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A Comparative Methodological Analysis between Spanish and Norwegian ESL classes
Un análisis metodológico comparativo en clases de inglés como segundo idioma en España y Noruega

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to analyze the methodological differences in the English language teaching in Spain and Norway, exploring the approaches utilized in each country and their benefits and challenges. It seeks to explore how each country implements these methodologies, for which examples of activities and materials will be shown, providing a deeper understanding of their implication in the English classroom.

The reason for choosing these countries is that Spain is my country of origin and Norway is a country that ranks high in the educational analysis of PISA. Therefore, the study examines the methodological application in order to understand the reasons for the success of Norwegian teaching styles compared to the ones in Spain, according to the PISA results (2018).

Finally, the materials used will be discussed considering the benefits or drawbacks of each. Additionally, an analysis will be conducted to understand how the various methods can impact the learning outcomes, thus allowing for a comprehensive assessment of their effects.

Keywords

Teaching methodologies, SLA, educational Spanish system, educational Norwegian system, comparison.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar las diferencias metodológicas en la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa en España y Noruega, explorando los enfoques utilizados en cada país y sus beneficios y desafíos. Se busca investigar cómo cada país implementa estas metodologías, para lo cual se mostrarán ejemplos de actividades y materiales, brindando una comprensión más profunda de su implicación en el aula de inglés.

El motivo de elección de estos países se debe a que España es mi país de origen y Noruega es un país que ocupa una posición elevada en el análisis educativo de PISA. Por lo tanto, el

estudio examina la aplicación metodológica con el fin de comprender las razones del éxito de los estilos de enseñanza noruegos en comparación con los de España, según los resultados de PISA (2018).

Finalmente, se discutirán los materiales utilizados considerando sus respectivos beneficios o desventajas. Además, se realizará un análisis para comprender cómo los diferentes métodos pueden impactar en los resultados de aprendizaje, permitiendo una evaluación exhaustiva de sus efectos.

Palabras clave

Metodologías de enseñanza, adquisición de la segunda lengua, sistema educativo español, sistema educativo noruego, comparación.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language has gained significant relevance nowadays in the education context. Learning this language has become a need in a globalized world, where effective communication in English is essential both academically and professionally. Given this reality, the question arises as to how English teaching methodologies are being approached in different countries and how these differences can influence students' outcomes.

The objective of this dissertation is to analyze the differences between the methodologies used to teach English in Spanish and Norwegian schools, while emphasizing the importance of understanding and studying these differences. To achieve this, various methodologies in the English language are going to be explored and analyzed, namely significant learning and active methodologies, Project Based Learning (PBL), pair group, feedback and error correction, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and speaking skills.

All these methodologies will be defined in the theoretical framework, establishing the first point of the research. The theoretical foundations and principles of each methodology will be examined, providing a solid foundation for subsequent analysis and comparison of systems. In addition, the benefits and challenges of each approach will be explored.

Furthermore, the implementation of these methodologies in both countries, Spain and Norway, will be described pointing out the existent differences or similarities in terms of their application. The pedagogical approaches in each country will be examined as well as their curricula which influence the teaching methods in the English language.

The main part of the research will focus on the analysis of materials and activities used in the English subject in Spain and Norway as well as the practical implementation of the aforementioned methodologies. This analysis will allow the identification of the preferred

approaches and particularities in each country and the benefits or challenges of its application.

Finally, the findings of the comparative analysis of the methodologies in each country will be presented, discussing the results and highlighting the pedagogical implications. The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of how different methodologies can influence the display of activities while providing valuable information for the improvement of teaching programs in both countries.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Significant learning/active methodologies

Significant learning is a proposal made by Ausubel in 1963 in an essay called *The Psychology of Meaningful Verbal Learning: An Introduction to School Learning* (Grune & Stratton qtd. in Moreira, 2017). This essay describes the importance of an education where children can create a significance of the things they learn, giving them a meaning and moving beyond being only things to be learnt by memory.

As it is said by Moreira (2017), significant learning is a process where the new knowledge is related to the previous knowledge of an individual. That is to say, learning is converted into significant learning because a person is activating his cognitive intelligence by trying to remember the things that have been learnt before and that are on his mind. Following the depiction in Moreira's text (2017), Ausubel (1963) argues that in this type of learning there is no necessity to discover but students should attribute meaning to the new knowledge they receive in order to make it significant. It is something that depends on students' intention, because if they only try to memorize the contents, the materials and the result of the process will be acquired in a mechanical and non-significant way. Thus, pupils should show an intentionality during the learning process and should have an active role and store the knowledge in the cognitive structure, while the materials given should be significant (Moreira, 2017).

Furthermore, significant learning has the influence of active methodologies. As Diaz Peláez and Serna (2013) claim, an active methodology is a process whereby the child is the main character in his learning and the teacher has a second role, standing by when students need help but leaving them space to experiment and test. The teacher should create activities to potentiate their critical thinking and creativity while they solve real problems and work with their classmates. These active methodologies can be implemented in many ways and teachers should know which one fits best for their students. Some active methodologies could be cooperative learning, competence learning, task-based problems, problem-based learning, to name but a few (Bernal González & Martínez Dueñas, 2009).

2.2 Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning (hereafter PBL) is one of the teaching methods described in the essay called ''The teaching method'' written by William Heard in 1918, who expressed that students could develop independence and social values through this approach. The method started to gain recognition and, in the 1970s, it was spread worldwide by Dewey, a philosopher who considered that the way children learn is through living experiences and solving practical problems, thus emphasizing the importance of creating meaning in school subjects and gaining real experience (Knoll, 1997).

PBL can be defined as a type of methodology based in organizing the class around projects, wherein students work together in order to solve different tasks the teacher sets out (Thomas, 2000; Larmer, Markham & Ravitz, 2003; Bell qtd. in Putri, Artini & Nitiasih, 2017). According to Solomon (2003), students are responsible for deciding how to approach a task while involved in it because they need to use critical thinking in the same way adults do, learn ways of communication to others and show how much learning they have acquired.

