it was incorrect, he corrected it himself. If both students failed with the spelling, a third student would come along and take part in the correction.
In this last part of the task, is in which speaking is more likely to be elicited.

Expected outcome: sheet of paper from their notebook with the vocabulary of the day, written in it properly, because their own mistakes should have already been corrected.
For instance: *1. TOWELL   2.CAMERA   3. BEACHBALL   …*

Time: 25'

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to spell any word.

2. Students will be able to understand that blending letters can change the pronunciation of some syllables, especially if they contain diphthongs and tripthongs, and that the same letter can be pronounced in different ways, depending on different factor, which will not be explained.

3. Students will be able to use an IWB.

4. Students will be able to write down any word hearing it being spelt (recognize all the letters in the English alphabet).

Skills used: listening (to the video), reading (the vocabulary), speaking (to spell the words) and writing (to write down the words spelt).

Pitfalls:

- The connection to internet in the class did not work (a fact that I was not aware of), so I had to search for an available class, and move in momentarily. In that class, the speakers did not work, but fortunately I solved the problem by moving the wires.

- Some students did not notice or understand the difference between spelling and pronouncing in the target language, because in their mother tongue both are very similar, apart from certain exceptions.

This drawback could be seen in the dictation of the words. Some children wrote "bichbol", rather than "beachball".

- The difference between the students level. This difference could have been due to the ease of some children acquiring a language sooner or with less effort than others – language aptitude-, or because some children attend private or extracurricular classes and they are in greater amount exposed to the L2, which helps second language acquisition (SLA).

Feedback: my intention was to elicit a peer feedback. Some children feel a bit reluctant to teachers' correction. Therefore, I thought it was the best way to avoid fears, bad

reactions and complaints. As I have mentioned before in the last part of the task, a student spelt a word, and another classmate wrote the letters forming a word in the IWB. If s/he had done it correctly, everybody would say it was correct, and the student would receive self-satisfaction. Whereas if s/he got it wrong, the other student would correct the mistake, and he/she would receive self-satisfaction, and indirectly, the previous student would notice his mistake and uptake it.

Modifications carried out in a future practice: once all the information was gathered, the modification for a future practice would be:

- More tasks would be planned to ensure children have learnt the alphabet. Not sure if all of them did.

- Similar videos would be shown. Loads of them can be found just by clicking *alphablocks* on YouTube.

- Ensure everything works before instructing. This will help save time, which is really valued in education.

Task 2: biographical digital magazine

Student's age: 10-11 (5th year of Primary Education)

Materials: tablets, an IWB, digital photos, a microphone and headphones.

Description:
The students were asked to bring to the next EFL class some old photos from their early childhood up the present (10 photos more or less), and a photo of the job they would like to do when they become adults. Those photos had to be in digital format, and therefore, they had to be scanned. If they did not have a scanner at home, I would scan the photos myself to satisfy their needs.
In the following EFL class, all the students were told to switch on their tablets. I asked them to search the internet webpage www.joomag.com . This is the main webpage that will serve us during the entire task to create a biographical digital magazine. It is very

similar to a real magazine and one of the remarkable features is that you can also turn over the pages and the proper webpage makes the same noise as a page in real life makes when it is being turned over, which is quite realistic.

Then I asked them to click the tab where it said –create new account- . For some of the students this was unnecessary, because they could also join the webpage using their own FaceBook account.

Once they had created the account, they had to give the document a name *-The Story of my Life-* and select as many pages as were going to be needed in their magazine. All of them had to have at least 10 pages, counting the cover (with the title and their names).

The next step was to copy from the blackboard the patterns in a Microsoft Office Word document that would be used during the whole magazine (annex 3). The principal point was to work mainly on the past simple of the verb to be, in order to work cooperatively with the *Curriculum de Aragón* and with the L2 teacher, because that was the grammar that was being taught at that time. According to this idea, Nunan (1991: 19) suggest that "the syllabus specifies sets of grammatical, phonological, lexical, functional and notional items to be covered. Rather than identifying a particular item, say "talking about oneself", "nationalities" and the verb "be", and creating a text and a task to teach these items, one might find or create an interesting/relevant text and task at the appropriate level of difficulty, and then identify which language items on the syllabus checklist can be introduced or taught through the text/task." Therefore, the purpose of creating a text in which indirectly teach the past simple of the verb "to be" is supported by this fragment.

