ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDIES

Master Thesis:

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH DISCOURSE:

The Scottish Fable and its Methodological Applications.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this project I am going to carry out is to focus on English teaching from a new perspective that takes as its starting point not only discourse but also a process oriented approach which is related to the task-based-learning methodology. For this reason, I have selected a Scottish fable so as to be applied methodologically to different linguistic areas.

This way, I have organized the thesis around chapters taking into account the linguistic field to which each of the papers is devoted.

Therefore, the Master Thesis is going to be constituted by the following sections or chapters:

1. Discourse Analysis in English.

2. Semantics, Discourse and its methodological applications.

3. Grammar, Discourse and its methodological applications.

4. Methodological Research Resources for English language teaching.

5. Syllabus design: Production and evaluation of methodological material.

Discourse Analysis in English

Discourse analysis, among other things, offers multiple possibilities with regards to the EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching and learning. Therefore, in this paper, I pretend to profit from the many chances that discourse analysis offers with the aim of applying them to an English language lesson. I also want to emphasize an autonomous learning as well as a methodology based on the "Content-based Instruction". In this way, taking a Scottish Folk Tale as the starting point, I want my students to know about Scotland and its folklore. I pretend to raise their interest towards this nation that, thanks to its beautiful and dramatic geography, has given rise to a lot of romantic and historical stories, traditional customs, superstitions and magical folklore.

I want to introduce my students to this magic world full of beasts, witches, elves, fairies, monsters and giants. I also seek to broaden their minds towards a different culture that is related to the English language.

The so mentioned text that I am going to work with is the one that follows. It is a Folk Tale in the form of a fable:

How the Wolf Lost his Tail

One day the Wolf and the Fox were out together, and they stole a dish of crowdie. Now the Wolf was the biggest beast of the two, and he had a long tail like a greyhound, and great teeth.

The Fox was afraid of him, and did not dare to say a word when the Wolf ate the most of the crowdie, and left only a little at the bottom of the dish for him, but he determined to punish him for it; so the next night when they were out together the Fox said:

"I smell a very nice cheese and" -pointing to the moonshine on the ice-"there it is too."

"And how will you get it?" said the Wolf.

"Well, stop you here till I see if the farmer is asleep, and if you keep your tail on it, nobody will see you or know that it is there. Keep it steady. I may be some time coming back."

So the Wolf lay down and laid his tail on the moonshine in the ice, and kept it for an hour till it was fast. Then the Fox, who had been watching him, ran in to the farmer and said, "The Wolf is there; he will eat up the children. The Wolf! The Wolf!"

Then the farmer and his wife came out with sticks to kill the Wolf, but the Wolf ran off leaving his tail behind him, and that's why the Wolf is stumpy-tailed to this day, though the Fox has a long brush.

This text is going to be applied to students in their second year of E.S.O. In order to specify their linguistic competence I have taken the Common European Framework as a reference; but before giving the reference level of my students I think it is important to summarize briefly the labour to which the Common European Framework is devoted. As it is pointed out in its official web site, the Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations and textbooks across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allows learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning on a life-long basis.

Besides, the Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe. It provides the means for educational

administrators, course designers, teachers, etc. to reflect on their current practice to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible.

Furthermore, the provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency facilitates the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning context, and accordingly it aids European mobility.

Thus, taking into account the Common Reference Levels, my students belong to the B1 level. That means that regarding the listening skills, they are able to understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can also understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

As for the reading skills, they can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language, as well as the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.

With regards to the writing skills, they can write simple connected texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. They can also write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

However, regarding the speaking skills, they are supposed to belong as well to the B1 level but, actually, I would situate them in the A2 level, at least in relation to the spoken interaction. They can only communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. This is due to the traditional way of teaching which focuses on grammar points almost all the time without paying attention to the development of the oral skills. Nevertheless, as for the spoken production, the students are able to connect phrases in a simple way in order to

describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions. Besides, they can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans as well as narrating a story or relating the plot of a book or film; which is included in the B1 level.

Since this text is going to be used as a tool for the study of discourse analysis applied to an English language lesson in secondary school, I consider it important to comment on certain notions related to discourse analysis.

First of all I think it is important to distinguish the meaning of the word "text" from that of "discourse".

If we take into account Robert de Beaugrande's definition, a text is "a unit of communication produced by a speaker or group of speakers with the intention of communicating something and with a clear beginning and a clear end"; whereas discourse refers to "two or more mutually relevant texts produced by two or more speakers or writers and which may be continued through time."

However this is not the only possible definition for discourse. If we take into account Jaworski and Coupland's (1999) point, discourse would be defined as "language above the sentence and above the clause" or "the set of social practices which make meaning". According to them, what discourse linguists study is the way in which a communicative act or text depends on previous acts or texts, and how people creatively interact in the task of making and inferring meaning.

This way, discourse analysis can be briefly defined as "the study of language in use", which means that the meaning of a text is not in the text properly, but assigned to the text by language users, and as such interpreted in their minds. (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999)

There are different reasons that explain my decision of choosing this Scottish Folk Tale to be analysed:

Firstly, I think that the literary text is richer than any; and, as Pilar Alonso points out, it is not a conventional type of discourse since it is possible to distinguish two different levels of interaction within it. She says that we may speak of discourse at the internal level, because, with the exception of poetry, there is usually more than one speaker in every literary text, and their communicative exchanges are discourse; as it happens in the fable I have presented above. She continues explaining that the literary text is also discourse at the external level, since it belongs to a socio-cultural reality and maintains discursive relations with its receivers, such as readers or critics, and with other texts of similar characteristics, sharing for example the same subject, same genre or the same type of production. (Pilar Alonso, 1999)

Secondly, according to Pilar Alonso as well, it is frequent that students make mistakes when they try to understand and interpret a text in a foreign language. However, most of them are due to the application of mental schemata that are proper of the culture to which the students belong, but, on occasions, these schemata do not correspond with the ones which are active in the culture or social structure in which the text is involved.

She also explains that from the very beginning of a reading, certain individual preconceptions are activated in order to satisfy the readers expectations as soon as possible, without even taking into account the information provided explicitly by the text. She continues arguing that this is due not only to a grade of lexical and grammatical ignorance of the language that is being studied but also to the relevance that the previous knowledge of the world has; whether it has been acquired encyclopaedically or based in our own experiences, as well as the knowledge structures

that interact with the information provided by the text in its reception process. (Pilar Alonso, 2005)

Nevertheless, in the case of the text I have just presented, I think that it would not result difficult for the students to interpret it in the right way since, in spite of the fact that they activate a mental schema proper of the Spanish culture, it would also be valid because of the fact that in Spain we are also used to dealing with fables. Because of this reason, I believe that it would be much easier for them to work with this type of text. In my opinion, students would be able to establish knowledge relationships with the text without too much effort, which I think is an advantage.

Finally, I also decided to choose this text by taking into account the interest of my students. From my point of view, Folk Tales, including fables on them, and legends, which are also related to the Scottish culture, have the quality of thrilling and entertaining readers of all ages.

I also pretend to justify my choice by doing a qualitative analysis of the structural characteristics and the methodological potential of the text.

Taking into consideration the structure of the text, I think that it offers an appropriate level of challenge with regards to the attitudes and skills of the target group. It adopts the typical form of a tale, with a characteristic beginning and ending that the students will easily recognize.

Besides, as in most tales, the language used is simple, so it will not create big problems to the students.

In addition, the concepts and ideas that appear in the text have been linked accurately, so the text is presented in a coherent way.

With regards to the contextualization capacity, there are several factors that intervene in the process of interpretation and which can be divided into three groups:

1. The cognitive elements which are those related to the previous schemata that the participants who are going to face the discourse have.

2. The semantic elements which are those that affect the content of the text or discourse and its meaning as it is expressed in such text, even though they do not correspond with the aims of the producer.

3. The pragmatic elements, which make reference in a more direct way to the contextualization capacity and that is why I am going to go deeply into them.

Within these pragmatic elements the intentionality and aims of the producer are included, as well as the reaction of the receiver and the attitude that he presents towards the text or discourse in front of him. It would also be included in this section the relevance of the discourse and the situational context in which such discourse is immersed.

Regarding this last point I have just mentioned, I would ask the students to imagine the situational context of the fable I have presented to them. They may say that it belongs to the oral tradition that is that it has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. They might also say that they are told in Spain but they seem to be told as well in other countries and that they constitute a literary genre.