A significant characteristic of PBL is that students feel much more motivated due to the activity put forward, as it is related with real life experiences and situations they will face in their future. Moreover, students have an active role, something that is linked to active methodologies and significant learning mentioned above, with the objective of learning by themselves instead of the teacher being the person that transmits the knowledge. In doing so, the teacher acquires a second role and places emphasis on students, who are the constructors of their learning. Finally, the projects could be done in different times, having an extensive or reduced duration (Muga, 2018).

Another benefit of PBL is that, according to Muga (2018), teachers can take into account students' individual differences. Pupils do not have the same way of learning nor the same interests. In addition to this, the brain is susceptible to new things, which means that if teachers offer new materials or methodologies, children will probably be more focused on what they learn, due to the significant stimulus. Related to significant learning, students are going to store the information in their brains if they link new academic information with previous experiences. What is more, this methodology allows for diversity, favoring students

with different backgrounds while benefiting their collaborative abilities by working together, learning with their peers and developing their communicative skills.

2.3 Work in pairs or small groups

According to Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1999), Cooperative Learning is based on working together to achieve the same goals as a group, using reduced groups in which students work to maximize their own and the others' learning. Johnson & Johnson (1999) defines Cooperative Learning as the use of small groups in class wherein students work together to achieve a common goal and help each other during the learning process. Therefore, it is a methodology that assumes that students are responsible participants in the process and can learn on their own (Oxford, 1997), in contrast with the type of learning in which students need to be the best in class, obtain high marks and compete with each other to succeed (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1999).

Cooperative Learning is a tool teachers can use in order to emphasize the interaction between children and contents, thus acquiring them in a deeper way because of the several benefits it contains, such as an increase in the academic performance, motivation, autonomous working, to name but a few (Gallach & Catalán, 2014). With this type of learning, students can help each other into achieving learning goals, building learning together, with an emphasis on cooperation rather than competitiveness (Gallach & Catalán, 2014). Thus, by using this methodology, learning is expected to go beyond contents and foster cooperative skills, team work, autonomy and responsibility development, critical thinking, as well as acceptance of belonging to a group (Gallach & Catalán, 2014).

2.4 Feedback & Error correction

Feedback depends on the teacher and can be applied in different ways. When teachers use feedback, they need to have in mind that students are not homogeneous and, consequently, different methods should be used depending on the case. There are different types of feedback such as negotiation of meaning, feedback on errors, corrective feedback (which is divided into six different types), to name some (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The negative

feedback is based on different strategies of correction such as repetitions and clarification requests, among others, that can be implemented when communication breaks down, especially among young learners when working in pairs or groups (Cook, 2015). According to Long (qtd. in Cook, 2015), negative feedback can facilitate the acquisition of morphology, syntax and lexical structures, as it improves language acquisition in those cases in which negotiation is unresolved, facilitating the answer directly. Yet it is important to implement positive feedback in which the teacher points out the aspects carried out correctly, such as pronunciation, fluency, grammar or vocabulary, in order to develop self confidence in students.

Errors are expected in the learning process of students as a part of it. In fact, both teachers and students can commit them (Gower, Phillips and Walters qtd. in Jhumoor, 2009). According to Gower, Phillips and Walters (2009), there are different types of correction. Self-correction, for instance, allows students to explore where the mistake is and receive support in case they need it. Another one is student-student correction in which, if students cannot correct themselves, the teacher would look for a partner to help in the process of error correction. This technique has more benefits than the previous one because it implies cooperative work, listening and helping others. The last technique is teacher correction which should be resorted to in case the previously mentioned ones have proved insufficient or ineffective. This can be done by stopping and explaining the difficulty to the entire class or asking other students to provide the correct answer or explanation.

Error correction in the foreign language classroom has a large impact on children because it either makes pupils feel more confident while speaking the language or has the opposite effect. Plenty of research has been conducted on how teachers use error correction in the classroom and some research shows that teachers give more importance to articulating a whole phrase grammatically correct rather than committing some errors but having a great communication and comprehension (Hanzeli qtd. in Hendrickson, 1978).

There are also contradictory studies. Cathcart and Olsen (qtd. in Oladejo, 1993) argue that children want teachers to correct their errors, while Walker (qtd. in Hendrickson, 1978) says that students feel less confident when teachers correct most of their mistakes. Interestingly, another study made by Fanselow (1977) shows that teachers tend to correct children directly, highlighting the errors and providing the correct answer. According to Gower, Phillips and

Walters (1995), the principle that should be followed is that children learn more effectively if they are the ones that correct their own mistakes rather than being corrected by the teacher, precisely because it makes them reflect on and understand the reason behind the error.

2.5 ICTs

The Information and Communication Technologies (from now on ICTs) date back to 1950, when technology had a vast impact on the realms of radio and television, which have long stood as the pioneering forms of communication. These technologies have not only revolutionized interpersonal communication but also demonstrated extensive utility across various domains, as in education. In 1970, information technology started to be used in education as an educational approach, being a way to look for information and a helpful tool in the learning process. In 1980 the influence of technology in education started to be studied, providing various explanations and critiques regarding the process. Furthermore, in 1990 they started observing how teachers act in school with the application of technology in the classroom, organizing activities and observing experiences (Vidal, 2006).

ICTs are experiencing an increasingly exponential use in the educational field, as schools are incorporating their use in classrooms due to the demands of a technology-driven society. According to Bao Dihn (qtd. in Sabiri, 2019) the use of technology in classrooms could be beneficial for children because they can be more motivated with the use of electronic devices such as computers or tablets. However, one research carried out in a school in Galicia revealed that the use of the ICTs in the classroom was reduced to entertainment such as games due to the amount of contents to be tackled and, most outstandingly, most teachers considered themselves as technologically misinformed, leading them into feeling insecure and reluctant to use technology in class (Vidal, 2006).

