Universidad Zaragoza

1542

Trabajo Fin de Máster

The Use of Comics in the ESL Classroom for the
Practice of Grammar and its Impact on Motivation.

El uso de los cómics en el aula de ILE para la
práctica de gramática y su impacto en la motivación.

Autor

Kenan Nathaniel Frey Gálvez

Director

María Eugenia Ossana

Table of contents

Abstract

It is widely known that students' performance varies from one another and depends on many factors: the individual, the context of the class, teachers and classmates, the personal situation outside the classroom and motivation amongst other things. This Master's Degree dissertation propounds an investigation proposal focused on the educational potential of comics —as a medium— for grammar explanation due to their entertaining nature and the usage of pictorial, textual and otherelements in order to deliver messages as multimodal texts. Firstly, terms are defined so as to be able to deploy them in the analysis. Afterwards, the working hypotheses are proposed: comics (focusing on comic strips) can facilitate the students' understanding, learning and performance of English grammar. Consequently, and as a result, a second hypothesis is considered: comics may also increase students' motivation during English lessons. In order to do so, I will be using triangulated data collection instruments for the purpose of adding extra validity to this research. The theoretical framework collects different educational aspects and theories to use in the analysis and conclusions. However, due to the present national Covid-19 health situation, this research proposal has not been implemented; therefore, real data have not been collected. Nevertheless, there is a hypothetical analysis—using the theoretical framework to discuss the potential of comics— and a proposal to undertake the research and gather results in the future.

Keywords: Comics, Grammar, Motivation, Didactic Resources, ESL Classroom

Es un hecho que el rendimiento de los alumnos varía de uno a otro. Esto depende de muchos factores: el sujeto, el ambiente áulico, profesores/as y compañeros/as, la situación personal fuera del aula y la motivación del alumno/a entre otras razones. Este trabajo de fin de máster es un proyecto que propone una investigación centrada en el potencial educativo de los cómics —como medio—en la explicación de la gramática por su naturaleza entretenida y el uso de diferentes elementos pictóricos, textuales entre otros con el fin de trasmitir mensajes en forma de textos multimodales. En primer lugar, se definen los términos para poder llevarlos a la práctica en el análisis. Después se proponen las hipótesis de trabajo: que los cómics (tiras de cómic especialmente) pueden facilitar la comprensión, el aprendizaje y el uso de la gramática inglesa y, como resultado y segunda hipótesis, incrementar la motivación de los estudiantes durante las

clases de inglés. Para ello utilizaré instrumentos de recolección de datos triangulados para añadir validez a la presente investigación. El marco teórico recoge diversos aspectos y teorías educativas en el análisis y las conclusiones. Sin embargo, debido a la presente situación de emergencia nacional de Covid-19, la investigación no se ha puesto en práctica y no recoge resultados propios. A pesar de ello, se propone un análisis hipotético —utilizando el marco teórico para considerar las posibilidades de los cómics— y una propuesta para realizar la investigación y reunir resultados en el futuro.

Palabras Clave: Cómics, motivación, gramática, recursos didácticos, ILE.

1. Introduction

In the past, the main pillars in education have been placed on the figure of the teacher who has been regarded as a key variable in the learning process. S/he was supposed to explain and transmit knowledge to the student. If the learner seemed incapable of understanding after a few opportunities of participation, the student was deemed incompetent and unable to learn appropriately; hence, s/he was not worth much attention. Many of these "worthless students" were discouraged and abandoned school, or their academic studies, and focused, instead, on getting a job and earning a living. Who knows if one of those students would have ever found the cure for cancer or, else, if s/he could have made a great discovery in any area of expertise? Might s/he have written, say, a bestseller? It will remain unknown because they were regarded below the required standards. However, some teachers have shown a real vocation and have evinced an interest on teaching, helping students who did not understand some aspects of a subject.

In this research dissertation, I will concentrate on the practice of grammar in connection to the use of comics as a resource for teachers in the ESL classroom and its possibilities for motivating students. However, I have not been able to conduct the research in a real classroom and, thus, there are no data collected results. Hence, I will speculate on the results, hypothesizing on the possible outcomes and the reasons behind them, taking into account several theories and research already carried out in the field. The ultimate objective is to provide a research design that can be undertaken successfully in the future.

The gap found that leads to the hypotheses in this study is that grammar is sometimes difficult for students, even more so for students with lower performance on English subject. The problem is, thus, how to introduce comics as an educational resource. Previous research has been mainly focused on English learning through comics in terms of general language competence acquisition, the use of graphic novels for literature teaching in English, or the use of comics for motivating students in the ESL classroom. However, I could not find any research studies oriented to the use of comics in the ESL classroom focused on grammar consciousness raising explanations and learning. Therefore, there seems to be a common gap for both variables pursued by the working hypotheses of this investigation; that is, English grammar teaching and the

use of comics during English lessons. Consequently, I have proposed the following guiding questions:

- Could comics make grammar understanding easier for students?

- Would comics help students to acquire, in this particular instance, Present Simple and Present Continuous tenses of English more successfully?

- Could the use of comics evince an improvement in the students' marks regarding these grammar items?

- Could that improvement have a positive impact in the students' communicative competence fluency and accuracy?

- Would comics be a useful scaffolding tool?

- Could comics, in turn, be a motivating resource in the EFL class?

If I could find answers to these questions, I might find another use for comics as a language teaching resource. These questions led me to the formulation of two hypotheses: a main hypothesis and a subordinated one:

1. Comics —as a medium— can be a remarkable tool for the ESL classroom in order to improve the students' understanding of specific grammar items, and thus, upgrade learners' academic results in a positive manner.

2. As a consequence, the use of comics can transform grammatical lessons into more enticing sessions for the students and, therefore, improve their motivation.

This idea is based on Stephen Krashen's "Comprehensible Input" hypothesis tenet which claims that linguistic input could be easier for students if it contains visual aids due to the difficulty of the abstract nature of grammar (1988).

The purpose is to offer an aid for students who might have difficulties in comprehending and acquiring grammatical rules of English and benefit the rest of the class. Although I want to foster English learning for as many students as possible since its level in Spanish schools seems to be improving of late and numerous families have difficulties to help their children with English due to the high linguistic competence level. Thus, our intention is to provide further resources that can be used in several contexts and facilitate English learning as a second language. Therefore, comics could

help the teacher to explain grammar deductively and to give the students a resource as an aid for doing exercises and preparing their tests on their own.

2. Justification, Purpose and Objectives

2.1 Justification

Currently, there are several methodologies to teach English. The *Education Corner* webpage, the "The Learning Pyramid" is shown (see Appendix 2, figure 4) —adapted from the NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science Learning Pyramid— theorizes on the amount of information that students could be able to remember from different learning methodologies. An ordinary class delivering new content in our context starts with some presentation of new content by resorting to explanation from which students will be likely to remember a 5% of the information. Afterwards, they will have to practice what they have "learnt" because, with practice, an average student will be able to remember a 75% of the information s/he has been exposed to. Many textbooks have a brief explanation as an aid to perform practice exercises. Students will allegedly remember a 10% of what they read. These percentages do not equal 100%, each method has a degree of accuracy in helping the student to retain the information and; therefore, these percentages are individual, not cumulative. However, the question at this juncture is what would happen if different methodologies are combined during the explanation of content and grammar? Comics could be a meaningful manner of combining theory and visuals to help the students learning.

One of the reasons that inspired this approach is a TED talk by Gene Luen Yang, a cartoonist and high school teacher in Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, California, which is named "Comics belong in the classroom" (2016). This appealed to me sufficiently so as to examine the video when thinking of an approach for this Master's Dissertation. The American teacher explains how his students in the subject algebra considered him tedious. He was oftentimes compelled to assist other teachers; thus, he would record a video explaining the lesson, resulting in a yet more tedious task. He eventually could envision the solution by resorting to explanations through the aforementioned medium: comics. The students were delighted and improved significantly their understanding on algebra. Presently, this high school employs comics in different areas. For instance, he claims that one of his former colleagues, uses Scott

McCloud's 'Understanding Comics' in his literature and film class, since it gives his students the language to discuss the relationship between words and images (TED, 2016).

After identifying the gap on the use of comics focusing on grammar, I considered motivation as a feature widely studied by researchers and experts in the field in order to improve students' learning. However, my dissertation was not intended to focus on motivation itself but as a consequence of improving the teaching of grammar through a more appealing resource. Therefore, the gap found focuses on making a theoretical aspect of English—as it is grammar— more enticing and observing if a linguistic improvement in this aspect could have a result on the students' motivation towards English learning.

Regarding the educational law in Spain, this research proposal is in tune with the national legal requirements for several reasons. In the national curriculum (LOMCE, Órden ECD/489/2016), within the foreign languages section, English; one can find some methodology orientations. The first is methodological principle (section e) related to motivation development and creativity, which states that a variation of resources, the inclusion of sociocultural knowledge, contact with native speakers and the design of creative activities, can lead to positive attitudes that favor new learning and acquisition. In connection to grammar and vocabulary issues, the curriculum states that grammar represents knowledge of the language functioning. The teacher must introduce the grammatical rules explicitly with illustrated examples that help the students to comprehend syntactic and discursive contents. Finally, regarding educational attention to diversity, the curriculum points out that learning depends on several factors such as age, cognitive ability or the students' interest. In addition, it mentions scaffolding as general strategy to be used in the classroom —by recourse to tables, images, concept maps, models, language simplification and the like. Therefore, the use of comics as it is suggested in this investigation —and will be analysed in the following sections— is entirely compatible with motivation, grammatical content explanation and attention to diversity, allowing the use of scaffolding as well.

2.2 Purpose

The main purpose of this research is to observe if the hypotheses I seek to validate could be true in a real practical research with its own results based on previous research undertaken within the field —since I have not had the opportunity of gathering data with the students of my Practicum II teaching placement period. With this research study, the aim is to improve the students' learning on ESL and facilitate English comprehension and use, especially for the learners that struggle to acquire this language and perceive it as a burden —instead, this new knowledge can bring new opportunities to them. By the same token, it could facilitate teachers' tasks when it comes to explaining grammar and expose the students to grammar practice. In addition, I seek to support the divulgation of comics as source for ESL teaching and whether this multimodal textual medium could be a useful tool regarding comprehension — especially on grammatical structures— since it may contribute to a better understanding through the *use of visuals*. Moreover, I want to test if comics and can improve students' motivation in class to create an environment favorable to learning. Nevertheless, I intend this research to be theoretical proposal which could be widened in scope and in the future with a practical data collection research and suitable results that could be further analyzed and discussed on.

