

Final Master's dissertation

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“THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA” AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS

Abstract.

The text I have selected has been taken from a web page and it is a short story titled “**The Princess and the Pea**” written by the famous author Hans Christian Andersen.

I have decided to choose this particular story because I consider that it may result an interesting and amusing tale for young people and in this sense, it may call their attention, but at the same time, because I pretend to exploit at the maximum this text as regards to certain linguistic branches and I think that this source of information can be a possible way for that purpose.

The main linguistic areas of knowledge I wish to focus on are the following ones: discourse analysis, discourse semantics, discourse grammar and methodological and research resources and syllabus design.

These linguistic branches are going to be developed through the fulfillment of different kind of activities which will be proposed to all the students.

The main goal of this paper will be to promote a type of methodology based on the notion of “autonomous learning” in such a way that the students realize that they are acquiring knowledge by themselves thanks to their own efforts.

This is the text I have chosen for the development of this linguistic task:

The Princess and the Pea

<http://ivyjoy.com/fables/princess.html>

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she would have to be a real princess. He travelled all over the world to find one, but nowhere could he get what he wanted. There were princesses enough, but it was difficult to find out whether they were real ones. There was always something

about them that was not as it should be. So he came home again and was sad, for he would have liked very much to have a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on; there was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents. Suddenly a knocking was heard at the city gate, and the old king went to open it.

It was a princess standing out there in front of the gate. But, good gracious! what a sight the rain and the wind had made her look. The water ran down from her hair and clothes; it ran down into the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. And yet she said that she was a real princess.

"Well, we'll soon find that out," thought the old queen. But she said nothing, went into the bed-room, took all the bedding off the bedstead, and laid a pea on the bottom; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then twenty eider-down beds on top of the mattresses.

On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

"Oh, very badly!" said she. "I have scarcely closed my eyes all night. Heaven only knows what was in the bed, but I was lying on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over my body. It's horrible!"

Now they knew that she was a real princess because she had felt the pea right through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds.

Nobody but a real princess could be as sensitive as that.

So the prince took her for his wife, for now he knew that he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum, where it may still be seen, if no one has stolen it.

There, that is a true story.

I have followed the criteria offered by *"The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment"* to determine the

characteristics of my target group of students.

The Common European Framework describes what language learners have to learn so as they make use of a language in a communicative approach and it also defines what type of knowledge and skills they have to acquire in order to be able to act adequately.

Moreover, the Framework also gives details about the levels of proficiency which enable learners' progress to be rated at each phase of learning.

The type of students I wish to focus on corresponds to Secondary students, and more specifically, they belong to the 3rd year of this stage.

As for the linguistic competence of my students, I can state that they are supposed to have acquired an A2 level in all the four different skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) according to the Common European Framework of Reference.

This means that they can understand phrases, repeated vocabulary related to personal relevance (basic personal and family information) and they can extract the main point in short pieces of information when they listen something.

Considering the reading skill, they are able to read easy texts, they can find important information and they can understand simple and not too long letters.

Taking into account the speaking ability, the students at this point should be able to communicate in simple tasks involving an exchange of information on common issues although they lack of some knowledge to carry on a continuous conversation by themselves. Moreover, they should show the ability to use sentences to describe in a simple way their families, their educational backgrounds or their present or recent jobs.

Finally, as far as written skills are concerned, they are able to write simple notes

related to their nearest circle and they are also quite good writing letters where they have to thank someone for something.

The main goal from now on and making use of the story selected for the students, will be to increase their English level competence in such a way that at the end of this year they reach a B1 level.

This level implies the handle of certain aspects for each of the different skills.

As regards the listening skill, they will have to understand the principal ideas of the speech about common matters which may appear in the work, in the school...

Furthermore, they will have to get the main point of a radio or TV programme about updated issues when the diffusion of the speech is rather slow and clear.

Bearing in mind the reading skill, at the end of their academic year they will have to understand texts composed by daily language about work, feelings and so on.

As for the speaking ability refers, they will get ready to cope with possible situations they would find, if they had to travel to a foreign country. Furthermore, they will have to acquire the ability to take part in an unprepared way into conversations about familiar subjects as it can be the family, the hobbies, the work, etc.

Considering the speech production, they should connect sentences in a simple way so as they can give details about their experiences and events, their dreams and wishes and so on. In addition to this, they will have to be trained to give different opinions about some plans and they will have to tell a story or the main argument of a film or a book defining the hearer's reactions.

Ultimately, as far as the written skills refer, they will have to learn to write simple texts about personal and familiar issues together with the writing of personal letters giving details of their sensations and experiences.

As I previously remarked, I have selected this concrete short story because I consider that it can provide a whole source for the development or the analysis of the structural characteristics that students are required to learn due to the size of the text, the content, the vocabulary used and the quite accurate adjustment that this text can offer as regards the students' competence of the English language but also to their possible expectations among other factors.

Moreover, since this text is a short story, it may result interesting for the students when they have to fulfill the different kind of activities that they are supposed to do. Before starting to analyse the text in-depth, it is important to clarify or to define the main field of research in which the students are going to focus on, that is to say, our first aim will be determine what do we mean by "discourse" and "discourse analysis".

Discourse can be defined from two different approaches. From a formal approach, discourse refers to a unit of coherent language consisting of more than one sentence.

Another possible interpretation of the term is based on a functional approach according to which, discourse would be language in use.

By "discourse analysis", we are referring to language in use, that is, we are defining discourse as a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds as a means of understanding the society that surrounds us, but also as a way of interpreting the human responses to it, as well as for understanding language itself. Therefore, we can conclude saying that this last term is like an "umbrella term", since it conveys a cognitive and social perspective mainly on communication exchanges and which includes spoken discourse but also written discouse, as it is our case with this text.

It would be a good idea to ask our students what they understand by discourse and discourse analysis.

This is a very useful activity for two main reasons. First of all, it supposes a good way in order to break the ice between the teacher and the students and secondly, it may help the teacher to get an idea about what the students know about this area and therefore, the technique he must adopt to direct their activities.

Finally, it would be advisable that the teacher explains them the meanings of both terms in an appropriate and accurate way considering their levels and their knowledge of this area.

It is essential to explain the definition of those terms to the learners because otherwise, they would feel initially lost beforehand, but also, they would not understand the purpose of the tasks that they are supposed to put into practice.

Once we have explained our students the definitions of discourse and discourse analysis and once we have also confirmed that they have understood it, we are now prepared to study all the possible factors of analysis that the text contains.

According to my own view, I chose the text called "The Princess and the Pea" because I realized that it offered certain discursive conditions adequate for the development of a series of activities on the part of students. Those requirements are the following:

As regards the language complexity, this story may be a good sample for the students' expectations for certain reasons.

First of all, a positive aspect which can be applied to this text has to do with the length, since this story is neither too long nor too short, but at the same time, it is sufficiently well elaborated to cover a whole range of purposes through the fulfillment of different kind of activities.

Secondly, as for the vocabulary concerns, it is worthy pointing out the fact that this text does not present too many words which may make difficult a correct comprehension of the story on the part of the students, moreover, this apparent inconvenient can be easily solved by the students if they take into account the context in which the text is taking place.

A possible activity for the improvement of this problem is a reseach of “clues” in the text in such a way that the students arrive at a possible solution as far as the meaning of those mysterious words refers.

Finally, taking into account the grammatical structures which appear in this text, we can argue that these should not cause any problem for the students because most of these structures such as *present perfect, past simple, future and conditional tenses* among others, are supposed to have been seen before though may be not in a detailed way.

Considering the language connectivity of this story, we can state that this text offers both, a coherent and a cohesive structure.

It is a coherent text because the whole text can be seen as an unit, that is, each of the individual sentence that the text contains relates to each other in an appropriate way leading to the development of the global meaning of the text.

Furthermore, it is a cohesive story because each of the paragraphs that the text contains links each other following different criteria expressed by means of conjunctions or through any other kind of cohesive ties like references, ellipsis, substitutions,etc.

Moreover, a positive aspect this story displays is the fact that each of the sentence are not too long and they are linked to each other in a logical sense in such a way that it facilitates a better comprehension of the text, and furthermore, the text as a

whole has three different parts very well distinguished: the introduction, the body or the development of the action and the conclusion.

This last feature of a text is very important because when the students read the text, they frame the text within a whole context and they have a sense of completeness.

Many are the possibilities that this short story provides for the development of different kind of exercises as far as the teachability of communicative skills concerns.

If we want to benefit from this text with regard to listening skills we can suggest to our student some tasks.

A possible activity that a teacher could ask a student (once they have previously read the story) is to tell to the rest of the class what he/she has understood from the text and while he/she is reading or just when the reading has finished, the rest of the class have to write down what they have interpreted from the partner's reading and finally, the teacher might tell someone to relate what he/she has written.