These same patterns or sentences from the Word document were the ones that they would have to record using a special program and attach them to the photos. Therefore, the text would be written and orally recorded, in order to achieve the speaking goals. It must not be forgotten that speaking is trying to be elicited.

I corrected each text one by one, and pointed out the mistakes that they had made in order to be re-written again. I definitely did not want the voice to be recorded using a faulty or incomplete text. The text had to be accurate, because enough problems would arise while recording and I did not want one more to be added.

Once all the mistakes had been noted and corrected, the next step was to start recording their voice. A new webpage, www.vocaroo.com, was used to record the voice.

In this webpage, students could record their voices; check if they had done it "properly" and then save it on MP3 format, which is the format allowed by the webpage www.joomag.com to attach audio.

The second to last step was to attach the audio to the photos and decorate the magazine, changing for example the colour of the background, the font face, the font size, the font colour and so on.

The last step was to upload the magazine onto their digital blogs. Clicking the photo of each student in the webpage www.lunasdecarton.blogspot.com each one of the magazines could be seen, and this made my job much easier, because I could correct the audios at home, and not one by one during the EFL classes.

An example of a biographical digital magazine is provided in Annex 4.

Expected outcome: the biographical digital magazine.

Time: 150'

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to talk about the past, using the past simple.

2. Students will be able to talk about the future, using the structure "I want to be…"

3. Students will be able to create a text in the target language, using a pattern.

4. Students will be able to notice their pronunciation mistake throughout listening to their voice having been recorded previously.

Skills used: reading (the pattern), writing (the text), speaking (recording their voice) and, indirectly, listening (to my instructions in the target language).

Pitfalls:

- Some students did not have their photos the day they were told to.

- Some students did not bring the photos in digital format, so they could not work with them that day. I told them with sufficient time that if they did not have the photos in digital format, they would have to give them to me before the following EFL class in order to be scanned.

- The first program chosen to record voices was not downloaded in the majority of the tablets, so students had to download it from the internet using the webpage www.softonic.com . The program firstly selected was –AudaCity 1.3 Beta-. Once all the students had downloaded the program a new problem aroused. This program worked improperly in the majority of the tablets. The students were not allowed to save the document in MP3 format, or once they wanted to attach the audio to the photo, the webpage www.joomag.com rejected it.
Consequently, I had to change the voice recorder. I chose the webpage www.vocaroo.com mentioned above, and hopefully the problem was solved.

- Some children copied incorrectly the patterns from the blackboard, and therefore, their written text was riddled with mistakes. An example of a student copying from the blackboard is provided in Annex 5, which can be compared with Annex 3.

- Some students tended to repeat the same structures all the time.
For instance: "I was happy", "It was sunny" and so on. They did not even change the words. In some cases, it was snowing, and they still wrote, it was sunny. They were not describing the photo; they just wanted to fill out the page with sentences.

- Some students that did not finish the steps on time during the classes, so they had to take it as homework. Most of them did nothing at home, and therefore, I had to give them time during the following EFL class, and to postpone what I had planned to do that day.

Due to all these drawbacks, I was forced to modify the timing of the tasks. It should have been 150' more or less, and by that I mean two and half EFL classes, not four classes, which is exactly what it took the entire group to finish completely every step.

Feedback & assessment:
In this task, I gave two different types of feedback:
- The first type of feedback is related to the written section. As I have explained above, I corrected the written text before the students' recorder their voices, in order to

avoid errors that would trigger mispronunciation. The solution or correct sentences were not given to the group explicitly. The purpose of this feedback was to give the students a clue to change what they had written incorrectly (as can be seen in Annex 6).

- The second type of feedback is related to the spoken section. This feedback would be given to the students a while after they had uploaded the work onto the blog. A rubric (table 1) would be used to assess children's work, specially the spoken section. The marks would be handed in to the EFL teacher and they would count towards the final mark of the subject.

