

# **THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SPEAKING SKILL WITH THE USE OF CINEMA IN THE CLASSROOM AND TEXTBOOK ACTIVITIES**

Modalidad A, Especialidad Lenguas Extranjeras, Inglés

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

I decided to enroll on the *Master Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas* because without any doubt, I want to dedicate my professional life to teaching. Nowadays, in our current educational system, this Master is an essential requirement to work as a teacher in Secondary education. Besides, the Master's subjects and school placements have allowed me to acquire the appropriate skills and competences to start my professional career as a teacher. I have therefore undertaken these studies because I want to achieve the suitable training in order to be teacher.

The reason why my field of specialization is English comes from long ago. I have always been interested in learning other languages and cultures. But I also had an English teacher at high school who motivated me a lot and this fact contributed to increase my interest and curiosity for English language and culture.

This point was also crucial when I chose my degree. I did a B.A. in English Studies at the University of Zaragoza in order to learn the language, the culture and history of English speaking countries. After that, I did a summer course on teaching Spanish as a foreign language and that course was the starting point to take numerous Spanish teacher training courses at *Instituto Cervantes* in Madrid. For a couple of years I have taught Spanish to immigrants. It has been a very rewarding experience because I have had the opportunity to learn how to design activities according to their necessities and to be more flexible depending on their process of learning. But this experience has not only allowed me to learn about practical aspects related to teaching, it has also been a very valuable personal and cultural experience, thanks to the intercultural exchanges between people from many other countries who have different interests, and show different attitudes in the teaching-learning process.

The idea of being teacher is a vocational one because I love children and teenagers, and when I was younger and saw my teachers giving the lessons to my classmates and me, I liked their job, I loved what they did. They had a very positive influence on me and I have a fond memory of them. Furthermore, by the end of the degree I had the opportunity of giving private tuition. During those classes, I realized that I loved what I did, I really enjoyed that time teaching English to those boys and girls. This point has been emphasized during the school placement (*Practicum*), a period in which I have had the opportunity of preparing lessons, materials and teaching. I have finished the *Practicum* being convinced and sure that I want to be teacher.

Regarding all these aspects, I would like to move on to reflect on the role of the teacher. The figure of the teacher is a fundamental part in a top quality education. Accordingly, well-trained and motivated teachers are needed in order to provide a good education. In this sense, teachers need to ensure ongoing professional growth through self-and peer-

assessment, as well as keeping up with information available in the field. For this purpose, it is interesting to use EPOSTL (*The European Portfolio for Students-teachers of Languages*) because it provides different sections such as methodology, resources, assessment and conducting lessons that can help teachers to reflect on our didactic knowledge and skills to teach English.

The work of the teacher in the classroom is based on a humane and personal relation with the students through which teachers show their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. The teacher is not only an instructor, the teacher's role is also to facilitate the learning process. In order to fulfill this function, teachers organize, create new materials, carry out research, evaluate students, assess their own activities, and of course, they may become role models for students in linguistic, behavioural and ethical examples, that is, students have to see that teachers work hard with lessons but also, teachers are examples of respect, good manners and good behavior. Of course, as teachers and especially as language teachers, they have to use the language perfectly in order to be able to teach it. For all these areas, teachers must have the suitable knowledge and the adequate teacher training.

With reference to the relation between teachers and students, it must be taken into account that it is a significant feature of teaching because they are together in the classroom in order to pursue the same aim: the teaching-learning process. For this reason, the relation teacher/students must be close so as to be able to work collaboratively, to create a good atmosphere in the classroom. Concerning the relation teacher/students, emotional intelligence must be applied in Secondary compulsory education because teenagers need to self-affirm, to value their capacities and limitations, they have to be able to take their own decisions, they must have responsibilities and to feel accepted by their classmates. So, emotional intelligence helps to know one-self and to understand people's behavior and emotions. The school is fundamental so as to favour the emotional education. One way of implementing emotional intelligence is to integrate it in the different subjects and courses, as a transversal competence. The teacher's role in the emotional education is very important because by imitation, the student learns to develop and to put into practice his/her own emotional intelligence. The teacher, with his attitudes and behavior, can offer an atmosphere of security, respect and trust before students (Élia López Cassá, 2007: 45-54). The teacher must learn to establish cordiality and trust in the classroom with the aim of facilitating communication, understanding and as well as to foster a productive and meaningful learning of the contents. Accordingly, Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning proposes to arouse a reflective and critical attitude on students, and a meaningful learning contributes to have a long retention of the information (Ausubel, 1967). The educational system needs to have reflective teachers who are able to analyze and to provide alternatives to possible problems and difficulties, adaptations to the different situations, contexts, necessities and interests. Therefore, the teacher's role is not only to explain some specific contents in the classroom. Teachers have additional roles and among them, teacher as researcher. By researching, teachers will understand in a better way their students, learner's difficulties and the context in which they work. As a consequence, they will be able to give solutions to those difficulties, to design syllabus in order to cover students' necessities and interests, to introduce innovative

materials and resources. The teacher as researcher pursues to contribute to the improvement of the teaching-learning process and to the professional development of teachers. Last, but not least, teachers should also fulfill the objectives and competences according to the Aragonese Curriculum and the law (*LOE, LOMCE*).

To be aware of the role of the teachers and to obtain the suitable training, the Master has contributed as follows: in the first part of the Master (the first term), we have received a theoretical approach to education and the life of a high school in the subject *Contexto de la actividad docente*, that is, we have analyzed the relations between society and education, we have studied the Spanish educational system and its evolution in the European Union framework, we have also focused on the organization of the centers (high-school, official language school), their documents such as the year plan, DOC (*Documento Organización del Centro*), PEC (*Proyecto Educativo del Centro*), or RRI (*Reglamento Régimen Interno*). Furthermore, we have also studied the most relevant theories and principles about the teaching-learning processes which have been developed throughout different periods. Psychology of education has also been worked during the first part of the Master in order to be able to know and to reflect on young people's interests, to know how to have a formative and stimulating atmosphere in the classroom and as teacher, to know how to contribute to the students' development and to help them academic and professionally, mainly through tutoring, and taking into account their psychological, social and familiar characteristics.

In the first term, I would like to particularly highlight the subject *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional*; it has been a very important module because I have learnt to select the most suitable methodologies according to the necessities of students, to design activities and how to implement them in the classroom. So, this area has provided me with tools to analyze critically the different methodologies and to have the proper criteria to develop activities in order to work collaboratively and to carry out a meaningful learning.

The second term has mainly been focused on how to develop units of work in the subject *Diseño curricular* and research in aspects of teaching in the subject *Innovación y evaluación docente*. These two subjects have been a complement to *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional* because in *Diseño curricular* we have studied the Aragonese Curriculum and the structure of the different levels (*ESO, Bachillerato* and official language schools) in order to be able to design year plans and units of work. This has been possible thanks to the previous study of methodologies, through which I have acquired the proper basis to design the structure of the course with the year plan and the units of work and taking into account several aspects such as the method, the law (Aragonese Curriculum), level of students, contents and objectives. The subject *Innovación y evaluación docente* has involved the reflection on the different methods, resources and materials. This has also meant to consider the relation of this subject with other modules of the Master such as the two subjects mentioned above and in consequence, we have reflected on the current teaching-learning process, in the different methodologies used over the decades, their efficiency and the development of new ideas and innovative materials to improve the teaching and learning of languages.

Apart from that, in this term I chose two optional subjects which I consider very relevant for my teacher training interests: *La comunicación oral en inglés* and *Habilidades comunicativas para profesores*. These two modules have given us the opportunity of specialising our teacher training in some specific aspects. In the subject *La comunicación oral en lengua inglesa* we have learnt the relevance of a correct use of the English language, and for this reason, we have studied the different features of the English language (sounds, stress, accent, etc). At the same time, we have learnt to develop different types of activities in order to work this aspect of the English language in the classroom and consequently, to promote oral communication among students. In the subject *Habilidades comunicativas para profesores*, we have learnt to develop several strategies to interact with our students and to develop communicative skills and strategies in order to transmit the contents of the subjects properly and consequently, to contribute to a good development of the teaching-learning process.