I would add that in this case it belongs to the Scottish tradition and that it was once told in cosy crofters' cottages and draughty castles.

Going back to the contextualization capacity in general, regarding the components of the text, the students will be asked about the time in which the action takes place as well as the place, that is, the setting.

They will also have to tell the rest of the class the participants that intervene in the discourse taking into account its internal level. Later on, they will have to specify the addressees of such discourse.

I will also ask them their opinion of what they think the discourse pretends to transmit and the tone in which it has been written. They are supposed to guess that it is an informal or colloquial one, since it comes from oral tradition as we have commented before.

I will also ask them if they think that there are flashbacks or if the action takes place in a chronological way.

Another exercise that I would apply to this contextualization capacity would be to show the students only the title of the text, that is, "How the Wolf Lost his Tail". Then, I would ask them to try to identify the literary genre that could be related to that title.

Another way to do it would be by showing them only the beginning and the ending of the text. This way, they are supposed to identify it as a tale because of the characteristic structure that it presents. If we take into account the beginning of the text, "One day..." we associate it with the typical way in which most tales begin.

With regards to the mental model building, I think that the text I have chosen represents a good example in order to explain what a mental model is. Besides, it also provides a good frame for applying the ideas related to the mental model building in the English language lesson.

To start with, the mental models refer to the representation that people form in their minds from the information received though language. In the case of the text I have presented, my students will probably associate it with a fable, and so, with a type of literary genre that aims to teach something. However once they have read it, each of

them might have a different interpretation of the text; they may learn something different. This means that they will have created a different mental model in relation to the text they have read.

Taking into account Bartlett's (1932) definition, a schema or mental model is "a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory". Besides, he says that the schemata can be viewed as "the organize background knowledge, which leads as to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse".

According to him, we use information from the encountered discourse, together with knowledge from past experience related to the discourse at hand to build a mental representation.

In the case of my students, I believe that those who have been in contact with fables in their past experience, (probably most of them) will immediately associate the text to them due to the mental models that they already have in their minds. When reading the text, they will activate their schemata in relation to fables. They will have in mind certain ideas as for instance that a fable is a tale in which animals are the main characters, that they speak, that some animals are clever than others and that there is a moral at the end of it.

I have gone deeply with the text at issue and thus I decided to show it to some young people who read it. Then I asked them to summarize and interpret the text. Their answers made me realize of the great importance that mental models acquire when facing a text or discourse.

For instance they identified the moonshine in the ice with a cheese because they took into account their mental models in which the moon is rounded and white like a cheese.

As for the wolf paying heed to the fox, they answered that it was due to the fact that the fox was clever than the wolf, to what I asked why. They answered that they knew it because they had read more fables before facing this one and in all those fables the fox always won.

All this information corroborates the idea of the important role that previous knowledge and mental models have in our interpretation of texts and discourse.

As Yule (1985) says, interpretation goes on line with the experience we have of the way the world is. My students are supposed to identify the text as a fable by associating it with the characteristics that other fables present. They are going to activate the fable's frame.

Furthermore, as Cook (1989) states, "the mind stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context activates a knowledge schema". In relation to this statement, I would propose the students the following exercise:

I would ask them to define the literary genre to which the text belongs taking some key words as the starting point. In this way, they are supposed to identify it as a fable thanks to some important key words as for example wolf or fox.

What I pretend with this type of exercise is that the students realize that it is possible to understand and interpret a text without knowing all the vocabulary that appears in it only by paying attention to certain words that activate their mental model.

Besides, I think that it is important to establish a difference between what the text actually says and what the text tells us. For instance, the text in itself do not specify that its aim is to teach us something, however we get to the conclusion that it has a moral because of our mental model in relation to fables. To this purpose I pretend to propose an exercise in which the students have to do a summary of the text by using only the

elements or key words that they consider important within the text. In this way, students will be able to distinguish between the information that is provided by the text and the information that they add to the text through their mental schemata.

Once they have done the summary by using only key words that appear in the text, I will explain then the new words that they do not understand. This way they will pay more attention to them since, in contrast to the traditional method, I have not talked about vocabulary before. In my opinion, this method favours the learning of new words and at the same time it facilitates the task of remembering new words to the students.

To end up this paper, with regards to the teachability of communicative skills, which according to the Common European Framework are listening, speaking, writing and reading, I am going to propose the students different exercises:

As for the reading comprehension, I will carry out a process-oriented approach to reading instead of a product-oriented approach to reading. This way, meaning is obtained through a successful interaction between the reader and the text. The reader forms a preliminary expectation about the material and he brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs. The reading skills are achieved this way through an efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world.

Since I want to activate their mental model in order to facilitate the reading of the text I have given to them, I would introduce first key words such as wolf and fox or an image in the whiteboard containing a picture of a wolf and a fox talking to each other. Then, I would ask the students to say anything that initially comes to their minds, and I would write the information in the blackboard so that they are able to see the associations. Afterwards, I would ask them questions such as "What made you think of ...?. This way,

they become aware of their network of associations and they have also the opportunity to listen to other explanations and interact with other students. This interactive process also provides students with the opportunity to accept, reject or alter their own initial associations and to integrate them into more accurate pictures of the target group. (Langer 1981).

In order to improve the oral skills, once they have finished reading the text they will comment aloud what they think the text wants to transmit, that is, the intention with which the text was written. Since the students will have created different mental models of the text, they will have different interpretations of it as well, as for example that appearances can be deceptive.

Regarding the listening skills, a native English speaker from Scotland would come to the class and would tell the students different Folk Tales and legends from that country.

Finally, as for the writing skills, I would ask the students to write a composition about their experience related to the topic. They can write about other tales that they know, or they could even compare the fable that has been seen in class with other ones that they know. Another possibility would be to write about Scotland in general.

In conclusion, my aim with this paper, in which I have benefited from the multiple possibilities that discourse analysis offers regarding the teaching and learning of a foreign language, is to emphasize the idea of the autonomous learning within the bases of a content and a task-based instruction, and, at the same time, that students feel motivated in their process of learning the English language.

Semantics, Discourse, and its Methodological Applications

The aim of this paper I am going to carry out is to apply semantics to the field of language teaching. To be more precise, I am going to benefit from some of the possibilities that semantics offer regarding teaching in order to apply them to an EFL (English as a foreign language) lesson.

I will start by giving a definition of semantics. According to Cann (1993), in its broadest sense, semantics is the study of meaning. However, linguistic semantics is the study of meaning as expressed by the words, phrases and sentences of human languages.

I personally would define semantics as the study of meaning in discourse; and I understand discourse as language in use.

There are different semantic theories such as formal semantics, cognitive semantics and discourse semantics. I will mainly focus on cognitive semantics and discourse semantics above all.

Formal semantics have received a lot of criticism from other linguists due to some deficiencies that this theory presents.

For instance, Sampson says that meaning cannot be analysed formally since it is something abstract and not fixed like the syntax. He says that the kinds of inferences in real language are constantly modified by men's active intelligence.

Austin thinks that formal semantics forget about the illocutionary force of utterances related to the theory of speech acts since it only deals with the propositional content of sentences. It forgets on the intention of the speaker and the context.

Finally, Lyons says that formal semantics has a limited view of sentence- meaning since it only focuses on the content of propositions and its truth conditions.

Besides, he says that there is also meaning encoded in the lexical and grammatical structure and that there are contextual assumptions, conversational implicatures and subjectivity to take also into account.

As I have mentioned above, I am going to pay more attention to cognitive semantics and discourse semantics. Since I am going to use these theories for an English language lesson, I am going to use the Scottish fable that I am supposed to be working on with my students as the basis for that lesson. This way, this text will constitute the starting point for putting into practice these theories I have just mentioned.

With respect to cognitive semantics Gilles Fauconnier (2003) says that it is a powerful approach to the study of language, conceptual systems, human cognition, and general meaning construction.

According to Van Dijk (2000), cognitive analysis of discourse conveys different issues such as topics or implications.

Topics in cognitive semantics refer to the global meaning assigned to or inferred from fragments of discourse by language users. Nevertheless, this global meaning might be subjected because language users often provide their own subjective summaries of a text and such a summary is based on the amounts of knowledge that is not provided by the text but by the knowledge representations of language users.