Table 1. Rubric - speaking

OBJECTIVES	VERY GOOD	GOOD	REGULAR	NEEDS TO IMPROVE
Comes to class with the homework done (10%)	Brings the homework done 3 days out of 3	Brings the homework done 2 days out of 3	Brings the homework done 1 days out of 3	Brings the homework done 0 days out of 3
Brings to class the material needed on the correct date (10%)	Bring the photos on the correct date	X	X	Does not bring the photos on the correct date
Uses the Past Simple of the verb to be properly (10%)	Uses the past simple of the verb "to be" properly in the entire magazine	Uses the past simple of the verb "to be" incorrectly in 1 or 2 sentences	Uses the past simple of the verb "to be" incorrectly in 3 or 4 sentences	Uses the past simple of the verb "to be" incorrectly in 5 or more sentences
Uses Future structures properly (10%)	Uses the future structure properly in the sentence required	X	X	Uses the future structure improperly in the sentence required
Pronounces all the words properly while recording (20%)	Does not mispronounce any word	Mispronounces 2 or 3 words	Mispronounces 4 or 5 words	Mispronounces 6 or more words
Accuracy and coherence in the written text (20%)	The text is coherent and grammatically correct	The text has 2 or 3 features that make it incoherent or grammatically	The text has 4 or 5 features that make it incoherent or grammatically	The text has 6 or more features that make it incoherent or grammatically incorrect

		incorrect	incorrect	
Fluency while speaking (20%)	Does not stop unexpectedly while speaking	Stops unexpectedly while speaking once or twice	Stops unexpectedly while speaking three or four times	Stops unexpectedly while speaking five times or more

Modifications carried out in a future practice:

     - The voice recorder chosen to use from the beginning would be the one placed in the webpage www.vocaroo.com, which gave hardly any problems.

     - Ensure that the entire group has the needed photos in digital format, as asked.

     - Be more strict with the students that have not brought the homework done. Continue with the class as it was planned, and make them catch up. It is not fair that the innocent pay for the sins of the guilty.

Task 3: voice recording

Student's age: 9-10 (4th year of Primary Education)

Materials: a Microsoft Power Point document (ppt) containing slides with sentences describing different features of *The Simpsons* (Annex 7), those same sentences recorded by a native or native-like speaker, the computer program AudaCity 1.3 Beta, a microphone, a beamer, a large screen and a pair of speakers. *The Simpsons* ppt would be used as an authentic text, such as the -communicative approach- suggests.

Description:

Pre-work: Before the task was carried out, the chosen slides from *The Simpsons* ppt had to be recorder by a native voice. The people selected to record the audios were both my mother and my sister –native and half-native speakers- respectively. Two voices were chosen in order to make the task a bit less monotonous.

The group was taken to the computer room, in order to work with a large screen, a beamer, some speakers and a microphone already plugged in, and a "decent" computer.

First, I would exhibit the ppt to the students in order to draw their attention. Children have a crush on cartoons, and therefore, I would take advantage of it.

The entire group would be sat on the floor, and each one of the students would follow the same procedure. They would be called randomly –one at a time-, and meanwhile the rest of the group would be able to follow the process, and thus, no explanation of the procedure would be needed after the first student had taken part. Once a student had been selected, a specific slide from *The Simpsons* ppt would be both listened and read in silence at the same time, so as to be read aloud afterwards by the student, using the audio as a model to follow. Then, both audios –the native's and the second language learners'- would be compared with the goal of recognize pronunciation mistakes, lack of fluency or intonation.

If the teacher or the student was not pleased with the result, s/he would have the option to repeat as many times as required.

Expected outcome: an audio with their voice recorded.

Time: 45'

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to compare their pronunciation with a native speaker's and notice their mistakes.

2. Students will be able to be in contact with a different accent apart from the British Standard English accent.

3. Students will be able to improve their speaking fluency and intonation.

4. Students will be able to get accustomed to a native accent, in order to acquire a native-like accent.

5. Students will be able to improve their oral and aural skills.

Skills used: Reading (the sentences from the ppt), listening (to the audios) and speaking (declaiming the sentences in order to be recorder and compared).

