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INTRODUCTION

Sir John Lubbock, the banker, Liberal politician, philanthropist and scientist once said, *"The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn"*(Lubbock, 1887). This quote reflects impeccably what I consider teaching should be; a matter of interest rather than an obligation for students.

From this consideration onwards, I will develop my critical analysis of the Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching. What follows is an original and integrating report in which I will first analyze the teaching profession from the relevant theoretical framework and from my own experience in the educational center. Once this analysis has been done, two different projects will be presented, projects which were elaborated in two of the subjects we completed throughout the Master, and they will be commented on from the perspective of their importance for my learning process in terms of language teaching.

I consider it important to mention and briefly comment on one of the most important documents that determine what a modern teacher of languages is and what it is expected from him or her; the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), designed in 2001. This document reflects the basic aims of the Council of Europe's linguistic policy. Its objective is to unify the guidelines for language teaching and learning within the European context. In other words, it consists of directions or directions on what language teaching should consist on. The CEFR includes a detailed description of the competence levels that show what a language user can do with the languages he or she knows or uses.

As the Council of Europe states, the final aim of language teaching is that students learn how to use the language in order to communicate. The students and users of a language are thought to be social agents; they are members of a society that have to fulfill some "tasks" under certain circumstances and within a specific context. These members will develop a series of communicative competences under specific conditions and restrictions, making use of the appropriate strategies so as to fulfill those "tasks". In other words, these considerations of the CEFR refer to the acquisition of the language as a way to carry out everyday life tasks. In addition, teaching and learning in Spain is regulated by the National Curriculum and, specifically, the Aragonese Curriculumin Aragon´s region, which follow the teaching and learning guidelines of the CEFR. So, taking this essential objective into account and also my personal experience during the teaching placements, I will next talk about what I have learnt in the Master in order to provide a context to the projects I have carried out throughout it.

Secondary School Working Conditions

All through this year, there are several aspects that have first caught my attention. In reference to the working conditions, I must say that from the way the educational system is organized and what the resources of the Secondary Education School are, as I have observed in the classes I assisted to in the Master and in the Secondary School of my placement, I have noticed the differences between theory and practice. In the first semester, in the subject *Contexto de la Actividad Docente*, I learnt how the Spanish educational system works, and what documents they rely on in order to organize the school resources and adequate the educational performance to the specific context. These documents are the following:

– Reglamento Orgánico de los I.E.S. (R.D. 83/1996. B.O.E.).

– Instrucciones que regulan la organización y funcionamiento de los Centros Docentes Públicos de E.S.O. (Orden 22 Agosto 2002. B.O.A.).

– Instrucciones de inicio de curso (D.G.A).

Drawing on these regulations established by the Ministry of Education and Regional educational authorities, each Secondary School elaborates the School-based Education Project (P.E.C.), which is considered to reflect the ideology of the school (analysis of the context, identity principles, main objectives, organization). This document includes several others that intervene in the working conditions, the organization and the resources of the centre. These documents are the following: P.C.E. (*Proyecto Curricular de Etapa*), R.R.I. (*Reglamento de Regulación Interna*), D.O.C. (*Documento de Organización del Centro*), and P.G.A (*Programación General Anual*). As considering every document on its own would take a lot of time, I am only going to consider some of them, and their implications in the organization, resources and working conditions of the centre, and I will reflect on their existence and application in the Secondary School of my placement.

As to the working conditions, it is in the P.E.C. that the educational context is determined. It describes the type of neighborhood the school belongs to, and what kind of students it is made up of. I consider it fundamental to reflect on this document because it is the basis from which a secondary school starts working. If you do not take into consideration the place the school is situated in, your performance as a teacher may not be successful because what you do or teach will not be adapted to the target students. Here we can see the first sign of the importance of knowing the student and his or her context before teaching. Besides, you also have to bear in mind what are the identity principles of the school, to know what conditions you are going to teach in. During my first internship, I had access to this document, as it is of public nature, and I could see how everything this document is supposed to include was comprised in the School's P.E.C. There was an extensive contextualization of the school, and you could observe what the working conditions were. From my experience, I can say that almost everything that the document stated was reflected on practice, even though the recent public sector cuts had let the school in a critical situation. It is not that the working conditions were precarious, but the school had reached a point in which they could not invest in students with special needs or in basic infrastructures such as ramps for the disabled. However, on the whole, the working conditions of both students and teachers were acceptable and did not differ from those of any public service.

Secondary School Organization

The P.E.C. also establishes the organization of the Secondary School. In this document you can also learn about who identifies the objectives, designs the year plans and the teaching units, and who judges their appropriateness. This is the document you have to turn to when you do not know who to approach if you have any doubt. The other document that you can refer to if you have doubts in terms of imposing sanctions is the R.R.I. (*Reglamento de Régimen Interno).* Throughout my first placement period, I also had access to this last document, and I could appreciate how each illicit action a student or a teacher could perform in the school had been registered in it, and had a specific treatment. From taking these documents into consideration, I realized how complex teaching is and how important it is to work as a team in order to organize the

School appropriately, adhering to what the European, National and Regional authorities stipulate.

As for the organization of the school members, the primary decision-making organ is the management team, formed by the Headmaster, the Head of Studies and the Secretary of Studies. Even though the LOE emphasizes the idea of the management team, more power is given to the figure of the headmaster. Another important organ in the school organization is the teaching staff, which is divided in different departments, belonging to the different areas of Secondary Education teaching. This is the largest group, and the one I paid more attention to, as they were the figures I had to observe for my future as a teacher. The most important organ, in theory, was the School Board, formed by the management team, the representatives of the teaching staff, parents, students and council. This organ approves or rejects any proposals and documents present at the centre, but as I could not attend any meeting, I could only observe how the management team had the power to make decisions and to give directions.

Resources

In terms of resources, as I have mentioned above, public secondary schools have undergone some serious cuts, and these were visible in the facilities the school had. They had not been able to construct ramps for the disabled, and for this reason, those students who needed them had to be sent to another one in the same area where they had such facilities. There was a lift only in the E.S.O. building, but not in the Bachiller or F.P. one. As we can see, adapting to the needs of every student is sometimes literally when you lack the necessary means.

Apart from these structural barriers, the school had numerous resources in terms of education. Almost every class had a digital board, a computer and speakers, so that teachers could make the most of their teaching. Altogether, the resources of the center could be considered adequate for the students to learn in an appropriate atmosphere.

Role of the language teacher

A key element that contributes to the quality of education in any educative center is its teaching staff. Due to the evolution in teaching theories and practice, and in particular in second language teaching, the role of the teacher has been transformed in order to adapt to society and its needs. Nowadays, the teaching of the foreign language is or should be approached from a communicative perspective. This view of language and of language teaching is one of the founding principles of the CEFR and has been also adopted by our National and Regional Curricula. It focuses on the active and autonomous role of the student, which does not necessarily mean that the role of the teacher is less important, but that his or her role has changed and must contribute to developing the students learning in another way. Whereas before the teacher was an expert whose role was that of transmitting his or her knowledge to the students, now the mission is different: the teacher has to guide the students' learning process; he or she is a bridge between the students and the target language and its culture.

In the case of the secondary school of my placement, the teacher is usually the only English speaking person with which the students are in contact. He or she is the only person that can offer them *input* in English, both directly (communicating with them) or indirectly (by means of songs, films, news…). However, interaction, which is a very important factor in the CEFR and in the Aragonese Curriculum, can not only be

offered by the teacher. Students should also interact with each other, as the teacher is not the main actor or the source of the student's learning process; the teacher should be just a guide in this process. His or her role is to provide students with a considerable amount of audiovisual materials and to encourage them to talk and not to fear making mistakes. Besides, in order to amplify the scope of interactional figures, the teacher has to supply learners with resources in which they can find more information on the language, the cultures it embraces, their inhabitants and how to contact them. Nevertheless, a teacher still has to master the language, because it is not worth anything having many pedagogical resources and materials to use with students if you do not master the topic you are teaching or your language competence is deficient.

Moreover, the language teacher also acts as an evaluator. Student evaluation has always been one of the most important aspects of teaching since it is the final mark what the students, parents and eventually, authorities are interested in. With this new role, a teacher should not evaluate only the student's competence, but also the learning process, and what is more, a teacher should make self-evaluation. The benefits and advantages of self-evaluating, as I have been able to see throughout the Master have not been taken into account yet in the Secondary Schools, at least in the one of my placement. It is a shame that such an enriching process for the teaching and learning process has not been implemented yet in E.S.O. or *Bachiller,* while it is being carried out in Spanish Universities. However, it is a fact that we have been insisted on during the Master and that I have taken into consideration when designing my Unit of Work.