Thus, a cognitive analysis of topics involves spelling out those knowledge items that were used or need to be used by participants in order to extract their topics from a given text. This way, I will ask the students to summarize the Scottish fable and then I will make them the following question: What did you base your summary on?

They could say that they used the title and therefore they summarized it simply by saying that it is a tale that tells a story about the way in which a wolf lost his tail.

Another possibility could also be for example that they used the conclusion and therefore the summary would be as well that it is a fable that tells us how the wolf lost his tail through the fault of the fox.

The conclusion is that since they have read similar texts to this one I have proposed to them, they have already got a mental model which tells them that the most important information appears at the very beginning of the text (as in the title for instance), or at the end in the form of a conclusion or a moral in the case of fables.

Another issue that cognitive semantics touches is that of implication. Following as well Van Dijk's (2000) point of view, the cognitive analysis of discourse in semantics uses the notion of "implication" in the same way as pragmatic analysis uses the related notion of "implicature". Implications in discourse are propositions inferred from actually expressed words, phrases, clauses or sentences.

This way, I will ask my students the implication they derive from the following sentence:

One day the Wolf and the Fox were out together, and they stole a dish of crowdie.

One possible answer can be that they were both very hungry, to what I would ask the reason why they think such a thing. They might answer that it is because they stole the dish. Therefore I will propose them the following question again: Why is it because of the verb steal?

The answer will be that it is because the verb steal implies doing something immoral and thus, the animals should have been very hungry in order to do that.

Then, I will show them as well the following sentence:

The Fox determined to punish the Wolf for it.

Once they have read it, I will ask them the following question too: What do you imply by this sentence?

They might answer that the wolf has not behaved correctly because you punish someone when that person has done something unfair.

As it can be seen, these implications are derived from the socially shared knowledge; and, as Van Dijk (2000) comments, spelling out the implications of a proposition expressed in the text means to list the propositions that may be derived from those propositions given a relevant domain of knowledge.

With regard to discourse semantics, I am going to explain first the theory in order to apply it afterwards to an English language lesson.

Discourse can be defined as any linguistic manifestation that takes place in any communicative context. Therefore, it refers to language in use.

There are two concepts that play an essential part in the semantics of discourse. These two concepts are coherence and cohesion; and they are both responsible for the global meaning of the discourse.

Coherence can be local or global. Local coherence refers to the meaning relations holding between individual propositions which are normally physically close to one another. The term used by Van Dijk to refer to the sequential connectivity of sentences in a text or discourse is "microstructure".

With regard to this microstructure, the ordering of sentences commonly follows standard criteria such as: general-particular, known-unknown, perceptible-imperceptible, part-whole, class-membership, container-content, condition-cause/consequence-effect, past-present, global state of affairs-details of state of affairs and global state of action-details of state of action.

In addition, Van Dijk also includes a conditional coherence that involves a causal relation and a functional coherence that involves explanation, comparison, contrast, example, specification and generalization.

On the other hand, global coherence is related by Van Dijk to the concept of "macrostructure", which represents the global semantic content of discourse.

Global coherence subsumes the more essential, relevant, abstract or general information and disregards the unimportant micro-information.

The macrostructure can be inferred from the microstructures. This can be managed by following some "macrorules" proposed by Van Dijk and which are the following ones:

1. The deletion rule
2. The generalization rule
3. The construction rule
4. The zero rule

The rules number one, two and four can all be explained by saying that they delete all those propositions that are not relevant for the interpretation of other propositions of the discourse. They only leave those propositions that contain essential information for the macroproposition.

Meanwhile, the construction rule constructs a new proposition which includes other local propositions contained in the text.

Nevertheless, these rules imply subjectivity since decisions are taken individually and each person has his own judgment.

However, it is possible to avoid this subjectivity through the analysis of its semantic components. For this purpose, thematisation and frequency rate can be used.

Thematization refers to the information placed at the beginning of the paragraphs. According to Pilar Alonso (1999), it is important because it functions as point of departure for the message the writer is trying to convey, it reflects the producer's point of view and has a direct influence on the receiver (Brown and Yule 1983). Thematisation is related to coherence.

Frequency rate, following Pilar Alonso's (1999) description, refers to the proportion that exists between the frequency of appearance of a given element or structure in the verbal text and its relevance, in the sense that a consistently recurrent phenomenon usually plays a highly significant role in the global construction of the text.

This frequency rate is related to cohesion.

Apart from the theme and the frequency rate, there are also some important notions such as the topic and the comment. They are concerned with the way in which the information is organized within the sentence and throughout the discourse.

The topic is the subject of the sentence and the comment is the predicate. Thus, it is the comment that gives new information.

The persistence recurrence of a topic is going to be the discourse topic. However, a discourse can have more than one topic. If these topics are semantically related through any of the following cohesive devices: reference, repetition, synonymy, antonymy, meronymy, hyponymy, superordination, general word or collocation for example; then, they will all be treated as related and contributing to the construction of the global discourse topic.

In order to apply discourse semantics to the English lesson ant taking also the Scottish fable as the starting point, I want my students to extract the global meaning of the so mentioned text.

Since we only get the macrostructure through analysing first the microstructure, I will start by making my students extract the local coherence of the text.

This way, I will ask them to look for meaning relations between propositions and I will write on the board the following ones as a clue for them:

1) Condition-consequence

2) Cause-effect

3) Global state of affairs-details of state of affairs

4) Comparison

With regards to the first one, they can find for instance the following example:

"Well, stop you here till I see if the farmer is asleep, and if you keep your tail on it, nobody will see you or know that it is there. (Condition)

So the Wolf lay down and laid his tail on the moonshine in the ice, and kept it for an hour till it was fast. (Consequence)

As for the second one I present the following example:

Then the Fox, who had been watching him, ran in to the farmer and said, "The Wolf is there; he will eat up the children. The Wolf! The Wolf!" (Cause)

Then the farmer and his wife came out with sticks to kill the Wolf (Effect)

As for the third one they can find the answer in the first paragraph:

One day the Wolf and the Fox were out together, and they stole a dish of crowdie. (Global state of affairs)

Now the Wolf was the biggest beast of the two, and he had a long tail like a greyhound, and great teeth.

The Fox was afraid of him, and did not dare to say a word when the Wolf ate the most of the crowdie (Details state of affairs)

Finally, with respect to comparison, I present the following two examples:

Now the Wolf was the <u>biggest</u> beast of the two, and he had a long tail like a greyhound, and great teeth.

The Fox was afraid of him (...) (Comparison)

(...) and that's why the Wolf is stumpy-tailed to this day, though the Fox has a long brush. (Comparison)

Once the students have identified the local coherence of the text I will make them focus on the macrostructure so that they can extract the global coherence.

I will explain them the macrorules I have previously mentioned and they will have to apply them to the text. They will see for instance that they can leave intact the title since it is very clear and it only contains essential information. Actually, the tale is going to tells us how the wolf lost his tail.

However, once they have applied the rules, they will realize that they have selected different things with respect to their classmates and they will probably get confused.

Therefore, I will teach them how they can really get the global meaning of the text.

I will explain them what a topic is and they will have to look for it.

The answer is going to be the wolf since that is the word that appears more times functioning as a subject. This way, the wolf would constitute the discourse topic.

However, I will also tell them that a discourse can have more than one topic if they are semantically related through cohesive devices.

Thus, they will have first to look for more topics by taking into account the frequency rate.

They might answer that the other topics are "the fox", and "The fox and the wolf" if they take into consideration the times they appear functioning as a subject.

However, I believe that some of them will mention as well the "tail" because of its frequency rate.

Then, they will have to look for cohesive devices between those topics. For that purpose I will explain them what personal reference, reiteration by repetition, comparative reference and collocations stand for.

This way, they will see that "the fox and the wolf" are constantly related by the personal reference 'they', there is also a permanent reference by repetition towards them and even a comparative reference as well through the word 'biggest'.

In regard to collocations, they will realize that the words beast, teeth, tail or brush belong to the animal's semantic field and both the wolf and the fox share those things.

Once they have done these activities and they have got the global meaning of the text, I will ask them to write ideas about other titles that could be suitable for the fable or to elaborate a really brief summary of the text.

They could suggest for example the following ideas:

- How the Fox made the Wolf lose his tail.
- The Wolf's tail and the Fox

o   How the Wolf lost his tail because of the Fox.