2.3 Objectives

As objectives for the accomplishment of my purpose I have to find evidence that comics are useful and stimulating for the students, find other research articles that test comics as a resource for English teaching, and analyze their results. In addition, I need to investigate theories on language learning to determine if comics can be in tune with current approaches on language teaching and learning. Eventually, if comics are validated as an ESL teaching resource and they conform to the theories of language acquisition, the objective is to analyze other research items, their results in order to theorize on my own and decide whether comics could facilitate grammatical understanding for students, teaching for teachers and if, as a result, they could create an enjoyable and more appealing environment for learning.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Previous Related Research

I have deliberately chosen some research studies, essays and articles conducted in Spanish contexts as far as this endeavor was possible. Since the context in which I want to conduct my research in is the Spanish secondary school, the most significant previous experiences on the topic are studies undertaken in Spanish speaking classrooms learning English as a second language. Nevertheless, there seems to be a gap in the perspective I intend to tackle: comic strips applied to grammar explanations and its impact on motivation. One of the main research articles I will be focusing on will be Sara Paola Lengua Salinas' findings in "El cómic: una oportunidad de motivación y aprendizaje en las clases de inglés como L2" (2015). The reason behind this choice is that Lengua Salinas' exploration is the only research that could be traced in a similar Spanish speaking context and that involves the impact of comics on the students' motivation as an important part of the investigation. She undertakes the research in Colombia. Her main objective was to evaluate the effect that the use of comics had as a motivational tool on students' learning. Thus, she designed educational interventions in the classroom in order to gather relevant data. Her methodology aimed at modifying the existing input by adapting it to comics, to implement two tests —one at the beginning, and another at the end of the process so as to compare both in terms of the improvement of English use and accuracy. Additionally, two questionnaires were used, together with a field journal in which she recorded relevant observations on the classroom dynamics and the students' performance—such as participation, accuracy, and confidence. The results she eventually obtained were positive in terms of motivation and language learning, since the students believed they were more engaged and, in addition, their participation in the classroom and their written production increased, showing a progress during the research.

In addition, there are several didactic proposals that have shown an interest on comics which have proved to be quite valuable for this research, mostly in terms of theories and experiences about the use of comics in the classroom and their implications for motivation. One of them is an article by Ricardo San Martín—teacher on I.B. Alfonso XI in Alcalá de la Real— about the use of comics in the ESL classroom and some proposed activities. There are also some Master's dissertations on the topic: "Las

posibilidades didácticas del cómic a través de su uso en manuales de educación secundaria" by Nerea Ruiz Arnau (2018) and "El cómic como recurso didáctico en el aula de lenguas extranjeras" by Isabel García Martínez (2013). Ruiz Arnau focuses her dissertation on the analysis of different panels from textbooks used in secondary school by analyzing their linguistic and pragmatic use and functions in order to emphasize comics' versatility as an educational resource and to analyze its educational possibilities. She undertakes a deep analysis on: pragmatics, spelling, artistic and paralinguistic elements; and different levels of language—phonetic and phonological, morphosyntactic and lexico-semantic. Subsequently, she explains her results on each aspect of language and how comics affect them. She states that it is an excellent tool in a communicative context and that more studies have to be undertaken on the topic from different perspectives. Meanwhile, García Martínez analyzes course books in English, French and Spanish —providing a definition for this term—, comparing them before presenting a didactic proposal using comics as a resource based on the previous analysis. Her conclusion, after gathering opinions from teachers (they believe that comics help to motivate the students) and scrutinizing the textbooks, is that comics are a beneficial resource if it is used correctly as *a complement*. She also claims that this tool is quite meaningful to reflect on the target culture, since comics usually mirror cultural issues. However, this also depends on the importance that comics have in the culture of the target language. I have also focused on an enlightening conference by Manuel Barrero (2002) on comics as pedagogical tools in the classroom, in which he presents the current condition of Spanish education and the importance of the image in learning, he also discusses the history of image in schools and provides extensive documentation on the topic. Accordingly, he shares successful experiences in schools and different perspectives about the use of comics, providing a range of activities to use in the classroom. His conclusion examines the different utilities of comics as educational tools —such as fostering abstraction ability, producing reading habits, acquiring new concepts among the most salient. Although I have not used any of his activities due to the nature of this study, the advantages of comics in his conclusion and some of his documentation have been useful for the rest of this research, shedding light on the possible results I could reach in more convenient circumstances.

I have also concentrated on an essay by Enrique del Rey Cabero "El comic como material en el aula de E/LE: justificación de su uso y recomendaciones para una correcta

explotación" (2013) which—despite being focused on the teaching of Spanish— has valuable information on the characteristics of comics, some of them duly cited in my dissertation. He gives evidence of the validity of comics as a resource and some advice for its appropriate application. There is also an undergraduate dissertation by Eduardo Rosales Fernández, "La narración gráfica como recurso educativo a potenciar en la enseñanza de idiomas: el cómic en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE)" (2016), which was of much help for the purpose of contextualizing an overview of the topic. Rosales Fernández has as objectives: investigating the most relevant bibliography on the use of comics in education, analyzing and drawing conclusions that can lead to the application of techniques already seen in class, discovering if future teachers in Sevilla are familiar with graphic narration and to foster the use of comics in the classroom due to its motivational and divergent nature. His conclusions contend that using this resource in the classroom allows teachers to transmit an extensive variety of content, facilitating the students' learning. The mentioned thesis was mainly focused on graphic novels and primary education, and thus, not perfectly in tune with this dissertation. However, his theoretical framework and his conclusions add up information to this study and provide a different perspective.

Eventually, there is another proposal, although focused on Spanish as a second language. Marina Alonso Abal's "El cómic en la clase de ELE: una propuesta didáctica" (2010) gives a different perspective on the use of comics in the classroom, since she discusses different variables to practice with comics that are not necessarily focused on learning content, but competences. Her objective is to make use of comics for ability developing and integration, curricular material development, the student's autonomy and learning strategies, text sequences and the cultural component variable. Her conclusion is that the value of comics as educational resource comes from its potential as medium and as a cultural product —reflecting in this case the Hispanic society and values—, allowing students to appreciate the target language culture. In addition, from a theoretical perspective, comics are authentic material, reflecting orality that becomes easier to comprehend for the student. Therefore, apart from acquiring lexico-grammatical and cultural contents, comics add an affective component, due to being quotidian and known outside the classroom, and thus, introducing it to the classroom can offer a good starting and motivational point to acquire contents on language. Furthermore, comics are ludic and humorous; hence, helping to acquire the previous

components. As a consequence of analyzing in detail the aforementioned publications, I realized that no dissertation or research is focused on the use of grammar, which motivates the main focus of study of this dissertation. However, they have been helpful to use some terms and variables for analysis as the starting point for this study and to offer different perspectives, experiences and conclusions, in order to develop the current research. In addition, I have considered several English theorists and authors' ideas— some found in the literary review's works— for the theoretical framework of this dissertation.

3.2 Towards a Definition of Comics

To start with, we need to rigorously define comics. The *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* defines comic as "a magazine, usually for children, that tells stories through pictures" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2020).On the other hand, the *Cambridge Dictionary* provides a more accurate definition: "a magazine or book that contains a set of stories told in pictures with a small amount of writing" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Scott McCloud, a comic theorist and author, claims that this kind of denotation is elusive and that comics need a wider meaning distinction. Despite the difficulty to give a clear-cut delineation of comics, Scott McCloud has taken that risk in his book *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art* (1994). He claims that the term "comic" is worth defining because it is the *medium*, not the object *per se*—which would be the comic books or comic strips. He cites Will Eisner (1992) —a renown comic illustrator—, who uses the term "sequential art" when addressing this multimodal format since for him the individual pictures could only be understood dialectically on the page. In other words, it is, rather, when they are *part of a sequence* that they transform into something altogether different. However, Eisner's definition does not take into account style, quality or subject matter. Therefore, McCloud ponders a new interpretation of comics: they are "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (1993, 9). This sequential art has been present throughout history. Egyptian hieroglyphs could be said to have already involved some traits of this art, so did Native Americans' codices, and even French weaver artists evinced such aesthetic pieces as shown, for example, in the Bayeux Tapestry.

3.3 Comics: Useful Terms

In his work "El cómic como material en el aula de E/LE: justificación de su uso y recomendaciones para una correcta explotación" (2013), Enrique del Rey Cabero thoroughly defines comics and their characteristics. Taking Will Eisner and Scott McCloud into account, he introduces the main elements of comics. For the record, I am using here the elements that del Rey Cabero explains in his essay (appendix 1, figure 1). Firstly, one should consider the term *panels* that —according to Eisner— are "the individual frames or segments that capture or encapsulate the events in the text" (2002: 40). There is also the *gutter* or space between the panels that can be real or imaginary. These panels are placed in pages in which the reading direction is the same as that of common books, from left to right. Then he introduces *speech bubbles/balloons* from Gasca and Gubern which are "symbolic recipients or containers for the speaking characters' utterances" (1998:422). There are also *captions* which are boxes inside the panels which explain what is happening or provide the context. Del Rey Cabero states that these are the main concepts —although the enumeration is not conclusive and extensive. Other variables are equally important such as the expression of time and rhythm, onomatopoeias, signs, perspective and framing, visual metaphors, movement, gestures and expressions according to Gasca and Gubern (1998, 2008), Eisner (2002), McCloud (2007, 2008) and Varillas (2009).

The reason for explaining these key terms of comics is to demonstrate the considerable amount of information that can be transmitted in a single panel using the mutual semantic interaction between text and images. The medium of comics has had negative reputation throughout its history. Del Rey Cabero argues that—according to Gravett—even in the present, there are "teachers, librarians and other 'cheerleaders for the cause'" (2005:11)that perceive and utilize comics and graphic novels as "useful primers, stepping stones to literacy, but not worth reading in their own right as 'real books' themselves" (del Rey Cabero 2013:184). He claims that "this dominant culture of the written against the visual has accused comics of being simple readings, deprived of imagination in comparison to literature" (del Rey Cabero 2013:184). However, he also mentions McCloud's term *closure*—that is, the "phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (McCloud 2007:63) for disproving this belief. This effect is evinced in the gutter—the space between panels—as the reader has to complete with his/her imagination what happens between panels. There are different types of

closure according to McCloud (appendix 1, figure 2): *moment-to-moment* (single action in several panels, requiring little closure), *action-to-action* (a single subject in a progression of actions), *subject-to-subject* which entails the changing subjects within a scene, which requires the reader's involvement, *scene-to-scene* used to signal the transitions across significant distances of time and space, requiring deductive reasoning, *aspect-to-aspect;* that is, the transitions between different aspects of a place, idea or tone and *non-sequitur* which makes reference to no logical relationship between panels. McCloud also identifies a number of categories for word and image combinations (see appendix 1, figure 3) such as: word specific combinations (pictures illustrate but do not add to a complete text), picture specific combinations (words do little but soundtrack the images), duo-specific panels (words and images send the same message), additive combinations in which words amplify an image or vice versa), parallel combinations (words and images follow different courses without intersecting), montage (words are integral parts of the picture); and inter-independent —where words and pictures go hand in hand. Del Rey Cabero collects these explanations with the objective of demonstrating the vast manners by means of which comics can deliver information, written or non-verbal, developing visual and reading comprehension and being stimulating for the student's brain.