I also want to point out subjects such as *Educación emocional*, in which we have had the opportunity of paying attention to a more “humane” side of teaching, that is to say, to learn that it is important to show a positive attitude towards our students, to show them that we are interested in them, not only to talk about some concrete content during one hour; to show them that they are important and we want to work with them and help them.

A common subject in the two terms has been the practical periods. *Practicum I* took place during the first term and *Practicum II* and *III* have been developed during the second term. The school placements have meant to put into practice what we have learnt in the theoretical modules of the Master. The first was centered on a close reading of the documents of the high-school/official language schools. We were working on the different documents taking into consideration the Aragonese Curriculum and the law (*LOE*), the way these laws determine the organization and structure of the educational system and the centers: from levels, contents, objectives, duties of students, teacher’s role, organization of the departments, management. *Practicum II* and *III* have been focused on the observation lessons, the implementation of the unit of work and research project, too.

In reference to the experience during the teaching placement, I am strongly satisfied with it because it has been my first contact with the reality of a high-school; in other words, now I know how it is to be before 25-30 students, I am aware that each student is different because each one has his/her own process of learning, I know that timing is important, I have seen that there are unexpected doubts or problems with some activities. I have had the opportunity of teaching, of evaluating myself giving a lesson, organizing and preparing materials. Therefore, the school placements have been extremely valuable because I have gained real knowledge and skills which I can apply in my future job as teacher. This has helped me to better assimilate all the contents learnt through the whole year, I have learnt a lot from my tutor, all the teachers of the English department at the high-school with whom I have maintained conversations about teaching, students, English language, etc. To be in class with students has been really productive because I have seen how they behave, how they study, their difficulties, but also good and positive things such as I have seen that some of students work hard every day and they are really interested in English. Thanks to this experience, I have learnt to pay attention to each student and to think on them, on their necessities

when preparing the lesson and the activities. They have given me a new perspective on the teaching profession because I have noticed the significance of lesson plans in order to fulfill the contents and objectives. I have seen the difficulty of class management because not all students behave in the same manner. They have also helped me to notice that I feel very comfortable being surrounded by students and teaching English and that this is my profession.

Some of the most important competences that I have acquired along the whole year have been to analyze critically the importance and impact of different theories on education; concepts related to methodology in the learning of English; to analyze and to reflect on the different tools, criteria and steps to carry out my role as teacher-researcher successfully; to identify the social contexts that influence on students' motivation to study; to understand that students are teenagers who are developing their personalities and consequently, some difficulties or unexpected behavior can appear; to be able to help them and to create dialogue, interaction and a good atmosphere in the classroom; I have also learnt to be conscious of the different contexts, laws and administrative framework in order to be integrated in the educational system and develop my work as teacher efficiently; to design units of work and year plans, how we have to take into account skills, contents, timing, activities, evaluation in order to include all these elements in every lesson so that students improve little by little in the learning of English and in the acquisition of the key competences: learning to learn, autonomy and personal initiative, cultural and artistic competence, competence in linguistic communication, competence in social skills and citizenship, competence in processing information and use of ICT, competence in knowledge of and interaction with the physical world.

This dissertation is divided into three parts: first, I am going to explain why I have chosen the projects "Communicative approaches to language teaching and learning: Principles and practice: Cinema in the classroom" and the research project "Speaking skill in textbooks" and to comment on this dissertation. The second part is devoted to the development of these two essays, that is, to explain and critically reflect on what I have done in these two works: why these themes, methodologies, steps followed, teacher's evaluation and self-assessment. To finish, I will include the conclusions, what I have learnt with these two projects, my impressions and proposals for the future.

## 2. JUSTIFICATION

In this second section of my MA dissertation I am going to comment on the reasons why I have chosen the essay “Communicative approaches to language teaching and learning: principles and practice: Cinema in the classroom” and the research project “Speaking skill in textbooks” as the central parts of this final work. I have decided to include these essays because both of them deal with one of my main concerns in EFL teaching: the speaking skill and spoken interaction. In this section I will explain why I believe speaking skills need to be further developed in the English language classroom in secondary school. Both projects contribute to analyze and to suggest improvements for a better and more fruitful work of speaking skills and spoken interaction. In the first project I proposed some activities to improve oral communication in the classroom with the use of cinema.

In the first place, I will provide a critical reflection on the essay *Cinema in the classroom*. The purpose of this assignment is to present cinema as a varied and attractive tool for developing speaking skills in class. In the subject *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional* I learnt the different methods and after that, I had to write an essay in which I proposed activities based on a specific methodology. I chose cinema because it is a cultural product, it has a strong influence on society, cinema determines clothes, hairstyles, music. But apart from that, cinema is related with hobbies, with spare time, in general terms, most people enjoy watching cinema and especially, children and teenagers. This is a positive aspect because it enhances students' motivation in the classroom. It presents a wide variety of possibilities because there are a lot of film genres, besides, with cinema people are immersed in other worlds, in other realities that provoke a strong involvement of viewers and can derive in opinions, debates, discussions, and a considerable amount of topics. This essay was developed for the subject *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de lenguas extranjeras* during the first term. In this subject I have explored the different methodologies (Grammar Translation method, The Direct method, The Audiolingual method, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, Task based learning, Communicative approach) carried out in the field of education through time. With the purpose of establishing a global panorama for the comparison of several methods in different periods, thus facilitating the understanding of how the teaching of languages has evolved with the passing of time. Therefore, this subject has been of great value because it provides a fundamental basis for the work of teachers, to put it differently, to have the adequate training so as to be able to teach the contents according to the speciality of foreign languages, English, and depending on the competences students have to acquire. And as a result of *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional* to do the adequate selection of materials, to design and to elaborate activities taking into account the methods, finally, to put them into practice with students.

By the same token, *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de lenguas extranjeras* is related to *Diseño Curricular*, in which I have studied the Aragonese Curriculum and the design of a Year Plan. Additionally, this subject can also be linked to *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera*. In this subject, I have looked at the contents and competences of the Aragonese Curriculum and the design of activities

in depth and according to the methods learnt in *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de lenguas extranjeras*.

Despite the fact that this subject does not set out to prescribe a particular approach to language methodologies, this subject has enabled me to learn and to reflect on the sort of methodological traditions that have been developed through history. This means that I have developed my own criterion in order to choose the methods that I want to put into practice in the classroom.

Consequently, once I have studied the different methods through the reading of Bell's *Method and Postmethod. Are they really incompatible?* (2003) and Allwright's *Language Teaching research* (2003), I have acquired the proper background to choose the method I wanted in order to design some works such as the Year Plan, the Unit of work, the project for the subject *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de lenguas extranjeras* and the method I want to use in my lessons.

Although different methods can be used in the classroom, I have chosen the communicative approach as the main framework to develop classroom activities. I will briefly stress some aspects of the communicative approach, which at the same time, are the ideas in which I have focused on the essays mentioned above. This method focuses on all the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic and strategic) of the communicative competence. The aim of this method is to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Students are expected to use the language in the classroom in a meaningful productive and receptive way. Because of this, linguistic skills are going to be worked in order to improve the communicative competence. Important too is the emphasis given to the autonomy of students and the role of teachers as guides and facilitators. Referring to materials, as a future teacher, I am going to use authentic and diverse materials such as magazines, newspapers, films, TV programmes, etc.

By working with this method, I am going to promote communication among students, a real and a meaningful use of the language in context. My aim using this method is to work and to improve learner's needs, to meet their communicative needs. As a matter of fact, I want to teach students the use of language so as to they can act independently as a tourist, as a student, as a professional, in whichever situation in which the taught language, in this case, English is the vehicle of communication.

“Cinema in the classroom” can be defined as a starting point to work mainly on the speaking skills in detail, taking into consideration all the topics mentioned above (the law, the level of spoken English, the methodologies). I found relevant to include this project in this dissertation because it represents my first step into my learning process of CLT centered on the speaking skill, which I fully developed in the analysis carried out

with the second research project “Speaking skills in textbooks”. My main aim is to provide a critical analysis of the common themes developed in both essays and draw a plan to develop in this area for my future teaching career. At the same time, this project was the first step I followed with the communicative competence in the research project, with which I have tried to go one step further in the analysis of the speaking skill and spoken interaction.