Pitfalls:

- The main drawback in this task was that some students - mostly girls- felt a bit embarrassed to speak in the target language in front of their peers. Despite feeling ashamed, the entire group participated whether they had to be obligated or not.

In relation to this drawback, Attapol Khamkhien (2010:188) highlights that "the speaker will be shy to speak out again as he or she recognizes that there might be mispronunciations during the test."

- Some students did not pay attention or were not able to recognize their mistakes while comparing the audios. Hopefully, this barely happened.

Feedback & assessment:

- As has been mentioned before, if I decided that the students could have done it better, I made him repeat the audio, or even s/he could notice his/her mistakes. I did not say *"You have done it wrong",* I rather said "*You can do it better, let's do it one more time."* Therefore, the feedback was indirect.

- All the audios were saved once all of the students were happy with their productions. I would listen again to the audios at home, and assess them using a rubric (Table 2). The marks would be passed to the EFL teacher and they would count towards the final mark of the subject:

Table 2. Rubric reading-speaking

OBJECTIVES	VERY GOOD	GOOD	REGULAR	NEEDS TO IMPROVE
Fluency while reading aloud (25%)	Does not stop unexpectedly while reading	Stops unexpectedly while reading once	Stops unexpectedly while reading twice	Stops unexpectedly while reading thrice or more
Intonation while reading aloud (25%)	Uses an adequate voice level sound	X	X	Uses an inadequate voice level sound
Pronunciation while reading aloud (25%)	Pronounces all the words properly	Mispronounces one word	Mispronounces two words	Mispronounces three words or more
Makes the corrects	Does not speed up the	X	X	Speeds up the production of the

pauses (25 %)	production of the message			message

Modifications carried out in a future practice: To be honest, no modifications would be carried out in a future practice because the task was a great success.

Task 4: videoconference with a native speaker

Student's age: 10-11 (5th year of Primary Education)

Materials: the distinguished videoconference program Skype, a laptop, a huge screen, a microphone, a webcam, some speakers and a sheet of paper with the students' questions.

Description: the task was a short group conversation with a native speaker, my mother, through Skype. It was set in two EFL classes:

On the one hand, the questions to be asked to the native speaker were prepared during the first lesson. Each student thought of a question in their L1, and they themselves tried to translate each question with both the EFL teacher's help and mine. If the questions were simple or short, children were allowed to ask two questions, instead of one. The students read the questions twice or thrice to me, to check the pronunciation so as to be understood by the native speaker. Some examples of a possible question were:
"How many brothers or sisters have you got?"
"How old were you when you got married?"
Chea Kagnarith, Chea Teara and Alan Klein (2007:3) suggest that "working on questionnaires that are based on a relevant local context brings a motivating dimension of reality to the classroom environment. Rather than relying on generic textbook activities, which learners might find contrived, such a project encourages students to put their heads together and work actively to accomplish a meaningful goal." Therefore, this fragment gives sense to the task because the learners would ask questions to the native

speaker about the foreign language context (a real context), and without using the activities in a textbook. Furthermore learners' motivation would be elicited within the task.

On the other hand, the videoconference took place. The students were taken to the computer room, because as I have explained in the task above, in this classroom is where the huge screen and speakers are placed. I used my laptop, in order to save time because I already had the program the microphone and the webcam installed. I plugged in the speakers and the screen, so that my laptop's screen was reflected in the huge screen and everybody would be able to see clearly and properly. The students asked the questions to the native speaker following the order of the roll, and they had to copy or try to copy the answer. Moreover, my purpose was not to finish the task when asking because the answer was also part of what was requested to children. The answer by itself was not really important, whereas its meaning was. Children were desired to guess the meaning of the answer, not to write the exact words of it literally.

Once the videoconference had finished all the answers were shared together in common, to check understanding.

Expected outcome: sheet of paper with questions written in it.

Time: 30'

Objectives:

    1. Students will be able to make up questions translating from their L1 to their L2.

    2. Students will be able to pronounce an accurate and coherent message using the L2.

    3. Students will be able to understand the meaning of a message sent from a native speaker, even if the accent differs from the Standard British's.

Skills used: speaking (asking questions to the native speaker), reading (the questions whilst preparing the pronunciation), writing (the questions) and listening (to the native speaker's answers).