I am going to develop now a second stage with regards to discourse semantics with the aim that students benefit from the work they have done in order to broaden their knowledge about fables and cultures.

Once the students are familiar with the lexical terms and they have also contextualized and developed the structures of the fable, I will ask them to look for other fables written in English as homework promoting this way an autonomous learning.

Then, I will show them some tasks that they are going to carry out in groups so that they share ideas, experience and different points of view or perspectives. This way, I promote as well an intercultural communication that is going to be very enriching for the students.

These tasks will be commented afterwards aloud.

The first thing they have to do in relation to lexical cohesion and to be more precise with the cohesive device reiteration by repetition is to look for terms or expressions that are used in all or some of the fables they have encountered, as for example wolf, fox, lamb, afraid, etc.

Then, they will have to look for those elements that appear only in the Scottish fable we have been working with, as for instance crowdie, dish or stumpy-tailed.

Once they have done both tasks, I will ask them to classify the different elements they have encountered taking into account the semantic field they belong to, as for example animals or food.

I will also encourage them to look for synonyms or antonyms and also to find parts of things, that is, merronyms. One example of merronym would be the word `tail´, which constitutes a part of the fox or the wolf's bodies.

Finally, I will ask them to combine the different information provided by the various fables so that they create their own fable. One example could be a fable containing a lamb, a fox and a wolf as characters.

This way, they practice composition and elaboration of small texts and improve at the same time their written skills.

In my opinion, these tasks favour an inter and intra-textual labour that is going to facilitate an active student's learning due to the fact that the activities are presented in a dynamic, entertaining and pleasant way.

Besides, as I have commented above, by taking a text, which in this case is a Scottish fable, as a starting point, students can expand first their knowledge in relation to that text and later on with other texts that are interrelated with that one.

To end up and as a conclusion, thanks to the new perspective and possibilities that semantics offer regarding teaching, students will learn to derive the real meaning of the different texts they are going to encounter in everyday life.

Grammar, Discourse and its Methodological Applications

The aim of this paper is that students learn English grammar from a new perspective that differs from the traditional one in the sense that it takes real context and a task-based learning approach as its starting point promoting this way the communicative competence which had been forgotten in the traditional view.

To start with, according to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2007), in the past many EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers have viewed grammar from an exclusively sentence-level perspective. However, I agree with the idea that a sentence-based view of grammar is inconsistent with the notion of communicative competence.

This fact can be explained following again Celce-Murcia and Olshtain's (2007) description in which the speaker/writer's ability to produce the required form or construction in a grammatically accurate way is part of a larger process in which the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse appropriateness of the construction itself is also judged with respect to the context in which it is used.

While phrase structure rules may account for all the possible grammatical forms that these structures have, it is pragmatic rules that determine which form works best in which context and why.

From my point of view, what they mean is that there are different grammatical forms that can be used to fulfil a certain communicative function but we only choose one of these forms depending on the context of the communicative situation; that is, we take into account pragmatics, and I totally agree with this idea.

Nevertheless, as they also mention in their book *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching*, formal linguistics have restricted grammar to a sentence level and, what is

more, many formal linguists have a preference for looking at grammar or syntax as an innate, autonomous, and context-free system. However, this point of view corresponds to the traditional view of teaching in which learning a language was first and foremost a question of learning its grammar. Nowadays things are changing and learning a language is best understood as acquiring communicative competence as its main aim.

In relation to this communicative competence, since what I really want is to focus on the communicative and social functions of the language with my students, and not only on the linguistic ones, I think it is important to signal the importance that grammar has in the production of discourse.

As Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2007) state, whereas the interrelationships between phonology and discourse applied primarily to spoken language, the interrelationships between grammar and discourse apply to written discourse as much as spoken discourse.

Besides, they continue saying that grammatical knowledge is somewhat more critical for discourse production, for writing and speaking than it is for discourse reception, listening and reading. This is because listening and reading comprehension support on multiple sources for interpretation such as meaning of vocabulary items, content, formal schemata, situational/contextual information and knowledge of the world; whereas grammar tends to have a subordinate role for the receptive skills and is only used as a subordinate basis for resolving problems of interpretation rather than being deployed as a primary resource.

To end up this introductory point, I consider it important to signal that I am going to use the Scottish fable as the real context in which I am going to develop this grammar lesson since, as I have remarked above, I strongly agree with the idea that

restricting grammar to sentence level brings the problem that there are few grammar choices made by speakers or writers that are strictly sentence level and completely context-free.

With regard as well to the way in which I am going to teach grammar to my students, I also consider important to make a distinction between the traditional approach of teaching English grammar and the task-based learning approach.

The traditional approach, according to Thornbury (1997), divides the whole of the English language up into manageable bitesized chunks, and then introduces these to the students, one chunk per lesson, so that they gradually and systematically accumulate a complete picture of the language.

On the other hand, the task-based learning approach creates an environment where a lot of language, known and unknown is met and where the students are helped with new language only when they already have some awareness of it, and have curiosity and questions about it.

In the traditional approach the teacher is like an instructor or a prosecutor of errors whereas in the other one is a supporter or inventor of tasks.

The approach I have chosen to carry out the English grammar lesson is the task-based learning approach. In my opinion, simply by a series of tasks that I am going to propose to my students, they are going to acquire unconsciously the grammar required to express anything they want to communicate.

In addition, I also believe that this task-based learning approach is more motivating and entertaining for the students than the traditional one.

As for the development of the English grammar lesson, I consider it relevant to remark that I am going to take the notions of grammatical form and function as a basis for the learning of grammar.

I am going to propose the students some tasks that have to do with grammatical forms and functions, but firstly I will explain them that function refers to what someone wants to express or communicate as for example an order, a request or a warning whereas grammar, as Jim Scrivener (1994) states, is concerned with the form of the language: that is, the patterns or the regularities. Moreover, some common items have names: past perfect, past progressive, reported speech, relative clauses, etc.

I will insist on the fact that they need grammatical forms so as to be able to express the different communicative functions of language and therefore, they have to know the English grammar structures in order to be able to communicate whatever they want at any moment in the target language.

However, I will let them know all the time that all these tasks they are going to carry out have a communicative purpose as its primary objective. Besides, they are going to summarize the analysis of the different pieces of grammar by the communicative functions they present.

Since I do not want to follow the traditional method of teaching which was based on presentation, that is, using the board or a power point, telling the students all the time to open their books or giving printed information and which I think is really boring, not motivating and not interactive, I will follow instead a guided discovery in which I will give the students some clues and I will also propose the tasks that are going to determine the grammar they need.

Sometimes students will find themselves as well in between a guided discovery and a self directed discovery in which I forget in a way about my responsibility as a teacher.

The first thing students will be asked to do is to read the Scottish fable carefully. Certain pieces of grammar in which I want to focus on are going to be underlined. They will be highlighted with a different colour each depending on the grammar point they represent. These grammar features are the following ones:

o comparative forms

o simple past tense

o past perfect continuous

o gerund

o the verb *have got*

o imperative form

o simple present tense

o structures containing *will*

o the modal *may*

o first conditional type clauses

o relative clauses

Since I agree with the idea that it is essential to study a language in its typical contexts of use in order to establish meaning and form rather than in isolation, I will hand out many examples containing these grammar features that had been underlined in the text appearing in their real contexts of use.

Then, students will be asked to work together, discuss and find out what the rules of these grammatical forms are. This way, instead of writing the structures on the board and explaining them to the students, which was the common way of doing it in the

traditional approach, I let them work out the rule promoting at the same time an inductive methodology.

In my opinion, English grammar is best learned inductively than deductively.

The deductive approach focuses simply on studying the rules and then applying them to examples. On the other hand, the inductive approach is more creative since students first infer the rules and then put them into practise in order to be able to communicate in the target language. Nevertheless I also think that a combination of both works too.

Therefore, with this task I have proposed to my students I am helping them to find out for themselves. They will find themselves in the middle of a guided and self-directed discovery.

I want my students really to see the grammar forms, think about them and understand them in order to become much clearer on its form, meaning and use. This way I am favouring as well an autonomous learning that conveys a more dynamic and active attitude instead of a passive one.

Once my students have inferred the rules of these grammar points I have previously mentioned, I want them to focus on the functions underlining those grammatical forms so as to manage the communicative purpose.