In the second project I critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of activities promoting the speaking skill and spoken interaction in the classroom, as well as students’ response to such activities in order to improve my lessons in my future career as a teacher.

Research and innovation are crucial in education because teachers must aim to contribute to an understanding of the profession, that is, they must be redefined according to the future needs of teaching and learners. They must take into account the surrounding environments (technology, cultural changes) in which the teaching-learning process is going to be developed and in order to have an effective learning on students. Teachers must enhance education to reach quality standards.

The research project “Speaking skills in textbooks” was written for the subject *Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en el ámbito de la especialidad de inglés*. It has been included in this dissertation because the research project was driven by concrete practical need: the vast majority of students are unable to speak English fluently and textbooks are a key element in the classroom. An analysis of the activities of the speaking section in textbooks is therefore needed in order to explore the variety of speaking activities and tasks included in textbooks. The main aim of this project was thus to elicit the strengths and weaknesses of the tasks proposed to ultimately help learners improve their speaking skills and develop the communicative competence.

This project has allowed me to revise textbooks deeply and to see their gaps when implemented in the classroom. From my experience as a student and teacher of languages, I have realized that textbooks can be a guide and a reference for both teachers and students, that is why I find interesting and pertinent to discuss how textbooks deal with the speaking skills.

During the school placements I noticed that teacher’s interest and effort in the creation of new materials has an utmost importance because textbooks do not always reach students’ necessities. Besides, on most occasions, they lack motivating materials. At this point, I would like to mention that the decision to carry out a research project on speaking skills is mainly based on the importance that I believe this skill has in the

teaching-learning process of a language from a communicative approach. During my school placement I detected a need in students to practice spoken interaction in class. This confirmed my previous impression that I had concerning the speaking section in textbooks because I have observed in many books and for a long time that the speaking part of many textbooks was very lineal, that is to say, activities are repeated over and over again and they are very monotonous. They are very limited for the progress of students' own learning of the language.

Both projects, therefore, *Cinema in the classroom* and the research project *Speaking skills in textbooks* have a clear connection. My aim with these two essays has been to pay attention to the oral communicative competence, to design activities linked to these specific linguistic skills and to give a personal approach to the development of a new focus in this skill pursuing effective communication as the main target of my teaching.

### 3. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

Before analyzing *Communicative approaches to language teaching and learning. Principles and practice: cinema in the classroom* and the research project *Speaking skills in textbooks*, I want to make reference to the context and theoretical framework in which these two essays have been designed and implemented.

Both of them have been developed during the school placements. The students with whom I had put into practice these two works were students of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Bachillerato*. According to the law of Education 3/2006, chapter III, article 23i, students should be able to express and to communicate in one or more foreign languages appropriately. The Common European Framework of Reference establishes stages in the task of learning a language: A1 Breakthrough, A2 Waystage, B1 Threshold, B2 Vantage, C1 Effective operational Proficiency, C2 Mastery. Taking into account this classification of language competence, it is interesting to note that the two courses (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Bachillerato*) were a mixed ability classroom in which almost all students moved in an A2 level. They had a general, basic ability to communicate in a limited number of the most familiar situations of everyday life, using language for survival and to gain basic points of information. Besides, there were some students who have a level above the rest of the class. As my tutor told me and as I have seen during the *Practicum*, there were few students who have a B1 level according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), so they are able to cope linguistically in everyday situations which require a largely predictable use of language.

The class as a whole group, therefore, did not reach the objectives established by the mentioned law above. Considering that, the main aim of my work on cinema and the research project is to contribute to the acquisition of the proper level of English for *Bachillerato* following the law, focusing mainly on the speaking skill. The acquisition of the key competences (competence in linguistic communication, competence in knowledge of and interaction with the physical world, competence in processing information and use of ICT, competence in social skills and citizenship, cultural and artistic competence, learning to learn, autonomy and personal autonomy, mathematical competence).

On the subject of the speaking skills, it is important to make reference to the Communicative Language Teaching. The first essay is the result of the work carried out in the subject *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional*, where I came to know the main theories and methodologies in language teaching. From all of them, Communicative Language Teaching is, from the 1970s onwards, the approach widely used nowadays worldwide. Convinced that the main objective of language teaching is that making students achieve meaningful communication, I would like to briefly comment on the communicative approach in relationship with the speaking skill and spoken interaction in order to justify my research interests in language teaching.

CLT focuses mainly on the need to center on communicative features in the learning of a language. The purpose of this method is to make communicative competence the aim of language teaching. It is considered in language teaching because teachers teach “language for communication” and “language as communication”, that is to say, the

main purpose of language teaching is that learners must be able to communicate in the language they are learning, students must be able to interact with other people in that language. In this sense, the best way of achieving it is practicing with particular situations and events (Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, 2003).

Using a methodology based on a Communicative Approach, teachers must take into account discourse analysis, it means an analysis of the structure of discourse, it concentrates on how utterances are put together by speakers in individual interactions. Discourse analysis will provide the adequate basis in language teaching-learning, in other words, it will help to create suitable contexts for interactions, situations and speaker/hearer exchanges in order to give students the possibility of learning the language and improving the speaking skill according to different situations and in real situations.

Discourse analysis is significant because it highlights two aspects of communication that people use in every communicative act: the first one is the intended meaning, which is within context and is related to the sequence and link of utterances in production. The second one is the interpreted meaning, it refers to pragmatics, that is, speakers' and addresses background attitudes and beliefs, their understanding of the context in which a sentence is uttered, and their knowledge of how language can be used for a variety of purposes.

Accordingly, some of the main characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching that allow teachers to help students to have an effective communication are the following:

1. The main goal is students must communicate in the target language.
2. The teacher's role is to facilitate communication in the classroom, he acts as an advisor, solving doubts, answering questions and controlling students' performance.
3. Students' role is to communicate and they must try to be understood by hearers although they have not a perfect dominion of the target language.
4. In the Communicative Language Teaching, activities are based on the use of authentic materials. Some adequate activities are scrambled sentences, language games, role plays and picture strip stories. In relation to activities, it is interesting to note that Morrow (Johnson and Morrow, 1981) underlined three features in those communicative activities: information gap, choice and feedback. The information gap is when a person in a communicative act knows something the other person does not, for instance, if two people know the colour of the sky and one of them asks about the colour of the sky and the another person answers "blue", the exchange, in fact, is not communicative. With this example I want to clarify that necessary information is required in order to carry out effective communication.

5. Interaction in CLT is mainly focused on students. They can interact in pairs, triads, small groups and whole group. The teacher does not really interact with students.
6. In the Communicative Language Teaching, students need to know the forms, the meanings and their functions. But it is also necessary to consider the social situation so as to convey the intended meaning suitably (Canale and Swain, 1980).
7. Learners work on all the five skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking and spoken interaction) from the beginning of the learning process.
8. Native language is avoided, the use of the target language is primordial.
9. In relation to evaluation, teachers are not only going to take into account the correct use of grammar and vocabulary but also, accuracy and fluency; aspects which show their communicative competence.
10. Teachers give feedback with accuracy-based activities.

Within the framework of CLT; I would like to move on to explain why I have focused on two of the language skills: speaking and spoken interaction. The language skills are grouped in two types: productive and receptive skills. In productive skills, students need to carry out an effective communication based on oral or written production. While in receptive skills, learners must develop interpretation skills related to listening to or reading a text.

The speaking skill and the writing one share the production process but in fact, they are very different because the speaking skill takes place in the here and now and it is produced and processed “on line” (Cook, 1989: 48-53). In this language skill, there can be mistakes and misunderstandings because the speaker does not master the language completely.

In the spoken interaction, there is a face-to-face exchange. The main purpose is to be understood. It is an immediate oral exchange in which the flow of speech must be maintained. According to this, students can miss linguistic knowledge and they must find situational and contextual elements which can help them to be understood. The premise in oral interaction is that the speaker’s purpose is to communicate, to transmit ideas, opinions, feelings, values, attitudes and of course, to be fundamental and pragmatic factors too (Olhstain and Celce-Murcia, 1980).