<u>Pitfalls:</u>

- Only pronunciation pitfalls were found in this task. Those mistakes were due to lack of practice at home.

<u>Feedback:</u>

- Explicit correction to each student whilst reading their own questions. Students must not mispronounce in order to be understood by the native speaker. The message had to be accurate, fluent and with the correct intonation.

- Once the videoconference had finished, the students were asked to check if they understood the meaning of the answers. Almost all of them understood the meaning, and some of them gave the exact words of the native speakers' answer. If a student did not understand the meaning of his/her correspondent answer, another student or even I as a last resort, would explain the meaning to him/her.

<u>Modifications carried out in a future practice:</u> no modifications would be carried out in a future practice. The task was gratifying and fulfilling to everyone that participated in it.

4. CONCLUSION

When this project was planned, it was already known that the idea that was intended to be carried out was very ambitious. If English speaking is almost forgotten in the Spanish EFL classes, it must be because its difficulty to be practiced and assessed. The –communicate approach- focuses its attention in the meaning of the message, not in the message itself. Therefore, a few problems arise at this point. The first problem is how or when to correct students, because in early ages it is normal to make mistakes, since they are not ready to emit an accurate and grammatically correct message. Hence, I found the assessment, correction and feedback of the tasks the most complicated points in the whole project.

My belief is that if it were easy to correct, the speaking skill would be taught or practiced more often, regarding a context as the –communicative approach- suggests.

However, the project intended to prove that practicing the speaking skill, using ICTs and bearing in mind the -communicative approach-, could match all together. Despite the fact that the tasks were a complete success, it has been verified and tested that it is not easy to create activities that suit the communicative principles.

On the other hand, the main problem that some second language learners underwent in this project is the fear or embarrassment to speak in front of their peers. In order to solve this problem, ice-breaking activities would be carried out. For instance, an activity that has something to do with me, with my own life experience, and therefore, accomplish a communicative principle, which is setting out tasks, dealing with real life materials or dealing with real life events.

From my point of view, the practice of the speaking skill ought to be elicited (directly or indirectly) much sooner than it already does, and, without a doubt, this problem would be erased since before and without being noticed by students. However, this is one of my thoughts and impressions.

In spite of being the problem exposed above the one that appeared more frequently within L2 classes, all the proposals for enhancement laid out at the point "modification to be carried out in a future practice" in each tasks, would be also taken into account.

Nevertheless, the tasks highly proved to engage the students in their SLA, and to elicit their motivation.

To conclude with the project, my desire is that through all the formulated tasks, speaking skills and manipulation skills of ICTs have been improved, and, as a consequence, the development of a positive attitude towards EFL from now on.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: alphabet poster
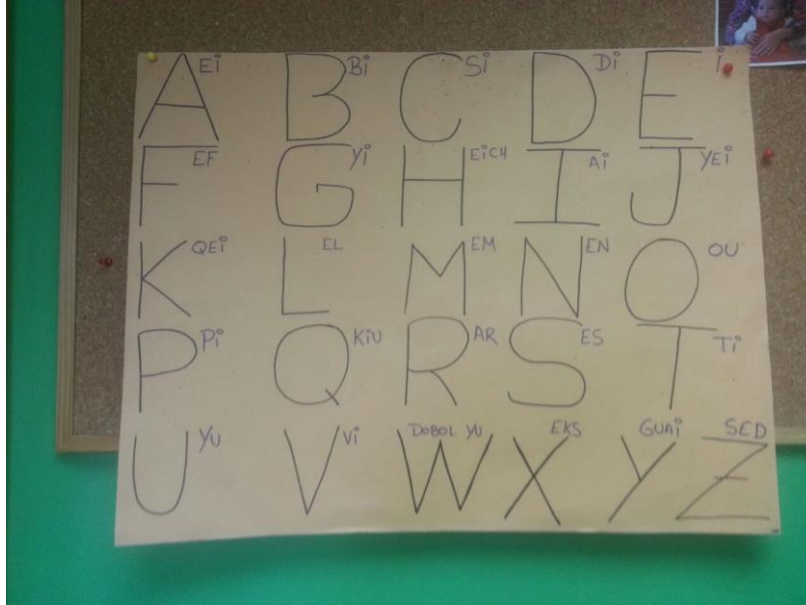
Annex 2: Microsoft Office Word Document