Another characteristic to consider—previously mentioned already—is the meaningful term: *multimodality*. The Center for Socio-Cognitive Discourse Studies at Moscow State Linguistic University has published an article about multimodality and defines it as the "human ability to combine several modes of world cognition and communication —verbal, visual, kinetic (with the help of gestures) and some others…" (SCoDis, 2016, online). Comics are a combination of text and illustrations; thus, they seem to embody the very concept of multimodality. However, if we delve on texts and visuals regarding comics, one can find further aspects for consideration. Regarding text, comics offer different options, there can be *narrative text* and there can be *dialogue*. We cannot find many instances of colloquial oral register in school textbooks. Hence, comics can offer the students the possibility of receiving oral input in a written form through the characters and formal explanations through the captions.

3.4 Comics in the Classroom

In addition to the characteristics of comics and the fact that they can transmit a lot of information in an entertaining manner, Isabel García Martínez in her Master's Dissertation "El cómic como recurso didáctico en el aula de lenguas extranjeras" (2013) devotes part of her proposal to explain why comics are as relevant for teaching as many seek to demonstrate. In the present dissertation, some of them from Brines Gandía (2012) and Manuel Barrero (2002) will be considered. García Martínez states the advantages of comics which, according to Brines Gandía (2012), are:

- It is an accessible, brief and linguistically rich material, with simple syntax.

- Most comic topics are contemporary and if they are not, they are still valid for the classroom.

- Its format is graphical, allowing the student to read gestures, movement, images, etc.

- It facilitates the development of several abilities, such as: comprehension, interpretation, synthesizing, sense of time and space, investigation…

- It provides an enjoyable environment

- It motivates the students due to its simplicity and humor.

Subsequently, García Martínez further introduces the different utilities of comics by Manuel Barrero (2002):

- Fostering abstraction and imagination.

- Generating reading habits following the occidental order.

- Cultivating a compositional ability.

- Stimulating abstract imagination.

- Acquiring knowledge and concepts such as voice-over, off-field scene, perspective

- Fostering of reading apart from literature, not instead.

- Enabling interest for different graphemes and typographies, games with texts, etc.

- Learning light, color and space management.

- Understanding different narrative models.

- Differentiating audiovisual narration from grapho-visual narration.

Although García Martinez mentions more authors and their ideas supporting the use of comics, these aforementioned advantages for using comics should be taken into account as a resource for English teaching, since they do not only help the understanding of

ideas and text with the aid of images, but also images are part of the medium to transmit ideas. In addition, they induce the target reader—through different stimuli— to become involved in cerebral activity consciously and unconsciously while reading.

3.5 EFL Theories: Relevant Considerations

Regarding EFL theories, methods and approaches, I find interesting Lengua Salinas' (2015) perspective on the use of comics and how they conform to education studies. She considers constructivism, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, scaffolding and motivation. Ricardo San Martín (1992) also examines Ausubel's meaningful learning on the topic of comics. Nevertheless, I want to reflect on Lengua Salinas' perspective of constructivism, scaffolding and motivation since I gather considerations are more in tune with my idea on using comics for grammar teaching and motivating students. However, I also want to take into account Krashen's idea of comprehensible input and affective filter which is also present in Marina Alonso Abal's teaching proposal (2010).

Constructivism

The University of Buffalo's webpage provides a definition for the term constructivism: "Constructivism is the theory that says learners construct knowledge rather than just passively take in information" ("Constructivism," n.d.). They also take into account the processes of assimilation—that is, taking new information and adding it up into existing schemata—and accommodation—using newly acquired information to revise and redevelop an existing schema. Therefore, the theory considers that a learner stores his/her knowledge in his/her own manner, building schemata by assimilation and rearranging it by accommodation. Lengua Salinas points out that this learning theory offers new learning opportunities. She cites González (2012) that constructivism takes the student into consideration as a rational being who is able to construct his/her own knowledge. However, this learning is always contextualized—it considers some factors as prejudices or fears that the student may have regarding his/her own learning. She also argues that there is evidence that when teachers use their students' knowledge as the starting point and they monitor their changes during the learning process, learning improves in a great manner (National Research Council, 2000). Therefore, the teacher is a guide that establishes some limits and helps the students if necessary. Comics here

could be a tool for students to consult on their own and the teacher could explain grammar and be the facilitator of this medium at the same time. Hence, giving the students enough space to reconstruct learning or help them if the need arises.

Scaffolding

Karen Sue Bradley and Jack Alden Bradley discuss scaffolding in their essay "Scaffolding Academic Learning for Second Language Learners" (2004). They cite Ovando, Collier and Combs, who argue that "scaffolding refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (2003:345). They also cite Diaz-Rico and Weed who assert that "as students become more proficient, the scaffold is gradually removed" (2002:85). Therefore, they identify and explain three types of scaffolding as especially effective for second language learners: *simplifying the language*, asking for *completion* rather than generation and *using visuals*. Simplifying the language refers to shortening selections, speaking in present tense and avoiding idioms; asking for completion focuses on asking students to choose answers from a list or complete a line or paragraph; and using visuals is presenting information and asking the students to respond through the use of graphic organizers, tables, charts, outlines and graphs. In this case, comics could not only be used for explaining grammar but to practice it. Comics could introduce simple language for the students to understand, as well as partially completed sentences they need to complete, and despite of the fact that they are not the same type of visuals, comics are a visual medium which could be somehow adapted for using scaffolding, since it is proven to have a positive impact on students learning.

Stephen Krashen's Hypotheses

I deem it interesting to dedicate a part of this dissertation to linguist Stephen Krashen and some of his hypotheses about language acquisition and learning, taken from Schütz (1998). Krashen stated five hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis, and the Natural Order hypothesis. *The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis* asserts that there is a distinction between learning (conscious process) and acquiring (unconscious process),

which requires natural communication—focusing in the act of communication rather than the form of the utterances. *The Monitor hypothesis* explains the previous hypothesis in terms of the relation between the two concepts and the effect one has on the other. This hypothesis explains that when the learner has sufficient time, focuses on form and knows the rule, their learning (conscious process) will supervise their acquisition in a communicative act; that is, learners' conscious knowledge will monitor their unconscious knowledge. *The Natural Order hypothesis* is based on research from different researchers cited in Krashen (1987) and states that acquiring grammatical structures follows a "natural order" that is predictable, although some structures tend to be acquired later than others. However, the ones I want to take into account, are the remaining hypotheses. The *Input hypothesis*, according to Krashen, leads the the learner to improve and progress along the "natural order" when he/she receives an input that is a step beyond his/her stage of linguistic competence. This is concerned with acquisition and asserts that for acquiring knowledge of the target language, the input must be understandable for the student using what he/she already knows to comprehend what he/she does not. If there is no possibility for the student to understand on his/her own using what they already know, there will not be acquisition of the language.

The next hypothesis is the *Affective Filter hypothesis*, which states that a number of "affective variables" play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. Such variables are: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personal traits. When these variables are positive—high motivation, self-confidence, good self-image, low levels of anxiety and extroversion— the student is better equipped for being successful in language learning. On the contrary, when these variables are negative, the student raises this affective filter and a "mental block" may impede using comprehensible input to acquire language.

A final remark is worth pointing out, although it is not a concept developed within his hypotheses, the role of grammar in the learning process, according to Krashen, results in language acquisition when the students are interested and the target language used as a medium of instruction. Therefore, the students' progress is likely to arise from the *medium* not the message of grammar itself (Krashen, 1987). To put is simply, considering Krashen's hypotheses and assumptions on grammar, comics can be a very meaningful source of comprehensible input if used appropriately, with a difficulty that goes a step further —the i+1 or learner's interlanguage plus the next stage in language

acquisition— beyond the students' knowledge. Furthermore, it can also improve the classroom environment by raising the students' motivation and, at the same time, it can be an alternative and novel medium for students to get exposed to grammar, rather than the traditional and textbook communicative oral or written input.

3.6 Motivation

In relation to Krashen's affective filter notion, it seems relevant to delve on the variable of motivation since it is a key concept in his hypothesis. In "The Impact of Motivation on English Language Learning," Mitra Alizadeh asserts that "motivation is a key factor for explaining the success or failure of any difficult activity" (Alizadeh, 2016). Alizadeh states that motivation can make a difference between failure and success; that is to say, if someone is motivated enough while involved in a task, success is certainly bound to be achieved. Motivation, thus, provides students with a goal, a direction they have to follow. Therefore, if this key concept is missing and students do not have a desire for learning, it will be difficult for them to process knowledge and store they are supposed to internalize. Alizadeh examines different definitions from professionals in the field such as: Crookes and Schmidt (1991), Elliot and Covington (2001), Pardee (1990), Gardner (1985), Oxford and Shearin (1994) among the most prominent. Yet, and in order to summarize, they all seem to agree on the concept of *action* and the concept of *reason* or *aim*. Therefore, motivation could be defined as the desire to attain an objective or the reason behind one's actions.

There are different types of motivation taken from different authors. Alizadeh states that according to Brown (2000) and Gardner (1985) there are two basic types: *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. Integrative motivation involves language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment, while instrumental motivation considers language learning for functional or external reasons. Dörnyei has defined the terms *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. Intrinsic motivation engages learners in an activity because it is enjoyable as a task. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation involves actions performed to get instrumental aims, such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment. Accordingly, we can distinguish four types of motivation: integrative, intrinsic, extrinsic and instrumental motivation. As conclusion, Alizadeh explains that the study examines the role of motivation by reviewing research on the field. There is the conviction that motivation plays a key role in the development of language skills,

that it is an important factor in learning—which is influenced by other variables— and that teachers should encourage students to get involved in unexpected areas and carry out research for their own motivational processes.