This activity is useful to measure the listening competence of our students since it requires a high degree of concentration to understand a communicative message and at the same time, it is a beneficial activity to practice the written skill.

Regarding reading skills, we have two main perspectives. The first one assumes that meaning exists itself and it is the textual factors that determine meaning.

In this approach, pre-reading activities focus on clarifying the meaning of complex words and structures.

The second perspective states that meaning is achieved through the interaction between the reader and the text.

A possible pre-reading activity could be proposed to the students like expressing a possible argument for the story they are going to read.

This activity is useful for the reader since it supposes a first contact with the text he/she will have to read but at the same time, it will face the student with possible linguistic difficulties.

As regards to the reading activities, the teacher may ask their students to read short sections of the text and then he may ask them to answer some questions about the context.

This activity allows the teacher to know what are those areas that could elicit misunderstandings and difficulties for the students.

Another possible reading activity could be that one or some students read some sentences of the text and the rest of the partners write down wrong pronunciations, intonations or mistaken spellings that the reader/s have made.

This activity may be interesting because students get aware of the other student's mistakes and at the same time, they can think about the mistakes they could have made.

Moreover, it is a motivating activity because students correct among them and this may produce a wish to improve or to reduce the mistakes next time, something which may result difficult if it is the the teacher who correct them their mistakes all the time, what might cause a feeling of frustration in them.

Finally, a hypothetical post reading activity could be a reading comprehension of the story selected for the students.

The mechanism of this activity is very easy. First of all, all the students read the whole passage and once they have read it, they have to answer several questions related to the reading.

This activity is very complete because it involves an attentive reading fulfilled by the students since sometimes they have to look for specific information in the text,

this is what is called *scanning*, and other times, it implies a more superficial reading when they have to find a main idea or gist, this is what we call *skimming*.

Anyway, this activity allows the teacher to measure the degree of comprehension of the students when they have to read a passage but it also permits the teacher to find out the main difficulties which students encounter in a text and consequently, a solution on the part of the teacher is determined in order to solve it.

Taking into account the speaking abilities, some activities can be carried out in order to improve the students' speaking competence.

An example could be the representation of this story. The development of the activity would be the following:

The teacher asks all the students to read the story selected, in this case "The Princess and the Pea", once they have read it, he leaves them some time to memorize the story and finally, he chooses some students and taking into account the number of characters which appear in the story, in this case the prince, the princess and the narrative voice, the teacher assigns to each of these students a role which they will have to interpret.

It is important to mention as regards this activity, that the teacher must be permissible in a certain way with these students if they make some mistake because they have not had too much time to learn their roles, and the teacher should also encourage them to add some new elements which do not appear in this story if they feel more comfortable or safer while they are playing their roles.

This activity supposes a good sample to measure the development of the speaking skills of our students but this type of exercise also supposes for the students a kind of training for the improvement of their linguistic competences.

Lastly, if we bear the writing skills in mind, several exercises can be performed so

as students make profit of them for their personal improvement of this competence.

A possible activity that could be done by the students would be the writing of a summary of the story.

This activity is very useful for the students because it requires that they extract from this text the most important keywords and in this way, they learn to distinguish between what is really important within a text and what constitutes additional or non-relevant information which can be omitted or mentioned implicitly.

Furthermore, this activity is a good test for the instructor to check the capacity to extract information of a text on part of the students and it also allows the teacher to know how the students connect different ideas written through different sentences leading to the creation of paragraphs in a coherent and a cohesive way, taking into account the different relations that hold among them.

Finally, another advisable task so as the students carry out would be that they create an alternative ending for the story they have just read.

This activity requires some criteria that students should consider. First of all, they will have to be imaginative when they design a possible ending for this story because the more creative they are, the more valuable his task will be. Moreover, they will have to be careful when they write what they are required to do, that is, paying attention to possible mistakes related to spellings, wrong words and punctuation among other stylistic factors and at the same time, they will be practising different structures they have learnt, the same as the composition and the production of short texts.

I have mentioned until now many methodological applications which can be developed from a text like this one, most of which are oriented towards the improvement of the four communicative skills (listening, reading, speaking and

writing).

Nevertheless, we can continue exploiting this story deeply, if we carry out an analysis of the specific features of this story.

Some of the patterns of analysis can be the following ones:

First, our learners could define what kind of genre and register constitutes this story, to which they are supposed to say that it is a narrative genre or discourse since this passage is a story, and the register is informal because this is an easy story containing colloquial words and structures and it shows cases of contracted forms typical of informal texts.

Students can also analyse the structure of this story, that is, they have to decide whether it is prose or it is verse, and in this case they would say that it is prose because the text is composed by long sentences, something that does not happen when we have a text in verse.

They can also consider the situation where the story is developed, that is, the physical and temporal space where the action happens, in this case, it happens mainly in a castle during an afternoon and the morning of the following day.

They could look for the participants and decide who is the speaker and the addressee or the audience, in this story, the speaker would be Hans Christian Andersen (the text's author) and the audience would be the children who read this story, and more specifically, here the intended audience would be our students who are working on the text.

Other aspects of checking could be that our students determine the tone or more concretely the function of the storytelling, that is, whether it is a serious story, a tragic story or an entertainment and funny story as it is the case here.

Our learners might also research if the story reflect samples of turn-takings or not.

As regards to this information, they would answer that there are no instances practically of turn-takings since this is a story told by the narrator and therefore, the text would be a sample of monologic discourse where one speaker produces a whole discourse with little or no interaction.

Finally, a last possible application from which a teacher can make use, taking the text as an excuse is to explain the notion of the mental model building.

To begin with, the teacher should explain their students what a mental model is, that is, the mental representation that you form in your mind of the information received through language created from the experience you have with people, objects and events in the world.

It is very important that the teacher makes sure that the students have understood it correctly, and he also has to emphasize the importance that it has to combine the previous mental schema or the previous knowledge of the students together with the new mental schema that they activate when they have read this story, because it is only in that way that a correct reading comprehension of this story and of any other text will be possible.

Finally, he should put into practice this concept with the text proposed and he could ask their students what kind of mental model they are supposed to have built.

According to this story, students ought to project a frame where they would have to include a prince who is looking for a princess to marry her, a girl who states to be a real prince but nobody believe it, the proof of the pea fulfilled by the prince to demonstrate that she is a true princess and finally, they should open a space where the solution to the problem appears, that is, when the prince convinces himself that she is a real princess to marry her.

The main purpose of this approach has been focused on the potential

methodological applications that we have made use with a text from the point of view of discourse analysis through the fulfillment of different tasks, all of them devoted to improve the linguistic competence of the students.

The design of the activities selected have been carefully considered, taking into account the level of the students but what is more important, paying attention to their expectations and their personal needs so as the students benefit from their personal work.

The didactic approach we try to pursue is what is called as “autonomous learning”, that is to say, we want our learners see themselves as autonomous individuals and responsible of their own learning, and the role of the teacher in this task is essential because it is part of his/her work to help the students to develop their self-consciousness, vision, practicality and freedom of discussion.

Many are the possibilities that we have at our disposal in order to make that our students get the most profit of a text, and more specifically of the short story that I selected as we have seen.

We have also been able to illustrate with regard to discourse analysis, all the different approaches which can be undertaken, such as, the study or the analysis of theoretical aspects (concepts, structures...,etc) and their put into practice from a methodological point of view, taking into account the students’ interests and needs.

The main purpose of this didactic approach is that our learners become aware by themselves of their own autonomous learning through the analysis and fulfillment of a series of tasks.

The study of this new perspective about discourse semantics is going to follow the same approach as the perspective tackled during discourse analysis, however, now, the main attention is going to be focused on the concept of meaning seen from the

point of view of the notion of text, the concepts of cohesion and coherence and its possible methodological applications.

Before starting to study our short story from a semantic point of view, it is important to explain our main field of analysis, that is, our first goal will be to determine what do we want to say when we talk about discourse semantics.

By discourse semantics, we refer to the study of meaning, the study of the different meaning relations that are established in a text and the mechanisms that exist so as those meaning relations can be carried out.

As we can notice, the term text is the most important factor in order to study the notion of meaning because if there is not a text, discourse meaning could not be analysed and this is the reason by which a special attention must be given to this central concept.

First of all and in order to promote the interaction with our students, it would be a good idea to ask our students what they understand when someone say that a piece of information is an instance of text.

This would allow the teacher to find out what the students know about this term and in this way, he could determine the different approaches that he/she should take in order to explain them this concept in a more useful and clearer way.

Another useful activity which may help our students to understand the meaning of the word text would be that the teacher give out their students different passages, some of them being samples of texts and others not and then, the teacher may ask the students the reasons by which they think that some of these extracts are texts and the reasons by which they consider that other instances of fragments are not texts.