Annex 3: patterns

"THE STORY OF MY LIFE"

In this photo, I was … years old   EN ESTA FOTO TENIA… AÑOS

It was...   ESTABA... (TIEMPO)

I was in...   YO ESTABA EN…

I was…   YO ESTABA... (ESTADO EMOCIONAL)

We were…   NOSOTROS ESTABAMOS…

In the future I want to be a…   EN EL FUTURO, QUIERO SER…

Annex 4: Example of a biographical digital magazine

THE
STORY
OF
MY
LIFE

CLICK TO PLAY

by Sergio Hernando

In this photo, i was 3 years old.
It was at night and that nigth it was cold. I was in my house in the sofa.
I was sad because i had just come out of the shower.
We were siting in the sofa .

In this photo, i was 3 years old.
It was at night and i was asleep
I was in my bedroom, sleeping in my bed
I was dreaming

In this photo, i was 3 years old.
It was cold and cloudy.
I was at home with my grandparents.
I was happy.

In this photo, i was 3 years old.
It was sunny and hot.
I was in the pilar festival
I was happy

In this photo, i was 5 years old.
It was cold and cloudy
I was in my house in new year's eve
I was happy.

In this photo, i was 6 years old.
It was hot and sunny.
I was at the beach
I was happy.

In this photo, i was 8 years old.
It was very hot and sunny.
I was at my friend's land.
I was very hppy.

In this photo, i was 11 years old.
It was hot and sunny.
I was in my house mith my mum.
I was happy.

In the future i want to be a zoologist.

Annex 5: Example of a student copying from the blackboard making mistakes

THE STORI OF MY LIFE

In this photo, i was … years old   EN ESTA FOTO TENIA… AÑOS
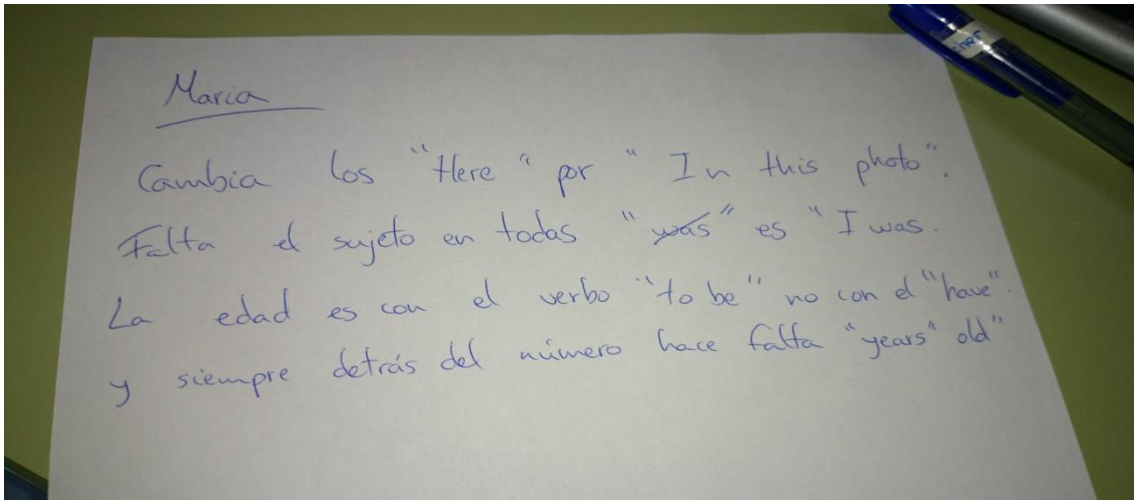
It was...   ESTABA SOLEADO

I was in…   ESTABA EN

I was…   ESTABA CONTENTO

We were …   NOSOTROS ESTABAMOS

In de future i want to be a…   QUIERO SER DE MALLOR

Annex 6: Example of a text correction feedback

Annex 7: Example of *The Simpsons'* ppt