Concerning the speaking skills, it cannot be left aside our educational system, specifically, the Aragonese Curriculum, in which the regional educational system is based on. During the first school placement (*Practicum I*), I had the opportunity to work with the different documents that form the basis and the organizational and legal context for the development of our educational system. Among them, it was the Aragonese curriculum; apart from studying the document deeply, I could see how it is implemented and the courses and lessons are organized according to it at the high-school. In what refers to the Compulsory Secondary Education (*ESO*), in the general learning objectives section there are two of them which are intimately related to oral communicative competence:

- Students should be able to express themselves and orally interact in daily communicative situations in an intelligible way and with some autonomy.
- Students should use correctly and appropriately basic phonological, lexical, grammatical, functional, discursive, sociolinguistic and strategic features in real communication context (Aragonese curriculum, 8, my translation).

All objectives must be taken into account but these two, which are related to students' oral production, should have a significant role in the design and planning of activities in the classroom because it will be the way through which students will be able to achieve them.

The Curriculum contemplates the oral skills including phonetics. According to this, in secondary education (*ESO*), students should also learn phonemes, rhythm and intonation patterns in order to acquire effective communication skills. With regard to Post-Compulsory Education (*Bachillerato*), there is a clear connection between this educational cycle and the previous one. In *Bachillerato*, there is an emphasis on the implementation of varied activities and communicative situations in order to improve students' communication needs.

The official document (the Aragonese Curriculum) highlights two objectives which refer to the speaking skill in *Bachillerato*:

- Students should be able to express themselves and interact spontaneously, efficiently, correctly, autonomously and creatively varied communicative situations (written and oral situations) and using appropriate strategies.
- Understand conversations from a variety of topics and genres, delivered by other speakers and by the media (Aragonese Curriculum, 56, my translation).

The official documents, therefore, highlight the acquisition of a communicative competence, both in written and oral discourse, but I have paid attention to the oral competence. Accordingly, in order to improve the English language level of Spaniards and moreover, speaking skill, EFL teachers in Spain have to create and use materials to promote oral communication.

I also find relevant that, teaching and promoting the speaking skill teachers are teaching the interpersonal, learning to learn and intercultural competences, too. All of them are very significant in the teaching-learning process in students and they will learn to express their ideas, to listen to different points of view, to know about foreign cultures and customs and to respect them.

Furthermore, it cannot be left aside a reference to the coming law, *LOMCE* (*Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Educación*). At first sight, this law favours the learning of foreign languages and multilingualism, highlighting the process of globalization which surrounds us. At the same time, it follows the key objectives given by the European Union in order to build a European common project. In the exposition of

reasons, more concretely, there is a clear reference to the development of the different linguistic skills but in article 9, it can be read that an emphasis to the listening, speaking and spoken interaction skills are made:

Spanish language will only be used as a support in the process of learning a language.  
Comprehension and speaking skills will be prioritized (p.13, my translation)

Although *LOMCE* gives priority to the development of oral/spoken communication, there are also some gaps in the curriculum that put into question the possibility of a proper work on the English language, for example, nursery school and *Bachillerato* will not be free, in that case, many people will not have access to education, in consequence, many children will not start the learning of English from the beginning of their education and many teenagers will not continue the learning of the language. Concerning my interest in the teaching of speaking skills in the classroom from a communicative approach, the decrease in the number of teachers and the subsequent increase of the ration teacher-students may become a challenge in foreign language learning, specifically in this area.

I have therefore decided to choose these two projects because they are focused on the development of the speaking skill, following the law and consequently, pursuing to fulfill the objectives in my future career as teacher. Aware of the low level of English language in Spain, I have taken into account documents as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in which there are surveys and analysis of the students' level in general culture and low level of the English language, especially concerning speaking skills. My experience in the *Practicum* has also made me aware of the deficiencies that students present in speaking skills and the difficulties that teachers have to face in the classroom concerning the teaching-learning process in this area.

### **3.1 Cinema in the classroom**

In this first part of this section I have decided to include the work *Cinema in the classroom*. This essay was written for the subject *Fundamentos de Diseño Instruccional y Metodologías en la especialidad de Lenguas Extranjeras*, which was developed during the first term of the Master.

Thanks to this subject I have had the opportunity of learning about the different approaches and methods in English Language Teaching (ELT). Among the points worked in this module, I would like to highlight the study of the different aspects that teachers must take into account when choosing a method for our lessons. I realized the importance of the approach to some considerations such as the linguistic competence, the basic units of language structure, and the central processes of the language learning. Besides, in this subject, I have also learnt about the linguistic content and specifications for the selection and organization of content (the general objectives of the methodology, criteria for the selection and organization of linguistic and subject matter content, a syllabus model); a specification of the role of learners (the types of learning tasks set for

learners, the degree of control learners have over the content of learning, the patterns of learning groupings), a specification of the role of teachers (the types of functions teachers fulfill, the degree of control of teacher influence over learning, the degree to which the teacher determines linguistic content, the types of interaction between teachers and learners); a specification of the role of materials (the primary goal of materials, the form materials take – textbook, audiovisual format-, the relation materials have to other sources of input), the procedure in which the descriptions of techniques and practices in the instructional system have been considered. Among them, I want to highlight the types of techniques and tactics used by teachers for presenting and practicing language content, the types of exercises and practice activities that are used in materials or suggested for teachers to follow, the resources in terms of time, space and equipment used to implement recommended classroom practices.

Another significant topic in this subject was the Common European Framework of Reference for language: learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) for secondary education. Accordingly, I have also had the chance to become familiarized with these two documents, which are of special relevance for education and for the teaching of languages. By studying and analyzing them, I have learnt the origins and background of the CEFR, now, I know that its purpose is to establish assessment criteria for the comparison of language proficiency levels in different countries, thus facilitating the objective of educational and occupational mobility. As it can be read in its initial paragraph, its stated aim is to provide “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc cross Europe” (Council of Europe, 2001:1). A deep analysis of the CEFR has been carried out in this subject and apart from its origins and background, I have learnt its structure, the Common Reference levels, Competences, general competences of the learner, Communicative language competences and self-assessment. In sum, I have a clear idea of this document. I now know it is important for the teaching of languages because it contemplates many aspects related to languages in order to have a global and general organization in Europe so as to share the same criteria looking for equality in language assessment and certification in all European countries.

In reference to the European Language Portfolio (ELP), I have to say that I have also come to know this document in this subject. I have learnt that it is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language, whether at school or outside school, can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It is composed of three parts:

- a) A language passport: here the language learner can summarize his/her linguistic and cultural identity, language qualifications, experience of using different languages and contacts with different cultures.
- b) A language biography: it helps the learner to set learning targets, to record and reflect on language learning and on intercultural experiences and regularly assess progress.
- c) A dossier: in this part the learner can keep samples of his/her work in the language he/ she has learnt or is learning.

In conclusion, this document was introduced as a means of helping language learners to keep track of their language learning as it happens, monitor their progress and regularly assess the results of their learning; students can record their learning achievements and their experience of using other languages and encountering other cultures. According to this, I personally believe that it can be a useful tool to develop language learning as well as intercultural skills, it can facilitate educational and vocational mobility; it encourages lifelong learning of languages and at the same time, it contributes to the promotion of democratic citizenship in Europe. For all these reasons, I consider that as future teacher I will take into account the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference) as important elements in my future teaching of English as a foreign language. Besides, I will recommend to my future students the use of the European Language Portfolio because I am completely convinced that it can provide them with many positive aspects, as those mentioned above, that will help them to improve both in the cultural and intellectual areas.

At this point, it is interesting to mention the aspects taken into account to include *Cinema in the classroom* in MA dissertation. First, the evaluation of this subject was carried out through a written assignment in which I studied the main foreign language methods (Grammar Translation method, The Direct Method, The Audiolingual Method, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, Notional Functional Syllabuses, Community Language Teaching, Content- based teaching, The Communicative Approach, Task-based learning) over time. After outlining the main characteristics, evolution and changes that have taken place with the passing of time, I saw that the Communicative Approach was the method used at the moment and the method I want to use in my lessons, although other methods may be introduced in certain contexts and situations, in fact, it may be appropriate and advisable, for instance, the task based method.