Elisabet Tort Calvo in her "Language Learning Motivation: The L2 Motivational Self System and its Relationship with Learning Achievement" (2015) studies the L2 Motivational Self System by the expert on motivation Zoltán Dörnyei (2009). She explains the three dimensions it is made of: the *Ideal L2 self*, the *Ought-to self*, and the *L2 Learning experience*. The Ideal L2 self is the "L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self'" (Dörnyei, 2009: 29). This is the image the learner would like to have in the future. For example, if a learner wants to become an L2 teacher who is fluent in English, this image can be a motivational factor for the learner. Tort Calvo states that this dimension is in relation to integrative and instrumental motivation. This Ideal L2 self is a "vivid and real image: one can see, hear and feel one's ideal self" (Dörnyei et. al., 2006: 92). She explains that "the ultimate ideal self is the native speaker of the L2" (Tort Calvo 2015: 6) and, therefore, the more positive the attitude towards these speakers, the broader the idealization of the L2 self.

The Ought-to self dimension "concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2009: 29). Tort Calvo affirms that obligations, responsibilities and perceived duties are the factors that have an influence on this dimension. Therefore, if a learner wants to please an external person with his/her fluency, the Ought-to self is the main motivator, which is also related to extrinsic motivational factors —as defined by Dörnyei— such as the wish of being praised by others or getting a reward. The L2 Learning experience refers to "situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2009: 29). Tort Calvo also explains the features of this dimension as situation-specific motives such as the curriculum, the L2 teacher, the peer group and the teaching materials can have a strong influence on motivated behavior (Papi, 2010). This dimension is focused on the learning process, since some learners find motivation on "the enjoyment of the learning environment" (Tort Calvo, 2015:6). She states that this dimension is related to intrinsic motivation due to the suitable environment being able to improve the students' attitude or study. Tort Calvo then asserts that the combination of these dimensions is supposed to motivate to learn an L2. They can be summarized as "the learners' vision of themselves as L2 speakers, the social pressures

from the outside and a positive environment" (Tort Calvo, 2015:7). This system proposed by Dörnyei sheds light on the factors that can motivate learners and can help to analyze the possible results of this research.

4. Methodology

In general terms, the methodology I have used to design this research is inspired by the previously mentioned research in the field. In order to conduct this investigation without the possibility of collecting data of my own, I will seek to resort, as far as I am able to, to the concept of triangulation when it comes to considering the data collection instruments. Thus, the data gathering sources I will use will be a final test for the students, two questionnaires (one for students and another for teachers) and a field journal with a table (appendix 2, figure 6) to grade a number of variables, opened as well to written observations as in appendix 2, figure 7.

4.1 Type of research

The research I will presently seek to devise is a secondary research, since—as I mentioned before—I have not had the opportunity to attempt a primary research collecting results and evidences on my own. Therefore, I have read research on the field of education to gather information that can shed light to the two hypotheses I mentioned—whether comics applied to grammar explanations can improve the students understanding and results and, as a possible consequence, if it enhances learners' motivation. Ideally, to undertake this research as a primary research, it could be a longitudinal study on the use of comics to compare the results of the students over a long period of time, such as a whole course, although the minimum I would choose would a didactic unit, in order to analyze whether there has been an improvement in the students linguistic (and grammatical) competence or not. Nonetheless, the variables to analyze remain the same in a primary or a secondary research. The independent variable—the cause— are comics, or more accurately, the use of comics while explaining grammar; and the dependent variable is the students' results —and expected language improvement— through the use of comics. However, there would be an additional dependent variable derived from the original dependent variable, which is the possible impact that this utilization of comics in the classroom and—in case of— the

improvement of their results can enhance their motivation as well. This research will be focused on collecting mainly *quantitative* results which can be measured and compared—although some *qualitative* data will be also recorded. For this purpose—and using triangulation—I have designed:

- A *test* the students will need to do to assess their familiarity and understanding on Present Continuous

- Two *questionnaires*—for students and teachers— that will provide quantitative results from two different participants (the experimental group B and the teacher/s).

- A *field journal* with which I will collect *qualitative* results in order to add a different perspective to the research.

4.2 Context and participants

The specific context will be two classrooms (A and B) from first course of the secondary school CPI La Jota and ages between 11 and 12. The manner in which I will mention methodology in this dissertation is theoretical; in other words, my suggestions on the criteria that should be. Regarding participants, the minimum should be two classrooms in order to be able to compare the results between both classrooms after teaching a grammatical item during a didactic unit. In Spain, each classroom has an average of twenty-five students, which would be make a total number of fifty participants. Although, it is widely acknowledged that the ideal research should be undertaken on the biggest sampling possible, the optimum sampling which can be measured and compared two classrooms from each course, in order to collect as much results as possible to give validity to the research. Nevertheless, the opportunity of having two classrooms for the research, could be an excellent starting point, since it is difficult to have access to that number of classes and a school to do so. In this case, I will choose—as if I was doing the actual investigation—two classes from first grade ESO, approximately fifty participants between ages 11 and 12. Both classrooms will be non-bilingual and with a level of English that is alike. The control group will be classroom A and the experimental group will be classroom B. The present research should be conducted with two homogeneous groups and the same teacher in charge of English with both groups. The participants' classes have been described hypothetically from a school in which I have had the chance to observe classes during Practicum II.

Hence, Classroom A is composed by 25 students, 12 males and 13 females. There are 4 so-called "problematic students" (3 males and 1 female) in terms of behavior; that is, they do not pay attention and seem unmotivated to learn English; while another 7 (4 females and 3 males) seem to be oftentimes bored in class. Classroom B is a group of 10 males and 15 females. The participants usually show predisposition to work in the subject, although there is some lack of interest in 8 students (5 males and 3 females). The students 'level of English evinces no significant disparity in both groups. At the beginning of the course, the students of first grade of secondary school in Spain take an initial evaluation test that reflects their level of English and their linguistic competence. With this test being conducted by schools, the researcher has to ask the school for the level of both classrooms that the school has already tested. The group itself does not matter at all in terms of components, although there are some requisites such as: there have to be students that seem bored in the classroom, do not pay attention, are unmotivated, or do not behave; in order to observe if there is an improvement in the groups 'performance, behavior and attitude—especially, with the aforementioned students.

4.3 Instruments

The material needed for my research will be a students' book for the English subject—I will use *New English in Use* for first grade ESO by Burlington Books— and a comic strip created to fulfill the linguistic and grammatical learning objectives of the unit. The book will be used in both classrooms, while the comic strips (appendix 2, figures 1 and 2) will be used only in classroom B (the experimental group) in order to be able to compare the results. However, the book activities implemented in classroom B will be adapted to maintain similarity between groups, but depriving group B from the use of the book format. In other words, the experimental group will be exposed to a similar content with a different medium —comic multimodality of text/image. This adaptation will simply be the transcribed exercises from the book into a document. Two examples can be seen in appendix 4.

Since our main goal is grammar explanation and understanding, the comic strip will be used in the explanation of grammar as a complement instead of using the book to explain it, so the students will have the comic strip to help them comprehend the

Present Continuous tense. Each new unit would need a new comic strip introducing a new grammar item. The rest of the material is the students' course book, Unit 4, focused on Present Continuous as well. Therefore, our material would only be an aid in order to discover if the use of comic strips as a complement for grammar explanation during their common lessons has an impact and whether it is positive or negative.

From then on, the rest of the materials would be the ones helping to collect results. The first instrument for data collection will be a short test (appendix 2, figure 3)—focused on Present Continuous and Present Simple—with a reading exercise, two exercises focused on the use of grammar and a writing exercise, all of them using Present Continuous. Although there are three skills in the test, the main objective is to evaluate learners' grammatical accuracy by identifying, understanding and using the Present Continuous tense. This test will be undertaken during the fifth session in both classrooms with the purpose of comparing the results between them afterwards. Another instrument will be a survey with two questionnaires—one for students and one for other teachers (appendix 2, figures 4 and 5)— which would be subsequently analyzed for discussing the results. These questionnaires would be for the experimental students on classroom B and for their teachers.

For the field journal (e.g. in appendix 2, figure 6 and 7), I will prioritize qualitative results, since there is already enough qualitative result gathering for the investigation. Its focus will be the students' attitude towards the explanation of grammar. The variables that the researcher has to observe in both classrooms will be:

- If the students have many or a few doubts after the grammar explanation.

- If the students seem attentive or distracted during the explanation.

- Their participation in class.

- Their attitude towards the test. Do they seem nervous or confident?

The reason for these variables is that the student's attitude in this environment can be valuable data according to Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis in terms of students' confidence and motivation towards the language, variables that could ease the students learning and acquisition. These variables will be categorized in three groups:

- *Variable number* 1: it is connected to their grammar comprehension (main hypothesis on the research),

- *Variables number 2 and 3*: they will deal with the students' motivation (secondary hypothesis),

- *Variable number 4*: it will gather information about the students' self confidence, that is related the Affective Filter hypothesis as a consequence, which can eventually result on higher learners' motivation.

The main objective of the field journal is to collect results focusing on the variables related to the hypotheses in my investigation from a different perspective from the previous results. The example in appendix 2 is a possible entry for the journal, with a suggested example which is not real, but altogether possible. It considers three of the four variables for that hypothetical lesson to depict how it could be accomplished.

The obtained results will be the qualitative marks from the students' test, the gradable qualitative results from the students' and teachers' opinions and the qualitative observations from the researcher that could support the other results or not. The basis for these instruments for gathering data is triangulation, in order to collect results from different perspectives as a way of giving extra validation to the investigation.

4.4 Procedures

Regarding procedures, I will explain the supposed process that should take place since a unit usually demands time. The objective of the research is collecting results; therefore, I only mention the fewer number of sessions that could possibly allow me to collect data. In addition, this unit is focused on grammar in order to get results, not grading the students for their actual course. Having these caveats, the process would be, in general terms, as follows.

Both groups will be taught four lessons on a specific grammatical content — Simple Present tense and Present Continuous tense. There will be one more session for both groups in order to take the test on grammar. Group B will have an extra session— or part of it at least—to complete the questionnaire required as part of the results. The unit in the book would be started in the accustomed manner; that is, using a lesson for the introduction to the content and grammar items (appendix 3, figures 1 and 2), which is a listening with vocabulary the students would practice by doing the exercises. The field journal will be started during the first lesson in order to observe the students

performance in the classroom and will continue in every lesson, recording the variables previously mentioned in order to compare them at the end.

During the second lesson, classroom A will receive an explanation on Present Continuous with the aid of the students' book, page 51 (appendix 3, figure 3). Meanwhile classroom B will receive an explanation using a comic strip (appendix 2, figure 1). Classroom A will use the students' book to practice and do exercises from student's book page 51. Meanwhile, classroom B will do the same exercises transcribed from the book (e.g. appendix 4, figure 1).