These activities but specially the last one are very useful in order to promote the

idea of the autonomous learning in our students because they can realise by themselves of what they really knew about this concept and what they can know now in the present.

Once we have carried out these possible tasks, the teacher should explain them what the term text means and the necessary requirements so as we can state that a piece of information is a text.

First of all, the teacher would have to say that the story selected is a text because is an unit of meaning composed by grammatical units longer than a sentence but related to it.

By an unit of meaning we refer to the idea that whenever a person says or writes something, he/she does for a communicative purpose, although a text can be read it as you like it.

Once we have explained our students the definition of text and once we have verified that they have understood it, we are now ready to study all the possible cases of analysis that this short story contains.

For example, the teacher could mention that a good instance of text would have to show connectedness, that is, a good linkage between every single part and so as this can be achieved, seven standards of textuality are at least required.

As a result, he would have to quote the following standards: cohesion and coherence which are language centred notions related to semantics, that is, they are attached to the interrelation of the linguistic elements within a discourse, intentionality and acceptability which are participant centred notions linked to cognitivism and pragmatics, the last one of which refers to the receiver's response to the communicative unit, another standard is informativity which is a text centred notion connected with semantics and pragmatics and finally, we have situationality

and intertextuality which are context centred notions which make reference to the context and the interaction of texts respectively.

As far as this issue concerns, the teacher might ask their students which of those standards they think that are more related to discourse organization and therefore, which of them are considered the most important as regards the meaning of a text. To these questions, students should answer that the most important standards of textuality related to discourse organization and discourse meaning are the terms cohesion and coherence.

To continue with this topic, a possible question that the teacher could formulate to the students would be a possible definition for the terms cohesion and coherence.

This question will allow the teacher to get an idea about the knowledge of their learners as far as those terms refer, something which is very important in this paper because these two terms will constitute the main axes around of which the notion of discourse meaning is going to be articulated.

Taking into account both concepts (cohesion and coherence), the teacher should remark firstly, that both terms are responsible for the whole meaning of a text and for its meaning relations making possible that this text, in this case our short story, function as a communicative unit.

Afterwards, he could start to explain each of these concepts in a more detailed way saying that cohesion is a semantic relation which alludes to the distinct ways in which the components of a text, such as the words we see for example, are mutually linked sentence to sentence and paragraph from paragraph within a sequence, that is, cohesion is based on grammatical dependencies which can occur at different levels like sections, paragraphs, sentences and even phrases and those dependencies that are made up within a text are the main signals for classifying meaning.

In other words, we may talk about cohesion when the interpretation of an element is dependent on another element that has been mentioned previously, and finally, we could point out as a final remark that the main purpose of cohesion is the analysis of a text like our short story beyond the sentence level.

It has been suggested right now that cohesion is achieved by means of a series of links or ties which connect different sentences within a text and which allow it to function as a communicative unit of meaning.

As for this aspect refers, it would be useful beforehand to ask our students about what do they think that a link is within a text and later on, once they have reflected about it, it would be advisable that we explain them the definition and the function of it.

Afterwards, we could ask them to identify possible links that the story I have selected them contains in such a way that we can verify that the learners have understood the explanation in an appropriate way.

Anyway, as I have commented before, the teacher at the end of those queries would have to define and explain their learners the notion of tie and the different kinds of ties that we may find within a text, and more specifically in our short story, so as they have no problem about this concern.

As a result, the teacher should define the notion of tie as the way by which cohesion is created, that is to say, a tie is an instance of cohesion, a term for one occurrence of a pair of related items which supposes a good tool in order to describe and analyse texts which have the property of signalling that the interpretation of a passage depends on something else which may appear verbally explicit.

Once the teacher has clarified their learners the term tie, he would start to set out the distinct kinds of ties that they could find out in a short story like this one.

From the very beginning, it would be a good that the teacher establish a distinction between links based on grammatical words and links based on full content words so as our learners realize the main differences among both categories of links.

For example, he might comment that within the group of links based on grammatical words we have reference links which contain three different subtypes and that make reference to the fact that two linguistic elements are related according to what they refer to, that is, an element introduced firstly in a text can be taken as a reference point for something that follows in a subsequent sentence, usually a personal pronoun (he, she, it...), a demonstrative (this,that, here, there, now...) or a comparative element that has been designated by another term in a preceding sentence.

We also have substitution links in which a word in a second sentence does not allude exactly to the same entity as does the related word in the first sentence, but to other entity to which the same term would be applicable.

Furthermore, the teacher could also point out that among the most important substitution links we have the verb “do” and sometimes the verb “have” in all the possible variants in both cases as far as the substitutions of verbs respect and the words “one” and “ones” as for the substitutions of nouns concern.

Together with this type of links, there are occasions sometimes in which we can have cases of links based on ellipsis.

These take place when a part of a following sentence that should substitute a phrase stated in the previous clause is omitted, making this second clause dependent for its completion of the first one.

Finally, if we continue making reference to the group of grammatical words, we have to quote a last category of ties called conjunctive ties.

These ties express different kind of semantic relationships such as temporal, causal and contrastive relations among others by means of the application of some linguistic connectors.

Next, after the teacher has explained this kind of grammatical links to their learners, he should concentrate now in introduce them the other categories of ties that exist, that is to say, ties composed by full content words or lexical words which are linkages expressed by means of nouns, verbs, adjectives... that also play an important role as cohesive devices at least in two distinct ways.

On the one hand, we have within this category what is commonly known as lexical reiteration which is ocured when the same word is repeated in a following sentence (reiteration by repetition), when a word is substituted by a similar synonym (reiteration by synonym), when a lexical item is replaced by an opposite word (reiteration by antonym), when the same word is recovered by a wider category (superordination) or by a narrower one (hyponym) and finally, when we take a big word to refer us to a collectivity (general word).

Having learnt our students the meaning of a cohesive tie and the different categories of ties that they may find in a text, it would be advisable that we as teachers encourage them to identify the different kinds of ties that our short story contain, once they have been provided with a previous theoretical background.

The purpose of this activity has a double nature. First, this activity will be useful so as the teacher realizes if the students have understood his/her explanation and at the same time, thanks to this task, students will be aware not only of their own improvements but also of their own difficulties in such a way, that we will be promoting in our learners the sense of autonomous learning.

It has been remarked before that the two main concepts around which the notion of

discourse semantics and its methodological applications was going to be articulated were the terms cohesion and coherence.

We have been analysing in an exhaustive way, the cohesive dimension and its possible didactic applications with our students, taking into account as source of reference the short story that we are dealing with as the main vehicle of study.

The next aspect that the teacher should expound the students moves around of the term coherence.

As it was proposed when we were explaining the concept of cohesion, a good introductory activity that could be carried out would lie in asking our learners their interpretation about the notion of coherence in a text and the different mechanisms that exist in order to promote it.

This initial activity will provide the opportunity to the teacher so as he/she know the degree of knowledge of their learners as far as this term refers and simultaneously, it will suppose a good initial source of discussion to develop later on the different coherent relations that we can make up within a text.

Once we have performed this initial exercise, we should give our students an appropriate definition of the term coherence in such a way that they complete, distinguish, reinforce or correct his previous knowledge about this linguistic term.

Therefore, he would have to explain them that when we say that a text has a coherent structure, we are referring to all the elements that give whole sense to it, that is, we make allusion to the ways in which the components of that given text are mutually accessible and relevant in such a way that a reader can follow the text easily.

Moreover, the teacher should add that coherence is responsible for the global (total) meaning of a text and for the organization and meaning relations that keep the

linguistic elements of this text together, allowing it to function as an unit of communication.

Finally, the instructor could conclude saying that a coherent text would have to constitute a network of meanings in general terms.

Then, the teacher should tell their students that we can promote coherence applying the cohesive devices that we mentioned before and later on, it would be helpful explain our students the two different kinds of coherence (global and local coherence) that exist in a text.

This new explanation will also constitute a point of departure for the explanation of other theoretical concepts very close related to these types of coherence.

As regards the idea of local coherence, we can state that it refers to all the information and the meaning relations that exist in all the sentences or propositions of a text.

After having introduced a brief explanation of this first type of coherence, we could specify this information telling our learners that this development of all the presentation or information of a text, represents what we commonly know as the microstructure of a text, that is, the meaning of every single sentence that for example our short story contains.

Next, we would have to discuss with our learners the nature of those meaning relations or the criteria that the order of sentences follows within the text like the chronological nature of events that takes place in our story, the study of the general and particular order of ideas that appears in it, the consideration to the condition/cause and cause/consequence effect if it is the case of our story. All those types of meaning relations are responsible for the linkage of the textual segments within a text.

As I have just said, it would be a good idea that the the teacher suggest to the students the analysis of those semantic criteria taking into account our short story. The purpose of this task is that they be able to discriminate between the nature of these distinct conceptual relations and and at the same time, to promote the put into practice of this task.