As Dalzell (1988) reports, for teaching purposes certain functions are commonly associated with certain structures, and vice versa. As an example he mentions the following ones:

FORMS	FUNCTIONS
The verb *have got*	Identifying/describing
Imperatives	Understanding and giving instructions
Simple present tense	Personal habits and routines Describing how things work Asking for information
Will future Simple present tense	Predicting Describing a process
The modal verb *can*	Ability Polite requests Possibility Understanding messages
Let's Could	Making suggestions Stating intentions
Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives	Making comparisons Stating opinions Agreeing and disagreeing

As it can be seen from this table above, any one linguistic form can be used to express a number of different functions, and, at the same time, one function can be realised by any number of different linguistic forms too.

This way, I will ask students to identify the communicative function associated to each of the grammar structures that are highlighted in the text. They only have to tell me the communicative function that those structures represent in the Scottish fable.

Therefore, within the context of the Scottish fable the comparative form is used to make a comparison, the simple past tense serves mainly to narrate, the past perfect continuous is used to emphasize the continuity and duration of an event that took place in the past, the gerund describes what someone is doing, the verb *have got* is used to describe, the imperatives are used to give instructions, the simple present tense has a narrative function whereas the constructions with *will* have a function related to predictions or expectations, the modal verb *may* represents possibility, the relative clause adds extra information and finally, the first conditional type clause is used to predict.

However, since the same function can also be expressed by using different grammatical forms, I will also ask students to think of other grammar features that can represent the same functions they have chosen for the grammar points which were underlined in the text.

Some possible answers that students could find are the following ones:

- Both the simple past tense and the simple present tense are used to narrate.
- The gerund together with the verb *to be* is used to describe what someone is doing at a specific moment.

- The modal verbs *may* and *might* as well as the verbs *can* or *could* are all of them used to predict or to express possibility. Apart from that, the first conditional type clause can also be used to predict.

At the same time, due to the fact that one linguistic form can be used to express a number of different functions, I will also ask students to think of different functions that are represented by the same grammatical form taking into account the grammar features underlined in the text. Then, they will share their answers aloud.

There are several possible answers such as the ones that follow:

- The verb *have got* can also be used to identify someone.
- The simple present tense can be used to express personal habits and routines.
- The simple present tense can be used to describe and to give information.
- The simple past tense can be used to ask and give information too.
- The gerund together with the verb *to be* expresses plans which have already been arranged.
- The comparatives are also used to state opinions.
- The structures containing *will*, can also represent intentions or plans.
- The first conditional type clauses are also associated with the communicative functions related to promises, warnings or threats.

The aim of this latest task is to originate the process of developing communicative competence. I want my students to benefit from the knowledge they have acquired in these previous tasks in order to apply it to other contexts of real life.

To start with students are going to make groups of four people. Then, I am going to give out one card per group. Each of the cards contains one communicative function. Students will have to create a board situation with the specific communicative function

they have. This way they will practise the target language by creating real situations and using authentic language.

Once all the groups have established their corresponding contexts, they will have to make a presentation of that board situation to the rest of the class.

Obviously, whenever they have any doubts they can ask the teacher to help them.

As an example, if one group has received the function of narrating, they can create a story. This way they are going to practise not only the structures concerning the simple past tense and the irregular verbs but also they are going to improve their communicative competence and develop creativity as well.

Another context that students can think of too is the following one:

- Students have got a card containing the function "expressing plans". Therefore, they prepare a telephone conversation in which they ask each other about the plans they have for next Monday for example.

Once the students have given the brief oral presentation using their assigned communicative functions and the topics associated to those functions, they will be asked to prepare a written version of their talk in order to reinforce at the discourse level the grammar they have practised.

I am going to propose to my students now another task without forgetting that in order to make sure that these young learners use language in meaningful ways it is necessary to combine form and context.

Nevertheless, since it is generally accepted that younger learners do not benefit from formal grammar instruction although paying attention sometimes to form can be helpful, I am going to focus on form in a painless manner by using meaningful exchanges that highlight useful grammatical forms.

I am going to make use of the constructions practised in the Scottish fable so as to talk about more concrete information familiar to the class members.

First of all, I will expose students to a series of questions about themselves as for example the following ones:

> Susana, can you tell us about a personal experience? You can talk about the first time you travelled by plane for instance. How was your experience? Did you like it?

Susana will have to use verbs in the past tense in order to relate her personal experience.

> Laura, can you tell us your father's job adding some extra information which is not relevant to the meaning of the sentence to your answer?

This is a way to put into practice non-defining relative clauses.

After answering these questions I am going to propose them a kind of game in which they will keep on practising the different communicative functions.

To start with I will ask a student to make a promise to one of his classmates. Thus, he will have to use the first conditional type clause. Then, the student that has made the promise will have to choose a different communicative purpose for the person to whom he has made the promise as for example describing. This way, this student will have to address to other partner describing for instance the way that partner is dressed and using therefore the verb *have got*.

The game will continue like this the time the teachers considers appropriate.

If the students can do these communicative activities in a relatively error-free manner, I believe it means they have probably internalized some grammar.

From my point of view, this way, we do not only emphasize the communicative functions of language but also the grammatical forms without the students even being aware of it.

Nevertheless, I am not going to focus primarily on problems students may have with form as the traditional approach does but rather on meaning. However, if I find out that the students have many problems with a specific grammatical feature, then, I will use a substitution table in the case of verb tenses or a "fill in the gaps" in order to make the structure much clearer for them.

As a final step and in order to review the grammar points that have been touched, I will ask the students to come to some kind of grammatical generalization in their own words about each structure.

Finally, I will give them the formal rule for each of the structures and they will have to compare these rules with the ones they inferred at the beginning of the lesson.

With regard to the testing of grammar, since I am emphasizing the learning of grammar in context rather than in isolation, I may use texts with one to five words missing rather than only the one-word blanks used in a cloze-type test. This way their knowledge of many grammar points as for example the choice of tense or aspect can be tested.

Moreover, I can also ask the students to complete short texts so as to test their knowledge of grammar and discourse.

In conclusion, as Celce- Murcia and Olshtain (2007) state, there is growing agreement that teaching grammar exclusively at the sentence level with decontextualized and unrelated sentences, which has long been the traditional way to teach grammar, is not likely to produce any real learning.

However, in my opinion, thanks to the task-based learning approach, students who do such tasks can remember and apply reasonably well the grammar they learn due to the fact that they have discovered how grammar is a resource for telling a story or creating texts rather than simply existing as a set of abstract sentence-level rules.

To end up and also according to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain's (2007) description, I would like to remark that most of the rules should be taught as grammatical choices made at the level of discourse since this is the level at which learners can best process, understand and apply the conventions of grammar in their second or foreign language.

Methodological Research Resources for

English Language Teaching

The objective of this paper is to describe the different methods that have been designed for English language teaching.

In my opinion, due to the fact that in the following chapter I am going to select a specific methodology for the creation of a listening comprehension and an intercultural communication session, a thorough description of English methodology will be very useful for the so mentioned chapter concerning syllabus design.

This way, I will start by making a presentation of the different English teaching methods that I have gathered in two groups depending on whether they are based on applied linguistics or they have been founded on the cognitive codes.

With regard to the methods based on applied linguistics I am going to mention the following ones:

1. The grammar translation method.

2. The direct method.

3. The audio-lingual method.

The grammar translation method refers to a method of teaching modern languages that resembles the way classical languages used to be taught.

Classes are taught in the mother tongue with little active use of the target language, much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words, long elaborate explanations of grammar are given and little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.

The grammar translation method was developed for the study of dead languages and to facilitate access to those languages in classical literature.

From my point of view it should have remained only for that initial purpose.

I strongly believe that it does not work for learning English since students only memorize a lot of words and rules instead of really learning the language by acquiring communicative competence.

However, unfortunately, the grammar translation method is still common in many countries.

With regard to the direct method it can be said that towards the end of the late 1800s, teachers, frustrated by the limits of the grammar translation method because of its inability to create communicative competence in students, began to experiment with new ways of teaching languages.

This way, the direct method was created in order that students learn to communicate in the target language, partly by learning how to think in that language and by not involving their native language in the language learning process whatsoever.

Thereby, classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language, grammar is taught inductively and question/answer exercises are very common.

The direct method, from my point of view, can be an effective method in terms of creating language learners who are very competent in terms of using the target language communicatively.