In the third lesson, both groups will do the reading on page 52 of the students' book (appendix 3, figure 4)—classroom A directly from the book and classroom B transcribed from it (appendix 4, figure 2). Later on, they will receive the explanation on the second part of grammar. Classroom A will have an explanation following the textbook on page 53 (Present Simple–Present Continuous) and do some exercises practicing the tenses. Meanwhile, classroom B will be explained Present Simple – Present Continuous with the second comic strip (appendix 2, figure 2). Afterwards, classroom B will practice transcribed exercises as well from page 53.

The fourth session will be used to practice with pages 54 to 56 of the students' book (appendix 3, figures 5 to 7 respectively)—transcribed for classroom B— and make a revision, in order to solve any remaining doubts. Then, the fifth session will be devoted to take the test on grammar (appendix 2, figure 3) in order to collect the quantitative results. These tests would be separated into group A and group B. After properly correcting and grading them—according to the accuracy of their answers—, I would create a bar graph in order to compare the students' marks.

Thereafter—during the sixth session—the students will be given their marks and the questionnaire (appendix 2, figure 4) they will have to complete. Additionally, the second questionnaire (appendix 2, figure 5) will be given to the teacher of English. After collecting the questionnaires, all the results will have been obtained. The results gathered from the two (A and B) classrooms will be the marks of the test and the field journal. The questionnaires *will be only implemented with classroom B* and the teacher of English. Nevertheless, these will be helpful at the time of knowing the students' opinions and experience on the topic towards drawing conclusions about the research. After collecting the results of the linguistic competence test, and in order to contrast if there is a statistical significant difference between the marks from the control group and

the experimental group, the test results would be submitted to a Student's T-test since the sampling group is small (50 participants). The main reason to do so will be to determine if the difference between the test results in the two groups is due to the use of comics or to random causes.

4.5 Analysis of Possible Results (due to COVID-19 circumstances)

Since my practice period is over, the national circumstances are unexpected and, at times, dire and the period of time dedicated to the design of this investigation in is a holiday period, I have not been able to actually undertake the research and collect results. Hence, the analysis of the possible results will be speculative, although supported by the information gathered beforehand to conduct this study.

First of all, regarding the possible results, I truly believe that there would be positive results towards the use of comics for grammar explanations. In other words, the experimental group would show an improvement in their accuracy when constructing grammar with Present Continuous, and they would generally have better marks than the control group on the test. These results might certainly depend on the teacher—collecting the results and using the comic strips— or the researcher's ability to explain theoretical content and to monitor the group's production findings. Simply put, if the content and instruments are original and attractive for students, but the teacher is boring and strict, students will not find the same pleasure they would should a more interactive and flexible teacher introduce the intended grammar structure. That being said, the extent to which comics can improve students' grammatical performance may be affected by the group itself and the context of the school. However, generally speaking, I still think that aside from these other incidental variables, the results will still be significant if the research is undertaken with groups to observe and work with. What justifies my belief is the amount of data found and mentioned before in this study that supports or can support the use of comics in the ESL classroom. In order to uphold my position, I will take into account part of the theory seen before in the theoretical framework.

In regard to constructivism, I have previously mentioned that learners store and organize knowledge rather than reproduce information. Two terms arose in connection to this theory: assimilation—in which information fits the schema— and

accommodation—in which the schema accommodates to information—. With Present Continuous tense introduced for the first time, the schema would accommodate to the new information in both classrooms regardless of the use of comics. At the same time, the students will be exposed to the information—on when they are supposed to use Present Continuous or Present Simple— they would also be assimilating the information, since there would already exist a schema for Present Simple and for Present Continuous respectively. The fact here is not that comics would be successfully used for assimilation or accommodation regarding grammar information, but the extent to which *students* would do it. This is the reason why both classes would receive new information to construct, but the question is: is it easier to construct knowledge when you understand the information? Moreover, is it easier to remember when one has a whole system of image/language (multimodality) at their disposal to anchor new knowledge? Affirming that knowledge is better constructed when it is understood seems logical. Hence, if comics can facilitate grammar understanding by recourse to a more mnemonic picture/text interaction, they would be helping the learners to build schemas.

Concerning scaffolding, this term meant providing contextual and well as textual support. It has been previously stated that there are three aspects which are especially useful for scaffolding: simplifying language, asking students for completion and presenting information through visuals. In this case, the grammatical explanation given to the experimental group and its examples are intended to contain simple language for the students to understand. Although there is no completion available during the explanation, the students will be later provided with the test —whose results will accrue figures for this research. Thus, learners will be exposed to many scaffolding examples regarding completion, since completion is more suitable for practice and English production by the students. However, visuals are present in the experimental explanation on grammar. Scaffolding visuals are often provided to the student to express him/herself, despite this, if used by the teacher, the students have an aid (the comic) that helps them to understand the process/dynamics involved throughout the explanation when using the comic strips. These aspects can be useful when students have to practice after the explanation.

As far as Krashen's hypotheses are concerned, the ones I mentioned previously, they can fit adequately at this juncture. Talking about the Comprehensible Input hypothesis, Krashen shows the Comprehensible Input process in a conference in the

80s. Part of this conference is recorded and available in *YouTube* (Hamza, 2016). From minute 2:00, Krashen starts explaining this hypothesis by talking in German. After it, he talks in German and supports his monologue with drawings. It is at this moment when people understand the message—or the overall idea— that was being transmitted in German. This hypothesis states that there is acquisition when the message can be understood. In relation to comics, the provided comic strips have a combination of images and text that can help to understand the message as stated by Krashen. In addition, there should be a consequence in the understanding that leads us to the lowering of Affective Filter. If a student is in a situation in which s/he does not understand any information, stress is bound to be experienced. Human beings are usually afraid of the unknown. When a subject is in a situation in which nothing is understood due to what is being said in a different language, the subject feels vulnerable and distressed. It is a well-known and typical situation when a student has not understood something in the classroom and hopes the teacher does not ask him/her anything related to it, undergoing anxiety if the question ever arrives. Therefore, if the message is somehow understood, nervousness lowers and the student can feel, at least minimally, more confident. This self-confidence can potentially lead to be more motivated, since the student understands and is aware of his/her capacity. The Natural Order hypothesis here can be related to constructivism. Krashen claims that English acquisition follows a natural order, while constructivism propounds that knowledge is built upon knowledge. The difference between Present Continuous and Present Simple comes after being able to identify both of them separately. When a schema is built up for each tense, new information regarding both can be assimilated, in order. The use of comics, in this case, would be supporting —or scaffolding— the construction of knowledge and the outflow of this natural order.

Concerning motivation, the four types and Dörnyei's system have been expanded in previous titles. The use of comics in this context of grammar identification and use could help intrinsic motivation, since the student could be engaged due to the enjoyable and humorous nature of comics. Thus, students could be motivated simply by faced with an amusing resource in the English classroom. Regarding Dörnyei's motivation categories, comics seem to be useful for the L2 learning experience dimension, in which the L2 teacher, the peer group and the teaching materials—among other variables— play a paramount role in motivating the student. If the materials are enticing and

humorous, the students have more probabilities to be engaged in the task. If they are attentive and have the help of visuals, they are more likely to remember a more substantial amount of information and use it accordingly. This, in turn, can lead to improving their English level and, thus, their marks, which will become a reward to be proud of—extrinsic motivation. Along these lines, the improvement of the learners' accuracy and their motivation has the potential to become an ongoing circle that can increment each variable.

In addition, the terms of comics that I mentioned taken from del Rey Cabero (2013) can be valuable data here. As I have mentioned before, "closure" could be of some benefit, as it is imagination and abstraction ability. In relation to the comic strips used in this study, the closure is oftentimes "moment-to-moment" or "action-to-action," but there are times when there is a "scene-to-scene" closure in which the students have to think—unconsciously— the process or plot unfolding through the strip. This fact may keep the students attentive to what they are seeing, as the human brain has a need to complete texts, messages, sentences, figures, objects and the like which are incomplete and offer a plausible interpretation or meaning for them. One can also discuss on the word-image combinations which are—as a last resort— what allows students to understand the aforementioned "comprehensible input." The designed comics consider the word specific and the additive combinations. The word specific combination is encouraged when pictures illustrate what it is being said, while additive combination entails images enhancing the textual meaning or vice versa. Thus, these combinations transmit a message that is more complete or more understandable as far as information is concerned.

4.6 Suggestions for improvement

Despite the fact that this investigation has been conducted with scanty available resources and options, as suggestions for improvement, the first option is to be able to collect real data results, since this study is merely hypothetical. The data collection instruments might be further developed or, at least, more instruments could be devised so as to gather more data in order to give statistical and scientific validity to this research study. By the same token, this investigation proposal would also be far more

accurate and impactful if it could be undertaken with more than two classrooms or during a more extended period of time.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, this research could not be conducted due to the current Covid-19 circumstances and, thus, there are no operational results. However, the theories about language considered in this study are not against one another, but can be used in harmony in order to achieve the objective of learning a L2. These theories and terms have been used to discuss the possible results that could have been collected if this investigation had been undertaken. If this theoretical premises previously analyzed are accurate and they have been properly considered —when this proposal is put into practice in an appropriate context—they should prove to be in tune with a sound analysis of real data. These have been the theory arguments to reach the belief that the use of comic strips for grammar explanations can help the students to understand English grammar in a more meaningful manner than if they were not used. As a consequence, taking into account different perspectives on motivation, there is a high probability of increasing students' motivation towards English if they realize that they are learning and that they understand messages with comics to a grater extent. Motivation itself would then be an important factor for the students in the process of learning. In other words, grammar understanding would have a positive impact on motivation, which would have a favorable influence as well on English learning, creating a successful dynamics.

Another fact that helped to reach this conclusion is Lengua Salinas' (2015) results in her research. She observed that by using comics in the classroom, the students seemed more participative, which indicated that they were more confident than before, their spelling and grammatical accuracy improved significantly in the available time, and in spite of their several mistakes, learners showed the required level of English, their self-confidence and self-image substantially improved. With the available theories, data and results, I would affirm that the stated hypotheses are most likely to be validated if the research was conducted with two groups from which data could be collected and results drawn. In other words, comic strips could be a very useful complement for grammar explanations which could, in turn, lead to an improvement English

understanding and learning. At the same time, the use of comics could also have a beneficial effect on the students' motivation. The reason for this statement is the use of the triangulation, a strategy that allows considerable research validity by taking different perspectives regarding information and results—collecting results with several and diverse instruments— and that could prove extremely helpful whenever this research could be actually conducted.