Once we have made sure that our learners have clearly understood the meaning of local coherence, the nature of the relationships attached to it and the concept of microstructure by the explanation and the fulfillment of the activity that I proposed them, it would be the time so as the the instructor centre on clarifying to their learners the other type of coherence that we pointed out before and which we defined as global coherence.

By global coherence, we refer to the most general dimension of discourse meaning since it recovers in a concrete and condensed manner the most important and relevant information that the content of a text contains as a whole.

Additionally, the teacher could point out their students that this idea of global coherence or global meaning as it is also known can be considered from two different approaches, this means that we can get the global meaning of a short story like this one thanks to our own mental model (that we already know) through the contribution of our opinions and points of view together with possible misreadings and misunderstandings or we may achieve the global meaning of it with the help of what is named as the “macrostructure” of a text.

The macrostructure supposes a good way to get the global semantic content or the topic of a story like the one proposed because it subsumes the more essential and general information leaving out unimportant information and simultaneously, it is the basis for a coherent interpretation of the rest of the story.

It is also very important that we comment our students that in order to get the macrostructure or the global meaning of a text, first of all, they must pay attention to the microstructure or local meaning of that text since the macrostructure is supposed to contain local information stored in the microstructure and because otherwise, the main idea of a text could be distorted and not being too much effective.

After having explained our learners the notions of global meaning and macrostructure, we could propose them the fulfilling of a useful task to check if they have really understood this theoretical explanation, and this activity would consist of the composition or the writing of a summary about the story I have selected them because a summary is a good intuitive representation of the macrostructure of any text.

This activity has a double purpose because on the one hand, we can verify if our learners are able of getting the main idea or global meaning of the story we are studying, and on the other hand, once they have written their respective summaries we could ask them the different mechanisms, techniques or strategies that they have followed in the preparation of their summaries.

This last didactic approach could be useful in order to present our learners the meaning of the term “macrorule” and the different kinds of macrorules that exist, something which is very closed attached to the composition of a summary.

Therefore, the teacher would have to say that when we talk about the concept of macrorule, we are dealing with rules designed to link the micro and macro levels of the structure of a discourse which have the purpose of creating meaningful pictures regardless of details and simultaneously, they organize the information of a text, that is, they facilitate the construction of the macrostructure of a text by practising

some variants on its microstructure.

Afterwards, the instructor should start to give detailed information about each of the four different macrorules which exist in such a way that our learners be aware of the different macrorules that they have applied when they have designed their own summaries.

As a result the following macrorules would have to be mentioned:

1. The deletion rule: This first macrorule is the simplest one. Its main function is the suppression of any proposition which does not contribute for the interpretation of other propositions, that is, you only keep what you believe that it is important.
2. The generalization rule: This macrorule involves introducing many entities into one.
3. The construction rule: This macrorule implies a sort of script, that is to say, you have first all the details and finally, you just get only one element to recover all the steps.
4. The zero rule: According to this macrorule, we just keep those propositions which gather essential information for the macroproposition.

We have just seen how the macrostructure of a text and the use of a series of macrorules which were proposed by van Dijk play an important role in order to get the global meaning of a text through the development of some tasks such as the preparation of a summary and why not, for the construction of headings, abstracts or concluding remarks which gather the general idea of a text.

Nonetheless, it would be convenient that the teacher warn their learners that they have to be careful when they make use of these macrorules since the theory for their put into practice is not concrete and therefore, all the decisions that they make about what to delete, what to generalize about and what to construct or what to keep have

to be meticulously considered since those determinations are based on the text user's own judgement and consequently, the summary might not contain information really important.

As far as this aspect concerns, we should give our students an alternative approach so as they achieve the global meaning or the macrostructure of this story in a more accurate way, that is to say, it would be quite advisable and productive to show our learners all the range of semantic components that they have at their disposal such as the concepts of topic, comment and theme, some terms which are supposed not to have been studied previously, so once they know the meaning of each of those terms and the main function within the text, they be able to apply them to the short story that we are dealing with.

So, first of all, the teacher could explain them that when we talk about the topic of a text we are alluding to what the sentence is about and moreover, he might highlight the fact that we usually tend to associate the topic of a sentence with the grammatical category of subject of that sentence.

Finally, the teacher could point out that from a pragmatic point of view, we consider as subject and therefore, as topic, the known information which we have within a text.

Within this category of topic, we could ask our students that they make up a possible discourse topic for the whole short story, once they have analysed the topic of this text locally, that is, sentence by sentence.

As regards the term comment, it would be important to remark that the main grammatical function associated with it is that of predicate of a sentence, that is, it makes reference to the part of the sentence which predicates or says something about the topic by means of the addition of new information to the old or known

information previously quoted.

Finally, in connection with the concept of theme, the instructor would have to comment their learners that this semantic concept is that part of the sentence which they may find in the first place and which is used as a starting point for the rest of the information.

As a concluding remark, we could comment our students that sometimes, the topic and the theme of a sentence may coincide.

To sum up, we can state that the semantic concepts of topic, comment and theme are more useful than the exclusive use of the macrorules to get the global meaning of a short story like this one because those terms function at a sentence or microstructural level, that is, their main scope is the analysis of a text sentence by sentence in order to find common information, that is, paying attention to the most repeated information.

Our main goal of this research has been the study of all the possible methodological applications from the point of view of discourse meaning by means of the fulfillment of some activities, all of them intended to the linguistic knowledge of all our students.

The elaboration of these tasks has been meticulously reflected, adapting to the degree of knowledge of our learners but mainly, putting the emphasis on the personal interests of them so as we can encourage them to a better comprehension of this linguistic field and make them feel motivated.

The purpose is not other than promoting a sense of autonomous learning in our students so as they realize not only of their own progresses but also, of their own probable difficulties because in this way, some solutions can be undertaken to improve this situation.

As we have been able to prove until this specific moment, numerous and different points of view can be set about in order to study from a theoretical and a practical perspective, any piece of discourse such as the short story that we are dealing with our students.

Until now, our main field of analysis has been focused on discursive and semantic grounds, but with a great attention placed on our students' needs and motivations.

The goal has been none other than trying to promote and facilitate a certain sense of autonomous learning in each of our students.

From now on, our main interest will be concentrated on the grammatical approach and its possible methodological applications, taking our short story as the main source of interpretation.

First of all, we will introduce in a general way, some ideas about the way of presenting and practising the teaching of grammar, secondly, we will concentrate on the kind of approach or methodology that we are going to take to achieve this previous aim, and subsequently, we will analyse the language of our short story from the points of view of its form and meaning.

This would be the theoretical development of the study of this paper, however, we will also deal with possible practical applications of all these theoretical elements.

This means, that we are going to devise a series of activities or tasks thanks to which, all these theoretical aspects will be put into practice in a fruitful and beneficial way in such a way, that our students can get profit of it and we can promote the idea of autonomous learning in them.

Finally, we will devote some time examining the procedures or approaches that should be applied towards the errors corrections, with a great emphasis placed on grammatical mistakes, and we will conclude with a global overview of all the

evidences and conclusions that we can draw about grammatical language and learning.

As far as the way of presenting and practising grammar refers, we have to say that this must be taught gradually and always following a practical nature insofar as it is possible.

To achieve this, the most appropriate methods are those which combine oral and written practice. In other words, the best methods and some of the actual ones are what are called as inductive and deductive ones.

It would be important to explain our students what do we mean when we talk about a deductive and an inductive method because otherwise, students would probably get initially lost and they might not understand what we pretend to carry out.

An inductive method is that method which presents a grammatical point or tense such as with a series of explanations and then, students put it into practice in order to reach a complete automatism while a deductive method, takes the previous knowledge of the students about a grammatical element, subsequently, they carry out the exercise and finally, this activity is expanded and corrected.

It is quite advisable to keep in mind that the best approach is that which combines both methods and this should be clear not only to the teachers, but also to the students in order to improve and reach the desired outcomes which are supposed to have been proposed beforehand. Furthermore, the methodology that I am going to follow will tackle both kinds.

As a remark, we could point out that grammar teaching would require to contrast the L1 with the L2, although sometimes this results difficult because we do not have equivalences between both languages.

Taking into account the material that we are going to use to teach grammar, this

would have to be appropriate and selective.

This means that we should select just some specific grammatical issues that we consider to be relevant for our students, according to their intellectual level and possible functionality so as they do not become quite overload with all the material that they receive.

Our main purpose, in any case, must be that our learners think about what we ask them to do or tell them, instead of just memorizing it without understanding it.

Moreover, the student will have to discover the grammatical phenomenon and they will also have to apply the corresponding rule.

Thanks to this approach, it will become easier to motivate our students so as they learn grammar but not as something purely learnt by heart, nevertheless, to learn and teach grammar we have to avoid the daily routine in classroom.