Furthermore, a teacher should be the model for his or her students. If we want cooperative learning and a good classroom atmosphere, the teacher should contribute to creating the atmosphere that allows for cooperative learning. If the teacher does not respect a student, it is difficult for the students to respect him or her. A teacher should also act as a tutor, which is a role that has gained strength with the LOE. He or she has to be both a teacher and a counselor, guiding students both in the personal and academic field, with an emphasis on improving social and civic skills, which is something that will have an effect on the classroom atmosphere. For all these reasons, I can say that the role of the teacher is not just to teach the language; it comprises various roles that one must take into account if he or she wants to become a successful teacher. Once again, we see how complex the educational process is.

Language Teacher Skills

Once the new roles of the modern language teacher have been considered, I will reflect on the skills that are associated to these new roles.

In the first place, as I have mentioned above, a language teacher should master the foreign language. But knowing a language does not only mean having the ability to speak it. The fact that you know a language, for instance, your mother tongue, does not necessarily mean that you know how to teach it. As the CEFR states, communicative competence includes linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences and each of these are made up of knowledge aptitudes and skills. But it is not only communicative competence that a teacher should work on; teachers should also have knowledge of language teaching and learning principles (Lightbown and Spada, 2006), teaching strategies, methods and resources. Nowadays, there is a common thought that a native teacher is the best option to teach a foreign language to your children, and private language schools often search for native teachers when they select their teaching staff. In my opinion, a native teacher does not guarantee that your children are going to learn

better English; it is essential for teachers to adapt to the needs of their students and to actually know how the learner is and what the best way to make them develop the communicative competence in the foreign language is. To be more specific, a native teacher may not know how to approach the typical problems their students may face when learning the language. By contrast, a non-native English teacher may not master the language, in terms of some of the skills, as well as a native one, but he or she will know how their students learn the language that makes up communicative competence, because he or she had to learn it as well. As a whole, I would say non-native teachers are closer to the students because they have experienced the same learning process as his or her students. As we can see, teaching is a complex process in which multiple factors are involved, and knowing the learner and the way the he or she learns is a vital one.

A language teacher should not think that he or she already knows everything about the target language. Language is something that is constantly changing. And a word that is used today may lose its importance and other words substitute it; a teacher should be aware of those changes. Language also comprises a great variety of forms, because you may know how they speak in Britain, but you ignore how they speak in the rest of the world, for which English is used as *lingua franca*. This shows the existing connection between language and culture, which is what the intercultural competence deals with. English language is not just the one in the UK or the United States, English is a *lingua franca*, so learning it implies a complex cultural experience. That is why mastering a language implies long-life learning, because if you do not update and amplify your knowledge on it, you will become an old-fashioned teacher whose English has become stilted and disconnected from real world language use.

The will of the teacher to improve his or her language skills should also be applied to his or her teaching techniques. We, as future students, have learned some techniques that we will apply, but these specific techniques may be useful at this moment but in the future, they may not work. This is why teachers are responsible for eventually devising for themselves certain *operating principles* that must take into account "linguistic, social, cultural, and political particularities" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:69). As this profession depends on the human nature, which is constantly changing, the techniques by which the language is taught will also change, as we have seen all through the history of language teaching.

According to Kumaravadivelu, depending on the period of time we are in, necessities will be different. This is why foreign languages have been taught in different ways throughout history. So, for instance, in a period of time in which people needed to learn the foreign language as fast as they could in order to start trading with other nations, the teaching method was different to the one that may be applied today when teaching children from the age of 3 (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). The way teaching and learning a foreign language has undergone a process of change throughout the last 15 years. The main focus has been changed from the final result to the process of learning and teaching. The way in which the profession of the teacher was seen has also changed; now there is no need to use a determined method, because there is no perfect one that can meet all the needs of language learners. That is why I have talked above about techniques and not about methods, because as Kumaravadivelu says, we cannot apply operating principles and methods anymore; we can only apply techniques that suit our students' needs.

Apart from knowing how to teach and mastering the language, a successful teacher must know how to have a good relationship with his or her students. It has been a long time since the teacher was seen as an untouchable figure no one could speak to and everyone feared. Currently, the teacher is considered to be a friendlier person who can motivate students, and at the same time, a figure that can manage the whole group, maintaining discipline in the classroom. Furthermore, the teacher must empathize with his or her students, something that can be connected to the fact that non-native teachers can put themselves in the position of their students and to the belief that by knowing how students are, teaching is more effective because you know what to expect from your students and what to ask from them. This idea is also linked to what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development; Vygotsky and some educators believe education's role is to give children experiences within their zones of proximal development, thereby encouraging and advancing their individual learning (Berk & Winsler, 1995). In order to know what that zone is, you need to know who you are teaching to.

Moreover, I would like to add that a teacher should be capable of adapting to the students' needs and to the context in which he or she is teaching. It is not the same to teach adult students than teaching children, because their needs and interests are different ones. Besides, it is not the same teaching English in a bilingual school than teaching it in a class for students with special needs. The teacher must be flexible, and adapt his or her knowledge and methodology to the target students (Brown, 1991). That is not an easy task to accomplish, because we tend to think that what works for a group of people should necessarily work for the rest. Besides, being flexible is something that takes time and effort.

Finally, I believe that the most important virtue of a teacher is to be patient. A teacher should know from his or her own experience that learning a foreign language is a long process in which making mistakes is indispensable. One of the students I taught to in the Practicum at the placement once told me; *"The most important thing you have to try not to do is coming to class embittered"*. I have come to the conclusion that a teacher has to be patient, and has to consider the learning rhythm of his or her students. The fact that they do not perform successfully one day does not imply that they are not learning. This idea can be linked to the different learning styles of the students and to the cognitivist and constructivist view of learning, in which failures or mistakes can be a symptom of change (Gayán &Vázquez, 2012). For these reason, you have to wait for those results to emerge. If you lose your confidence in them, and you come to class in an embittered mood, your students will sense it and that may eventually lead to student demotivation and unwillingness to work.

Professional Challenges

After completing the Master courses, there are some areas that should be considered more in depth in order to offer a better quality education. I have already mentioned some future challenges as a teacher, such as the roles one must play when teaching a foreign language, and some skills a teacher has to work on in order to improve his or her performance. In this section, I am going to analyze some general aspects that secondary schools and teachers should work on.

Attention to Diversity

All through the placement in the Secondary Education school, I have been able to observe how they approach attention to diversity. The secondary education school had its own document (*Plan de Atención a la Diversidad)* in which they stipulated how diversity was to be treated. The centre recognized some of the students' necessity to have access to an educational plan that was adapted to their needs. This document recognized that there was a considerable risk of marginalization of some sectors of the population, so the school wanted to fight against that inequality, taking action in order to achieve the highest possible development in these sectors. They divided these sectors in three main groups of students with special educational needs: those with physical, psychical and sensitive disabilities, those with special familiar, social and economic contexts, and those who had recently incorporated in a new society (different language, values and customs).

In accordance with the law (LOE), by means of programs to diversify the ESO curriculum, students who belong to the aforementioned groups should obtain answers adapted to their situation in the ESO stage, and it is the duty of the education authorities to guarantee equity, providing secondary schools with resources and procedures for the achievement of what the LOE stipulates in respect with attention to diversity. These changes in the law led to the improvement of the PAD (*Plan de Atención a la Diversidad)* of my placement school. They have incorporated the PCPI (*Programas de CualificaciónProfesionalInicial)* since 2008, for students with lower school performance, the PDC (*Programas de Diversificación Curricular)*, for fifteen year old students who have failed in the 3rd and 4th year ESO stage and the PAB (*Programa de Aprendizaje Básico)*, in order to contain academic failure at an early age.

As a whole, those programs have been of great help for students with educational needs, because they have access to a different kind of education, adapted to their level or their disabilities. However, if I take into consideration the opinion of the teachers of the school, most of them believed that these programs did not accomplish the final aim, which was for those students to promote and obtain the ESO title. Nevertheless, it did help teachers to spend more time with the rest of the class, which was something they lacked when they themselves had to assist those students with educational needs.

As I have mentioned before, in the resources section, education authorities had not given enough funds for them to help students with physical disabilities, and they had to send those students to another school in the neighborhood. Besides, as a result of the cuts, they had to cancel the language classes for those students who had recently entered in the Spanish society. As we can see, out from the three groups of students with special educational needs, only the second one (students with special familiar, social and economic contexts) could be assisted. It was not the school's failure, but the education authorities' responsibility, which is a professional challenge they have to face in order to offer an egalitarian education.

Integrating ICT

As I have been able to learn in the subjects *Procesos de Enseñanza/Aprendizaje* and *TICS,* the use of ICTs in the teaching and learning process is something that has gained importance in the last years. As ours is an information society, a society in which social development is characterized by the capability of all its members to obtain, share

and process any information by the use of telematic means instantly, from any place and in the desired form (Comisión Sociedad de la Información, 2003), the school should partake in this form of society.