Bibliography

Alizadeh, M. (2016). The impact of motivation on English language learning. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, *1*(1), 11-15.

Alonso, M. (2010). El cómic en la clase de ELE: una propuesta didáctica. *Universidad Nebrija, Madrid*. https://marcoele.com/descargas/14/alonso-comic.pdf

Barrero, M. (2002): «Los cómics como herramientas pedagógicas en el aula» en Jornadas sobre Narrativa Gráfica, conferencia impartida en Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), el día 23 de febrero de 2002.
http://www.tebeosfera.com/1/Hecho/Festival/Jerez/ConferenciaJerez020223.pdf
Date accessed: August 30, 2020

Bradley, K., & Bradley, J. (2004). "Scaffolding Academic Learning for Second Language Learners." *The Internet TESL Journal*, The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. X, No. 5, May 2004, 2004. http://iteslj.org/Articles/Bradley-Scaffolding/ Date accessed: September 04, 2020.

Brines Gandía, J. (2012): «La rentabilidad del cómic en la enseñanza de la cultura en E/LE» en *Revista Foro de Profesores de E/LE Volumen 8*. http://www.foroele.es/revista/index.php/foroele/article/view/13 Date accessed: August 28, 2020.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. (4th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Cambridge Dictionary: English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus. (2020). Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ Date accessed: June 17, 2020.

Constructivism. (2020, June 08). *Center for Educational Innovation - University at Buffalo*. http://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/enhance/learning/constructivism.html. Date accessed: September 01, 2020.

Crookes, G., & Schmidt R.W. (1991). Motivation : Reopening the research agenda. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 469-512.

del Rey Cabero, E. (2013). El cómic como material en el aula de E/LE: justificación de su uso y recomendaciones para una correcta explotación. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada*, (26), 177-196.

Díaz Canales, J. & Guarnido, J. (2005) *Blacksad. Alma Roja*. Barcelona: Norma Editorial.

Díaz-Rico, L.T., & Weed, K.Z. (2002). The crosscultural, language, and academic development handbook: A complete K-12 reference guide (2nd ed.). Boston: Ally & Bacon.

Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Conceptualizing Motivation in Foreign Language Learning. *Language Learning*, *40*, 46-78, 1998.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2009). Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self. Buffalo, NY : Multilingual Matters.

Eisner, W. (1992) *Comics and sequential art*. Princeton, Wi: Kitchen Sink Press, Inc., 1992.

Eisner, W. (2002). *El cómic y el arte secuencial*. Barcelona: Norma Editorial.

Ellliot, A. J., & Covington, M. (2001). Approach and Avoidance Motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*. *13*(2).

Fermández, M. & Díaz, O. (1990). El cómic en el aula. Madrid: Alhambra Longman.

García, I. (2013). *El cómic como recurso didáctico en el aula de lenguas extranjeras* Master's Degree dissertation. Universidad de Cantabria. Retrieved from https://repositorio.unican.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10902/4045/GarciaMartinezIsabel.pdf?sequence=1

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology in Second Language Learning*. Edward Arnold Ltd, London, Great Britain.

Gasca, L. y Gubern, R. (1998). *El discurso del cómic*. Madrid: Catedra.

Gasca, L. y Gubern, R. (2008). *Diccionario de onomatopeyas del cómic* Madrid: Catedra.

González. C. (2012). **Aplicación del Constructivismo Social en el Aula**. Instituto para el desarrollo y la innovación y la innovación educativa, bilingüe y multicultural, Guatemala.

Gravett, P. 2005. *Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know*. Nueva York: Harper-Collins.

Hamza, T. (Director). (2016, January 28). *Stephen Krashen: Language Acquisition and Comprehensible Input* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnUc_W3xE1w&ab_channel=TarekHamza Date accessed: September 4, 2020.

Heale, R. & Forbes, D. (2013). Understanding triangulation in research. Evidence-based nursing. 16. 10.1136/eb-2013-101494.

Iriskhanova, O. (n.d.). "Multimodality" (I. Ksenia, Trans.). Centre for Socio-Cognitive Discourse Studies at Moscow State Linguistic University (SCoDis), 2016. Retrieved from http://scodis.com/for-students/glossary/multimodality/ Date accessed: June 17, 2020.

Krashen, Stephen D. (1987) *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* Prentice-Hall International.

Krashen, Stephen D. (1988) *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.* Prentice-Hall International.

Lengua Salinas, S. (2015). "El cómic: Una oportunidad de motivación y aprendizaje en las clases de inglés como L2." Master's Degree dissertation. *Institutional Repository - Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. https://repository.javeriana.edu.co/handle/10554/17094 Date accessed: August 02, 2020.

Marks, L. & Addison, C. (2016) *New English in Use 1. Student's Book*. Cyprus: Burlington Books, pp.49-56.

McCloud, Scott. (1994) *Understanding comics: the invisible art.* New York: Harper Perennial.

McCloud, S. 2007. *Entender el cómic*. Bilbao: Astiberri Ediciones.

McCloud, S. 2008. *Hacer cómics*. Bilbao: Astiberri Ediciones.

MasterClass. (2020). How to Create a Comic Book: Neil Gaiman's Step-by-Step Guide for Making Comics - 2020. https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-create-a-comic-book-step-by-step-guide-for-making-your-own-comics Date accessed: August 31, 2020.

Ministerio, E. N. (2006, octubre). Formar en lenguas extranjeras: inglés- Lo que necesitamos saber y saber hacer. Bogotá, Colombia.

National Research Council. (2000). How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School: Expanded Edition. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries: Find definitions, translations, and grammar explanations at Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. (2020). https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/

Oxford, R., & Shearin, J. (1994). Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework. *Modern Language Journal*, *78*, 12-28.

Ovando, C., Collier, V., & Combs, M. (2003). Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching multicultural contexts (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Papi, M. (2010). The L2 Motivational Self System, L2 Anxiety, and Motivated Behavior: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. System, 38 (3), 467–479.

Pardee, R. L. (1990). *Motivation Theories of Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor and McClelland.* A Literature Review of Selected Theories Dealing with Job Satisfaction and Motivation

Pourhosein Gilakjani, A., Leong, L. M., & Saburi, N. B. (2012). Study on the Role of Motivation in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. *I.J. Modern Education and Computer Science*, *7*, 9-16.

Rosales, E. (2016). *La narración gráfica como recurso educativo a potenciar en la enseñanza de idiomas: el cómic en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE).* Undergraduate's dissertation, Universidad de Sevilla, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura y Filologías integradas, 2016). Sevilla. Retrieved from https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/45055/TFG%20Eduardo%20Rosales%20Fern andez.pdf;jsessionid=66A84671C5DA586DFA9380A226414172?sequence=1

Ruiz Arnau, N. (2018). *Las posibilidades didácticas del cómic a través de su uso en manuales de Educación Secundaria*. Master's Degree dissertation, Universidad de Alicante. Retrieved from https://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/77769/1/Las_posibilidades_didacticas_del_co mic_a_traves_de_su_uso_e_Ruiz_Arnau_Nerea.pdf

Schütz, Ricardo E. (1998, April). "Stephen Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition." English Made in Brazil. (Revised in October, 2019) https://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash-english.html Date accessed: June 17, 2020.

Tort Calvo, E. (2015, June) *Language Learning Motivation: The L2 Motivational Self System and Its Relationship with Learning Achievement*. Universitat Autònoma De Barcelona, June 2015

Vadillo, R. S. M. (1992). Utilización de comics en la clase de inglés. *Educación y biblioteca*, *4*(27), 71-72.

Varillas, R. (2009) *La arquitectura de las viñetas. Texto y discurso en el cómic*. Prólogo de Roman Gubern. Sevilla: Viaje a Bizancio Ediciones.

Yang, G. (2016, November). "Comics belong in the classroom." TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/gene_luen_yang_comics_belong_in_the_classroom/transcript Date accessed: April 27, 2020.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Figure 1: Elements of comics according to del Rey Cabero (2013).

My translation from del Rey Cabero (2013): In this fragment from *Blacksad: Alma Roja* (Díaz Canales & Guarnido 2005:48) the main characteristic elements of comics can be seen: panels (1), gutter (2), speech bubbles/balloons (3) and capture (4). Other secondary elements can also be appreciated, such as: onomatopoeias ("craash") or kinetic lines.

Figure 2: Types of closure from McCloud (1994:74).

Figure 3: Word and image combinations from McCloud (1994:153-155).

ANOTHER TYPE IS THE **ADDITIVE** COMBINATION WHERE WORDS *AMPLIFY* OR *ELABORATE* ON AN IMAGE OR *VICE VERSA.*

MY HEAD FEELS LIKE A *SMASHED PUMPKIN!*

HOW D'YA LIKE MY *NEW THREADS,* BABE?

IS THIS THE SAME *JUPITER* OF MY YOUTH?

IN **PARALLEL** COMBINATIONS, WORDS AND PICTURES SEEM TO FOLLOW VERY DIFFERENT COURSES-- WITHOUT *INTERSECTING.*

"TALKED TO *BILL* YET?"

"*SALLY* DID. *WHY?*"

"THE *TEST RESULTS* CAME BACK. ALL *NEGATIVE.*"

"*REALLY?* THAT'S *GREAT!*"

WELL...

PEPPER.

CEREAL.

MILK. BUTTER.

LIGHT BULBS.
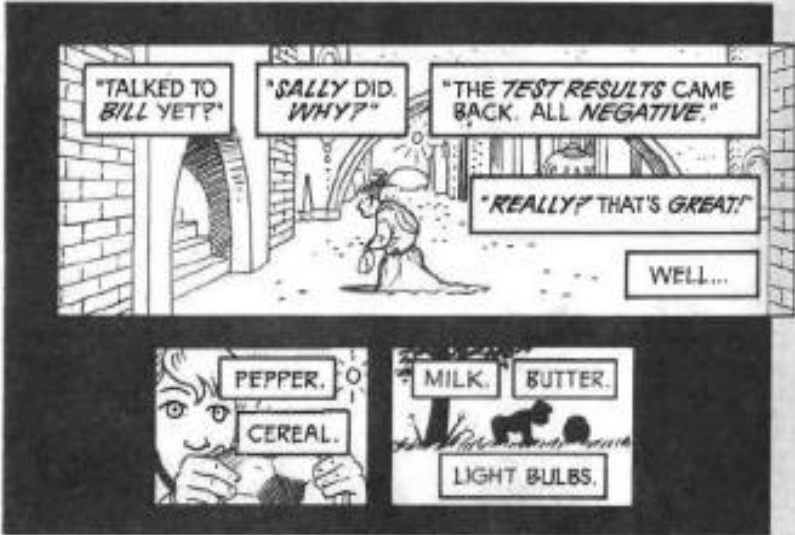
STILL ANOTHER OPTION IS THE **MONTAGE** WHERE WORDS ARE TREATED AS INTEGRAL *PARTS* OF THE PICTURE.