Social media allows people to learn in many ways, including informal ones, because people are exposed to information that can be learnt at any moment and students can learn more outside the classroom. That is why schools should integrate technology in order to take advantage of it, structuring students' knowledge and exploiting all the opportunities and functionalities it offers (Marqués, 2012). Social media and technology have a significant influence on our society, changing the way people live and the activities they do, not only

during free time but even at work or school. Thus, teachers should be adapted to the demands of society and should start including the use of technology in the classroom, thus providing students with the necessary tools to develop their digital competence.

2.6 CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL) is "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language'' (Coyle et al. qtd. in Cenoz, Genesee & Gorter, 2013). In *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (2021), whose acronym was invented in the 1990s (Ball & Lindsay, 2013), there are three approaches. Firstly, it is the language of learning, a concept that emphasizes learning the content through the second language. In such a case, students acquire knowledge and skills in a specific subject while using the target language as the medium of instruction, so the language becomes the means to learn the concepts, topics and skills of the subject. Secondly, language for learning implies using the language in different situations, both teachers and students, as a tool for learning and communicating content. For this, students need strategies that allow them to learn and use the language in an effective way, develop vocabulary, grammatical structures and communicative skills necessary to comprehend, and express ideas related to the content. Finally, language through learning is related to the previous ones since, in order to have effective learning, students need to use language in real situations, involving themselves in talking and thinking in that language. Thus, the second language is taught in an integrated and contextualized manner in relation to the topics and concepts of the content, and students acquire the target language in a more natural way.

Coyle (qtd. in Cenoz, Genesee & Gorter, 2013) highlights several aspects to be included in the teacher's planning, prioritizing the content, that is, what is going to be taught, the objectives of the lessons, and the learning outcomes. In this part, students should use the language in an active way, for which teachers need to plan the specific vocabulary to be learnt as well as the communicative strategies between students. Teachers should also think about the ways to make children reflect on their own understanding and the appropriate approaches for each content, thus fostering students' thinking skills. Lastly, it is important for students to approach the language they are studying from an intercultural perspective.

CLIL has a significant impact nowadays due to the society that young generations are exposed to and its demands, which are constantly changing. In addition, the approach has been supported by the European Union since 1995, as the organism considers CLIL an effective and valuable approach for the learning process of a second language (Georgiou, 2012).

2.7 Speaking skills

This is one of the four skills that are included in the learning process of a language and it is considered, together with writing, an active skill. The speaking skill has progressively acquired importance due to the demandings of society as people need to take part in conversations and in real-life situations (Rao, 2019). Moreover, as the English language is one of the most spoken languages around the world, developing its speaking skill is necessary so as to communicate effectively with people from different parts of the world.

Rao (2019) argues that some teachers used to teach speaking skills by giving their students texts to memorize and repeat. This way of teaching has nonetheless changed because the demands are changing as students need to use the language to communicate to others. Moreover, according to Rao (2019), the most difficult part is oral communication because people need to have a variety of vocabulary and grammar structures and use it while speaking. Thus, people need to think and speak at the same time to have that demanding fluency.

In *How languages are learned* by Lightbown and Spada (2013), it is said that children who are learning a second language go through the same process as when learning their mother tongue, using words and structures alone and, afterwards, developing more complex communicative skills while acquiring vocabulary and grammar (p.7). According to the authors, it is important for children to learn the language in the classroom and interact with each other in order to succeed, providing students with opportunities in which they can speak freely while correcting their errors when necessary, so that they can learn from them and avoid repeating them (p.157).

3. Comparative Study of Spanish and Norwegian Methodological Frameworks

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3.1 Significant learning/active methodologies

According to the Curriculum of the Spanish autonomous community of Aragón, *Orden ECD/1112/2022, de 18 de julio, por la que se aprueban el currículo y las características de la evaluación de la Educación Primaria y se autoriza su aplicación en los centros docentes de la Comunidad Autónoma de Aragón,* teachers should give importance to active methodologies in which students are the most important part of the learning process and teachers should have in mind the interests of their pupils and elaborate activities with a meaningful and significant purpose in which students have an active role.

As for the Curriculum of Norway, there are no significant differences compared to the Spanish Curriculum. The Norwegian Curriculum also refers to an active education in which pupils can experiment on their own and do different types of activities whereby they can appreciate the importance of learning English to communicate with others in real-life situations and for their working life (Curriculum for English Programme Subjects, 2020). The Curriculum considered that pupils learn English by doing, not just by listening to explanations. Thus, students should step outside the classroom and experience the activities prepared by the teacher, providing a context that would predate the explanations (Munden & Myhre, 2020).

In Spain, teachers usually create activities in which students are the main subjects. The teacher functions as an occasional aid providing help when needed, but s/he is not responsible for leading the activity. In Norway, on the other hand, the Curriculum refers to different core elements, the first one being communication. The way to implement it is having an active role and a significance for the students' future, by providing them with situations similar to real life, thus leading students to experience the language and to connect the previous knowledge with the new one.

3.2 Project Based Learning

PBL has a considerable importance in Spain and it is widely implemented in the classroom. The teacher poses a problem pupils need to solve in the way they consider better and more successful as they have the help of the teacher when needed (García & Pérez, 2017). Moreover, the Curriculum of Aragón (2013) emphasizes the importance of PBL as a way to explain students the objectives of the task and, more significantly, its importance for them.

In Norway, PBL focuses on team work and collaboration in order to improve different kinds of abilities such as students' communication of personal feelings to others and knowing how to be a leader or being led by others (Curriculum of Norway, 2020).

As has been argued, both curricula display similarities in PBL application, despite the fact that the Spanish Curriculum places greater emphasis on PBL rather than the Norwegian Curriculum. Additionally, in Spain the implementation of PBL is usually divided into different sessions, with a connecting thread among them, while in Norway, PBL is not as extensively spread over time or is often limited to a single session.