In my essay, I proposed the use of cinema as a useful tool to work on the Communicative Approach to the English language teaching and learning. I strongly believe that cinema can be a fruitful tool in class because nowadays, we live in a society dominated by technology. All these contents were taken into account in the development of activities included in my essay for its future implementation in the classroom. Technology and audio-visual materials have a strong influence on people. This aspect is emphasized in children and teenagers who do not understand their lives without technological gadgets (mobiles, games, internet, tablets). In fact, during the *Practicum II* and *III*, I have had the possibility of checking this because many teenagers, mainly 1st year of *E.S.O.*, were unable to leave their mobiles and their gadgets during the lessons. This made very difficult to teach properly because students do not pay attention. Accordingly, the use of cinema can be a strategy to call learners' attention and get them involved in the lesson.

The next point I want to deal with in this strand of the dissertation is related to the different publications and references examining the use of cinema in the classroom. At this moment there are numerous publications describing and analyzing the use of this art in the classroom. Among them, I want to highlight the work of Alba Ambrós Pallarés, *Cine y educación: el cine en el aula de primaria y secundaria*; the article "Using film in the classroom", by Alberta Learning and the work carried out in the Instituto Cervantes, which promotes the use of cinema and there is a real use of it in the teaching-learning process. Although in some of these references there is a study of the use of cinema in

the Spanish class, I think it is interesting because in all of them, scholars examine cinema's role in education. In general terms, the books and articles that I have read present a positive vision of the use of cinema as a didactic instrument in class. It is considered a good tool because students can do cultural activities, it is a support to the linguistic contents and it helps students to establish relationships between cinema and history, cinema and literature, and activities related to the use of cinema may also involve looking for different sources such as articles, reviews, pictures, forums, books, etc. <sup>1</sup>“La aplicación del cine en el aula ELE” presents a survey in which the key question was: What type of resources would you like to work on in class? The answers were: 23% materials or guides, 8% materials for specific purposes, 2% comics, 10% literary pieces, 2% internet and 55% audiovisual materials. As can be seen, audio-visual materials are very well – considered by students and they occupy the first place in the survey. Although this survey makes reference to the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, I think it is of great value in order to observe the preference of students in the learning of languages in Delhi. I am sure the same or similar results would be found if the survey would have made reference to English language in Spain because we live in a society determined by technology and audiovisual gadgets and especially, children and teenagers. In fact, during the *Practicum*, I have seen that students paid more attention to power point presentations and the Learn English webpage from British Council than to copies and textbooks. The audiovisual activities were more successful and the hour of class was much better organized and managed.

From this point, it can be considered that learners are interested in this kind of materials and they receive them positively. However, the interest of students in cinema or audio-visual materials is in opposition to what can be found in many high-schools. Many centers do not possess a film repertoire in order to use movies in lessons or to give students the possibility of watching movies.

In relation to this, it is also important to consider cinema and mainly, Hollywood, as an industry with a significant commercial and cultural impact in societies worldwide, especially in the Western world –Spanish society being no exception. In this sense, Hollywood contributes to cultural globalization because it has a strong power across the globe with the movies, which are well-accepted in different countries and different cultures. According to this idea, by using cinema in the classroom, we are also working with English as an international language, used around the world and as a means of connection among many different countries. In the contemporary globalized world, English is for different purposes worldwide (for tourism, professional, or academic purposes). For this reason, teachers should familiarize students with different varieties of the English language as well as with situations in which it is used as a Lingua Franca. Accordingly, English-speaking cinema could work as a way of facilitating the learning of a language because it is a medium which represents this process of globalization as well as different contexts in which the language is used worldwide.

According to Frank Zingrone: “It is only through an understanding of the structure of a medium that one can gain real access to its message”(2003:3). In my opinion, these

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<sup>1</sup> The article and surveys were carried out in Spanish because they were developed by the Spanish department. The survey was carried out in the Centro de Estudios Hispánicos, Portugueses, Italianos y Latino- Americanos de la Universidad de Jawaharlal Nehru and in the Centro de Estudios Germánicos y Románicos de la Facultad de Letras de la Universidad de Delhi.

words describe perfectly the idea that I want to transmit with the use of cinema in the classroom. Children and teenagers manage technology very well and they were born in a world defined by images; that is why cinema is going to be a perfect medium to teach the contents, objectives and competences of the EFL classroom. With this, I do not propose cinema as the sole tool in lessons. But it can be a suitable tool for this group of people (children and teenagers). Besides, it is a powerful medium and it has a strong influence in society. On the one hand, cinema forms part of popular culture, that is to say, nowadays films form part of our daily life, our behaviour, clothes, hairstyle, lifestyle is reflected and influenced by movies and our lives are completely influenced by the media. On the other hand, cinema is also an art. With this vision, cinema is considered as an aesthetic medium which is useful to transmit ideas, opinions and analysis of the society and world that surround us. This type of film may provoke critical thinking on people and offer different points of view, ideologies and visions of the world. In consequence, cinema, both as popular culture and as art can help teachers to connect more directly with students and it can help students to interpret culture, the world and to understand many contents which expressed in a rather complex way in textbooks.

The essay *Cinema in the classroom* was structured in two parts. First, I wrote a theoretical section where the starting point was an outline of the different methods in the teaching of languages. I focused on the relevance of the speaking skill in all those methods. From that point, I derived my assignment to the use of cinema as a varied and attractive tool for developing speaking in class from a communicative approach.

Now that the Master is almost finished and I have acquired more knowledge in reference to the teaching profession, the design of lessons, the teaching of oral communication and I have the experience at the High school with the *Practicum II* and *III*, they have taken place at *Pedro Cerrada* High school in Utebo, Zaragoza. From this perspective, I would therefore like to reflect on the work *Cinema in the classroom* critically. First, I maintain the idea that cinema is an interesting and enjoyable option to improve English. Apart from the fact that children and teenagers are very interested in technology, I see cinema as a very extensive source of topics that it is going to give me, as future teacher, the opportunity of introducing a considerable amount of themes to work in class (science, history, culture, citizenship, nature, world, politics and friendship values, among others). I also think that movies or clips can give me ideas so as to design new activities with different materials and to organize the class in a different way to have more dynamic lessons. Besides, as a cultural product, cinema deals with the past, with the present, with our society, with the world in which we live, with possible future themes and questions. It may help students acquire the key competences (Linguistic competence, cultural and artistic competence, competence in citizenship) but at the same time, it can broaden students' minds and to know other ways of thinking, other cultures and to enrich them culturally and to cultivate people. So, these are also reasons why I want to use cinema in class and as a future teacher, I can contribute to develop them.