As I have already mentioned in the resources section, the school had computers, digital boards and speakers in most of the classrooms, which is something that after all the projects the region and the country has gone through, has surprised me because I did not expect schools to be technologically modernized up to that point. However, the fact that the school has these resources does not necessarily mean they make the most of them. During my placement period, I could appreciate how teachers used the digital board together with the digital books, and how they looked for videos and images on the Internet, in order to offer their students more visual and attractive materials. Nevertheless, as I have learned in the subject *TICS*, the use of ICTs is not restricted only to using videos or the digital board.

An information society, as has been pointed out, lets us share information with others in real time, and it gives us the opportunity to find all the information we need onsite without moving. In this school, teachers used ICTs to present information by means of the digital board, and together with the digital books, students could make the most of interactive programs in the classroom. As I could discuss with many of the teachers in the center, the role of the teacher and the methodology had changed thanks to these books. As I have already pointed out, now the teacher is a guide for students, rather than a mere transmitter of knowledge.

However, I consider that there is an essential benefit that teachers did adapt to, which is the possibility to generate new educational scenarios, such as the virtual campus. This is something that has already been integrated in university studies through the *Anillo Digital Docente* (ADD), but it is not the case in secondary education. The way teachers could organize their subjects could be much better if they made use of these resources. As I have seen in the subject *TICS*, teachers could create blogs, wikis or webpages in which students could take active participation in their construction. In my opinion, this would have increased their motivation and interest in every subject, not just in the language classroom.

As a conclusion to these initial considerations, I would like to add that the objective of this piece of work is to reflect on what I have learnt in order to be a competent teacher and to face all those professional challenges. On the following pages, there is a justification of the projects on which the present dissertation is focused, and a critical reflection about the existent or possible relationships between the two projects mentioned. Out from that critical reflection, I will draw my own conclusions on being a language teacher, and I will also include some possible future action.

JUSTIFICATION

In this section I am going to justify why I have selected two specific projects out from the numerous exercises, tasks and essays we had to do in this Master. My dissertation will focus on these two projects, which I will compare and reflect on in the following section.

Firstly, I consider it important to start with a brief commentary on all the projects we have accomplished all through this year and express why I have rejected concentrating on certain ones with an in-depth analysis. We have wrote various essays, in which we had to analyze articles written by experts on education and teaching, and we had to apply them to our own teaching, for instance in the subject *Diseño y Organización* or in *Fundamentos de Diseño Instruccional y Metodología*. Writing these essays has helped me establish the basis for my teaching training, but it has not given me the opportunity to improvise or create, so I decided not to use them as the main focus of analysis, but as a foundation to rely on or turn to when carrying out other projects. In the subject *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula*, we also had to analyze the typical personality of teenagers and the behavior of specific ones in order to know how to respond when we faced problematic students. These projects were actually stimulating and formative, but we did not have access to any practice, so everything was said under theoretical explanations or according to the teacher's experience.

Another subject in which we carried out thought provoking theoretical analysis but lacking practice was *Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos*, in which we learnt how to manage difficult situations when facing problems with students or parents. We had to write a paper in which we considered one specific problem, such as cyber bullying, and we had to think of the possible course of action we could take in order to solve it. Once again, everything was done based on theory and on what the law stipulates, but we could not solve a real problem at a real secondary school. In the case of the subject, *Procesos de Enseñanza/Aprendizaje*, the same problem was found; we created an action plan for 3rd year ESO, trying to find a way to solve the problems or to improve certain teaching aspects. This work was based on a real class of a secondary school in Zaragoza, but the resulting ideas were not put into real practice, so the mark was, again, awarded for a possible practical success that was not actually proved.

Furthermore, in the subject *Comunicación Oral en Lengua Inglesa*, we did really interesting tasks and wrote essays based on the speaking skill. We realized how important it was to focus on pronunciation and to introduce this area at an earlier stage than it is actually introduced. We also learned how to create speaking activities which were appropriate for students, and we created our own lessons on segmentals and suprasegmentals, which was something with which I learnt that pronunciation can be made meaningful for. We can see how this subject is already updated to what the CEFR stipulates when referring to communicative competence; students should be aware of the pronunciation of sounds in combination (segmentals, suprasegmentals) before concentrating on sounds in isolation, which used to be the only focus of instruction in traditional approaches to pronunciation. However, I consider that working on this subject has helped me more to consolidate my own English, rather than to learn how to teach it. It is not that I have not learnt how to create activities on pronunciation, but I believe that it has been more helpful for me than for my teaching skills. I seriously considered including these tasks in the present critical analysis, but I finally decided that the two projects chosen had helped me more in terms of my learning process.

So, once I have explained what projects I will not include in the reflection of this *Trabajo Fin de Máster*, I will explain the two projects I am going to focus on. These are the Unit of Work I designed in the subject *Diseño Curricular* and the Research Project I carried out with two more classmates in the subject *Evaluación e Innovación docente e Investigación educativa*.

The reasons why I have chosen the Unit of Work are the following: It is the task with which I have been able to experience what it feels like when being a real teacher who designs his or her own materials, and knows how much time it takes to do so. Designing it has given me the opportunity to put into practice almost everything I had learnt in the previous tasks or papers, so I can say that it is a project that unifies the rest; I could apply what I learnt reading essays from experts, I could apply the action plans I designed in theory, and I could also apply the pronunciation activities I found so enriching. As a whole, I can say that the Unit of Work is a reflection of everything I have done throughout the Master, with the incentive that I could use all my creativity and imagination when designing it.

The other project I have chosen is the Research Project, for which I could choose the topic to be investigated, which is something that truly attracted me. The fact that I could decide on researching a topic that suited me made me enjoy it, and gave me the opportunity to reflect on something I was really keen on: using music in the ESL Classroom. Apart from being appealing, I consider that, as I said in the section that deals with the skills that make a successful teacher, a teacher has to continue developing his or her knowledge on the language and on teaching methods and materials. Being a teacher implies advancing on the command of the language you teach, sometimes focusing on what is really interesting for you. As I love music and I have always thought that using music has helped me improve my English, I wanted to know to what point this could work for my students. Apart from this, I had the tools in order to investigate into the topic, out from all the information and activities we carried out through the year, so I can say it is the piece of work that best combines what I have learnt and the future action I want to take when I start teaching English.

So, as a whole, I can say that the Unit of Work and the Research Project are the most enriching projects I have designed in terms of my learning process, as they gave me the opportunity to put into practice what I had learnt throughout the year, together with the possibility of creating my own materials and investigating into the areas I am more interested in.

CRITICAL REFLECTION

In this part, as I have justified in the previous section, I will reflect critically on the two projects mentioned. I will start by describing each other briefly, also in relation to the subjects that have helped me in their development. Furthermore, I will talk about the different decisions I had to make when designing each one, making reference to the literature I have used. In the last section of my analysis, I will reflect on what I have learnt in the process of completing them, and I will evaluate the outcome of the two projects by comparing between the competences and objectives I established at first to the resulting ones.

Unit of Work

My Unit of Work is entitled Gold Medal. It deals with the world of sports and the achievements of sportsmen, together with sports equipment and some atypical new sports. The assignment consisted on creating a teaching unit in which I had to include the following sections:

I had to introduce the topic of the unit, the school setting and a brief description of the target students, the contribution of the unit to the key competences, the objectives I wanted to achieve by implementing it, its contents, the methodology I was going to use in order to implement it and the evaluation criteria I was going to use when assessing my students. Besides, I included each of the lesson plans (6), which were divided into three main parts. The first one contained a brief contextualization, some assumptions (with regard to students), anticipated difficulties and solutions to those difficulties, the main, subsidiary and personal aims of each lesson and the language and skills to be practiced. The second section of each lesson plan consisted of a description of the procedures of each activity the lesson included, together with its specific objective, timing and interaction pattern and possible variations or follow up. After a justification of each lesson and a description of the way students were going to be evaluated in each lesson, I included the materials to be used in class with the students.

Contribution of the subjects of the Master's Degree

Once I have briefly described what the Unit of Work consisted of, I will move on to the first part of my critical analysis, in which I will try to explain how the different subjects taken this year have helped me to design this learning unit. I will name them in the order of importance I consider they have had for the consecution of this piece of work.

The most important subject is the one for which the Unit of Work was assigned; *Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades*. I had access to other Units of Work that I could take as a basis for my own one and also to various articles that gave me clues on how to start planning the unit, such as *Planning I* (Robertson, 2002) or *Lesson Planning* (Butt, 2006). Thanks to these articles, I could see how to design a lesson plan, what aspects to include, and which ones were not necessary. After reading these articles and discussing them in class, we designed our on lesson template, something that eased the way to designing my own lesson plans. In this subject, we went through Blooms Taxonomy (EDUTEKA, 2002), which helped me to start considering what were the appropriate verbs I should use when establishing the objectives of the Unit of Work and each lesson plan. It helped me when I had to classify the verbs I used for the objectives, from more simple to more complex in terms of learning. For example, I realized how

"understand" implies a simpler action that "synthetize" or "criticize". That way, I could determine which verb to select when establishing the learning objectives, so that students are taught in an ascending complexity order. After going through this literature, I realized how the concept of learning is focused on the cognitivist and constructivist approach, as the student is the one who learns and has most of the importance and therefore, the objectives are focused on their learning, and not on the teaching process, which belongs to a more traditional view.