3.3 Work in pairs or small groups

In Norway they work more practical than theoretical things, paying more attention to interdisciplinary topics such as life in society and citizenship. They do it in the English subject with the help of the teacher, knowing the culture of the language they are studying and its cultural importance (Curriculum of Norway, 2020). Moreover, thanks to the information provided by a Norwegian teacher in an interview, it seems to be important to promote pair and group work at school so that pupils can acquire social and friendship values, as well as the sense of belonging to a team, working collaboratively and learning from each other. However, the Curriculum does not go deeper into that topic although it has importance on real class situations.

On the other hand, in the Curriculum of Aragón (2013), cooperative learning and team work are emphasized in order to develop competences and tools that children can use in their future, like problem solving. Teachers should create a good environment where children

know the importance of individual work, pair work and team work. Team work is considered important in Spain due to the benefits it has such as the motivation children feel working with their peers, and reaching a more meaningful way of learning due to the influence of their classmates, which often surpasses that of the teacher. This type of learning has several benefits for the pupils: it helps them to develop their social abilities and the interaction with others, improve their personal learning process and, most importantly, learn how to cooperate with others in order to achieve a common goal (Gillies & Boyle, 2010).

In Norway, it is usually implemented with communicative activities, as indicated by the Curriculum, dividing students into pairs or small groups and letting them talk to their classmates, expressing themselves and adapting the vocabulary and language to each situation. In Spain, it is considered an opportunity for children to interact with others and develop their personalities with the influence of their peers. There are several applications of this methodology, such as speaking or writing activities, in which the learning how to work and communicate with others is intended.

3.4 Feedback & Error correction

Teaching English in Norway (2013) highlights the fact that making errors in second language acquisition is a common phenomenon, starting from the premise that teachers who speak English as a second language can also make mistakes, the same as students do. Additionally, teachers can demonstrate that there are times they do not always have an answer for all the questions posed by students, showing in this way that they can also experience uncertainty. *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language* (2013) talks about the reformulation method in which students should have an active role and teachers should try to correct errors in a way that students do not feel afraid of committing mistakes. The reformulation was based on paraphrasing the mistake that a student made, saying the same as the pupil but remarking the error in order to allow him or her to identify the error made.

In Spain, the Autonomous Curriculum states that errors in communication allow children to improve and should be considered as a tool for the teacher when giving support. The teacher should explain students that making mistakes is normal and is part of the learning process, thus encouraging them not being afraid of making them and see them in a positive way. The

methodological suggestions of the Curriculum says that errors should be pointed out by the teacher with extreme care, not having much negative effects for pupils in order to prevent students from becoming demotivated with the language and fostering self-confidence in the language instead.

As mentioned above, in Norway emphasis is placed on the idea that feedback and error correction are primarily centered around teachers correcting students' mistakes, especially in speaking. Consequently, this should be done constructively so that students do not doubt themselves. In Spain, this is carried out through various types of activities, such as oral presentations, which can be done in groups or pairs. Feedback is provided to groups once they finish their presentation, allowing them to learn in two ways: they learn how to give feedback to others and also receive feedback from others, enabling them to identify and correct their own mistakes.

3.5 ICTS

In Spain, the use of technology has been implemented in the last few years due to the modernization of society and the common use of technology between teachers and students in their daily lives. According to the Curriculum of the Autonomous Region, incorporating technology into the English language learning process can offer benefits for students. Additionally, teachers can utilize ICTs as a tool to support themselves in the teaching process. Moreover, it mentions the motivation that this will provide students, because they use the internet more and more nowadays, and implementing it during class will make them feel entertained apart from learning the subject.

As mentioned before, Norway has also implemented digital resources due to the demands of society. Neokleous (2019) carried out a qualitative study in which a group of students was asked different questions about their attitudes towards the digital resources used during classes. In their responses they argued that digital management should be integrate as a mandatory skill in their classrooms and it would be a way of doing more entertaining classes as students would have the chance to interact with their friends and do different activities while they speak freely without being judged (Neokleous, 2019). Nevertheless, as stated in *Twinkle Twinkle* (2020), there is not much information about the benefits or drawbacks of

digital skills in the first years of primary school, because Norwegian schools has only started to implement it in education (p.21).

The approach of the ICTs in Spain is understood as the use of technology as a method to learn new things and a tool teachers must use in their teaching methods. In some schools, they work with iPads or tablets and computers instead of books, which means that education is significantly changing so as to meet the necessities of a modern society, influenced by technology. It is a tool that seems to have several advantages in education, with students being more motivated due to it. In Norway, the Curriculum shows digital skills as one of the skills students should achieve, but they give more importance to outdoor education and learning by being in contact with nature and experiencing.

3.6 CLIL

In Spain CLIL is becoming more and more popular, with implementations in different subjects such as math, geography or biology in which language and content are integrated in order to fulfill the necessities of a globalized world (Cañado, 2012). Studies show that students often feel more motivated with the language they are learning when they use it to learn other subjects, helping many of them to become bilingual. Not only is this beneficial for students, but also for teachers who had to change their practices and methodologies in order to work together with teachers from other subjects, contemplating new materials and interdisciplinary concepts (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010).

Nevertheless, in Norway, this type of practice is relatively new, being mostly implemented in Secondary schools, although it has already shown several benefits of using a language while learning other subjects (Nikula, T., Dalton-Puffer, C., & García, A. L., 2013). According to *Content and Integrated Language Learning,* in Norway it is common to use this program primarily for improving the linguistic competence of students, due to the importance of English in the country, as it is the most important foreign language. Moreover, a study carried out by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) show that students who have worked under this program have significantly improved on their language and communicative skills, apart from being highly motivated in the process.

As stated previously, Spanish schools are starting to incorporate CLIL programs with some subjects being progressively taught in the target language. For instance, in *Escolapias Pompiliano* school*,* located in Zaragoza, only one subject is taught each year in English. For example, Primary starts with natural science taught in English and another year the same is done with music, having in this way an approach to a bilingual education. In Norway it is less common than it is in Spain, however, due to the benefits this type of methodology shows, more schools are including it in their programs, showing similarities with the way it is carried out in Spain.