Finally, to finish this general overview about some ideas connected with the way of presenting and practising grammar, we would have to remark that we should try to explain preferably when our learners have put into practice their own knowledge, something which implies that they should prepare the subject previously in such a way, that they come across with difficulties and therefore, they are forced to ask for help.

We mentioned earlier that we can teach our students grammar following different types of methodological techniques and this is what we are going to tackle just now.

Let us suppose that we choose some specific tenses taken from our short story such as the past simple, the present perfect, the past perfect or the future simple tense.

These grammatical tenses will be practised from two different perspectives.

On the one hand, we will ask our students to practice a concrete activity closely attached to the grammatical tenses that we have chosen in a controlled way, or we

will encourage them to mix their new knowledge with the traditional one as a free production.

This is a traditional approach to English, a didactic or inductive methodology in which first, a rule is presented and afterwards, the rule is put into practice through a series of distinct tasks.

On the other hand, we will also undertake a deductive trend. This will imply that first, we will begin practising real examples connected with these grammatical tenses selected with our learners and then, they will be required to infer the rule. The typical approach of this method is Content Based Learning, which is more or less similar in a certain degree to what is known as T.B.L., that is, task-based learning.

This approach stresses that students need a common general exposure to the target language in meaningful social communicative contexts, that is, they will require comprehensive language input, furthermore, they will have to be provided with frequent opportunities for the active use of their language in communicative situations, that is to say, to produce comprehensible input, and finally, as we pointed before, they will demand a high degree of motivation for the English language.

Following this approach, our main function will be to find tasks and whenever it is possible, we will also have to provide a real equivalent to these tasks which contain a linguistic input and lastly, we will also have to verify whether the hypotheses are right.

Once, we have analysed both approaches, it would be the moment to discuss the following question: "Do we need to know as teachers all of English grammar before we can teach it?"

The answer to this question mark would be that we are not supposed to know all the grammar. The only requirement that we should bear in mind would be that we just have to know what we are talking about.

As we pointed out during the introduction of this paper, any piece of language like our short story, can be analysed from two different perspectives but interconnected in some degree, that is, we will analyse some grammatical constructions of our short story paying attention to their grammatical forms and grammatical meanings.

Regarding the analysis of language according to its form, we could state that whenever we teach a grammatical issue to our students, first of all, we will have to ask ourselves not only what is what we need to know but also, what is what our students should know.

Moreover, the first aspect that we can find and that should be carefully considered would have to be the vocabulary.

Next, we would have to analyse in a detailed way the concept of collocation, that is to say, we should focus on how some words are commonly attached together and finally, we would have to study what are known as patterns.

There are many different ways used to explain patterns from the point of view of their form, however, among the most productive ways, we can quote what are commonly known as substitution tables, exercises based on filling blanks and tasks focused on ordering a sequence of events.

These mechanisms are intended to clarify grammatical patterns in such a way, that our learners get a better comprehension of them, nonetheless, we will concentrate more on substitution tables, since they offer a variety of advantages among which, we could remark that they are useful to work and practise not only with grammar but also with pronunciation and intonation skills.

To sum up, we could conclude stating that whenever we are trying to analyse language related to form, we will have to focus on patterns mainly.

We have just seen that we can analyse a specific grammatical structure or tense taking into account its form nevertheless, it is also very important to consider the analysis of this grammatical construction attending to the meaning that it conveys, because meaning in grammatical terms plays, if not a more important role than form, at least an equal role than form.

Our main goal will be try to state meaning applying a very simple and easy language.

A possible way to analyse meaning might be doing simple sentences, nevertheless, the best manner to achieve it would be by means of what is usually known as “concept questions” and “time lines”, which are approaches focused on a task-based learning methodology.

The mechanism of concept questions consists of turning sentences which carry on meaning into yes-no questions, that is to say, the idea would be the creation of sentences which can be simply answered by using the adverbs yes or no.

Thanks to concept questions, we are not supposed to use grammar terminology with our students, furthermore, this grammatical teaching method offers some important advantages for our learners among which, we could point out that students have the feeling that they are cooperating, they are also able to construct models and finally and simultaneously, teachers make profit of this situation since they can get automatic feedback of their learners.

Now, I would like to comment another possible way by means of which, we can interpret and verify the sometimes existent difficult interconnections of meaning that are established between tense, which is a grammatical term used to mark time

and time, which is a chronological term which signals ephemerality. In other words, we are going to focus now on time lines.

Time lines are useful approaches because they mark time limits in a visual way, however, we have to make sure that we provide a context, since time lines are quite schematic, though this may not be our case.

Once we have reviewed grammar from the points of view of its linguistic form and meaning in a detailed way, it would be the appropriate moment to get that our students concentrate on a concrete grammatical chunk that our short story contains in such a way, that they reflect about it and try to understand it in a correct way, taking into account its form, meaning and use.

To achieve this goal, we dispose of three main possibilities that I am going to develop right now, however, I will opt for one of these alternatives since I think that it is the best choice in order to help my students to turn into authentic autonomous learners.

The first possibility is what is commonly known as the PPP approach. These three initials stand for the words presentation, practice and production of a grammatical aspect.

This approach stresses the teacher's role, that is, he tells and shows his/her students a specific piece of grammar using presentations in power point either in English or Spanish, writing on the blackboard substitution tables or directing his/her students to printed info.

Nevertheless, this first methodological approach brings up some problem. Firstly, it is a boring approach for students, secondly, they are deprived of real chances in order to participate, something which may lead them to switch off during the explanations given in the classroom and lastly, this approach does not allow that our

learners know much info.

Another alternative approach refers to what is called as self-directed discovery.

This methodological trend pretends that our students take on responsibility of their own learning in such a way, that they should find out things for themselves.

The problem with the planning of this method is that teachers might go by or forget their own responsibilities as teachers and consequently, this could imply some damage for the learners.

For all these reasons, the didactic methodology that I am going to promote and follow will be a guided discovery.

This means that my main role as teacher will be focused on helping my students to find out things for themselves.

To carry out this methodological approach, I will ask my students a series of questions giving them clues at least, in three different aspects which are the following ones:

- Asking questions focusing on form.
- Asking questions focusing on meaning.
- Giving previous knowledge (basing on questions), that is to say, asking questions applied to the context.

There are several possible practical applications that could be developed to put into practice this approach.

For example, a list of sentences containing distinct grammatical tenses like the past simple or the present and past perfect ones ,which are supposed to have been studied in preceding years by our students, might be taken from our short story and then, they could be handed out to my students.

They will be required, either working alone or in pairs if they prefer it, to reflect

and try to guess what the rules of these tenses are.

Other task that could be fulfilled our students would be that they interpret and ascertain among them, a sequence of time lines that would be written on the blackboard about some grammatical tenses that they already know and that our short story contains.

Additionally, once they have found out by themselves, or if they have been unable to find it out the grammatical tense that these time lines represent, once I have told them the grammatical tense which there time lines represent, they will be asked to provide some examples of sentences, either reflected in our text or invented.

Such language production would be a good indicator for both, students and teachers, to know how well the language form has been understood.

Finally, it could be suggested to our students a kind of activity consisting on the creation of a board situation.

Here, the teacher's role would lie in clarifying a specific meaning and afterwards, he/she would have to elicit appropriate sentences from his/her learners.

These three grammar focus and clarification tasks constitute just a little sample of the whole variety that we have at our disposal, in order to achieve a guided discovery approach with our students, nevertheless, there are many other types of activities related to a guided discovery approach that could be put into practice with our learners so as they practise some grammatical tenses such as the ones contained in our short story.

One of these activities are questions about form. This task reviews aspects such as the class of word which goes in a concrete place, the lexical categories of verbs, the part of the sentence which appears after a verb or the name of a grammatical tense, among others questions.

Another type of task useful for our students would be problems and puzzles. This task requires to put a set of words in a correct order, fill something in the corresponding gap, rewrite a sentence applying the word that our students choose to fill that gap, etc.

A third type of exercise that might be realized with our learners would have to do with what is called as reflecting on use.

The aim is that they think about some of the grammatical tenses that our story has and try to guess why a tense is used in a specific sentence or the reasons by which, if we make use of another tense that sentence would be incorrect.

Furthermore, we could put into practise with our learners a kind of activity based on hypothesizing rules, that is to say, we could select a word which do not fit well within a sentence and then, we might ask our learners the reason by which this happens and we will also encourage them to find out an alternative word to replace this original correct word that the sentence contained so as it make sense completely.

Finally, a last prototype of activity that could be developed with our students would be related to contexts and situations.

The procedure of this activity would consist of asking our students some questions in such a way, that they be aware of the grammatical tense that they would be supposed to make use, taking into consideration the structure or construction of our questions and the situation which they indicate.