CASH FLOW BOTTOM LINE ANNUAL REPORT

HAPPY!
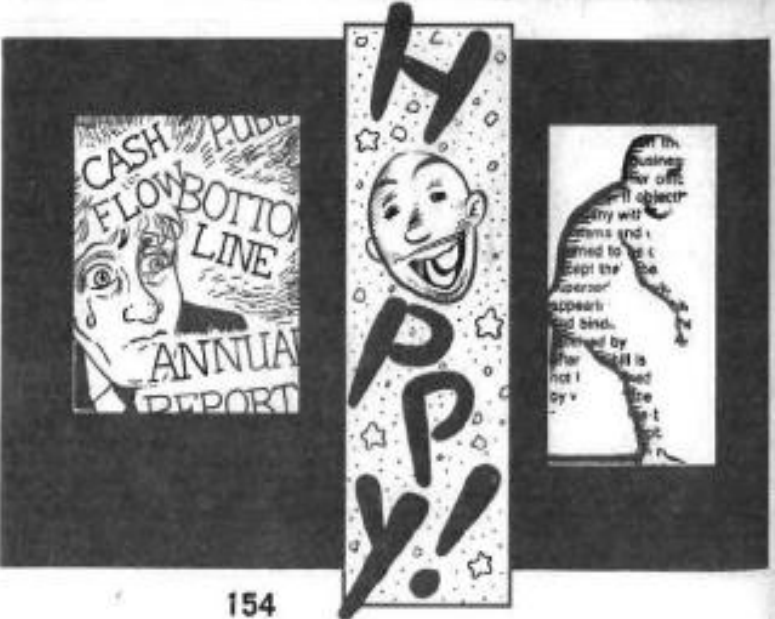
PERHAPS THE MOST *COMMON* TYPE OF WORD/PICTURE COMBINATION IS THE *INTER-DEPENDENT,* WHERE WORDS AND PICTURES GO *HAND IN HAND* TO CONVEY AN IDEA THAT NEITHER COULD CONVEY *ALONE.*

MEANWHILE...

DID ANYONE *SEE* YOU?

THIS IS ALL I NEED TO *STOP* HIM!

I ASK YOU, DOES THIS GUY LOOK LIKE A *C.E.O.* TO *YOU?*?

"AND JUST *GUESS* WHO DROVE UP IN BOB'S TRUCK AN HOUR LATER!"

HEY, MARGE!

OH, MY *GOD!*

HE'S LYING.

UH-HUH.

"AFTER COLLEGE, I PURSUED A CAREER IN *HIGH FINANCE.*"

HURRY UP, WILLYA!!

INTERDEPENDENT COMBINATIONS AREN'T ALWAYS AN *EQUAL BALANCE* THOUGH AND MAY FALL *ANYWHERE* ON A SCALE BETWEEN TYPES ONE AND TWO.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE MORE IS SAID WITH *WORDS,* THE MORE THE PICTURES CAN BE FREED TO GO EXPLORING AND *VICE VERSA.*

$$\frac{P}{W}$$

$$\frac{W}{P}$$

P W

155

Figure 4: "The Learning Pyramid" adapted from the NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science Learning Pyramid.
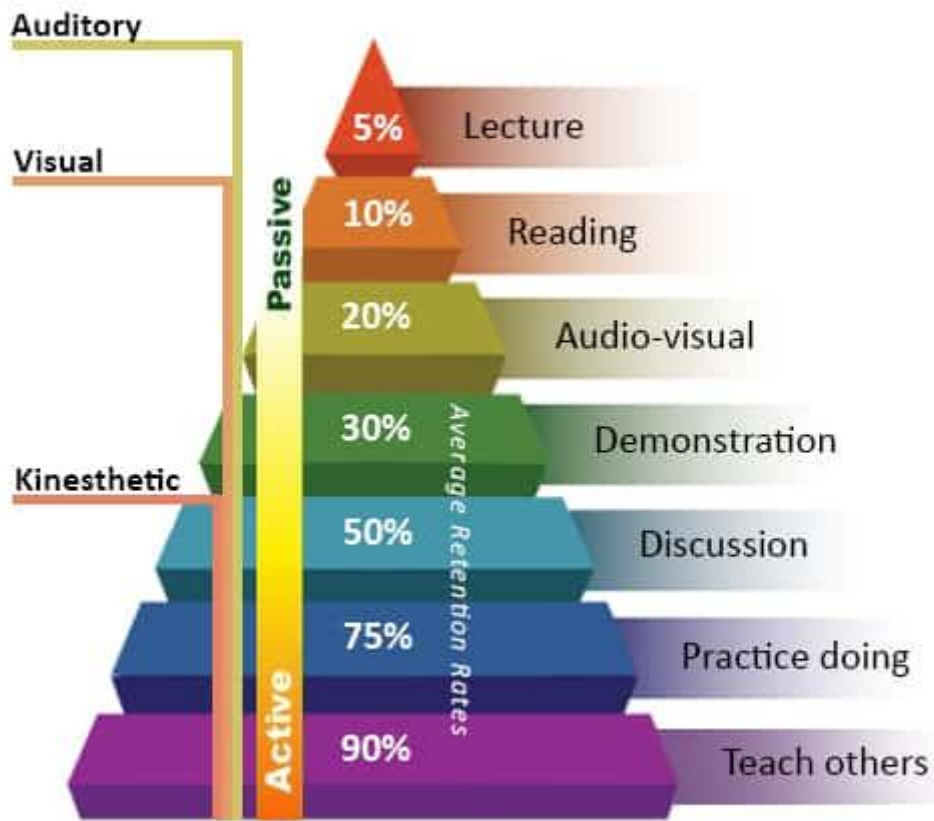
Adapted from the NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science Learning Pyramid

Figure 1: Comic strip about Present Continuous created using "StoryboardThat"

Figure 2: Comic strip on Present Simple – Present Continuous using "StoryboardThat"

Figure 3: test for the students' knowledge on Present Continuous.

Test

Name:_____

Date:_____   Classroom: A   B

READING

1. Read the text and answer the questions (3 points)

> "Hi Rob. I'm Ben. I'm in Niagara Falls with Sarah and Kathy. I'm sitting next to
> the Skylon Tower at the moment. Guess where Sarah and Kathy are? They're
> taking the Maid of the Mist tour on a boat by the Horseshoe Falls! I'm waiting
> for them here with our bags, but it's my turn next. The Maid of the Mist has
> tours every 30 minutes, but the tours also depend on the weather. It's amazing.
> I'm having a Tim Horton's coffee and a doughnut while I wait for the girls. It's
> delicious! Many people came here every year to visit Niagara Falls, and you can
> even take a "Journey Behind the Falls". I'm reading about it right now. You can
> also visit the amusement area in Niagara and see the Upside Down House,
> Ripley's Believe It or Not!, the Wax Museum and much more. Oh! Here come
> the girls, I'm taking the ride on the boat now. Bye Rob!"

1.   Where is Ben at the moment?

_____

2. What are Sarah and Kathy doing?

_____

3. Why isn't Ben with Sarah and Kathy?

_____

4. What is Ben doing while he waits for the girls?

_____

5. Why does Ben say goodbye to Rob?

_____

GRAMMAR

**2. Complete the sentences with the words below. Use the correct form of the Present
Continuous. (2 points)**

walk • play • watch • drive • wake up • ~~listen~~

Sam _is listening_ to music right now.

1. Kim _____ her dog to the park now.
2. I can't talk right now. I _____ tennis.
3. _____ you _____ TV at the moment?
4. Why is Dad angry? He _____ to work, because the car is broken.
5. It is Saturday. Why _____ Andrew _____ so early?

47

3. Complete the sentences with the verbs in brackets. Use the Present Simple or Present Continuous. (2 points)

Liam ___*plays*___ (play) basketball on Mondays.
1. Cocoa _____ (grow) in Mexico.
2. What _____ Jessica usually _____ (eat) for breakfast?
3. Mark is at school. He _____ (not shop) now.
4. Anna _____ (not understand) the exercise because it's very difficult.
5. _____ you _____ (read) a book at the moment?

WRITING

4. Write a little composition (about 40 – 50 words). Don't forget to use Present Continuous!
Imagine that you are in another country. Tell a friend what you are doing there. (3 points)

Figure 4: Questionnaire for students.

Name:_____

Questionnaire for students

Answer the questions knowing that 10 = a lot/ strongly agree and 0 = little/strongly disagree

1. Were comic strips interesting for grammar explanation?

   No ☐   Not at all ☐   Neutral ☐   Somewhat ☐   Absolutely ☐

2. How useful were they for your learning?

   1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐   10 ☐

3. Do you think that you understood grammar better with comics?

   1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐   10 ☐

4. Did your marks improve in this unit?

   1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐   10 ☐

5. Do you prefer English lessons with comics or normal lessons?

   Comics ☐   Normal lessons ☐

6. Do you find grammar easier with comics?

   1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐   10 ☐

7. What do you remember most about the comics?

   Pictures ☐   Dialogues ☐   Sound effects ☐   Other ☐

8. What has been most useful for you to remember the Present Continuous and Simple Present Tenses?

   The teacher's explanation ☐   The comic strip ☐   Practice activities ☐   Other ☐

9. Would you like to keep using comic strips in the classroom?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

10. Are you more motivated towards English now? Why?   Yes ☐   No ☐

    _____

    _____

Figure 5: Questionnaire for teachers.

Name:_____

Questionnaire for teachers

1. Have you perceived an improvement in your students in terms of…?

    a. linguistic performance?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

    b. behaviour in class?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

    c. attitude to the subject?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If the attitude is different, is it more positive or negative?

    Positive ☐   ☐ Negative

3. Have they mentioned any change in their English lessons?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Do they seem more motivated towards English?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

Figure 6: table for the field journal.

Daily observation	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
The students are attentive during the explanation				
The students have many doubts after the explanation				
Students participate more in class				
Shy students answer				

spontaneously				
The students seem nervous when asked to participate				
The students' production is accurate				
The students attitude towards the test is confident				

Figure 7: Field journal: an example of a possible entry, apart from the table.

Entry 4: Date X. Student's book page 52.

Classroom A.

During grammar practice together, there have been:

- 10 participations in the reading exercise.
- 10 participations in exercise 2.
- 8 participations in exercise 3.