3.7 Speaking skills

Norway is a country recognized for the emphasis it places on the development of communicative skills when learning a language. As it is mentioned in *Teaching English in Norway (2013)*, the way children develop their personal speaking skills is by taking an active part in talking because they need to practice talking to their classmates and to the teacher. The National Curriculum shows basic skills that students need to achieve, highlighting first oral skills. Pupils should improve their communicative and oral skills in order to communicate with others in formal and informal situations, use a variety of vocabulary and choose the vocabulary depending on the situation they face (Curriculum of Norway, 2020). Connecting this topic with the above, CLIL is a way they use to implement the speaking skill because teachers provide students with real situations in the classroom where they can have conversations and exchange information with a meaning as well as to improve the oral skills in order to avoid potential difficulties (Gjessing, 2016).

In comparison to several years ago when greater emphasis was placed on memorizing grammatical structures and vocabulary, communicative skills are considerably gaining importance in Spain. The Curriculum of Aragón (2013) emphasizes the importance of enhancing the development of speaking skills, aiming to enable students to achieve fluent communication in the language and successfully communicate in real-life situations. However, there seems to exist a lack of communication in English in Spain because students do not live real situations apart from the ones in the classroom, which limits their possibilities of taking part in conversations (Linguistic Competence of the European Union, 2012). Moreover, children usually do not feel comfortable speaking in the language and, according

to the European Conservatory of languages (2014), the English education in Spain seems to be more based on theoretical aspects (as grammar and vocabulary) rather than practical ones (as speaking), which means that children are more focused on learning a language in a theoretical way. Nevertheless, nowadays there is a progressive change towards a competence-based learning approach, wherein children can interact with their classmates and the teacher in order to improve in all skills.

There are significant differences between the two countries in the importance they give to oral skills. In Norway the approach they use is summarized in learning how to speak by doing in real situations created in the classroom. Moreover, it has a special value in the Curriculum, as it is included in one of the skills children need to achieve. In Spain writing activities are still more emphasized than the speaking ones and the latter is done by applying the vocabulary and grammar learnt or by having stated conversations or asking targeted questions that require specific responses, instead of allowing students to freely express themselves, thus restricting their ability to engage in meaningful and authentic conversations.

4. ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS

This final degree dissertation follows a case-study design, conducting an in-depth analysis of the methodologies and materials used in the English subject in Norway and Spain, along with the benefits or challenges each country experienced.

According to PISA results (2018), Norway is a country which grants significant importance to equality in education and adopts a student-centered approach, in which students participate actively in the learning process and strive to achieve the established goals. During the internship experience done in October 2022, it was observed that teachers in Norway adopt a practical approach, giving more importance to verbal communication and hands-on experiences rather than focusing on theoretical aspects.

As mentioned before, the curriculum of the autonomous country of Spain also emphasizes significant learning and adopts a student-centered approach, departing from the traditional teaching methods of the past. Nevertheless, compared to Norway, Spain still emphasizes the acquisition of theoretical concepts rather than teaching students how to apply their knowledge in real life situations or providing them with opportunities for meaningful interaction with others, a crucial aspect in the development of their personality and identity.

In the materials gathered from both countries, there is a clear difference in the methodological application. While in Spain the approach involves starting with the study of grammar and vocabulary related to the topic being taught, in Norway they focus on direct engagement in activities, giving students time to think about what they want to say and practice through speaking. The difference in this methodology is that in Spain activities normally begin with writing and vocabulary acquisition and in Norway learning takes place through interaction and real conversations.

In Norway, significant learning is achieved through an activity that involves practicing grammar and vocabulary learnt in previous classes through speeches. Firstly, the teacher explains the methodology for creating a proficient speech, emphasizing the importance of outlining three main concepts that will be subsequently developed in their speech. The teacher says the different topics and pupils choose one of them, considering what they want

to say, and proceed to present their speeches to the rest of the class in small groups. As mentioned above, this approach allows students to activate their vocabulary in a meaningful way by engaging in conversations with their peers, without relying on guided conversations *(Teaching English in Norway,* 2013, p.127).

In Spain, the activity to work in a significant way is divided into different sessions. In the first session, the topic is introduced to students, informing them that they should start planning a trip for the summer holidays. The teacher initiates a discussion by asking questions about various aspects to be organized, such as accommodation, activities, transportation, and more. The class is divided into groups, each assigned a different city. The goal of the activity is to create a ''Holiday book'' in which students record travel information. Subsequently, students have time to search for information in the computer room, gathering relevant data and recording it in a table.

In the second session, students focus on searching for accommodation and are introduced to useful vocabulary related to the topic, as well as structures to express desires. In the following session, they create boarding passes with flight information, and new vocabulary about transportation is taught to help them navigate from the airport to the hotel. In the next session, students will need to decide which activities they will engage in. In the sixth session, a simulation of the travel day takes place, incorporating new vocabulary. During this simulation, the teacher acts as if boarding groups are being called to board their flights. Finally, students hand in their ''Holiday book'' to the teacher, expressing what they have learned, what they enjoyed the most and what they would change (Sanz, 2017).

A way to implement significant learning is through PBL, a methodology common in Spain. The teacher presents a problem which the pupils need to solve by working in teams and searching for solutions in the best way possible. It has some advantages such as promoting team work, providing firsthand experience in problem-solving, and fostering a feeling of membership. Moreover, working with peers potentiates a deeper learning and understanding of the concepts, as students feel comfortable collaborating with children of the same age. (Álvarez-Herrero, 2018).

In Norway this is less important because group activities are done by paying attention to leadership in education, which has gained importance over the years. The process emphasizes

the value of appreciating leaders and giving them both individual and group responsibilities, with the teachers' support when required. Moreover, it is also remarkable for teachers to be leaders. According to Bøe et al (2022), Norwegian teachers prioritize leading activities by acting as mediators and emphasizing social and emotional relations between pupils, observing their ways of working and interacting.