However, it requires small class sizes, motivated learners and talented teachers in order to succeed really well.

In addition, the direct method contains nothing in its essential theory and principles that deals with the learners themselves and, in my opinion that constitutes a reason for it to fail.

As for the audio-lingual method, it was created by the time of World War II.

At that time it was thought that the most effective way to develop communicative competence in students was through extensive repetition and a variety of elaborate drills.

To this end it was held that the language habits of the first language would constantly interfere, and the only way to overcome this problem was to facilitate the learning of a new set of habits appropriate linguistically to the language being studied.

Thus, the typical techniques this method uses are completing dialogues, dialogue memorization, repetition drills and question/answer drills.

However, I think that that the audio-lingual method falls, among other things, because it does not create sustainable long-term communicative competence in language learners and it only emphasizes the surface forms of language instead of the deep structure.

With respect to the methods founded on the cognitive codes the following ones can be mentioned:

1) The silent way.

2) Suggestopedia.

3) Community language learning.

4) Total physical response.

5) The natural approach.

6) The communicative language teaching approach.

In my opinion, the most important one of all these methods I have just mentioned is the communicative language teaching approach. That is the reason why I am going to focus on it.

All the methods described so far are symbolic of the progress foreign language teaching ideology underwent in the last century. However, I think that the most relevant or accepted approach nowadays is the communicative language teaching approach.

Now, teaching students how to use the language is considered to be at least as important as learning the language itself.

The communicative language learning approach emphasizes communication through interaction in the target language. It introduces authentic texts into the learning situation and provides opportunities for learners to focus not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.

Besides, it also considers the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and attempts to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

Among other basis features of the communicative language teaching approach I consider important to mention as well the following ones:

- Communicative competence is the desired goal.
- Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
- Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
- Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings.

There are several types of learning associated with the communicative language teaching approach. I present them below:

- Interactive learning: This stresses the dual roles of receiver and sender in any communicative situation. The concept necessarily entails that there will be a lot of pair and group work in the classroom, as well as genuine language input from the real world for meaningful communication.

- Learner-centred learning: It focuses on personal creativity and input from the students, as well as taking into account their learning needs and objectives.

- Cooperative learning: This concept stresses the team like nature of the classroom and emphasizes cooperation as opposed to competition. Students share information and help, and achieve their learning goals as a group.

- Content-based learning: Language is seen as a tool or medium for acquiring knowledge about other things, instantly proving its usefulness. The content itself determines what language items need to be mastered, not the other way around.

- Task-based learning: This could be a problem solving activity or a project, but the task has a clear objective, appropriate context, a working /application procedure, and a set range of outcomes.

The task-based learning approach is the one I am going to use in next chapter for the elaboration of a listening and intercultural communication session.

It has also been the approach I have used basically along the various linguistic areas I have touched so far. That is the reason why I am going to go deeply on it.

The task-based learning approach has been defined by Nunan (1989) as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing

or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form".

There is a more general definition as well that has been given by Jane Willis (1996) and which says that "Tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome".

Moreover, according to Estébanez (2008), in the task-based learning approach the process carried out by students to learn the language is much more important than the outcome. In addition, this approach focuses on meaning rather than on specific grammar points. This is due to the fact that its main aim is to make students capable of communicating in different situations of real life.

Following Estébanez's (2008) description, the most important thing is that students pay attention first to what they really want to express and then, they can think about the more appropriate grammar structures that can be applied to that specific situation.

It is also very important to highlight that this approach emphasizes the idea that the aims proposes for each of the tasks must be put forward by both the teacher and the students.

In addition, with regards to the design of the tasks, it is important to take into account that they should not be too easy since in order that students progress. However, at the same time, they should not be too difficult so as to avoid that students lose motivation.

As Willis (1996) reports, when designing a task the first thing to take into account is to introduce a topic and then to establish the aims.

Then, the teacher together with the students prepare the tasks.

Afterwards, in my opinion, in order to make the most of the strategies, resources and materials of instruction, these tasks should include certain activities such as representations, role-plays, using computers and the internet, and using a video as well.

Young learners enjoy language learning with video. It is an effective way of studying body language and students gain confidence through repetition.

Besides, video communicates meaning better than other media and it represents a positive exploitation of technology.

I have taken all these resources into consideration when designing the activities for the following section.

Once students have carried out the tasks, they should reflect about the most interesting points of the task and the things that should be corrected.

In my opinion and to conclude, thanks to the task-based learning approach, students are aware of the importance of the language since they learn to use it for different communicative purposes instead of associating it to a simply set of grammatical rules that they have to learn to apply.

Syllabus Design:

Production and Evaluation of Methodological Material

The aim of this project I am going to carry out is to select an approach regarding syllabus design in order to be applied to the development of listening skills and intercultural communication in an English as a second language lesson.

To begin with, I think it is important to point out that there are three different main approaches that should be taken into consideration when designing a syllabus.

This way, we have the product-oriented syllabus that focuses on the knowledge and skills that students must learn as a result of instruction and which is commonly associated to a grammatical approach.

We have also a process-oriented syllabus that focuses on the learning experiences themselves and which is usually related to a task-based approach.

Finally, the functional-notional syllabus is a kind of syllabus that can be situated between the product and the process oriented syllabuses.

With respect to the syllabus approach, I have selected a process oriented syllabus. In fact, to be more precise, I have chosen a task based syllabus. This type of syllabus is organized around tasks rather than in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

From my point of view, it constitutes a more effective way to learn since it provides a purpose for the learning of the language as opposite to simply learning language items for their own shake.

In my opinion, by using this approach, students realize that they need to know certain things in order to do the tasks and this fact I believe is a highly motivating factor for them.

Traditionally, a distinction has been made between syllabus design and methodology. Syllabus design has been usually related to the selection and grading of the content while methodology has always been concerned with the selection of learning tasks and activities.

However, as David Nunan (2002) points out, when learning processes are built into the syllabus, as it happens with the task-based approach, the traditional distinction between syllabus design and methodology becomes difficult to sustain.

Actually, in my opinion, syllabuses should not only involve the selection and grading of content but also learning tasks and activities with their corresponding grading too.

Nevertheless, grading has been viewed by applied linguistics as an issue that conveys difficulty for task-based syllabuses.

However, following Nunan's (2002) point of view, when grading tasks we can take into account the degree of contextual support provided to the learners, the cognitive difficulty of the task, the amount of assistance provided to the learner, the complexity of the language which the learner is required to process and produce, the psychological stress involved in carrying out the task, and the amount and type of background knowledge required.

Actually, I have taken into consideration most of these ideas when grading the tasks designed for the listening and intercultural communication sessions so as to make it easier for the students to carry out the tasks.

In fact, when I designed the listening comprehension activities, I really took into account the psychological stress involved in doing the task. I wanted to avoid the stressful situation that most students feel whenever they have to face a listening activity.

Moreover, regarding as well the grading of the tasks designed for the listening session, I also considered some factors such as creating tasks that follow a chronological sequence and a universal pattern, or designing tasks in which the students do not have to interpret a complex code and which are coherent and interrelated.

Finally, and before developing the listening and intercultural communication sessions, I would like to remark that even though I have focused on learning processes for the design of the tasks rather than on the end products of these processes, this does not mean that, at some stage, I have included specifications of what learners should be able to do as a result of instruction. However, when grammatical, functional, or notional elements have been considered, this happens as a second order activity.

With regards to "Teaching L2 Listening", the aim of the project I am going to develop is to design good listening material as well as the required tools so as to teach a listening lesson competently. In order to achieve this purpose, I have created my own listening material and tasks.

To start with, with respect to the material, I am going to use authentic material which I have taken from this site: www.youtube.com. This way, I have selected a video from Scotland. In fact, to be more precise, it is a video that describes the city of Edinburgh. The reason why I have decided to use authentic material is that it reflects natural speech as opposed to the speech produced by actors, which, unfortunately, is the kind of speech students are accustomed to listen to. This is due to the fact that most course books present the listening comprehension in this way, using scripts.

However, I want my students to be able to cope with real listening situations and I disagree with the idea that scripts prepare students to be real listeners; so that is why I have chosen authentic material.

Furthermore, in my opinion, since students are not used to dealing with this type of authentic material in the classroom, they will feel more motivated because of the change. They will also realize that they do not need to understand every single word in order to extract what the main idea is.