Second, I would like to consider some improvements and specifications in reference to the essay *Cinema in the classroom*. By reading more references such as *Film: Resource Books for teachers* by Stemplesky and Tomalin or by visiting some websites such as <http://www.filmeducation.org>, (which provides activities and resources to work in cinema in the classroom) or <http://www.bfi.org.uk> and <http://imdb.com> (which provide

thorough information about cinema and films which can be used by the teacher to complete or elaborate his/her own materials), I have realized that I can improve the activities proposed in this essay, the variety of films and the use of cinema in class. Among those changes and specifications I want to point out the following:

**Selection of movies:** as a future teacher, I will use cinema for both *E.S.O.* and *Bachillerato*. But it is true that the selection of movies is a complicated task because many aspects such as students' age or the plot must be taken into account in order to show them a proper film, one that is appealing and whose content could be appropriate for their age. Some movies that I would use for *E.S.O.* are: *The Muppets* (James Bobin, 2011), *The Simpsons* (David Silverman 2007), *Narnia* (Andrew Adamson, 2005), *The Lord of the Rings* (Peter Jackson, 2001) *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995) *Sherlock Holmes* (Guy Ritchie, 2009) *Australia* (Baz Lurhann, 2008). For *Bachillerato* some of the films I would use are: *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle, 2006), *Australia*, *Brave Heart*, *The Simpsons*, *Frankenstein* (Kenneth Branagh, 1994), *Oliver Twist* (Roman Polánski, 2005). I have to mention that in my work I included series such as *Yes, Prime Minister* and now, I am aware of the fact that this serial cannot be very motivating for young teenagers because it deals with politics and it is sometimes very complex. I certainly could include some specific clips for second year of *Bachillerato* to make students reflect on some aspects of politics in the UK, however a thorough preparation of pre-viewing and post-viewing guiding activities would be necessary. Furthermore, I am conscious that I have to choose movies and TV series like *The Simpsons*, which are well-known and well-considered among children and teenagers. These productions can lead to speaking activities and cultural issues, debates on topics concerning teenagers' interests, i.e. *The Simpsons* are an example of irony and parody of society. Not only this but also, I have to take into account those films whose plots can be interesting for learners, i.e. action films, romantic comedies and sit-coms. In relation to the topics or plots of the movies and in order to be close to students, I will have to look for specific clips of the films, moreover, with adaptations from literary pieces and historical movies so as to satisfy students' interests and needs and consequently, to have more dynamic and productive lessons. For example, *Australia* (Baz Lurhann, 2008) has some interesting topics to be raised such as a different culture, aboriginal people, or the influence of England in this country.

**Timing:** it is also important to mention that I consider the screening of the whole film in class twice or three times a year. The reason for this is that films need a lot of time; first of all, the screening and, then, the different activities carried out before and after watching it. So, many hours of classes are needed and unfortunately, it is not possible to dedicate so much time. That is why I prefer to work with clips, one or more clips, depending on the unit of work, the interest in the film, time and topic. Besides, in this sense, I am going to promote autonomous learning, watching films in the original version outside the classroom and creating interest in the students to watch films at home. In a first moment, I do not include the screening of movies as homework but I will include recommendations of films (related to the topic worked in the lessons) in the section "Complementary activities of my units of work".

**Subtitles:** referring to the use of subtitles, I firmly believe that subtitles in Spanish cannot be used because students will be focused on reading the subtitles and they will not pay attention to the dialogues in English, to the pronunciation. Like in listening activities, clips will be watched a couple of times and in the last one, subtitles will be

included in order to check the understanding of the conversations, the spelling but this will also depend on the difficulty of the movie because not all films have the same complexity.

**Methodology & activities:** considering difficulties, there will probably be students with different levels and not all of them will understand the whole clip at the same time. So, taking into account these problems, I will always be careful with the selection of films in order to avoid movies with difficult accents, complex vocabulary and dialogues. In addition, I will include pre-viewing activities, I will propose group work (4-5 people) in order to facilitate the understanding and the realization of activities and of course, my constant supervision so as to help students with problems and misunderstandings. I will repeat the screening of the clip if necessary.

**Input:** another significant point is input. I must say that I will include movies at the middle or at the end of the unit of work. According to this, students will be familiarized with vocabulary and grammar. Although with students of *E.S.O.*, though I will always give them activities of vocabulary previous to the screening in order to make the comprehension easier. I will try to give them varied activities so as to avoid a monotonous lesson with the same process each time a movie is going to be watched. However, with students of *Bachillerato*, I will distribute pre-viewing activities but I also consider interesting to work without this kind of activities in order to provoke on them the effort to understand, to vary the sort of activities and to change the organization of the class. I prefer to give students the vocabulary (with activities or in a list). In my opinion, it is a better option because during the school placements (*Practicum II* and *III*), in my observation classes, I saw that one of the teachers asked for some definitions so students had to look for words in the dictionary but in fact, the vast majority of them lost time speaking with the classmate. So, I personally think that better results can be obtained if vocabulary is provided or learners have to do exercises to elicit the meaning of the unknown words.

**Context:** I consider the use of cinema as a tool included in some units of work. At this moment, I do not want to include movies or TV series in each unit of work during the whole year. I think it is not possible because of time and my teaching is not going to be based exclusively on cinema. I consider it as another material which can vary and improve my teaching. Of course, I could design a unit of work centered on cinema and TV but my idea, with *Cinema in the classroom* was to suggest cinema as one more element that can help teachers to teach English.

**Other activities:** last but not least is the revision of the activities proposed in the essay *Cinema in the classroom*. I will also include activities using the trailers of the films, a part of the movies which I have not considered till now. As I have already explained, vocabulary will be provided but in my essay I proposed that students had to look for it. Now, I have a different vision, consequently, I will change all those activities. The main point is that I have observed that in all the movies there are activities related to the work in pairs. At this moment, I would drastically change all those activities because after my research project I saw that textbooks only propose work in pairs exercises and I criticize them. I strongly believe that this type of exercises do not help to develop fluency in English and the improvement of the speaking skill. In my opinion, to work in pairs provoke that students spend the activity time to speak in Spanish and to talk about personal aspects, friends, other subjects. While if the activities are carried out with the

whole group, learners are going to be more focused on the exercises because they know that the rest of his/her classmates are waiting for his/her answers, exposition. At the same time, with the whole group activities students are going to gain self-confidence because they are going to talk before more than one or two people and little by little, they are going to lose embarrassment, shyness or any other factor that limits students' oral skills. In this sense, the practical section of Cinema in the classroom would suffer a significant shift.

This is the most relevant element that I will change and it corresponds with my learning during the elaboration of the research project, the *Practicum* and the study of the different subjects in which I have reflected on the design of activities and the different ways to produce interesting and better activities to help students to improve in the teaching-learning process. According to this, I will propose activities with the whole group or with groups of 4 or 5 people in order to improve oral communication. I will be closer to them and I will work hard to design activities promoting speaking interaction and satisfying and pursuing students' learning and autonomy in English.

### **3.2 The Research Project: speaking skills in textbooks**

In this last part of the section, I have decided to include the research project *Speaking Skills in textbooks* presented in the course *Innovación e investigación en el diseño de actividades*. In this course I have learnt the importance of carrying out research and innovation in the teaching profession. As Cooper proposes in his work on innovation in language planning, teachers play a fundamental role in the development of innovation in syllabus design. Innovation and research implies the implementation and evaluation of new ideas and new procedures (Cooper, 1989: 145). In this sense, teachers are involved in the research and innovation process.

Scholars like Lambright and Flynn (1980: 243- 44- 45) suggested that within the context of education individuals relate to each other as adopters, implementers, clients, suppliers or entrepreneurs /change agents. Kennedy (1988: 334) proposes the following structure: teachers as implementers, students as clients, curriculum and material designers as suppliers and the curriculum expert as the change agent. I agree with Kennedy on the idea that these roles are not exclusive and as Kennedy affirms it is possible that the same person will play different roles, in some occasions simultaneously and sometimes during the process.

According to this, it is important to consider that teachers can work as material designers. For this reason, in this course I have also learnt practical activities for planning my research project, data collection instruments and procedures such as quantitative and qualitative approaches, introspective and empirical data, individual and collaborative approaches, observation techniques following different templates, to make interviews and questionnaires and, of course, to take into account the ethics and protocol involved in all research. Important too is the avoidance of plagiarism and confidentiality.

I decided to carry out research on the way speaking skills are dealt with in textbooks and in the classroom. When we learn a language, there are five skills that we need to complete communication: Reading, writing, listening, speaking and spoken interaction.

The five language skills are related to each other in two ways: the direction of communication (in and out) and the method of communication (spoken and written).

Speaking is considered a crucial part in the learning of a language. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. The speaker ability to communicate determines the success of communication.

Spoken interaction is the last skill and it refers to the act speech among people. It can be perfectly related to the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975) in which speakers in their speeches have to be brief, make contributions as required, they have to be truthful and relevant. This means that communication will take properly among people. Aspects such as context, register, situation, purposes of communication play a fundamental role in this skill.