The activity for PBL in Norway is implemented through a theater project, in which students are divided into groups and are given the task of choosing a topic, with the help of the teacher in case it is needed. When the groups have chosen their topic, the class moves to the technology room where they can research for information and ideas. Afterwards, students need to write the plot and create the characters, with freedom to plan their project, fostering their creativity. The final stage of the project involves presenting their theater to the rest of the class, determining first the format and materials needed for the presentation. In summary, PBL in Norway involves the following steps: planning the project freely, carrying out the project during class time and presenting the completed project (*Teaching English in Norway,* 2013, p.126).

In Spain, an example of PBL activity was provided by a teacher from José Antonio Labordeta school, in Zaragoza. The activity took place during the Science and Technology Fair and involved students from 5th and 6th grade of primary school. The school integrates second language learning with the natural science subject area. The purpose of this fair was for students to exchange scientific and technological experiences, conduct experiments, and present their research in the form of posters (see annex 1), which would later be exhibited with a limit of 8 minutes. The objectives of the activity were to foster creativity and imagination, promote collaboration, and develop oral skills that allow students to improve their oral expression in the language. Additionally, students worked under Sustainable Development Goals number 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land) throughout the activity (Gobierno de Aragón, VIII Edición de la Feria de Ciencias y Tecnología en Lengua Extranjera, 2023).

In this specific case, the materials show similarities between both countries. In both Norway and Spain, ICTs are utilized to research information necessary to complete the activity. Cooperation among students is emphasized in order to achieve the desired outcome, and imagination and creativity are needed to show their ideas to others. Nevertheless, there are

differences in the approaches, such as the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within PBL in Spain, which is not mentioned in Norway. Moreover, Norway does not present students with a real problem to solve as in Spain, so it is reduced to an activity where pupils need to work with other people and be creative.

The distribution of PBL could be approached in many different ways, and an effective method is pair work. As stated in the Curriculum of Aragón (2013), teachers are encouraged to create activities and challenges that promote collaborative work among students. Dividing the class into pairs provides an opportunity to engage in speaking activities, as students often feel more comfortable communicating with one partner rather than being in a larger group. This approach reduces the potential of embarrassment and encourages greater participation and interaction.

In Norway, working with others is also highlighted, with an additional focus on recognizing existing leaders within the classroom and groups, expressing their ideas without causing harm to others' feelings and developing an open mind that accepts different comments and thoughts. According to *Teaching English to Children* (1990), working in pairs in the language classroom is highly beneficial as it ensures that every student is engaged and tasks can be completed at different times, making sure that students understand what is expected from them when they are instructed to work in pairs.

In Spain, the autonomous Curriculum of Aragón (2013) provides an activity that involves cooking a recipe as a collaborative project. The teacher presents the task to the class, stating that students need to prepare a dish together. In this particular case, they have to make a healthy pizza. Firstly, students need to determine their roles and responsibilities, engaging in English language discussions to negotiate and explain their ideas. Each pair needs to work together to achieve a common goal, thus encouraging collaboration and coordination and emphasizing the importance of effective communication and cooperation.

The activity in Norway was taken from *Teaching English to Children* (1990, p.43) and is designed for 10-11-year-old children to work in pairs. Each pair is given two different maps: map A and map B. The student with map A is responsible for explaining the locations of various places on the map, including nearby shops or landmarks, and providing directions on how to get to those places to the student with maps B (see annex 2). The student with map B

is required to ask questions about the location, and afterwards the roles are switched. Through this activity, pupils work on specific vocabulary while practicing their communication skills.

Another important aspect is the correction of errors and feedback in the English language subject. In Norway, attention is not only given to the errors made by children but also to the errors made by teachers, emphasizing the fact that teachers are not superior to students. The book *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language* (2013) says that teachers should acknowledge that they do not know the answer to a question and assure it is alright.

However, in Spain the Curriculum states that teachers should underline the errors children make with extreme care in order to avoid them hating the process of learning the subject, although there is no mention towards teachers' mistakes. In addition, in Spain it is common to work with peer feedback to correct errors and give support to others, which is beneficial for students as they are supposed to be less afraid of being corrected by an equal.

The Norwegian activity proposed is the following: Norwegian students face challenges with the pronunciation of ''v'' and ''w'' sounds. Teachers provide them with techniques to pronounce these letters correctly, such as pronouncing an ''o'' in front of the letter ''w'' when the word begins with ''w''. They also instruct students to place their upper teeth against their lower lip when saying the letter ''v''. To practice and improve their pronunciation, students are divided into pairs. One student reads a text containing words that require the specific pronunciation, while the other student listens carefully and provides feedback when necessary. The teacher circulates among the pairs, occasionally asking students to pronounce words to assess their accuracy and correct any mistakes if required (*Teaching English in Norway*, 2013, p.122).

In Spain, a common activity to work on feedback is through oral presentations. Students are assigned the task of doing a presentation of a topic of their choice. After the presentation, the rest of the class asks questions and provides oral and written feedback, explaining what they liked the most and which things could be improved. For the written feedback, the teacher shares "two stars and a wish card" (see annex 3) that students need to complete in order to give feedback to the groups. With this activity, each group learns how to give and receive feedback in order to improve their own practices as well as practicing speaking and writing skills.

As demonstrated by these materials, there are similarities in how both countries make children play an active part in error correction. By engaging in this type of activities, children firstly learn while actively participating in the activity itself and, secondly, learn by actively listening to others and paying attention to correcting errors. In Spain, one method used to correct errors and provide feedback is through oral presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions. During this activity, students develop their speaking skills by delivering the oral presentation, and engage in error correction by identifying mistakes and asking questions related to the presentations. In Norway, the focus of the activity is primarily on pronunciation. Norwegian individuals often struggle with pronouncing certain words, so they pay particular attention to correcting it.