Let us imagine that we are teaching our students the past simple, which is the most frequent tense that appears in our short story and we realize that they make some mistakes, once we have explained them how to form it appropriately.

Our following step would have to be to determine whether the mistakes that our

students are making is due to problems associated with the form of this grammatical tense, or whether the reasons by which they are making these mistakes, are associated with aspects related to the meaning that our students are conveying with the incorrect meaning mismatch between two tenses.

As we have pointed out before, our main task as teachers is to devise some clarification and focus tasks, so as we can solve these mistakes associated with grammatical tenses.

This means that if the mistakes of our students make are produced due to aspects associated with form, we could provide filling the blanks and ordering activities together with some substitution tables tasks.

However, if the mistakes are attached to meaning problems, the best solution would be a training based on time-lines activities and concept questions tasks.

To change things a little bit, I would like now to devote some time analysing the procedures or approaches most commonly applied towards the correction of errors, since they bear relation in a certain sense with the grammatical field that we are tackling.

Before starting to develop the approaches taken towards the correction of error, it would be important to distinguish between errors and mistakes, something that most people confuse and find difficult to define.

An error is a mistake made in language learning which reflects that the learner has not yet learnt something, whereas a mistake is a language slip produced by a learner when he is careless, that is, when he does not pay attention.

Once it has been clarified the distinction between errors and mistakes, something which may be of great importance for teachers in order to analyse and find solutions for their students, and for students in order to determine the degree of difficulty of

their personal grammatical problems, we are going to focus on the category of errors.

There are two main reasons to make grammatical errors in English:

- Interference.
- Overgeneralization of a rule.

Nonetheless, the main problem has to do with the way that we normally follow to correct these errors, since we may adopt a heavy-correction approach or a non-heavy correction one.

Both of them present problems, but we will just focus on the main problems that a heavy-correction approach on the part of the teacher may convey, since a non-heavy correction approach tends to happen rarely and the problems would be many.

Among the most remarkable problems of a heavy-corrector teacher we can quote the following ones:

- Class is controlled by the teacher.
- Learners are subordinated figures and learning is subjugated to teaching.
- There are no possibilities for students' creativity because accuracy, that is, the ability to produce language in a grammatically correct way, is valued more highly than fluency or imagination, that is to say, the ability to produce language easily, to communicate quickly but not necessarily with grammatical correctness.
- Learners usually take a long time formulating sentences.

To avoid all this range of difficulties, it is highly advisable that we keep in mind what would be the aims that we should promote when we carry out our corrections among which, we could include try to build the confidence in our learners, raise awareness about the language they are using and the fact that they acknowledge

progress and achievement.

As regards the process of correction concerns, we should think about some aspects like who should correct these errors and when they should be corrected.

As far as the first query refers, we might state that the student who made that error/s or the rest of the class should correct these errors and if everyone else fail, it would be the teacher who would correct them, in which case, he/she should not forget going back to the original student finally.

As for the moment of correcting, this would have to happen in the controlled stages of the lessons.

Finally, with regard to the procedure of correction of errors, we could maintain that it would be quite advisable and fruitful to follow up these sequences of stages:

Firstly, we must indicate them that an error has been made using a gesture and secondly, we would ask them to locate that error.

This can be achieved stopping the sentence just before the wrong word, fingering code the word, telling them “not X but” or asking them to repeat a wrong word with rising intonation. If all this fails, we can categorize the error, that is to say, we can say “tense”, “concordance”, etc.

Then, the error would be corrected by the student who made it or by another one if he/she did not know it , and only in last case, the error should be corrected by the teacher.

Lastly, we might standardize the error asking the learner who made the original error to repeat the sentence again.

This last step is necessary so as the teacher check whether his/her student produces the correct forms or not.

Some evidences or conclusions may be elicited from this study, and these are the

following ones:

First of all, it is very important to highlight that the aim of learning a language is not a question of learning grammar, but it is a question of a communicative competence which is composed by a series of distinct subcompetences such as linguistic, discursive and sociolinguistic competences.

Secondly, we could state that the teacher's duty is to know more than the language itself.

Thirdly, we should keep in mind that though it is quite important to combine a deductive and inductive approach when we teach grammar, we should devote most of the time, approximately the 70% or 80% of the time, applying a deductive approach, since it is more constructive for the autonomous learning of our students.

Furthermore, we could state that grammatical terminologies would have to be left aside, because these do not have so much usefulness for our learners.

As for the presentation of rules concerns, it is suggested providing our learners with whole rules instead of providing them with half rules, and whenever it is possible, we must try to avoid complex rules that difficult the understanding of our students of a given grammatical tense.

Finally, whenever we have the intention to present our learners a specific piece of language or grammatical tenses, as it is our situation here, we will try to take into account the context in which these grammatical tenses appear, since this is essential to study form and meaning.

Finally, we can take a short story in order to analyse what is called as syllabus design and the different ways in which a syllabus design can be applied to develop the students' listening skills, whereas we are promoting in them a sense of intercultural communication at the same time.

First of all, I will define what is meant when we talk about a syllabus design. Next, I will mention the methodology that I am going to follow in order to explain what I will teach my students and finally, I will consider some objectives that I pretend to achieve with them.

By syllabus design, we make reference to the characterization of a teaching programme (contents, tasks, objectives and grading of tasks) which defines a concrete subject, in this case, the listening material and the intercultural communication for a specific group of students.

Furthermore, this specification not only gives details about the selection of content of these areas of knowledge (listening and intercultural dimension), but also, orders this content as a succession of objectives.

As far as the methodology that I am going to follow concerns, I would like to point out that my syllabus design will be based on what is commonly known as a process oriented syllabus, that is to say, my syllabus will be focused on the process by which the outcomes and skills of my students will be achieved.

This means that the emphasis will be placed on the learning experiences themselves.

Moreover, and in order to be more specific, I would like to highlight that within this process oriented approach that I am going to tackle, I will focus on a subtype of approach called task-based one.

This implies that the syllabus that I am going to consider will be built around tasks applied to the listening and intercultural communication fields, since I believe that this is a more fruitful way of learning a language.

Therefore, the emphasis will be put on the linguistic elements and communicative skills that my students are going to acquire and display as a result of instruction.

As regards the objectives of syllabus design, these will be a necessary requirement so as learners get a clear idea of what they must expect from my language programme.

These objectives will be appreciated when I develop the listening planning and the intercultural dimension, then, I will state some of them like mentioning my students the things I am going to do or the topics that I am going to analyse, and the types of behaviour that they should have acquired after instruction.

The first dimension I will begin to develop as far as syllabus design refers is the listening dimension.

First of all, I am going to analyse and evaluate from a critical point of view, the distinct variety of resources and activities which I will carry out with my students, thanks to an audiovisual material like the one I have selected for them about a fairy tale.

The intention is that my learners learn and practise mainly the listening comprehension skills, but I will also have a look, although to a lesser extent, to the development and put into practice of other skills such as writing, speaking and reading.

Once I have gathered the appropriate tools and listening resources, I will be able to teach my students to become better listeners and at the same time, I will also be ready to make profit of this educational situation to become a better listening teacher.

There are several factors which must be taken into account to achieve a suitable design and preparation of a listening comprehension session.

For example, I have had to determine the kind of material that was going to be applied for the fulfillment of the listening comprehension session.

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For example, I have had to determine the kind of material that was going to be applied for the fulfillment of the listening comprehension session.

As far as this aspect concerns, I must say that I have selected an audiovisual material taken from the web page called Youtube. This audiovisual is about a fairy tale and the title is "The Shoemaker and The Elves".

I have decided to select it because it is a good sample of authentic material, something which may suppose a series of advantages and benefits for my students. Among some of these advantages, I could mention that this kind of material shows real language discourse, since it is very well reflected the rhythm of natural speech together with a good sound quality, and almost without any type of adaptation from the original source.

Now, I would also like to mention some personal reasons by which, I have decided to choose this listening material.

On the one hand, I have selected it because when I started the drawing up of the other papers which are supposed to make up my final thesis, I took as a source of study another fairy tale from which, different linguistic analyses belonging to different disciplines such as discourse analysis, semantics analysis, grammatical analysis and methodological and research resources for English language teaching were going to be tackled.

Consequently, this situation have led me to focus now on a material which share in a certain way some similar patterns with this previous material like the genre, the prosaic structure and a kind of plot more or less alike like a common happy end, in such a way, that once I have finished the analysis of this present work on listening comprehension some parallelisms and a certain degree of cohence and cohesion can be appreciated between all the projects as a whole.

On the other hand, an essential reason which has clearly influenced the choice of this material, has been the consideration towards the possible interests and

motivations of my students, without forgetting the level to which they belong.

As far as this subject refers, it is important to highlight that the level of my students is intermediate, since they are taking the 3rd course of E.S.O.