In this subject, we also went through some articles and webpages that gave us clues on different topics units of work dealt with. Besides, I learnt the different approaches of teaching, such as task-based and other communicative approaches. With the information we could extract from some articles, such as *Communcative Language Teaching* or *Task-based Language Teaching* (Larsen-Freeman, 2011), we could start considering how we were going to approach language. Moreover, after establishing a basis for what our Unit of Work was going to be, we had access to many activities which focused on the main four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading). We could also see articles on how to use videos in the classroom, songs or different types of games to increase students' motivation. The teacher tried to show us different approaches to the typical activities, so that we could have a more innovative idea of how to use certain materials. At the end of the subject, we could see how to evaluate in the classroom. We learned about reflective teaching (Zeichner and Liston, 1996) and we realized how evaluation does not only refer to the assessment of the students' performance, but also to the assessment of you own performance as a teacher and to providing feedback so that students know what they need to improve. In their book, they say a teacher "*is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching*". We can see how teachers must think about what they do in the classroom, because teaching is not just conveying what you know, but reflecting on the way you convey what you know, and taking into consideration how your students are, and in which way they are going to learn more successfully. In order to carry out a self-evaluation of your own teaching, we had access to the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), with which you can analyze the different aspects of your teaching (methodology, context, resources, lesson planning, conducting a lesson, assessment…), in order to reflect on your performance as a teacher.

As a whole, this subject has been the most important one in terms of providing me with resources to design my own Unit of Work. It has given me ideas for the topic of the unit and for the activities I included on each lesson. It also helped me to design and structure each lesson, and to reflect on the methodology and approach my unit would consist on. Besides, I also learnt how to focus my students' evaluation and my own one.

If we move on to another subject that has considerably helped me, I think of *Diseño Curricular*, from the first semester. In this subject I could analyze the different curricula for each stage of E.S.O. This way, I was aware of the objectives and competences that were worked in each stage. These requirements helped me establish the objectives of my Unit of Work, because you cannot ask for the same results in 1st year E.S.O. than in 3rd year E.S.O, as students are in a different stage of their lives. This can be connected to the article we read on multiple intelligences; *Multiple Intelligences. A thematic approach* (Prim-Ed, 2004), in which we saw how each student is different and we need to design a unit of work that can suit all of them, or at least, the majority, as it is almost impossible for all your students to find your unit motivating. Now I know

that there are students that feel more attracted, for instance, by working and learning in groups while others prefer developing some of their language competences working on their own. The assignment we had to do for this subject was a year plan, in which we had to include methodology, objectives and a short description of each unit of work. This was really helpful when designing my Unit of Work, because it gave me the basis to start constructing it, as I had already thought of some topics, objectives and methodology I applied to this final project.

Furthermore, the subject *Fundamentos de Diseño Instruccional y Metodologías* also helped me to be aware of all the methods that have been used in language teaching. Methods have always been designed considering the general necessities of the language users. When the necessity was to learn languages in order to start communicating with other countries in terms of commerce, the methods were merely focused on learning certain structures which would solve the communicative problems between countries. Nowadays, as English is used as *lingua franca*, there is a common necessity to learn how to communicate as a whole, not just focusing on certain topics such as commerce. I realized how the way a language is taught depends on the target students and the use they are going to make of that language. In this subject, we had to do an assignment as well, in which we decided to identify a number of educational websites that could be helpful both for students and for teachers. After doing it, I knew where to find activities that I could include in my Unit of Work. Besides, I could use these websites to recommend them to my students when I implemented it, in case I considered that they needed to improve in any area.

In the case of *Procesos de Enseñanza/Aprendizaje*, it really helped me to get aware of the real problems student face in the E.S.O. and in non-compulsory Secondary Education. We watched videos of some real classes, in which students expressed what they felt teachers needed to change in order to learn English in a more effective way. We had to write an essay in which we analyzed these students' expectations and beliefs and we designed an action plan so as to improve their situation and the way the teacher should approach the English class. When designing my Unit of Work, I took all these aspects into consideration so that my students did not find the same problems when I implemented it. However, as each student is different, and the context of the secondary school of my placement was different, I had to adapt to the students' beliefs and expectations.

Moreover, as I wanted to include a lesson in which students could develop their pronunciation skills, I made use of what I had learnt in the subject *Comunicación Oral en Lengua Inglesa*. I had to look at the curriculum in order to know what was expected of students at their stage of E.S.O. By these means, I designed a lesson plan that was similar to the one I designed in this subject, adapting it to the level of the target students of the placement and to the topic of sports. I consider that the lesson I created would have been quite interesting for my students if I had had the chance to implement it, because I introduced the concept of word stress, something that they had not worked on, at least, consciously. I realized that one of the most significant difficulties of the Spanish learners is that the rhythms of Spanish and English languages are totally different. Spanish language is syllable-timed while English is stress-timed, which is a feature that can be confusing for students if they focus on pronouncing and understanding each syllable in English.

Other subjects that have helped me to design my Unit of Work, but to a minor extent, were *TICS*, *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula* and *Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos*. In *TICS*, I discovered the different applications of the ICTs to language teaching, such as the use of videos, *PowerPoint*, Cmaps or Blogs. Even though they were really interesting, I decided not to use most of them because, in the case of Blogs, Wikis or Webpages, their application is focused more for a whole year or for a long-term project, and as the Unit of Work was aimed at 6 or 7 lessons, I dropped the idea of introducing those long-term ICT projects. Nevertheless, I included videos that helped my students in their development of the linguistic component of communicative competence. In the case of *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula* and *Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos*, they were not so helpful in terms of designing the Unit of Work, but they did help me when considering what the students expectations were, and which were the common problems I could face and how to solve them in an appropriate way.

Decisions Adopted

In this section, I will describe and explain the decisions I adopted when designing the Unit of Work. As for the topic of the unit, I decided to choose a topic on sports because it is a topic that, from my own experience as a student, has always interested me and the rest of my classmates. Besides, it is a topic that students always want to learn more on, because they can apply this knowledge to real life. However, this theme may have been a little boring for them at the stage they are (3rd year E.S.O), because it is likely that they had had to go through this kind of topic all through their academic life. Even though it can be a repetitive topic, I tried to develop it in a way that they had not seen before. I tried to raise new points of view. Besides, I believe it is important for them, as the curriculum states at this stage of their schooling, to start awaking their social consciousness on some of the problems or concerns that the sports world is experiencing now. With this intention, I tried to develop a different sports topic, in which all language skills were put into practice and one in which students were given the opportunity to see the other face of sports.

As for the general objectives of my Unit of Work, I decided to use the general ones that are stated in the Aragonese Curriculum at the stage of 3rd year E.S.O, and I adapted them to the specific topic, breaking each objective down into more sub-objectives I considered my students should accomplish at the end of the unit. Apart from the common objectives (being respectful, being able to extract general and specific information, being able to write texts on the topic), I decided that in order to develop their linguistic competence, they could read and write texts that included adverbs and subject and object questions, because according to my tutor in the secondary school, those were the objectives that the target students should accomplish at the stage of the year they were in. Now I consider that grammar should not have been taken as an objective, which evidences a traditional view of grammar, but as an enabler in the development of the communicative competence. However, there is a moment in the learning process in which grammar has to be introduced in order to facilitate the communicative competence (Seliger, 1979). I think that the topic on sports suited this aim of including adverbs when describing the characteristics of sports or athletes, so that, as I have said, students can develop their communicative competence.

In respect with the following section of the Unit of Work, contents, when deciding which materials to use in the lessons I took into account those that could suit

my students' cognitive level and knowledge of the language, and those that could be interesting for them. As for the vocabulary exercises, I decided to use images (some of them with texts), that students could observe and extract the vocabulary they thought they knew from them. This way, I would act more as a guide than as an information transmitter, letting the students demonstrate what they already knew. Moreover, for the listening activities, I decided to choose oral texts that could motivate and suit my students and I gave them access to the vocabulary that was going to appear in the listening exercises, so that they did not feel lost when listening to them.