Moreover, the use of ICTs in education has significantly improved over the years. Spain, in particular, has embraced the implementation of electronic devices in the classroom. Nowadays, many schools have replaced traditional books with tablets or computers. These technological tools have gained popularity due to their multifunctionality in education, particularly in assisting students in accessing information quickly and effortlessly.

On the contrary, in Norway, great importance is given to outdoor education, known as "friluftsliv" or "free-air-life" in English. This approach is considered a defining feature of the Norwegian education system (Vigane & Sæther, 2020). During the internship period, the classroom would frequently venture into the forest, engaging in play and exploration while the teacher observed students' activities. A study conducted by the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning (2021) emphasizes the significance attributed to this approach, as it contributes to the development of a positive attitude towards nature.

In the Norwegian activity, students are organized into groups and tasked with creating oral presentations on the topic of "Broken Britain". They are required to discuss whether this term accurately describes present-day United Kingdom, using the statement "Is Britain Broken?" as their starting point. The activity begins with students providing a description of the term and then delving into a discussion that covers various aspects, such as the country's history, the royal family, living conditions, and the media. To submit their work and presentations, students utilize the Fronter app. At the end of the week, they present their findings to the rest of the class. The objectives of this activity encompass expressing themselves coherently and

logically in both written and oral forms, conducting research using ICTs, and carefully selecting information from diverse sources (Teaching English in Norway, 2013, p.135).

In Spain, the activity for the application of ICTs is from a thesis work (Villaescusa, 2014) that was put into practice in a classroom. This activity is designed for students in the 5th and 6th grades and is divided into multiple sessions. The focus of the activity is individual work, and the class gathers in the technology classroom to create a Notebook. In this Notebook, they are required to include a picture of an animal along with its corresponding English word as well as linking the website where they can listen to the pronunciation of the word. Once completed, each student must add their individually chosen animals to a group Notebook, which will then be uploaded to the virtual classroom allowing students to see each other's creations.

The existing similarities between both countries are evident, as the utilization of technology aims to facilitate information search on the internet. Additionally, in both countries, students are required to submit their work to interactive classrooms, where their creations can be viewed by other students who can provide comments and feedback on the final projects.

CLIL is a methodology that in Spain is extensively used in classrooms and it is implemented in order to have a more bilingual education. As has been said, it is a methodology where teachers from different subjects work together, teaching their subject in English and improving the children's language level because of its use on different subjects beyond the language classroom. The activity from Spain has been provided by a teacher from José Antonio Labordeta school for the science subject in which students learn the cells that animals and plants have. Students are divided into groups and must make an illustration of a cell, making use of other materials to generate ideas (see annex 4), and write the different parts that form an animal or a plant cell. With this activity, children are expected to learn specific vocabulary of the unit and deepen their understanding by doing the artwork through which they can appreciate and classify in a visual way all the parts of a cell.

In Norway, this type of methodology is not as known as in Spain and definitely not commonly used in primary schools. Nevertheless, it has been implemented in secondary schools showing an improvement on the learning of the English language. The activity in this case is similar to the one in Spain, because it deals with the same subject and is thought to

teach children new vocabulary words. The activity is called *What are ecosystems?* and the first lesson is based on a warm-up of an overview of the unit and then the elaboration of a list of useful vocabulary, checking students' previous knowledge. Afterwards, students play a game called *I bet it is true!* in order to check vocabulary comprehension. Before finishing the session, students are given time to think which animals live in dry or cool places and, finally, students need to do a chart classifying those animals. For the second lesson, the teacher starts asking students different questions about the places where animals live, such as ''does an elephant live in the same place as a polar bear?''. Then the class is divided in pairs and students need to think and decide where some animals live, classify habitats and pictures and then correct it all together (CLIL, Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010, p.75-83).

Finally, speaking skills are of significant importance in Norway, where they are primarily developed while doing different types of activities. That is to say, they usually do activities that involve oral communication rather than writing ones. The existing material consists of an activity called ''I can't give you my word'' wherein some students need to describe famous people while the others guess the person. The class is divided into groups and each person needs to write down a word about a famous person. Afterwards, the papers are put on the table and mixed, and then each person in the group has to pick a paper. Subsequently, students cannot look at their own papers and the papers must be held on their foreheads, allowing the rest to see the word. The other group members have to describe the famous person that others have on their paper until the person holding the paper on their forehead guesses who that person is. This is an interesting activity because students practice their speaking while playing and learn how to describe people, which makes the activity more motivating. (*Teaching English in Norway,* 2013, p. 125).

In Spain, speaking skills are gaining more and more importance due to the necessities of a society with a significant influence of the English language, which highly values individuals who possess proficiency in that language. Therefore, the current demand is to know English in order to access employment more easily, and it is taught in schools in order that children can acquire that language when they are young. The activity was given by a teacher from José Antonio Labordeta school in which students are divided into small groups and have to carry out oral presentations about the city of London. For this, not only the speaking skills are being worked on but students also work with ICTs as different digital platforms can be used

to create their presentations. Moreover, in the video provided, the group exposing used a card with added pictures from London decorated by students themselves (see annex 5).

Based on the internship experience in both countries, it was noted that in Norway more speaking activities are done during English lessons and a way schools use to implement speaking skills is by learning and singing songs or watching the news without subtitles. In the school where the internship took place, the teacher taught the class a song each week, which is considered something practical in Norway to improve communication and, therefore, speaking (*Twinkle Twinkle,* Myhre, 2020). In contrast, at the Spanish internship school the teacher used to follow the students' book, doing more written activities and dedicating less time to speaking activities compared to the Norwegian school, despite the fact that the Curriculum of Aragón (2013) expresses that all skills possess the same importance, aiming towards a globalized approach to education and the overall acquisition of the four skills, with a special focus on speaking and listening tasks in the first years of schools.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Through this study, different methodologies have been analyzed in terms of their implementation in two countries, Spain and Norway, aiming to assess which country achieves greater success in terms of learning objectives based on the approaches used. The study also explores the implications and challenges experienced when implementing these methodologies in classrooms. This has been achieved through a comparative analysis of both countries, examining the different pedagogical methods followed and materials research according to the learning models.