This way of teaching L2 listening takes into consideration real life and I believe that it constitutes a very motivating factor for the students.

Moreover, when I decided to select a video for the listening comprehension, I also considered the fact that my students would enjoy more watching a video taken from the web than simply listening; and, at the same time, it would facilitate the understanding.

The video I have selected describes the city of Edinburgh due to the fact that I am supposed to be working on a Scottish Folk Tale with my students and thus, I really wanted something related to Scotland to keep on working on the same topic.

Besides, I think that this video will be of their interest since young people like travelling, knowing new places and meeting new people.

In my opinion, the video describes in a very good and enjoyable way, not only the city of Edinburgh in itself but also its people. In addition, the broadcaster is a young man that I think will call the attention of the students because of the enthusiasm he shows for the city of Edinburgh as well as being young too.

I pretend to encourage my students to visit Scotland and to know more about the Scottish culture, customs and traditions. Actually, the broadcaster invites people to come and visit Scotland at the end of the video.

In addition, one of the things many second learners want to do is comprehend radio and television broadcasts so, in my opinion, this is a good way to get into touch with such issue.

Before describing the way I am going to develop the activity, I consider it important to mention that I will need two sessions of 50 minutes each to carry out the activity.

I have organized the listening activity in three different steps: pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening.

With regards to the pre-listening step, I will tell the students that we are going to carry out a listening activity that is related to Scotland; and, since I want them to feel excited about visiting Scotland, I pretend to motivate them by emphasizing the cultural interest that this country presents.

The first thing I am going to do is to write on the board the word "Scotland" so that they always keep the topic in their minds and then, I will start by making the following general question: "What do you know about Scotland?"

In order to activate their mental models about the country and help them to prepare for the listening, I will ask first people who have not been there to tell the rest of the class the way they imagine the country. They might think of Scotland as a place full of mountains, lakes, fairies, monsters, etc.

Then, I will ask students who have been there to describe the places they have visited and the things that most called their attention.

In order to facilitate the task and encourage them to participate, I will write some relevant vocabulary on the board that they may have to use in order to describe different aspects related to Scotland. These critical words are the following ones:

- Kilt: the typical Scottish skirt

- Whisky: national Scottish drink

- Beer: a very typical Scottish drink

- Bag pipe: the typical Scottish instrument

As Susana Gómez Martínez suggests, the teacher's experience is very motivating for the students because they feel curious about their teacher's private life. For this reason I will use some pictures of a journey that my brother made to Scotland with a friend.

I will show them the pictures and then I will ask them some questions as the following ones:

- Who do you think these people are?

- Where are they?

- What are they doing?

- What do they wear?

- Do you think they are having a good time? If so, why do you think that?

By using these pre-listening tasks the English class becomes a dynamic lesson and, at the same time, I encourage students to be participative and I also help them to improve their oral skills and fluency.

Afterwards, I will ask them to tell me the name of Scotland's capital because they are going to watch a video of the so mentioned city.

In order that they contextualize the listening, I will tell them that in the video there is only one person that speaks, and I will let them know that this person is a young

broadcaster that is describing the city of Edinburgh with a very excited attitude that means that he really likes the city.

I will immediately show them some pictures of Edinburgh as well, so that they really get into touch with the topic.

Finally, I consider important that the students know about some cultural issues that are going to be mentioned in the video and which are reflected as well in some of the pictures that they are going to see about Edinburgh.

This way, I will tell them that a very famous arts festival takes place all years in Edinburgh and that the broadcaster talks a lot about it. I will also comment that, in relation to this festival, they are going to hear the expression "military tattoo", which makes reference to the military parade that among other things, always takes place in the festival.

I will also mention that the broadcaster describes Edinburgh at the beginning as the city of the one o'clock gun. I will explain them that it is due to the fact that from 1861 on, everyday, except on Sundays, there was a gunshot from the castle to remind the sailors the time. However, this tradition has been kept till nowadays.

I will also comment that the city is divided into what is known as the "Old town", which turns around the castle; and the "New town", in which they can find for example the most fashionable shops.

Finally, I also think it is important that they know about "Haggis", which is the most typical Scottish food; and that they become familiar with the term "George houses", which refers to the Scottish typical architecture. I will tell them that they are going to listen to these terms in the video and so, they should pay attention in order that they

understand better the listening. Besides, it is going to be very useful for them when doing the corresponding tasks.

In addition, I also think it is important to make them know that the broadcaster often uses the expression "you know" when he is speaking about the city. However, they have to take into account that it is a meaningless addition that is commonly produced in ordinary conversation.

Once I have carried out these pre-listening activities and with regards to the during-listening step, I will hand the students a sheet of paper containing the tasks they have to fulfil with respect to the listening/video activity.

Since the listening passage is well beyond the student's level, I have really taken into consideration the grading of the tasks I am going to ask them to prepare. I have graded the tasks, not the video, although I also took into account that following one speaker would be easier for them than following two for example.

I am giving them the tasks before they watch the video so that they have a reason to listen for something. This way, they also become aware that they do not have to understand everything.

Since I do not want my students to feel upset because of being interrupted while they are watching the documentary, I have designed short and simple tasks in order that they keep active and do not switch off.

Besides, they are going to see the video as many times as required.

It is very important to remark that they already know that they are going to see a video in which a broadcaster describes the most important aspects of the city of Edinburgh.

This way, the first task they have to carry out has to do with places that appear in the video.

I have given them a list of vocabulary containing words which refer to different places such as: railway station, forest, church, airport, garden, castle, pub, zoo, palace, disco, museum, park, shop, restaurant, post office, and bridge. What they have to do is to tick off those places that they have watched in the video. It does not mind that the broadcaster has not mentioned them. Whenever they see one of these places they have to mark them in the vocabulary list.

I will insist on the fact that there is no right or wrong answer as long as they give evidence to what they have marked. This way, I will avoid the stressful situation that they associate to listening comprehension activities.

The second task they have to do is to take brief notes while watching the video in order to describe the things that people who appear in the video are doing.

They will have the following sentence as an example:

"There are lots of people walking in the streets".

In my opinion, they may find several answers to this task such as:

- o "There is a man playing the bag pipe"
- o "There are people playing football"
- o "There are lots of people drinking beer in the pubs"

Then, a student will write on the board all the different answers their classmates have written.

The second session is going to be of 50 minutes as well, and it will start with the students watching the video again so that they remember and activate their schemata about Scotland and Edinburgh.

This time they are going to work on groups of three people due to the fact that the third task contains some specific questions about the video.

By working in groups I think that they feel more confident with regards to this type of tasks. Since they are going to share their answers with their partners, they will not have to give an individual answer that can be right or wrong. I do not want the students to feel pressed but to enjoy listening.

I will also tell them the time when they have to pay more attention in order to answer the questions. These questions are the following ones:

- o How does the broadcaster describe Scottish people? Are they rude, friendly, honest or cold?

- o Where can you usually start a conversation with Scottish people? (You can infer it from what you see in the video)

- o Does the broadcaster talk about typical Scottish food? Could you mention some traditional dishes?

- o In what month does the arts festival take place? (You can infer the answer as well from the weather and the way people are dressed)

- o How does the broadcaster describe the English that is talked in Scotland? Is it difficult to understand?

To end up, regarding the post-listening step, I will start by asking them their impressions about the city and the things that they liked most as well as the reasons. This way, they also practise their oral skills.

Then, I will ask them to write an essay in which they have to describe not only the city of Edinburgh, but also the Scottish customs and traditions, and the things that they like most about the country. This way, they will consolidate specific vocabulary such as bag pipe, haggis, kilt, pub, whisky, festival, etc.

Besides, they will also revise the grammar concerning the simple present and the present continuous as well as the expressions with the verb "like". They will reintroduce as well the existential "there" and mass/count nouns.

I will not finish the listening session without encouraging the students to give their opinions about the tasks and to comment the difficulties they have encountered and the strategies they have used to carry out the different activities.

To conclude, I strongly believe that this way of teaching L2 listening comprehension give the students the opportunity to become real listeners who can cope with real listening situations, and, at the same time, regarding the material I have designed, they also develop skills in spoken language and establish and maintain relationships through exchanging information, ideas, opinions, attitudes and experiences.