As for the written texts of the unit, I intended to find texts that they had not gone through before (the other face of sports), that is why I chose the one about the genes, and the one about Felix Baumgartner and his milestone jumping form 36 kilometers high. I consider that this last written text is truly authentic, as it is a text taken from an Internet journal. I intended to include authentic materials, but it is sometimes difficult to find a piece of text that suits your needs. For this reason, I had to adapt the contents to the specific objectives I wanted my students to achieve. Finally, as for the grammar explanations, I decided not to use a lot of time, as I considered it was easier for my students to have a short view of the grammatical rules on the use of adverbs and subject-object questions, and move directly to the exercises so they could put in practice what they understood from the theory. That is the reason why I designed short schemes that students could rely on when completing the following activities. As it can be observed, I preferred using a more traditional methodology, as it was what my students were accustomed to. I used a 3P's (Skehan, 1998) model (presentation, practice, production), which was also easier for me to evaluate, instead of a more flexible but more difficult to implement as well task-based approach. This was the model that the teacher had used throughout the whole ESO stage, so I considered it difficult to make the students work in another way because it was something that would have been a handicap rather than a benefit. I also believe that, due to my inexperience, I tended to design more traditional lessons, with which I felt more secure and more professional, as it was the way I was taught when I was a student. Now that I can analyze the Unit of Work with some distance, I can see that I held on to a more traditional view on teaching and learning, perhaps because I was in the process of developing and integrating all the new knowledge and skills..

As regards the methodology, I decided to elaborate lessons that would focus on skills that students needed so as to work towards authentic communicative competence. I chose a simple and structured method that would ease the acquisition of the key competences the LOE stipulates. This unit's methodology offers a variety of occasions to increase the student's knowledge about sociocultural and interdisciplinary topics, such as sports and the body, and each lesson was designed in order to provide the students who finished before the other classmates with more exercises with which they could strengthen the learning process. I chose to design a learning unit in which vocabulary was given special emphasis, without forgetting the other areas. That is why in all the lessons, even though each of them focuses on different skills of language, there was a space for vocabulary, or at least, in all the exercises vocabulary was going to be introduced or re-cycled. I wanted to insist so much on vocabulary because I intended my students to have the basic tools to face the communicative situations regarding the topic on sports and the body, as I consider that vocabulary is a means to developing communicative competence rather than a goal to reach.

Grammar is also given the importance it deserves (Skehan, 1998), and that is why there are several lessons in which the main focus are the grammatical components to be learned in order to develop communicative competence. As with vocabulary, I consider grammar as a facilitator to develop this competence, and not as an objective to accomplish. Those grammatical components and structures are also put into practice and evaluated in the speaking and writing activities.

I did not include writing activities during class time. In six lessons, there is not enough time to assign one whole class to developing the writing skill. That is the reason why I decided to include the writing tasks as a part of students' homework. This way, we could make the most of our time. To conclude on the methodology section, I want to add that, as the final aim of the unit is to develop communicative competence with a special attention to its oral dimension, the final lesson consists of a whole class discussion, in which students have to show the tools and resources they have learnt, always within the boundaries of the topic. This is a kind of "final exam" for the unit. When students are involved in active learning through discussion, they are not simply listening, but are developing skills in handling concepts and ideas, and they feel much more motivated than doing traditional, form-focused exercises (Bonwell, 2003). Besides, discussion has a key role in intercultural education. It provides a basis for students to talk about their feelings and ideas and can enable students to develop or change their ideas or feelings. Students need to feel that they can speak their minds. For this, we need to create an atmosphere of trust and support that will help them express their opinion even though it can be different from others.

As a whole, by the end of the unit, students were expected to have developed some of the key elements that constitute communicative competence within the topic suggested.

Apart from all these considerations, I would like to add how I decided to evaluate. As I have already mentioned in the subjects section, we learnt how evaluation does not only imply the assessment of your students' performance but also self-assessment. This is what we know as reflective teaching, which is linked to the fundamental teacher skill of continuing your acquisition of knowledge and development of teaching skills. If we are able to find out which are the weak points of our teaching, then we will be able to correct them in the next lesson, unit or year plan we teach. For that reason, I considered it important to not only assess my students, but also my own performance.

From the students' evaluation, I can say that I wanted to focus on an assessment that bore in mind all the work they had done throughout the six lessons, this is, continuous and formative assessment. I doubted on making the assessment summative, which would have implied not providing my students with feedback (just giving them marks without improvement points), but as I actually wanted my students to know where they had to put more effort in or where they had performed successfully, I decided to choose a formative continuous assessment. In order to do so, I elaborated observational sheets that I was supposed to fill after each session for each student, in which I would reflect on their performance in terms of behavior, vocabulary, group work, opinion sharing, reading comprehension performance, etc… As some time has gone by since I designed these rubrics, I ask myself if this would have been possible and if it would have been tedious and time consuming, because completing a rubric for each student after each lesson would have taken a long time. I consider it would have taken

me a long time to evaluate their performance after each class, but I consider it is the best and most professional way to evaluate your students if you intend to do continuous and formative assessment. Moreover, as for the final lesson, the group discussion, I elaborated a specific rubric in which I included all the aspects I had already told my students I was going to expect from them.

As to my self-evaluation, I considered it important to fill in one observational sheet after every lesson, in which I analyzed the instructions given, the timing, the organization, the materials and their interest. Besides, I also took into account my own performance, such as in the use of English, the pronunciation and the kind of English I had used when I approached my students (modified for student comprehension or not), and the interaction with students, whether I constantly motivated and encouraged them, or if I had given them feedback after the activities. In this rubric, I also considered whether I had been able to manage conflicts appropriately. I believe that doing this kind of self-evaluation can help a teacher to improve his or her performance, because if you fill it in right after teaching the lesson, you are aware of all the difficulties that have arisen and the positive points of it.

However, I also think that self-evaluating is not enough in order to improve your performance; you also need help from the students' side. That is why I designed a One-Minute Paper that students could have filled at the end of the Unit of Work. In this paper, they had to name what they had liked most and less about the teacher, what had been the most important thing they had learnt, and what unanswered question they still had. I believe this is the best way to finish the Unit of Work; knowing the positive and negative points of your performance form the students' point of view. I doubted on handing out this one-minute paper after each lesson or after the whole unit, but I finally decided to do it at the end of the unit because after a lesson, a student may have a view on that specific lesson and may not actually understand the reason for that lesson to be the way it is. After going through the six lessons, everything gains significance. Then students can carry out a more reliable assessment of whether the Unit of Work has helped them or not.

Self-evaluation of the Unit of Work

As a conclusion to the unit of work I have designed, I would like to say that I consider I have fulfilled my objectives, because I have been able to design a piece of work in which the exercises includedcould have significantly contributed to the students' learning process, and at the same time, they are useful in order to learn English language. Besides, I have integrated most of what I have learned throughout the Master in this piece of work. I managed to contextualize all the activities within the topic of work and I believe I have included all the skills and areas of language that the National and Aragonese Curriculum prescribe. I truly consider that students would have been able to achieve the objectives that I intended them to achieve at the beginning.

Every lesson has been developed thoroughly, taking into account all the aspects that intervene within the classroom. Each of them include the context, a justification for the particular instructional sequence, an evaluation section, and there is an exact explanation of the procedures of each activity. As a whole, I believe my students would have enjoyed the teaching unit, but as I did not have the opportunity to implement the unit of work during the Practicum placement, I consider that the best way in order to provide some conclusions on the success of the unit, is to reflect on what I think would

have been the results of it if I had had the chance to implement it, considering the materials included in it, now that the end of the Master has given me a new perspective.

In the first place, I am going to consider the selection of the topic of the unit of work. After designing it, thinking about it thoroughly and listening to other colleagues' opinions, I realized that the topic on sports may have been interesting for the boys of my classroom, but not so much for the girls, as many of the Master's classmates observed. I tried not to design the typical unit of work on sports, which deals with the most popular sports, something similar to what they have studied in other educational years. I intended the unit of work to show a different face of sports, one that the students had not studied yet. That is why I included, in some lessons, tasks that got further away from the habitual ones, such as Lesson 3, which deals with Felix Baumgartner's achievements. This has not always been taken as a sport itself, but nowadays it is starting to reach the status of sport. Moreover, in order to make this unit of work interesting both for boys and girls, I tried to include some subtopics that could motivate my girl students, such as the difference between men and women in sports, from which I believe that all the students of the classroom would have had something to say.

Furthermore, another new area to be developed throughout the unit is social consciousness, which is something that they are beginning to cultivate at this stage. What I want to emphasize with this is that students are not only supposed to complete the writing tasks or the reading comprehensions, but they also have to express their own social consciousness with respect to the subtopics presented through the unit.

Nevertheless, there are more aspects that could have been developed in order to make all of my students be motivated at the same level. For instance, as a way to show the equality between men and women in sports, I could have included some tasks in which the main characters of them were women. In other words, instead of including a text in which students read about three sportsmen who had beaten records, I could have also included a text that dealt with accomplishments of sportswomen. Besides, I could have made my students compare both texts and both sports icons, so that they could have the opportunity to develop their social consciousness on that specific topic more in depth, and they might have had more tools in order to complete lesson 6 (it will be explained below).