This means that when I have examined the material, first of all I have made sure that the recording have been adequated for them according to the level of difficulty, the length (neither too long nor too short) and the pauses that I may need to fulfill, if my learners explicitly require me in order to not overload them with too much information and secondly, I have considered that the variety of exercises that I am going to command them be in harmony with their own abilities, that is, what I wil grade will be the task nor the tape.

Whenever we select a material for listening comprehension or any other kind of comprehension, our main aim is to mine this material at the maximum through all the possible exercises which help our students to improve their listening skills and at the same time, which help them to increase their own confidence in what they are doing.

Nevertheless, it is also true that this can not be achieved successfully, if the listening session is not structured following three different stages previously.

These stages are the following ones: pre-listening, during-listening and post-listening stages.

Each of the different stages requires not only a different approach towards their analyses but also, distinct kinds of practise.

However, the aims of these three different stages are the same: getting that our learners become better listeners so as they can cope or face with real listening situations in their lifes and supressing the typical fear that they fell whenever we tell them that a listening comprehension session is going to take place.

Presently, I am going to give detailed account of each of the different stages that a listening session must contain from a theoretical point of view and from a practical point of view through some possible activities that I have designed to carry out with my students.

The pre-listening stage as its own name indicates, refers to the initial period intended to train the learners for the implementation of the real listening activities which they will have to fulfill later on in the during-listening phase.

During this stage (the pre-listening one), I am going to try to achieve a series of objectives in my students like motivating them, providing them a good context for an adequate interpretation of the material and preparing them for the tasks they will have to do next, and the best way to reach those aims is through the fulfillment of a set of tasks on the part of the students.

To motivate my students, I will generate some kind of interest towards the topic they will hear, in this case, towards the topic of the fairy tales.

It is important to do this because students do not listen for listening's sake but they listen with the purpose of getting some kind of information.

To achieve this purpose, I will write on the board the genre of the fragment they will listen to, in this case a fairy tale, and then, I am going to ask them about what they know of this genre, whether they like it or not, some examples of fairy tales that they read or that their parents told them when they were younger and if they still remember some of them.

As a complementary approach, I will tell them my personal experiences about this topic, something which is supposed to increase their interest and motivation.

Another goal of this stage would be to promote their comprehension abilities.

To do this, I had thought that it would be useful to provide the students with the topic or the genre, together with the title of the tale I have chosen to deal with and with the context of the listening situation.

The idea is to facilitate them the understanding of what they will hear, and then, I will ask them about their opinions about what will happen in the story and about what they want to get from the listening material.

These tasks I have just mentioned, are very appropriate to activate the mental schemas or background knowledge of the learners, since they are reflecting about things that they already know and about the elicitation of new things about this topic.

Finally, the last but perhaps the main goal of this pre-listening stage, is to prepare our learners for the recording they will have to listen to during the following stage. This implies to prepare them for difficult words and grammatical constructions that they may find in the listening without which, the understanding of the material would be almost impossible.

As far as this point respects, some tasks could be done with the students to solve this possible problem.

For example, I am going to write the title and the genre of the recording on the board and they will have to brainstorm key items which they consider that they might hear.

Then, I will use some image clues of our video so as they may determine the words of these pictures in such a way, that they can elicit the topic which all images allude and then, they may try to create a story with the words given.

Some other tasks applied to the development of the vocabulary that I could carry out with them would be to matching a series of terms of the video with the

corresponding definitions that I would give them previously.

These tasks are beneficial because they help learners to concentrate on the overall meaning of what they will listen to and simultaneously, they imply that the students will make predictions about what they will listen to, something that will encourage their participation and curiosity undoubtedly.

Nonetheless, the most important practice during this pre-listening phase is to establish the tasks and goals that the learners will be commanded to do in what is called as during-listening period.

This means that I will have to specify, for example, whether they will be required to get the general meaning of the recording, the specific meaning or both kinds, as it will be the case with this listening comprehension.

It is necessary to do this because as I pointed out before, students usually need a reason to listen to something.

It is also advisable that I inform my students that they are not going to be required to understand everything that they hear since, this is in most cases ineffective.

This will contribute to mitigate their personal fear and restlessness in such a way, that they will increase their own confidence and motivation.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the time I pretend to devote to the fulfillment of these pre-listening tasks will not exceed the ten or fifteen minutes approximately, since this is supposed to be just a training session and also because I have the intention to spend most part of the time with my students practising and analysing what is named as during-listening tasks.

Once I have explained what are the main goals that I pretend to attain with the students during this pre-listening period, that is, motivating, contextualizing and preparing them for the during-listening period, and having reviewed some useful

approaches and tasks to reach those goals, it would be the moment now to explain some of the requirements and exercises that they are going to be asked to do during the following stage.

First of all, I will inform my students that they are going to listen to the audiovisual material for the first time and then, they are going to be required to tell me the main idea of this fairy tale, which in this case could be for example: The economic improvement of a shoemaker and his wife thanks to the help of four kind-hearted elves.

This activity constitutes a good introductory approach to the during-listening session, since students get in touch with the voice of the speaker and at the same time, they get an idea of what kind of information is mentioned where during the recording.

Subsequently, once I have checked that the learners have found what would be the general understanding of the recording, I would replay the material a second time but now, the students would carry out a series of activities focused on getting more specific details and information about it.

Some of the exercises that I am going to do with them will be related to what is called as activities based on short responses, in which, students will have to scan concrete information from the recording, but the answers they must provide will be quite short.

An activity that they will be proposed to do will be to decide whether the following sentences that I will give them based on the recording are true or false.

The approach which I am going to follow is the following one:

First of all, they will just hear the recording, but they will not see the images and after they have finished the task, then they will check their answers with both,

images and sound together.

The statements that I will provide them are the following ones:

1. The shoemaker and his wife were happy because they sold many shoes.
2. Five little elves were listening to the conversation that the couple was having.
3. The elves felt sad for the shoemaker and they decided to help him with the making of the shoes.
4. The shoemaker and his wife felt happy when they saw that a pair of shoes had been made up.
5. One day a man went to the shoemaker's house and although he did not buy his shoes, however, he gave him some money.
6. The elves made up two more pair of shoes which were very pretty.
7. As gratefulness, the shoemaker and his wife decided to give the elves a delicious cake.

The goal of this activity is that learners pay attention to the recording in order to get specific information in such a way, that I may verify their degree of understanding when they have to listen to the material without making use of the images that appear in it. Another task I will intend to do with my students will be to ask them a series of questions connected with the video but this time, they will have to write specific information that they are required .

These questions could be the following ones:

1. Why had the shoemaker and his wife become poor?
2. Where were the elves hidden and what were they doing?
3. What did the elves decide to do to solve the shoemaker's problem?
4. Why did the shoemaker and his wife become amazed?
5. What did the man who went to the shoemaker's house?

6. How did the shoemaker and his wife reward the helpful elves?

7. What was the elves' reaction once they saw their presents?

Both activities, that is, this one and the previous one, will be done initially without the students watch the images, that is to say, they will just listen to the recording, because otherwise, some of the questions that I have prepared for them would be too easy.

As it was mentioned with the previous task, after, I would replay the recording again, but this time with images included so as my students can check their answers and verify their mistakes if there is anything.

Once the learners have fulfilled those tasks, I would like that they practise an activity but this time, the task will be based on what is known in some occasions as Use of English.

More specifically, my intention will be that they do a fill- in- the- gaps exercise in which they will have to complete a number of gaps that I have selected them from a variety of different passages of the recording that they will hear again.

The possible samples of extracts of the recording and the gaps that they would have to complete could be these ones:

Once a time the lived and kind and his wife nobody his shoes anymore and they had become

To him his wife said: " Don't too much will soon be
..... the on the table.

..... four little elves outside the window
..... talking.

The goal of this task is that students find out the appropriate words omitted that they will hear in such a way, that the whole passage make sense. They can make use of the context in which these words appear to deduce them.

However, it is also important to take into account that they do not only pay attention to complete these gaps, but also, that they make an effort to improve the general information or comprehension of the passage.

In addition to all these tasks, and as part of the during-listening stage, I will ask them to do an exercise focused on phoneme discriminations.

The approach of the activity will be the following: I will select some lexical items such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc., that they are supposed to hear in the audiovisual material and besides, I will insert some words that are slightly different from the original words by a phoneme, a sound.....

All what they have to do is to choose the word they have listened to during the listening.

The set of pairs would be the next ones:

Pair-peer	Feel-felt	Lying-laying
Live-leave	Sun-soon	Night-knight
Four-for	Sewing-showing	Puzzle-puzzled
Hurt-heard	Made-maid	Awake-aware

The aim of this activity is that students be able to discriminate individual sounds/phonemes of English while they are learning simultaneously new kind of words, some of which, are related to the field of the fairy tales such as maid or knight for example.