With regards to intercultural communication, the aim of this classroom session I am going to carry out is to develop an intercultural dimension in language teaching that, according to Byram et al. (2002), involves giving learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence.

To begin with, I consider it important to explain first what the expression intercultural competence refers to. Following Guilherme's (2000) point of view, intercultural competence is the ability to communicate in an effective way with people coming from cultures different from our own.

However, since this paper is aimed to introduce intercultural communication in English language teaching, I think it is important to specify the kind of culture that we can teach in an English lesson. As Kramsch (1998) states, "in the foreign language class, culture

is created an enacted through the dialogue between students and between teacher and students. Through this dialogue, participants not only replicate a given context of culture, but, because it takes part in a foreign language, it also has the potential of shaping a new culture."

This way, I am going to benefit from the Scottish fable I have presented at the beginning of the project in order to foster intercultural communication in the classroom by promoting dialogue through the different tasks I am going to put forward.

The time I am going to need for the intercultural communication lesson is two sessions of fifty minutes each.

As for the first session, I will let students know that we are going to work on the Scottish fable in order to develop an intercultural communicative dimension within the classroom that is going to be very fruitful for them.

I will tell them that in order to achieve this purpose they have to share knowledge and to participate in the different discussions that are going to take place in the classroom by giving their opinions and showing their values too.

I will motivate them by emphasizing the fact that creating an intercultural atmosphere in the classroom involves an interchange of perspectives that will constitute an enriching experience for all of them. I will insist on the fact that it is a very good way to open their minds and discover new things or points of view by avoiding ethnocentrism.

Students need to know as well that the only way of creating culture is, as Kramsch (1998) points out, through discussion and therefore they are going to work in groups. These groups will be formed by four people.

The first task they have to do is to get an individual interpretation or moral from the fable and then share the different answers with the rest of the group. There might be different proposals such as the following ones:

- o Appearances can be deceptive: (the wolf seems to be the strongest one but at the end he loses)
- o You cannot trust anyone.
- o Avarice is not good at all.
- o You must be vengeful in order to survive.

This way, students are aware that individuals have different perspectives and different ways of looking at things; and, in my opinion, this is a very relevant point for the understanding and development of intercultural communication. They will notice how other people think and thus, they will have to distance from their own way of thinking in order to understand their partners' judgements.

In regard to the second task, I will take as the starting point Byram et al. (2002) description. They think that "learners have to be able to engage with multiple identities".

I will ask students to identify themselves with one of the characters that appear in the fable and to explain the reason of the choice they have made. What I pretend with this activity is that students know that we have different identities even though we are from the same country.

Some students will identify for instance with the wolf because they may like being in power or controlling situations. Others may say that their reason is that people think they are strong but in fact they aren't.

There might be as well students who will identify with the fox for these other reasons: they seem weak people but they are strong; they are spiteful; or they are clever and thus they are able to achieve their proposals.

This way, they will notice how others have different identities and they will learn to accept and respect them. Besides, I will insist on the fact that knowing more about others enriches their own identities. Therefore I will encourage them as well to know more things about the people they meet in order that they know how and why they are what they are.

As for the third task, I will ask the students the following questions: What character would you like to represent in real life? Why?

They could say that a wolf because they would like to command more or they could also say that they would prefer to represent a fox because they would like to take revenge from an offence. Through this activity students will also see that there are multiple identities and, as Byram et al. (2002) say, they will "avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity."

The next activity will consist of a role play. Since they are working in groups of four people, they will have to represent the fable by adopting the roles of the wolf, the fox, the farmer and the narrator.

However, if a member of the group has been identified previously with the fox, he will have to play the role of the wolf.

This way, as it is pointed out in the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, it is important that students have empathy and are able to take someone else's perspectives by imagining their thoughts and feelings.

Finally, once they have done this activity, I will ask them the reasons why the wolf and the fox behave in such ways. I want them to question what is usually taken for granted and viewed as 'normal'.

I am almost sure that most of them at first thought that the wolf was bad. Nevertheless, once they have had to represent the wolf's role, they might think for instance that since the wolf is a very strong animal due to his physical qualities, he has to command or to be the chief so as not to lose his proud because otherwise his self-esteem would be damaged. As for the fox, once they have played its role, they could think that he behaves in an spiteful way in order to avoid that the wolf imposes over others or simply because he is spiteful. They could also say that the fox does not bear to think that the wolf knows he is afraid of him and that is why he needs revenge.

With regards to the second session, which is going to be of fifty minutes too, I will use the following picture as the starting point:
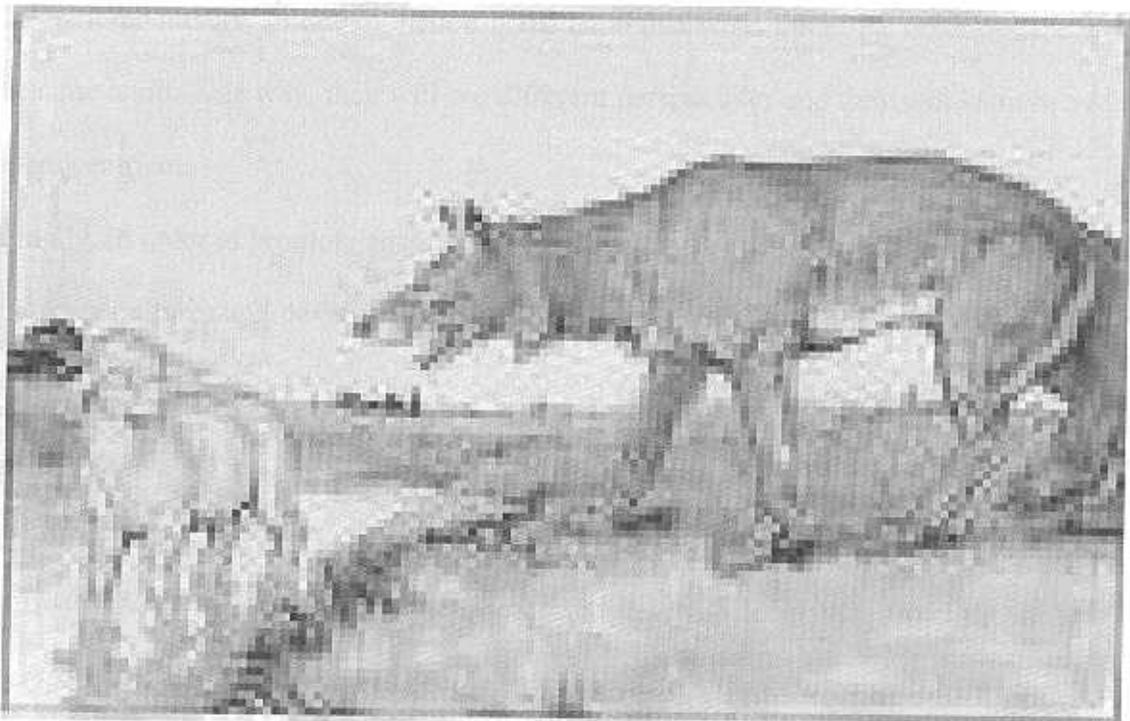
First of all, I will ask the students to look carefully at the picture because they will have to create a brief fable from what they see in the picture. They are going to work in groups of five people this time.

I will tell them that there are two key words which are "grass" and "water". They will have to select one of these words to create the argument of the fable. I will insist on the fact that they should avoid prejudicing and stereotyping. Thus, the wolf does not have to be a bad character although they should have already learnt it thanks to the tasks they have previously done.

In fact, an example could be that the lamb is lost and thirsty. While he is drinking water, the wolf appears. The lamb is afraid of him and, therefore, he starts bleating and shaking. Since the wolf does not want to frighten him, he runs away.

Once students are able to question presuppositions, they are ready to develop the intercultural competence I pretend to instil into them.

I will afterwards show them two different versions of the fable I have presented to them through the picture. In one of them it is the lamb that wins, but in the other one the wolf eats the lamb. This way, they will see different perspectives and they will learn to avoid ethnocentrism.

Finally, in order to promote an autonomous learning as well as to emphasize similarities between cultures and develop tolerance, I will ask them to look for fables in the web so that they realize that lots of fables have been translated to many different languages. This way, they will also notice that a lot of principles and values are shared among distinct cultures.

To end up and as a conclusion, students will learn that from the different perspectives, beliefs and values people have, they can highly enrich their own identity.

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