Moving on to another matter, I think it is important to remark the reasons why I designed my lessons with a common structure. All of them, except the one which focuses on phonetics (Lesson 5), include warm-up activities, main tasks and follow-up activities. Warm up activities consist of images, videos or short schemes in the case of grammar focused lessons. I chose these kinds of warm-up activities because I believe it is what would have interested my students most, instead of starting directly with practice activities. With respect to the follow-up stage, I want to make clear why I decided to choose writing tasks; when I was designing each lesson of the unit, I tried to integrate all the skills and areas I could in all of them, but this was not possible because of the timing. The only way I could integrate most of them was by leaving writing tasks apart, and asking the students to complete them at home, where they had more time to create good writing texts. If I had asked them to write the texts in class, no time would have been left to work on the rest of the skills.

Once I have analyzed the unit of work and the results it may have had, I am going to draw some conclusions on which lesson would have been more successful and which one could have been improved. The one I consider to be the most

successfullesson is No.1, which is the introductory one. I believe that the pre-tasks could have been very interesting for the students, as they include images in which they had to guess what sport they represented, and a trivia game, that included some facts on the topic that could have awaken the students' interest. Apart from the pre-task activities, I think that this lesson includes and integrates most of the skills on every task. Even though each of the activities focuses on one skill, the other skills would have also been developed within the same activity.

Working towards an integrated-skills approach, that is, designing activities that integrate many skills is something I found quite difficult, and something that takes a long time to prepare. I consider that the lesson main task, which is a reading on the topic, could have motivated my students, because it deals with some of their sports idols or icons. However, as I have already mentioned above, I could have mixed this text with another one which dealt with sportswomen, so that the girls of the class could have been more interested on the topic, something that is considerably important when teaching teenagers; they feel more motivated if they can identify with the people they are reading or talking about, in this case, a sports icon. One of the other possible improvements of this lesson is timing. Once I knew what the English level of my students was, I realized that including all these activities in one whole lesson could have been too much for them in such a short time. I think that they would not have had time to complete all of them, so one of the possible improvements could have been to ask them to finish the reading comprehension activities at home, as well as the written task, but that is something that I do not agree with, because I consider that asking them to do so much work at home would have diminished their motivation in class.

The lesson I consider to be less successful is the last one (Lesson 6). As I did not want my students to do a typical exam on the unit, I decided to do a debate lesson in which students were going to be evaluated. The debate dealt with 4 subtopics related to the world of sports, such as drug-taking in sports, and students were previously told, in Lesson 5, to prepare some information or some ideas about those subtopics. The reason why I consider it would not have been successful is that the English level of most of the students was not enough so as to carry out a debate in which all of them could participate and could be enriching from the experience. I want to emphasize that the topics to be debated were difficult for their English level, but not because of their degree of social consciousness, something I truly believe they could have raised very interesting ideas. The problem was to adapt their knowledge in their mother tongue to their knowledge in English, which is what I consider they were not prepared for.

As a way to make this lesson more successful, I should have given them more tools in order to talk about those topics. In the rest of the lessons, I gave them tools to talk about some of the subtopics of the debate, but I did not give them tools to talk about others, so, as an example, and as I have said above, I could have given them a text which dealt with achievements of sportswomen, so they could have used it in the debate. Apart from this, I am not really sure about what the attitude of the students would have been during the class debate, because they had never been examined in terms of what they said in a debate. Some of the students may have been embarrassed or nervous, and some of them could have remained silent, and their marks on the exam would have been low. I would have tried to create a good atmosphere in which everyone could feel comfortable, and I would have given them starting points from which they could have begun expressing their opinions, but you never know what the result is going to be. For that reason, I will never know what the result of the debate could have been,

but I am sure that many of the students would have been able to express their opinions about the topics in English, which was the main aim of the lesson.

As a whole, I would like to say that designing this unit of work has been fully enriching, and I have realized how much time it is needed in order to create a piece of work that actually works with your students. You have got to take into account not only what the official documents stipulate, but also the needs and cognitive and linguistic level of your students, without forgetting what motivates them and the time you have to do it.

Research Project

My research project is entitled The Use of Music in the ESL classroom. It deals with the possibility of using music as way to enable the students' acquisition of the foreign language. The assignment consisted on researching on a field of education for which I had to track the following stages:

In first place, we had to introduce the topic of using music in the ESL classroom, explaining the reason why we had decided to work on that topic. Once the topic was presented, we had to include a literature review in which we considered the previous projects on the use of music in the ESL classroom, but we had to decide in which way we were going to focus our research project, because the topic of music is so extensive that it would take more than one research project to cover. Once we considered what the most important fields of music that we could apply to our research were, we decided to focus on two of them; the use of background music and the use of songs with lyrics. In order to continue with the investigation, we had to decide what the objectives of our research were, what questions we wanted to answer with it and what the variables to take into account were. Furthermore, we included a methodology section in which we explained the way in which we were going to develop our research; what materials we were going to use and what people we were to address. Once the field work was done, we analyzed the results obtained, making graphs on it and we discussed what the implications of those results were, finally drawing conclusions on the topic that had been investigated.

Contribution of the subjects of the Master's Degree

Once I have briefly described what the Research Project consisted on, I will move on to the first part of my critical analysis, in which I will try to explain how the different subjects taken this year have helped me and my project partners to carry out the investigation. As in the Unit of Work section, I will mention them in the order of importance I consider they have had for the consecutions of this piece of work.

Before I start mentioning the subjects that have helped us in this project, I have to say that, if we compare it with the Unit of Work, the research project is not related to the subjects as directly as the learning unit. I consider that the Unit of Work embraces all the subjects taken in the Master, while in the Research Project, as the topic of investigation is the use of music in the ESL classroom. There are subjects that do not share any relation with it, even though they have been inspiring and useful in other projects. In other words, I consider that the Unit of Work is a project in which you can reflect everything you have learnt in every subject, while the Research Project is a piece of work that you can relate to some subjects, but it goes beyond what we have learnt.

However, there are various aspects that we can emphasize from the subjects taken throughout the year.

In the first place, I will mention the subject for which I had to write the Research Project; *Evaluación e Innovacióndocente e Investigación educative en el ámbito de la especialidad de Inglés*. From the first moment, we had to reflect on what the terms of evaluation, innovation and research implied. We had the preconceptions that evaluation referred only to the evaluation of the students' performance in the classroom, but we realized that evaluation is the process in which the teacher reflects on his or her teaching, and notto how much the students learn. It has to do with the professional development of teachers. For example, it can deal with reflective teaching (already explained in the Unit of Work section), in which effective teaching, body language, materials used in class, the teacher's philosophy can be included. It involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of all of these aspects.

We learnt how teachers could evaluate how they teach and all the factors taken into account when teaching by means of the One Minute Paper. This way, students could provide their teacher with some feedback in order to improve the way they teach. They can say what they liked and did not like about the class. Apart from this, teachers can use their own observational techniques to see what works and what does not work in class. One suitable way used to evaluate teaching is collaborative teaching, because teachers can help provide their help to other teachers, sharing their views on different ways of teaching. All these factors on evaluation were applied to our Research Project, which was mainly based on knowing the students and teachers' opinions about the use of music in the ESL classroom.

As for the innovation field, we had the preconception that innovating implied finding totally different ways to approach your students, finding totally innovative approaches that could improve the way we teach. Actually, innovation, in the teaching context, refers to using a different perspective to approach things. You do not need to do strange or new things that nobody has done before. The main point is to look at the way you teach and all the factors that come into action with open eyes or with an open mind. It means thinking of different ways to approach tasks that have already been carried out; it does not have to be absolutely new.Innovation could be applied in class by means of introducing new activities and materials in the classroom. This could imply a new way to approach a task that you have been carrying out normally, but from a different point of view that could motivate your students. The use of ICTs could be one of these new materials to which students could react with gratitude. In terms of innovation, I understand that the aim is to introduce small improvements that make the class more interesting and enjoyable, so that it facilitates your students' development of their communicative competence. By means of music, students were approached differently to what they were used to, and we wanted to investigate into the possibility of developing such communicative competence by the use of music.

When considering the term research, I thought at first that it consisted on a teacher studying a field of education, but it implied more than that. Research in the teaching context is the investigation that a teacher makes in his or her school; in the classroom with the students (Artigas, 2013). It is an action research because the objective of the teachers is to make their own classes better by trying to introduce new things. It deals with investigating by practicing. You start from a hypothesis, then you experiment it and you draw conclusions from it. The main way to apply it in the

classroom would be to apply the hypothesis that you are thinking on. You could think that, for example, girls learn faster than boys at the age of 12, and then, in order to carry out your research, you would start to analyze the hypothesis by observing all the factors that you are going to take into account in the students you are "investigating".