I decided to focus on speaking skill and spoken interaction because when I gave private tuition and during the school placements (*Practicum II and III*), I observed that students are unable to speak fluently and with accuracy. They do not find the suitable words to express the ideas they want; pronunciation is an aspect which is completely forgotten and left aside; learners only follow the pattern given by teachers, that is to say, if the lesson is focused on giving personal opinions, students only follow the expressions provided by teachers, for instance: *I strongly believe, I think,...* and they are not able to speak using the grammar and the vocabulary they already know. According to this, oral competence in English does not work neither in class nor outside the classroom.

Besides, Spain still appears down on the list in documents such as PISA,<sup>2</sup> The Program for International Student Assessment. I checked the document on 28th June 2013 in order to see the tables with the results of the different countries and in different years as well as the comments on the results to have an idea of Spain's grades, which unfortunately are low and the same grades are repeated year after year. When the English language level of Spanish students is measured, broadly speaking, the oral communicative competence is not Spanish students' strong point. I firmly believe that there are several reasons for this. I would like to signal that appropriate input is not received. People do not have access to original versions of movies, radio programmes, magazines, literature. At the same time, the teaching of English has always been centered on grammar; lessons are focused on teaching grammatical aspects and a communicative approach is not generally followed, consequently, the use of language has not received the proper attention. The learning of languages and in this case, English, needs more hours of study, that is, to include more hours in the curriculum and more study on the part of students. I believe that Spanish society has not given importance to languages until recently, when the need of mastering foreign languages is increasing. Nowadays, all students want to study abroad (Erasmus scholarships, Faro Global), companies want to be present in other countries, many different professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. consider that it is crucial for their careers to have a

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<sup>2</sup> It is an international study which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15 years old students.

period of professional development in universities or companies with international reputation, to have cross-cultural experiences.

It is fundamental for this work to take into account the Communicative Approach. As I said in previous sections of the MA dissertation, it refers to the set of teaching procedures that define best practice in the teaching of foreign languages or L2.

For this reason, I think that it is completely necessary to devote more hours of English language teaching to students during Primary and Secondary education. To provide input is also a significant element in the learning of a language because it is a natural and spontaneous way of learning it. Although there are teachers who prepare their own materials, and in consequence, textbooks are not the first and only tool used in their lessons, a change in methodology is also pertinent because textbooks do not cover students' necessities and they are an important reference and guide used in class. No less important is students' effort and motivation. Spanish students, in general, are not very keen on speaking in class, they are not used to do it, participation in class is almost non-existent. Related to this, it is also significant to mention teacher-students work, both parts must work together in order to achieve meaningful learning. They must have a common challenge in the teaching-learning process and to work together so as to achieve it. For that purpose, they are going to share their strong and weak points with which they must help each other in order to work collaboratively and therefore, to develop the speaking skills and spoken interaction in class. A common work between teacher and students and a good relationship among them is going to provoke a more enthusiastic attitude on students, they are going to get involved in the class and their self-confidence is going to be higher resulting in more interaction and participation in class, this is going to contribute to speak in class.

Therefore, coaching is another relevant component that must be introduced in lessons and which could be contemplated in the design of activities in textbooks too with the aim of facilitating a close contact and collaborative work between teacher-students. This aspect is needed because the teacher's role is to facilitate the teaching-learning process. In fact, students have different ways of learning, several cognitive styles, they can learn throughlogical/mathematical,visual/spatial,body/kinesthetic,musical/rhythmic,interpersonal, intrapersonal and verbal/linguistic processes. Accordingly, "the teacher as facilitator should be able to make easier students' learning with the design of varied and suitable units of work and activities" (Larson- Freeman, 2000: 130).

In this sense, I personally think that an educational link between students and the teacher must be created in order to be successful in the teaching-learning process. In fact, there are five fundamental questions which have to be taken into account so as to create this link but they are usually forgotten:

1. To have and to show interest, affection to our students. To have a kind attitude and behavior too.
2. Vocation. To work as a teacher by vocation is a truly important aspect because it determines motivation and illusion at work.

3. A bidirectional teaching-learning process. Students and teachers are always learning, students are not the only receivers of learning, teachers can also learn many things in order to improve their lessons.
4. Individual characteristics of students that determine the teaching-learning process.
5. Teachers have to offer different tools in order to provoke students' development of their potential.

I believe all these elements are the starting point in order to work inside and outside the classroom. But apart from that, teachers have to know their students because that will facilitate the task of teaching.

By pursuing to know our students and to be close to them, teachers have to think on the kind of teachers they want to be. Referring to this, I would like to point out some aspects that coaching proposes as relevant to students' needs and to education. I consider them very significant because I am convinced that they can help to improve the learning of students. For this reason, I will definitely take them into account for my future job as a teacher, I will put them into practice:

1. To be close to students, to know them.
2. To transmit knowledge but also values and emotions, that is to say, values such as the respect to their classmates, to adult people, the importance of effort; emotions like being empathetic with people (friends, family, people with problems).
3. To provide a wide range of possibilities to do homework and to work in class.
4. To say negative things, if any, only in private.
5. To arouse interest in order to enhance students' motivation.
6. To listen to students, to promote dialogue.
7. To have a positive attitude and to be motivated in order to be able to motivate students and to have a positive atmosphere in class (Melero Teruel, 2009).

These are some of the key elements that can contribute to improve the motivation and the involvement of students, to work more efficiently and consequently, to obtain better results and a better learning in our students.

As stated above, the aim of my research project is to examine the speaking section in textbooks. This material has a leading role in everyday lives of teachers and students. Accordingly, in this project I explored students' needs to improve their speaking skills. Essential for this purpose is the analysis of the activities in textbooks in order to know if they are repetitive, if there is an evolution between the activities proposed for the first year of *Bachillerato* and those proposed for the second year, if they allow to improve

fluency and accuracy speaking English or by the contrary students and teachers always find the same sort of tasks.

The reason why I considered textbooks for my research project is that they are very well-considered among parents, students and teachers. That does not mean, though, that they might miss some aspects. Furthermore, textbooks provide grammar, topics in an organized way and they facilitate teachers' work and students' too. At this point, I should specify that I followed several steps to trace the aim of this essay. First, I offered a theoretical approach with the purpose of building a theoretical background that would enhance the development of the analysis. I have attempted to examine second language acquisition (SLA) through the reading of Krashen's *Language two; Principles and Practice in second language acquisition*. I planned to introduce the main principles and statements thereby analyze whether textbooks provide or not suitable materials to acquire a second language and specifically, the communicative competence.

Secondly, I carried out a content analysis consisting on the study of the speaking section in textbooks. More concretely, I have centered on first and second years of *Bachillerato*. My criterion to select the textbooks was to work with those textbooks used at the *Pedro Cerrada* High school, where I did my *Practicum*. The idea was mainly to analyze books used at this moment in order to observe how students worked with those textbooks and to know what they thought about them through the survey. It is also significant to point out that I chose these two courses because I wanted to give an account of the design of activities, to establish a comparison between the two courses, to reveal if the speaking section in textbooks included activities related to pronunciation, cultural aspects, educational emotion mentioned in previous sections of the MA dissertation and that I consider fundamental in the teaching-learning process and in all, if they facilitate the students' improvement in the speaking skill. To do this, I have used a template in order to measure the frequency with which they appear in the two courses and lesson by lesson (See Appendix II).

Third, written questionnaires were distributed among students to know their opinions about the speaking section of their textbooks and to help me towards a more precise study of these materials (Appendix I I). Questionnaires were addressed to students of 2nd year of *Bachillerato*. There were seventy students from the different courses of *Bachillerato* (Humanities, Social Sciences and Science). They were chosen because of the age, in other words, they are older and they are in the last year so, they have seen more books and they may have more experience and more perspective on the use of textbooks than students of first or second year of *E.S.O*. The questionnaires were anonymous and all the questions (nine questions) were about the speaking section in their textbooks and materials from previous years, if they help them to develop or not the communicative competence. Some examples of the questions are: *¿Crees que el libro propone material suficiente y real para desarrollar la destreza de speaking?*, *¿Consideras que las actividades del libro en la sección de speaking se repiten en los libros de los diferentes cursos?*; *Si ves las actividades repetitivas, ¿Piensas que te permiten avanzar en tu competencia comunicativa?*; *¿Te parecen las actividades de speaking densas o monótonas?*

The survey was distributed in three days according to the timetables of the different courses. But it took just 10-15 minutes and students have to answer Yes-No questions although I gave them the possibility of longer answers if they considered suitable. An

important point is that questionnaires were written in Spanish in order to avoid misunderstandings. The reason why they were in Spanish is because of the low English level of students.