One of the findings of this dissertation is that Norway has a higher level of communicative skills compared to Spain. This can be attributed to the significant emphasis placed on communicative skills in Norwegian education, surpassing other skills. In addition, the influence of the English language in Norway is more noticeable due to its Anglo-Saxon roots as well as the limited availability of content in their native language, being constantly exposed to English through songs, movies and series, with many of them not even being translated to Norwegian. Furthermore, Norway places great importance on intonation and

pronunciation, teaching this from an early age which contributes to their proficiency and fluency in the language.

On the other hand, while CLIL programs are remarkable in Spain and serve as foundations to improve second language acquisition and exposure to the language, it has been challenging to find information about this methodology in primary education in Norway, as it is not used in many schools. Moreover, peer feedback and the use of ICTs have significant importance in Spain whereas outdoor education and experiential learning are highlighted in Norwegian schools.

Based on the collected materials, it is evident that in Spain all skills are equally important and there has been a change from traditional teaching methods to student-centered approaches. In Norway, the methodologies used are also active ones, with students taking an active role in constructing their own learning through experiences. However, the emphasis on communicative competences over written skills leads Norwegian students to have greater fluency in speaking and listening aspects of language while struggling with writing.

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ANNEXES INDEX

Annex 1:

Picture taken from an actual class in Jose Antonio Labordeta school.

Annex 2:

Picture taken from "Teaching English to students" (See references)
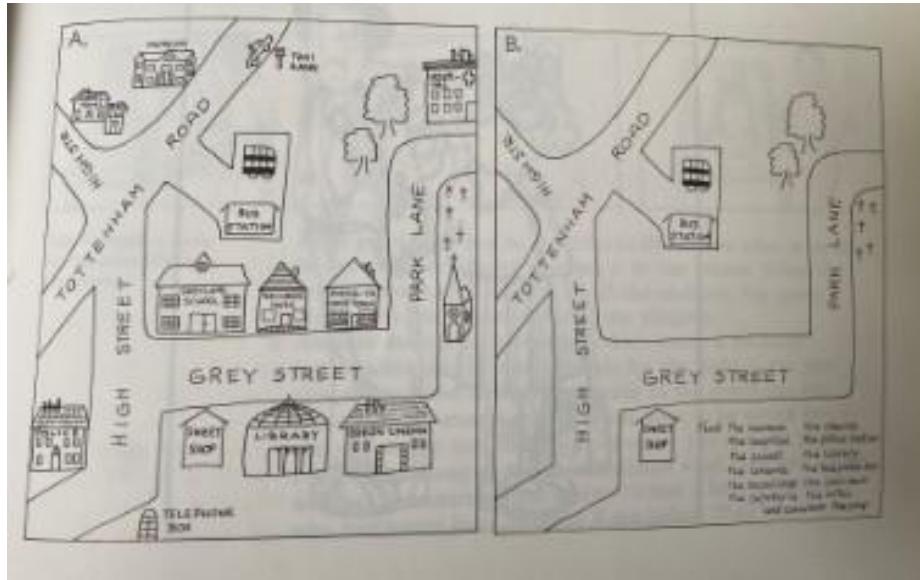
Annex 3:

Tool "2 stars and a wish" for Feedback and Error correction.

Two Stars and a Wish
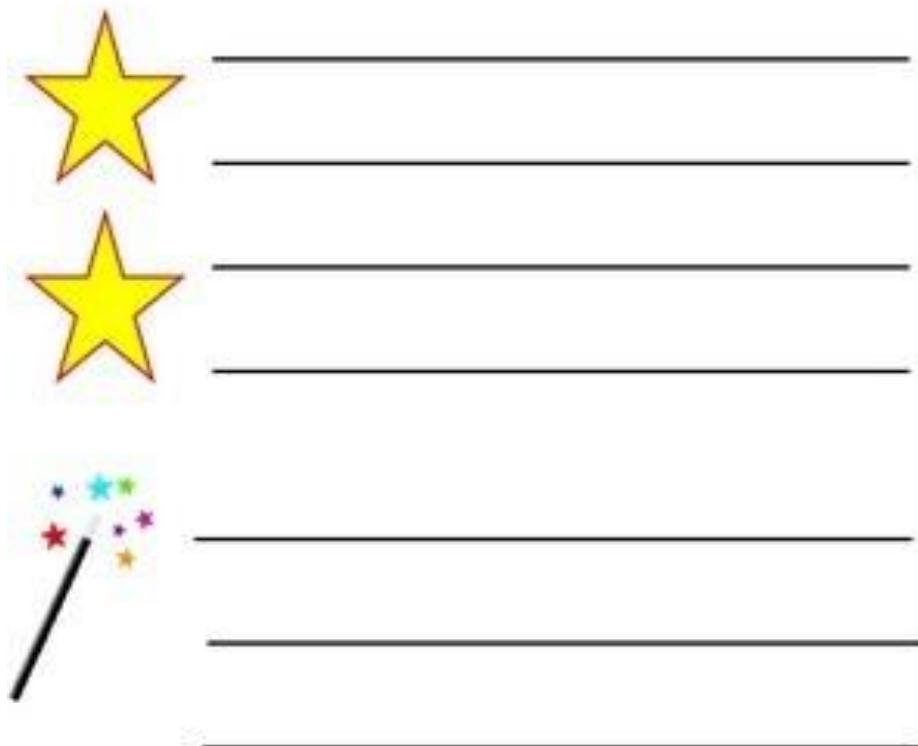
Annex 4:

Picture taken from an actual class in Jose Antonio Labordeta school.

Annex 5:

Picture taken from an actual class during a presentation from 5º Grade children in Jose Antonio Labordeta school.