The concept of action research is one of the most significant concepts we learnt, as we were going to carry it out, focusing on a specific topic on education. Action research concentrates on improving our practice as teachers. It is a constructive enquiry, in which teachers analyze a topic in depth, such as the use of music in the ESL classroom, and they realize what they have to improve. It implies learning from experience; as you research, you construct new knowledge, an idea that is directly linked to the constructivist approach on education. Besides, this new knowledge you acquire is shared with those who benefit from it, the students. Moreover, action research addresses practical problems in the classroom and it involves identifying them and looking for solutions. As we can see, it is directly connected to classroom practice; it is not just a theoretical investigation, something that can be connected to the idea that a teacher, in order to improve his or her teaching, has to take into account how his or her students are, what their motivations are and how they would react to certain changes or techniques in the way he or she teaches.

In the subject, *Fundamentos de diseñoinstruccional y metodologías en la especialidad de LenguasExtranjeras*, as I have mentioned in the Unit of Work section, we had access to the CEFR and the Aragonese Curriculum, in which they specify what the methodological guidelines in foreign language teaching are. By reading these documents, we knew what to look for when designing units of work or lesson plans. In terms of the research on the use of music in the classroom, we had to consider if by using these means (music), we could comply with what these documents prescribe. We had to consider if by using, for instance, tasks in which students worked with songs with lyrics, students were presented with real communication situations, if the activities were meta-communicative (for reflection on how language works at linguistic, sociolinguistic and intercultural levels), if it offered a variety of tasks, situations and contexts, if they were authentic materials… I will reflect on these prescriptions of the European, National and Regional authorities below. Apart from these documents, we also had access to an article that dealt with using songs (Lavery, 2001). We saw how all former assistants agree that songs are among their most successful teaching tools, because students who are usually quiet become talkative. However, you cannot exploit the use of songs, and they will not fill up the typical fifty minutes that a lesson lasts. The article gave us clue on how to use music appropriately as refers to time and manner. As a whole, I consider that this article was a starting point from which I started considering how I could use songs in the classroom. Besides, it made me realize that even though I have used songs when I learned English, and I am still learning with it (continuous learning teacher role), that does not imply that your students are going to appreciate the value of music as well as you do, and that you must find the way to motivate them with the use of songs, because a song or an activity on a song that may interest a student may not interest another student. You have to find the way to make all of your students appreciate the music tasks, and that implies, once again, knowing the learner.

Decisions Adopted

As a learner of English, I have always enjoyed the activities I did in class with music as a source and I still remember the songs we worked on and all the benefits I

obtained from them. However, I also had to take into consideration if what worked for me would work for the hypothetical target students, because as we know from the multiple intelligences theory, each student has a different way of learning, and what may suit a student, may not be appropriate for another one. After considering it with my research partners, we came to the conclusion that that aspect (the appropriateness of using music in the ESL classroom) was going to be the topic to research. We wanted to find out if what had helped us in our learning process could also help nowadays Secondary Education students.

Once we had decided on the topic, we had to decide on what areas to focus the research, because the concept of music is very ample, so we had to reduce the scope of research, because if we tried to cover all of the areas of education in which music could take part, the action research would have been impossible to carry out. We realized that when you want to investigate in the classroom, your objectives and topic of research has to be clearly identified, because if you try to investigate too much, your conclusions may not be significant enough to apply to take them as fully contrasted. At first glimpse, when we did the first superficial investigation on the Internet and some books, we realized there was a considerable amount of projects on the use of music in the classroom, but there were two specific areas in which there had been put more time and emphasis. These two areas were; the use of background music and the use of song lyrics in the classroom.

While we read through some articles and books on the topic, we observed that, even though there were numerous papers on the use of music in the ESL classroom, most of them focused on the benefits they could take from using background music, but not too many were focused on what background music could be used to implement it. In other words, they insisted on the fact that using music while English learners carried out other activities was considerably helpful for them, but they did not specify which songs they were using. Moreover, they acknowledged which were the positive aspects of using background music, but they did not provide the reader with opinions from secondary education schools' teachers, or with some negative aspects that this practice could imply. As action research is based on the investigation through practice, we thought that elaborating a research project in which we took into account both teachers and students' opinions would offer a new vision on the use of background music, something that we will in the self-evaluation section. Therefore, we focused this part of the investigation in discovering whether using background music in the classroom is as useful and beneficial as they say or not, basing our conclusions on the students' and teachers' opinions.

In the second section of our research project, we started investigating the different websites that provided teachers with some songs that could be used in the ESL classroom. We decided to focus this second part of our research on which type of activities were suitable when using the lyrics of songs in order to squeeze their possibilities to their maximum. However, when carrying out a research project, we must take into account what our possibilities and time are. We wanted to know which activities with songs were suitable, but we did not have time to implement some of them during our placements, so we had to refocus how to draw some conclusions on the use of songs with lyrics in the classroom. We noticed that the use of songs in the classroom was restricted to the final days of a trimester, or to the final hour of Fridays, so we wanted to analyze as well if these type of activities could be used not only as a way of rewarding the students behavior or progress, but also as a way to teach different skills of

the English language, by planning complete instructional sequences in the units of work.

As a whole, the main aim of our research will be focused on considering if music could be harmonized within the learning of English as a foreign language. In other words, we decided that our objective will be to investigate if music could be used, rather than a way to reward our students with isolated activities which did not contribute to the learning of the language, as a way to develop the main skills (writing, listening, speaking, reading) and areas (pronunciation, grammar...), which facilitate the students' development of their communicative competence in the English language.

Once we established what was going to be the aim of our research, we started thinking about which were going to be the variables that we were going to consider when doing the investigation, relating them to the use of music in the ESL classroom. These variables would be the following: motivation, interest, acceptance of music tasks, value given to what they learn through these exercises, attention, involvement and development of language skills. Once again, you can see how we wanted to know their opinions; we wanted to reach our students minds in order to know what they expect from us as teachers.

When the variables had already been considered, we had to decide how to carry out the research, and what procedures we were going to apply in order to obtain results from which we could draw some conclusions on the topic afterwards. At first, we thought that the best way to obtain substantial information on the topic was to implement some activities about the theoretical research we had already done. These exercises would consist of two different activities; one related to the use of background music in the classroom, and another one related to the use of a song and its lyrics. As we did not have enough time to do it, and we did not have the possibility to use several classes (not even one), in order to implement this study based on activities, and we had to forget about the idea of implementing activities in order to do the research. We realized how difficult it is to find a way to research on a topic, and even more so when we have limited time to carry it out and the access to our students is somehow restricted. That makes me think that the idea of researching in the classroom is idyllic, but when it comes to real practice, teachers do not have enough time in order to make their students achieve the objectives stipulated by authorities, and at the same time, carry out research projects on the fields they want to investigate on.

After considering how we could analyze all the variables we had thought of and how we could reach the pre-established aims, we came to the conclusion that the best way to do so would be through surveys that we would conduct with both teachers and students of the secondary schools. As we knew that they had already done many activities using music in the classroom, we decided to jump that first step of implementing the activities, and we focused directly on the teachers and learners opinions. The surveys we designed were going to be differentiated, one would be conducted to teachers, and a separate one would be conducted to students. Even though these surveys were different one from the other, they shared the same aim. We wanted to know what the opinion of the learners was, comparing it to the one of the teachers, so once everyone was surveyed we could see what the different points of view on this topic were. The surveys could be completed in any break, as completing them would not last more than 5 minutes. Then we had to decide what students the survey was going to be conducted to. We came to the conclusion that the best idea was to address the surveys to

those students we were going to teach in Practicum II. As these students already knew us, we thought that they would spend more time completing the survey, or at least, they would complete them more thoughtfully, and consequently, the results obtained would be more reliable, as far as can be expected.

As a conclusion to the procedure in the development of the research, and the elaboration of it, we found some restrictions in terms of time and information on the work the students had done before related to the topic, and we tried to solve it designing two surveys from which we could draw some conclusions on the use of music in the ESL classroom.

Self-evaluation

As a conclusion to the Research Project I have carried out with my classmates, I would like to say that I have partially fulfilled my objectives, because I have been able to carry it out, taking into account what the students' needs are, and basing the investigation on what type of input students prefer when developing their communicative competence in English, but I have not been able to develop the research project as much as I think it would have been necessary. However, I managed to find a way in order to have access to the Secondary School teachers and students' thoughts, and to draw some significant conclusions on the use of background music and songs with lyrics in the ESL classroom.

In the first place, I would like to comment on the suitability of the topic selected. I consider that the topic on music in the ESL classroom has been considerably enriching for my learning process. I have realized that what worked for me, and something I was keen on doing when I thought of being a teacher, actually has some restraints. Using music in the classroom can be helpful in order to motivate students and awake their interest in the worlds' culture, but it cannot be used as the unique way to make your students learn how to communicate in English. If we consider the two different areas we decided to research on; background music and songs with lyrics, I have come to the conclusion that we tried to cover too much. If we had selected just one of the two areas of music in the classroom, we could have deepened more on the suitability of one of them. Thus, we could have elaborated research objectives that were clearer for the learners, and the results of the Research Project could have been more specific and more significant.