Furthermore, in order to obtain not only quantitative but also qualitative assessment on the students' experience in the classroom, I interviewed some students (4 students) about the possible influence of cultural elements in Spaniards' level of English. Interviews with all the teachers of the English department (5 teachers) took place too. I talked with them individually and the conversations were focused on analyzing the possible reasons why in our country English and in languages are not mastered.

With all this data, I found that students, teachers and me coincide in the fact that the speaking section of textbooks is not satisfactory in order to improve the communicative competence. In reference to students, in general terms, students gave similar answers, they are not happy with the textbooks and with their level of spoken English. There is a general interest in the learning of the language and almost all students think that languages are needed and important. However, there is also a lack of motivation because they think what they did in class is very boring. Concerning teachers, all of them agree on the importance of input, in the fact that it is not provided, they also share the same opinion with regards to the necessity of more hours in the teaching of a foreign language.

In all, I have had the opportunity to check that what I have seen in class, the lack of motivation, the poor materials provided by textbooks confirms my vision on the necessity of changing the materials and of creating a closer link with students, that is to say, to put into practice emotional education and to have a collaborative work based on a positive attitude, more interaction and a close work between teacher-students. In the same way, it coincides with what I have studied during the Master in subjects already mentioned and in other subjects like *Procesos de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje*.

At this point, I must mention the difficulties I have encountered when carrying out this research project. In particular, the main trouble has been the lack of time. On the one hand, to analyze more books with the aim of establishing more comparisons and to provide a more robust analysis would have been possible. On the other hand, it would have been of value to have time to design new activities according to the study I have carried out in textbooks. In spite of that, I have been able to give some proposals which I consider can help to change the competence of Spaniards in spoken English. For instance, I would have put into practice some activities designed for the work on cinema because many of them are focused on the speaking skill, I would have used authentic materials such as fragments of series like *Friends*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Downton Abbey*. I have learnt to take into account students' needs, the main features and characteristics of the class and I expect that it results in a productive and meaningful teaching-learning process.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

Throughout this dissertation I have tried to summarize the main subjects and the most important competences acquired in the *Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, bachillerato, formación profesional y enseñanzas de idiomas, artísticas y deportivas*. I have also aimed to reflect on all the competences and knowledge learnt during this year with the analysis of two essays that show my evolution and the acquisition of the contents of the Master.

In this sense, these two works (the essay on cinema and the research project) are interrelated because with both of them I have tried to propose new options and a shift in the focus given to the speaking skill. According to this, as a future teacher, all the work done with the research project and the essay on the cinema are going to be taken into account in order to provide a new orientation to the lessons and to the work on the speaking skill. I am going to give students the possibility of speaking in class, I am going to propose activities based on real life situations and trying to arouse interest, motivation and participation. For that, I am going to propose group work in order to develop the habit of speaking before many people and not only to work in pairs which, as I explained in the previous section, is one of the main mistakes that I find in textbooks. In relation to activities, another key element will be the adaptation of tasks and exercises according to students' needs and level. I am going to include role plays, games, group discussion, expositions, social networks, cooperative learning, workshops, creative writing activities, cultural activities. In this sense, I also take into account my lifelong learning process in order to update my knowledge on teaching and provide a top quality education to my students. Of course, I am going to propose a collaborative work in which students and teachers work together and pursue the same aim: to learn and to improve English.

In relation to this, it is worth remarking that during this Master and the school placements I found considerable aspects, for instance, during the elaboration of the research project my tutor facilitated me the work and helped in the implementation of my unit of work, the design of activities, time and classroom managements. The rest of the members of the English department were very collaborative and kind too. Without doubt, I cannot leave aside students. Thanks to them the *Practicum* and the research project have been successfully completed. In this sense, they have shown a positive attitude towards my lessons, I felt them very motivated and interested in the activities. Significantly, they were very focused on the exercises and their performance. As a result, I saw a very good atmosphere during the lesson and all the activities were very entertaining and successful. By the end of the *Practicum* students evaluated me. They gave their opinion about my lessons, attitude and exercises done. I received valuable and positive comments on my work, for instance, some of them said that I paid a lot of attention to them and to the understanding of grammar and exercises; they considered the activities I prepared for them very amusing and interesting.

Interesting too is the feedback from the teachers. Once, I implemented the activities, I talked with my tutor and she gave me her impressions about the lesson. In this regard,

she was satisfied with the materials and with the development of the lesson. Nonetheless, she advised me that class management and organization cannot be the same with all groups, for this reason, she suggested me that flexibility and adaptation are key elements in the teaching learning process. According to this, the context in which teaching is going to be developed is also an important factor to be taken into account because I can find big groups (classrooms with more than 30 students) or mixed abilities classes, cases like these can present a different organization of the lessons.

Last but not least, I do want to point out some competences I have acquired after doing this Master and this dissertation. I have learnt the procedures and techniques used in research. I have also learnt to observe students in order to see what they need, their strong points and the parts of English language they miss. I have learnt how to manage time so as to have time to implement all the activities and to fulfill the planning. It has also been important to learn how to act when students do not behave properly, to control them and to maintain the organization of the class because the speaking class was developed forming a big circle, so the whole group works together. I have also had the opportunity of thinking on ways and activities to motivate students and to arouse students' participation. This has been thanks to the direct contact with them during the *Practicum II* and *III*. I have learnt to prepare materials thinking on students, that is to say, the preparation of materials thinking on people, not imagining that the activities are for the first year of *E.S.O.* but thinking on the previous lesson and bearing in mind the whole group and in some occasions, concrete students. To learn to provide feedback constantly has been very important because I usually missed that point. And the last point has been to be aware of the importance of being close to student in order to work more productively and to develop the spoken interaction and the involvement of students. In this sense, it is very significant the role of teacher as researcher because he/she is going to develop new materials and improvements with different resources, which can be adapted to his/her students' needs and interests, considering them as whole group but also individually.

To conclude, after this Master, I am able to analyze and to take into account the Curriculum (contents and objectives) as the basis for my teaching. Methodology is another component learnt in this Master, that is to say, the various methods, activities, strategies and resources. To consider the context of the teaching-learning process has also been another relevant aspect studied and learnt in this course, elements such as the classroom, classmates, interactions, atmosphere in the classroom, the center, familiar, social, economic, political and cultural factors that influence on education. More competences I have acquired are those related to the design of Year Plans and Units of work. Attention has also been given to the several theories of learning and to evaluation in order to pay attention to students' results. The *Practicum* as I have already mentioned has contributed hugely to center the theory learnt in the different subjects.

Nonetheless, I still need to improve all these competences by putting them into practice with students. Experience, in other words, to be with students in the classroom and with time will give me the opportunity to define all these competences according to the students' needs, the center, the course and all the contextual factors resulting in an adequate and top quality teaching-learning process. In order to reach this, I will also contribute with a constant effort.

Accordingly, my proposals for the future are to improve my teaching experience by constantly adapting resources and methods following the current demands of society; to provide an autonomous and integrative learning; to give to my students an education where they are going to be involved, working with dynamic and funny materials but giving a great value to students' effort; in my teaching, society and individuals are going to be key elements, for this reason, I am going to give a significant role to attention to diversity and to a multicultural enrichment; in my teaching career it is going to be of great value to provide an education where students learn to be integrated in society, I mean, active and well-prepared individuals within society, men and women whose contribution to society is going to be positive and fruitful; as a teacher I am going to be completely committed to education, that is to say, I am going to spend time with my lifelong learning, I am going to be in contact with students' family and I am going to work with them, I am also to be involved in the project of education as a vehicle to change and to improve society and the world. These are my main proposals for the future with which I want to give the best of me and to be a good professional in my future teaching profession.

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