The students were somewhat accurate in their answers regarding the use of grammar, but the participants were mostly from the same students during the lesson. When several mistakes appeared, they were asked if there were any doubts about Present Continuous. A few replied they had, but some more seemed to have doubts as well.

Classroom B.

During grammar practice there have been:

- 8 participations in the reading exercise.
- 13 participations in exercise 2.
- 15 participations in exercise 3.

The students were mostly accurate in their answers regarding the use of grammar. The participants were diverse and they still had doubts regarding Present Continuous. However, most of the students seemed to have understood the basics.

Appendix 3

Figure 1: page 49 from the student's book. Opening.

Figure 2: page 50 from the student's book. Vocabulary.

Our Favourite Holidays

SANDRA: My family and I are riding on camels in the hills of the desert in Morocco.

CLAIRE: A perfect day at the beach in Brazil. The ocean is great!

TIM and ANNE: Our hike in the jungle in Australia.

JACK: Here I am – next to a cave in the mountains in Bulgaria.

HARRY: My brother and I are in Switzerland. We're walking in the forest.

ELLEN and BILL: A fantastic holiday on a beautiful island in Canada. There are big fish in the lake!

Vocabulary   Geographical features

IC VOCABULARY PRESENTATION

1 Listen and repeat the geographical features in colour in the photo captions (1-8). Are there any similar geographical features near your home?

2 Which geographical feature is it?
   1. It is a tropical area with many trees.
   2. It's similar to a mountain, but it's small.
   3. It's an area of water with land around it.
   4. It is between mountains.
   5. It has got water all around it.

3 Write definitions for at least two other geographical features from Exercise 1.

4 There are eight countries in the holiday photos. Find them on the map on pages 140-141.

5 With your partner, copy the chart below and complete it with the names of real places.

Oceans	Mountains	Lakes
Rivers	Deserts	Islands

IC SLIDESHOW

50

Workbook, page 32

Figure 3: page 51 from the student's book. Present Continuous

Figure 4: page 52 from the student's book. Reading.

Reading   A travel brochure

🎧 **1** Read the travel brochure. Which geographical features can people see on this holiday in Mexico?

MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

Planning a holiday? Looking for an unusual place with many exciting things to see and do? Then come to Mexico. We are organising a group trip now.

Zone of Silence

The Zone of Silence is in the Chihuahuan Desert. People call it the Zone of Silence because there aren't any television, radio, microwave or satellite signals there. That's right – people in the Zone of Silence can't watch TV, listen to the radio or talk on mobile phones! Scientists are studying this unusual area, but they haven't got an explanation for it yet.

La Venta

This giant Olmec head is in La Venta Park. There are 17 of these heads in Mexico. They are 3,000 years old. The heads are 1.47-3.4 metres tall and they weigh up to 45 tonnes. Each head is from one big stone. The stones come from the mountains – 80 kilometres from La Venta. How can you move a 45-tonne stone over hills and rivers without lorries and machines? This is still a mystery today.

Guanajuato

Originally a Spanish city, Guanajuato is in a valley near the Sierra de Guanajuato mountains. It is a beautiful city with an unusual secret. Dead bodies become mummies because the weather is very dry. You can see some of these mummies in the Guanajuato Mummy Museum. Some of them are still wearing clothes!

Did You Know?
For almost 300 years, Mexico was a colony of Spain. In 1810, Mexico declared its independence.

2 Are the sentences true or false or doesn't the travel brochure say?

1. You can phone your friends from the Zone of Silence.
2. The Chihuahuan Desert is in the north of Mexico.
3. The Olmec heads are very old and very big.
4. The mountains with the stones are in La Venta.
5. Guanajuato has got a Spanish history.
6. It isn't very hot in Guanajuato in summer.

3 Answer the questions.

1. Why aren't there any TVs in the Zone of Silence?
2. How many Olmec heads are there in Mexico?
3. How much do they weigh?
4. What is difficult to understand about the Olmec heads?
5. How does the dry weather in Guanajuato affect dead people?
6. What is unusual about the mummies in the museum?

4 Find words in the text to match the definitions below.

1. the opposite of *noise* (lines 1-6)
2. very big (lines 14-19)
3. large vehicles (lines 20-25)
4. the opposite of *far from* (lines 27-30)
5. the temperature or conditions outside (lines 30-35)

English in Use

In adverts and brochures, we often shorten the Present Continuous and say *Planning a holiday?* instead of *Are you planning a holiday?*

52

55

Figure 5: page 53 from the student's book. Present Simple - Present Continuous.

Grammar Present Simple / Present Continuous

IC GRAMMAR ANIMATION

When talking about activities, we use the **Present Simple** to talk about routines and the **Present Continuous** to talk about activities that people are doing at the moment. When talking about people's feelings or thoughts about their activities, we often use stative verbs. Stative verbs don't usually use the Present Continuous.

We **climb** the mountain **once a year**.
Dan **is walking** by the river **at the moment**.
They **want** to go on holiday **now**.

> Grammar Charts, page 149

GRAMMAR BASICS Do exercises 7 - 10, page 149

5 Complete the text with the verbs in brackets. Use the correct form of the Present Simple or the Present Continuous.

Giant Radishes

1. ___ you ___ (like) radishes? Look at these pictures. No, you 2. ___ (not dream). These statues are from giant radishes! They 3. ___ (weigh) up to 3 kilograms and are sometimes 50 centimetres long. No, people 4. ___ (not eat) the radishes. Farmers 5. ___ (grow) the giant vegetables especially for La Noche de Rábanos, the Night of the Radishes festival in Oaxaca, Mexico. The festival 6. ___ (take) place every 23rd December. Artists 7. ___ (work) for three days before each festival to make statues from the radishes. Right now, they 8. ___ (prepare) the statues for this year's festival. They 9. ___ (want) the statues to be special. So what 10. ___ you ___ (wait) for? Come to Oaxaca and see the radish art!

BARRIO SANTA CRUZ

6 Look at the pictures. Write sentences comparing the Walker family's usual activities with what they are doing on holiday now.

1 at weekends   now
Paul usually plays computer games at weekends. Now, he is climbing a mountain.

Paul

Mr and Mrs Walker
2 on Sundays   now

Sue
3 on Saturdays   now

Dean and Linda
4 in the afternoons   now

Buddy
5 usually   now

Speaking Guessing

7 Imagine you're doing one of the activities in green at one of the places in blue. Can your partner guess what you are doing and where you are?

Activities: swim • hike • ride a bike take photos • read a book • play football
Places: beach • lake • mountain • island forest • river

Are you swimming in a lake?

No, I'm not.

Responding to guesses
That's right!
Guess again.
Try again.

English in Use

> Workbook, pages 34-35   53

56

Figure 7: page 55 from the student's book.

Figure 8: page 56 from the student's book.

Writing A photo description

Getting Ready to Write

Content

In a photo description, we usually include a description of the place and information about the people in the photo.

1 Copy the chart below. Then read the model and find the information to complete the chart.

> Place:
>   Description:
> People:
>   Information:
>   What they're doing:

Language

When writing a photo description, we often use *to be* and *have got* to describe the place and the Present Continuous to talk about the people. We also use linking words to connect ideas. We use *and* to connect similar ideas, *but* to contrast ideas and *because* to give a reason.

Susan **is** at the beach **and** her friends are with her.
Bob **has got** a jacket, **but** he **hasn't got** a hat.
The children **aren't swimming because** it's cold.

2 Find the following in the model.

1. a sentence with *to be / have got*
2. a sentence with the Present Continuous
3. a sentence with each of the linking words

3 Copy and complete the sentences with the correct linking words.

1. I'm wearing a sweater ___ I'm also wearing a coat.
2. We aren't having a picnic ___ the weather is bad.
3. I like swimming in lakes, ___ I hate the ocean.
4. They are smiling ___ they are happy.
5. She is at the football game, ___ she isn't playing.

Writing Task

Write a photo description.

1. Choose a photo from a holiday or other event.
2. Copy and complete the chart in Exercise 1 about the photo.
3. Use the information in the chart and the model to help you.

56

Model

My Holiday in Switzerland

This is a photo from my holiday in Switzerland. It's beautiful there. Switzerland has got many high mountains. My family is skiing in the mountains. Those are my sisters in the photo. Katie is 15 and she's an excellent skier. She's teaching Holly because it's Holly's first time skiing. I am taking photos. It's cold in the mountains, but we aren't cold. Katie is wearing a ski jacket, ski pants and boots. Holly is wearing a ski suit. It is very warm. We're having a great time.

English in Use

Check Yourself ✔

Content – I included
• a description of the place
• information about the people

Language – I used
• the verbs *to be* and *have got* correctly
• the Present Continuous correctly
• linking words correctly

Appendix 4

Figure 1: transcribed example from exercise 6, page 51, New English in Use 1.

6. Copy and complete the sentences with the verbs in brackets. Use the Present Continuous affirmative. Then match the people to the countries they are in.

1. Dan_____(hike) in Sherwood Forest now.

2. Sue and Linda_____ (climb) Mount Fuji.

3. I_____(take) photos in the Mojave Desert.

4. We_____(sit) in a Bedouin tent at the moment.

5. Jake_____(visit) the Parthenon right now.

6. Mr and Mrs O'Connor_____(swim) in Lake Como.

a) Egypt   c) England   e) USA

b) Italy   d) Japan   f) Greece

READING:

1. Read the travel brochure. Which geographical features can people see on this holiday in Mexico?

MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

Planning a holiday? Looking for an unusual place with many exciting things to see and do? Then come to Mexico. We are organising a group trip now.

Zone of Silence

The Zone of Silence is in the Chihuahuan Desert. People call it Zone of Silence because there aren't any television, radio, microwave or satellite signals there. That's right – people in the Zone of Sience can't watch TV, listen to the radio or talk on mobile phones! Scientists are studying this unusual area, but they haven't got an explanation for it yet.

La Venta

This giant Olmec head is in La Venta Park. There are 17 of these heads in Mexico, They are 3,000 years old. The heads are 1.47-3.4 metres tall and they weigh up to 45 tonnes. Each head is from one big stone. The stones come from the mountains – 80 kilometres from La Venta. How can you move a 45-tonne stone over hills and rivers without lorries and machines? This is still a mystery today.

Guanajuato

Originally a Spanish city, Guanajuato is in a valley near the Sierra the Guanajuato mountains. It is a beautiful city with an unusual secret. Dead bodies become mummies because the weather is very dry. You can see some of these mummies in the Guanajuato Mummy Museum. Some of them are still wearing clothes!

Did you know? For almost 300 years, Mexico was a colony of Spain. In 1810, Mexico declared its independence.