However, I also consider that if we had just focused on one of the two areas, the research would have been poorer. If we had selected just the area of songs with lyrics, we would have dismissed the background music, which is a topic that has not been investigated in depth, and if we had selected background music, we would have set aside the songs with lyrics, which is the area that has been investigated more as it has real applications in the ESL classroom.

Nevertheless, we reached some conclusions that are worth mentioning. From the students and the teachers' point of view, I can state that the use of songs with lyrics is far more enriching that the use of background music. In fact, when we asked teachers about their opinion on the use of background music while students develop language skills, all of them rejected the idea of using it, as they considered it would worsen the students' performance rather than help them. In terms of the use of songs with lyrics in the ESL classroom, I have come to the conclusion that using this kind of activities would help students develop their communicative competence in English language,

which is, as we know, the final aim of the English subject in Secondary School. Music does not only give students the possibility to develop linguistic competence, but also the sociolinguistic and the pragmatic competences. We tend to think that by listening to music in English, or carrying out activities on music will give us access to the English speaking culture, but English has reached a status that cannot only be restricted to the English speaking countries. English language has reached a higher status, it is the worlds' *lingua franca* by definition and by means of using music in the ESL classroom, students will have access to the worlds' culture (intercultural competence). This idea can be linked to the fact that teachers usually use music when students are tired or on Fridays, when students are less receptive and unwilling to work. If music were used as a main activity that teachers had analyzed and designed in depth, students could make the most of them in order to develop their communicative competence.

If we consider the methodological guidelines that the Aragonese Curriculum prescribes, we can see how the Research Project and the use of music fulfills the majority of the requirements; In terms of the Research Project, the needs analysis has been carried out to find out about real needs and interests of learners, and students have been taken into consideration when researching on the suitability of the use of music in the classroom. As for the use of music, students are presented with real communication situations and language, music offers the possibility to design meta-communicative activities in which students can reflect on how language works at linguistic, sociolinguistic and intercultural levels, as I have explained above. Music also gives teachers the chance to design a great variety of tasks and communicative situations, in which you can focus on fluency and accuracy. Intercultural and processing skills are worked on by means of the use of music, and you can make your methodology flexible, adapting to your students' learning necessities and context.

As a whole, there is an important aspect I want to remark on. Music is considered to be part of the students of Secondary Education language. If you want to make the most of your students, you have to know them in depth and you have to address them by means of the language that they use. Music is part of the language they use, so by approaching students by means of a language they are familiar with would ease the way for them to develop communicative competence in English.

Common thoughts on the projects

In respect with the aspects that the Unit of Work and the Research Project have in common, I would like to comment on some thoughts that have arisen from critically analyzing them. It is true that they are totally different projects that have different objectives and have been designed differently, but both reflect what the role of a teacher should be if he or she wants to be successful. Teachers should be able to design their own motivating lesson plans that suit what the authorities prescribe and they should also investigate into the areas they consider necessary in order to improve their performance as teachers.

The Unit of Work focuses on the elaboration of lesson plans that can suit students so as to reach the communicative competence in English and the Research Project focuses on analyzing music as a vehicle to achieve the same objective; communicative competence. So, from this point of view, we can see how, even though they seem completely different projects, they share the same aim.

Another point they have in common is the language that is thought to be used when approaching the students. In the Unit of Work, I decided that the topic by which they were going to develop their learning process would be sports, as it is something that most of the students feel attracted to and is part of their everyday life. Even though I consider I could have designed more motivating activities to which everyone (not just boys) had felt attracted, my intention was the same; finding a language that could catch the students' attention and finding materials and resources that could have facilitate the achievement of such objective. As for the Research Project, we also tried to investigate on a topic that we considered to be interesting and motivating for students; music. In these terms, both projects tried to find the key in order to entice students from the first moment and that would ease the way in order to achieve the communicative competence that the CEFR proposes.

I realized that if the topic by which you intend your students to develop their learning process is not appealing, they will not feel like what they are doing in class is going to be worthy for the future. It is the same case as when students find that their native language classes are not worthy and they do not understand why they have got to study its rules, because they can already communicate in that language. In terms of the English subject, it is easier to make them feel attracted to what they learn, because they have not achieved full communicative competence yet.

I consider that by using the topics on sports and music in my projects, I have accomplished this fundamental requirement of a foreign language teacher; getting to know your students and what their communicative needs are. This conception of what the role of a teacher should be differs from the traditional point of view, in which the teacher decided what to teach depending on his or her beliefs on language teaching. Nowadays, teachers have departed or are departing from that position; they are taking off the old traditional suit and they know the key is to get to know the learner at all levels.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROPOSALS

After reflecting on my projects and the previous considerations about the complex task on education, I can now draw my own conclusions. Both projects have been the most important ones for my learning process as a teacher, as they enact what a teacher should be; a professional designs his or her own materials adapted to the target students and also investigates into some areas of language teaching taking into consideration students and teachers' thoughts. Being able to carry out these two projects has been enriching for me; however, I consider it necessary to reflect on the teaching learning process so as to raise come up with challenges and find new ways of addressing them.

Designing my Unit of Work has significantly contributed building confidence and experience in terms of teaching performance, even though I have not been able to implement it in class. However, it has given me the confidence I did not have when I started the Master's Degree, as I had no idea about how to design my own lesson plans. Even more, I had not realized how much work it takes for teachers to prepare their classes. I had an idealized conception of what teaching was, as many people have. I believed in the most traditional view of the teacher; a person who is the center of the class and who "vomits" what he or she knows to the students. The reason for this prejudice about teaching I had could have come from my own experience as a student in the past, but, as you may imagine, since the Master started I have departed from that vision of the teacher. I have changed my view from the authoritative figure of the teacher to a new one, in which the teacher serves as a guide to the student in the learning process. Even though I have changed my opinion on the figure of the teacher, it has been difficult for me to, as I already said in the critical analysis, take off the traditional suit of education. As a student in Secondary Education, I was approached from a traditional view of language teaching, so it is sometimes difficult to depart from what you are accustomed to. For that reason, I consider that my Unit of Work showed that traditional nature on some occasions. Nevertheless, I tried to do my best in teaching in a different way from the one I was taught. So from this moment onwards, I will try to forget about the traditional language-based lesson and I will focus on more communicative techniques that foster communicative competence as the main aim of the students' learning process.

If we move on to my conclusions about materials, I will keep looking for real, authentic and creative materials that can put my students in contact with the real world they live in. I have realized that one of the most important factors for the success of students' language learning is the nature of the materials you approach them with. As I said with materials on sports and music, teachers need to find what the students' language is; you need to find a language in common so that they find English language appealing and useful. In the future, I want to continue exploring this idea of a common language. However, I think that the difficult thing to do is not so much finding that language in common, but finding the ways to elaborate materials that integrate both what students are looking for and what the authorities prescribe. Besides, although you can find interesting topics for your students, making them appealing for them is not that easy, because you also have to catch them and pull through them so that they depart from the stereotype and become critical (you need to converge with them before you can teach them to diverge. That is what I tried to do in my Unit of Work, in which I included some topics that would awake my students' social consciousness, something that I consider it would have also kept my target students motivated during my classes.

Together with my learning unit, my Research Project has also helped me to build up more confidence in my learning process. It gave me the chance to work cooperatively with two of my classmates. We all occupied the same role in pursuit of the same aim, trying to know what our students' and other teachers think about the topic put into discussion. From this experience, I have realized how important cooperative work is; it creates more motivation and effectiveness, and it also brings with more information than working individually, as there is diversity of opinions and views. As a whole, working on this project has made me realize how important it is to work cooperatively with the rest of the teachers in order to improve and investigate on education. Besides, working on this research project is also a part of what I intend to do in the future; continuing with my teacher training by means of investigating.

The most important aspect I have learnt throughout the Master's Degree, as I have insisted all through my dissertation is the importance of getting to know your students and showing an interest in them, because it makes them be more interested in their learning, and it also helps you as a teacher to know what your students expect from your classes. A teacher who does not pay attention to his or her students' interests and need is a teacher who is far from guiding his or her students to a successful learning process. If teachers take this aspect into consideration, they will enter in a positive cycle in which students will appreciate what you teach and you will appreciate teaching them. I strongly consider I will to try to know what the expectations and interests of my students are so I do not end up losing my motivation and falling into the routine.

In conclusion, there are many factors to take into account when considering the profession of the teacher of modern languages. Thanks to my performance and continuous work, now I know how to face the world of teaching as I have improved my skills throughout this year. I am prepared to face new challenges and continue working on my training so as to become a successful teacher.

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