Finally, to conclude this during-listening stage, I will carry out a task with the students in which they will have to order a sequence of events.

The method would be the following one: First, I will write some actions of the recording in the blackboard or in some pieces of paper, subsequently, they will have to hear and watch the listening material and then, they will have to organize the

actions correctly.

This simple and easy task is very useful for at least two main reasons. Firstly, because students get a picture in their minds about the general sequence of events of the listening and at the same time, they are provided with a kind of coherent script useful for a correct interpretation of the material.

As it can be proved, all the activities designed for the during-listening phase have been intended not only to improve the students' listening skills but also, intended to analyse in a more accurate way the material I have selected for them in such a way, that they make the maximum possible profit.

The time I have planned to spend to carry out all these activities corresponding to this during-listening phase will be more or less about 25 or 30 minutes, because it is also a necessary requirement to leave time enough of the whole session for the development and put into practice of the post-listening stage.

This post-listening period, as you can imagine, corresponds to the last part of the listening comprehension session.

As it has been demonstrated during the practical period of the previous sessions, most of the activities that I have proposed to my students have been focused on the development of the listening skills and to a lesser extend to the training of other skills like writing, speaking and reading.

Nevertheless, during this post-listening time, my intention will be to encourage my learners to practise and integrate listening skills together with the other types of skills that exist by means of a variety of activities, taking into account the same type of material that we have been dealing with.

As an initial activity of this period, and once I have checked that the students have understood the argument and the general idea of this fairy tale, I will ask them to

write a summary of this audiovisual material in such a way, that they apply their writing skills while they are learning simultaneously new and different things to say the same thing, but in a more personal way (learning to paraphrase).

This will contribute to promote in a certain way the personal creativity of each student because each of them are supposed to have different perspectives towards a common situation.

Secondly, I will command them to do a task which is called "sound down".

The mechanism of this activity is quite simple. I will put students into pairs. One facing the other but with just one viewing the video. Then, I will turn down the volume of the audiovisual during two minutes approximately. After, the student who is watching the material must narrate his/her partner what is taking place in the images or pictures. Later on, the roles are changed. Finally, I will play the video to see how accurate was the information that they provided.

The main aim of this activity is the practise of the speaking skills which are going to play an important role when they cope with real speaking situations.

Furthermore, thanks to this exercise, I will be promoting creativity and originality among the learners by means of the interpretation of these images and also, by means of the possible body gestures that may take place and which are so important in an effective interaction.

Lastly, whenever I have made sure previously that the students are not overtired and overwhelmed, I would like to suggest them to initiate a discussion or debate about the general topic of the fairy tales.

The process could be the following one: I will divide the class into two groups.

Each group must defend a different position, in this case, the half of the class would give reasons by which fairy tales might be considered as faithful representations of

what people could encounter in real situations of their lives and the other half of the students, would provide arguments by which fairy tales should be what they really represent, that is to say, imaginary or fantastic stories that a writer has composed. This activity contains a series of advantages so as students improve their speaking skills, it also makes that they think about a specific topic while they are learning new structures to express their opinions, and it also implies that they take turns when they give their opinions, something which will be of great importance when they deal with real listening and speaking situations.

All I have mentioned until now, makes reference to the practical application of all the skills as regards post-listening period concerns.

Nevertheless, it is also highly recommended that I invest part of the time of this period, that I have considered that should be around the 20 minutes, in assessing the success and the possible failure of my students when they have fulfilled the tasks belonging to the during-listening session.

It is important to do this because in this way, I will be able to detect possible difficulties and misunderstandings that they have encountered and in this way, I will be capable of helping them to overcome them.

At the same time, I would have the opportunity to examine the kind of strategies that they have applied during the preparation of this listening material and during the development of the tasks that they have been told to do.

To sum up, I can finish stating that whenever we carry out a listening comprehension session with the students, we have to follow these three different stages that I have been commenting.

Moreover, we should grade the tasks we command them according to their intellectual levels instead of grading the tape so as they can make profit of it and

consequently, they can become better listeners and they be able to cope with real listening situations.

All these activities can be useful tools to help the students to deal with real listening situations because these can help them to understand the various facets of one's personality, these can also provide them with opportunities to express themselves without inhibitions strengthening human bondages, moreover, they also confer them with clues to handle personalities with different traits and they make them feel more confident of themselves.

In short, the main aim will be that the students keep good social interactions while they are promoting transactional functions, that is, while they are conveying information or ideas.

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned that syllabus design was going to be tackled from two different perspectives.

We have just seen the listening application of a syllabus design and now, I am going to focus on the intercultural dimension that a good syllabus design must include.

First of all, I will start to mention what a intercultural-oriented language syllabus should get in our students.

For example, it must achieve that they be able to acknowledge multiculturalism and cultural diversity, recognize otherness, that is, being able of identifying that the the other person with whom you are talking to is different from yourself, by being aware of other approaches in life, show respect and interest towards other perspectives, values and beliefs shared by other communities, develop attitudes of openness towards the other, percieve him/her as somebody to be known and change previous cultural knowledge where necessary and observe differences and

similarities among cultures, in both, the mother and target culture.

This means that if the purpose is that students compare, for example, the material I have selected between one culture and another one, I must start making them look for resemblances or things in common between both cultures in order to communicate effectively and enrich themselves with the other person.

Moreover, students should be able to avoid stereotyping and prejudice and consider their own culture from a critical point of view.

Among the main aims that intercultural communicative competence would have to reflect, can be quoted the ability to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction.

Additionally, these aims can be applied to attitudes like the willingness to find out chances to involve with otherness in a relation of equality instead of finding out the exotic, the willingness to question the presuppositions in cultural products and practices, this means being critical with my environment and the others' environment, the readiness to engage with conventions of verbal and non-verbal communication, which can be achieved using pictures or images asking students why some people act or behave in that way, and the interest in finding other approaches on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar events in the own culture and in a different one.

Taking into account skills of relating and interpreting, the main aims of intercultural communication would be the ability to discover areas of misunderstanding in an interaction and clarify them in terms of each of the cultural systems existent, the ability to intervene between conflicting interpretations of phenomena and the ability to identify ethnocentric points of view in an event and explain its origins.

As far as skills of discovery and interaction refer, I should get some aims in my

students like the ability to identify important references within and across cultures and elicit their connotations by establishing relations of similarities and differences between them, the ability to discover equal and distinct processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal and negotiate an adequate use of them in concrete situations and finally, the ability to get from an interlocutor the values and concepts and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena (connotations, allusions, presuppositions, etc.).

As far as the design of tasks refers, I would have to create tasks neither too complex nor too easy because otherwise, students will not learn.

What I will try to promote is the concept of autonomous learning in our students, that is, a good autonomous learner will be that learner who make questions, a student who is not satisfied with their own knowledge since he desires to know more.

This implies that I should ask a student questions which have more than one answer so as he/she interact with the rest of the learners.

To carry out these tasks, it would be a good idea to use authentic texts like audio recordings, cartoons, diagrams, maps, visuals or written documents and then, I will ask them to do some exercises which involve understanding, discussing and writing in the target language but always, following a critical approach towards the material, in this case, the fairy tale that I have chosen for them.

The idea is challenging my students in order that they provide contrasting views about the material.

Moreover, the material I have selected could be applied as a source in order to promote discussions among the students.

However, this means that both, students and me, will have to characterize and

examine stereotypes and generalizations and introduce other viewpoints, and students, should have time for making personal responses to the images or the story they see.

The main goal of tasks which should be formulated carefully and include explorations of opinion and information gaps is that learners provide enough knowledge about their familiar cultures and some knowledge related to the cultures being studied.

We have analysed the main aspects that a teacher should take into account when he/she designs a syllabus.

First of all, we must focus on the content we pretend to teach our students, in this case, my main aim have been teaching listening comprehension and intercultural approaches.

Then, we have to specify the objectives of the course and subsequently the approach that we are going to take to carry out our aims and finally, we will have to develop a set of tasks suitable for their intellectual level and interests or motivations in such a way that our syllabus design be successfully achieved.

The desired outcomes will be helping students to improve their listening skills and making them conscious of the importance of the intercultural dimension, in such a way that they have enough tools and resources in order to cope with real situations that they may encounter in their lives.

Conclusion.

All through this project, we have been able to appreciate how a text, like the short story that I have selected for my students, can be an useful tool in order to explore in an exhaustive way several linguistic branches such as discourse, semantics, grammar and syllabus design analysis and all their possible methodological and

research resources for English teaching through the development of a series of activities of different nature.

Our main goal along this project has been focused on promoting a kind of autonomous learning in our students in such a way that they realize their own progresses and difficulties taking into account their own personal interests, needs and motivations.

If we have achieved this aim, it could be stated that the didactic methodology of this work will have developed successfully.

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