



Universidad
Zaragoza



ACTIVE LEARNING AND CO- OPERATIVE LEARNING IN ESL/ EFL

***FIN-1. A comparative study of two theoretical
or practical aspects related to ESL/ EFL***

University of Zaragoza. Education Department

Primary School Teaching Degree

December 2014

STUDENT'S NAME: Violeta García Viñado.

SUPERVISOR: Elisenda Castro Escario.

ABSTRACT

The methodologies and approaches that are used in Spain to teach English as a second language seem to be obsolete now at the present moment, according to our position in the European ranking, what means that there is something that should be improved and researched. The aim of this project is to present, explain and compare two innovative methodologies which are now being introduced and established gradually, little by little, in Spain, having in mind the LOMCE (Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa) and the European Frame Reference of Languages. These methodologies are *Active learning* and *Co-operative and collaborative learning*, whose theoretical basis comes from constructivist and second language acquisition theories or frameworks. This dissertation makes reference as well to several experiences during my Erasmus stay last year in Aberdeen (Scotland), where I had the opportunity to observe and participate in first person how these two approaches were put into practice in different curricular subjects.

Key words: innovative approaches; active learning; co-operative and collaborative learning; Monitor Model; constructivism; scaffolding; critical thinking; participation; involvement in children's own learning; communicative competence; second language acquisition; bilingual education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although the thematic that I have chosen corresponds to the code **FIN-1**, *A comparative study of two theoretical or practical aspects related to ESL/ EFL*, the title of this master thesis focuses its attention on *Active learning and Co-operative and collaborative learning*. This means, this dissertation focuses on the theoretical aspects related to ESL/ EFL, since I am going to develop a thesis about those methodologies which could be potentially used in English lessons in Spanish Primary schools.

First of all, I am going to present this project within a theoretical frame, which might contextualised the constructivist and second language acquisition theories these methodologies and approaches are based on, indicating also some behaviourist antecedents.

Secondly, I am going to explain and comment about the importance of learning second or foreign languages, focusing fundamentally on the early ages, when children are more exposed to experience this process. I might give my opinion, using some examples from my personal experience about some linguistic and methodological issues, but also I might give some objective data to contrast with.

Afterwards, I will compare two methodologies which are *Active Learning* and *Co-operative and collaborative learning*, as the main focus of this thesis. I will make references of my personal experience abroad, since I took part of an Erasmus programme in Aberdeen (Scotland) last year, so I could practise other different ways, regarding the learning and teaching approach, from those which I had seen in Spain.

In addition, I might give a legal frame in which those methodologies or approaches might be involved in, taking into account the general Spanish law (LOMCE), but also the European Council Languages Reference.

Lastly, I will make a brief conclusion related to this thesis and also I will make reference to my personal point of view and the effects, consequences or changes my school experiences have made on me, as a potential English teacher.

As well, at the end of the thesis I will indicate all the bibliographic and webgraphic sources from which I have based this project and which have helped me to organise and develop my own ideas.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME

The two methodologies I am about to present in this thesis have as their theoretical frame the pedagogical movement of Constructivism and Krashen's second language acquisition theory, which is called the Monitor Model.

2.1. Constructivism.

After reading some chapters of *Psicología de la educación y del desarrollo en contextos escolares* (2008: 47), about constructivist theories, I came up with several main ideas which can summarize it. Constructivism suggests a paradigm in which the educational process is seen as dynamic, participative and interactive in the apprentice's behalf. This way, the knowledge becomes an authentic construction made by the person who is learning, also referred as **scaffolding** (Bruner, 1978, in Lytle, D. E. 2003: 75)

Fundamental authors of this movement are Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Piaget focuses on how the knowledge is built up from our interaction with the environment, whereas, on the contrary, Vygotsky focuses on how the environment enables an interior reconstruction of the previous knowledge.

2.1.1. **Behaviourist antecedents.**

Around the 60's, behaviourist theories (Skinner, 1953, in Trianes Torres, M. V. and J. A. Gallardo Cruz 2008: 389), about language development got in crisis, due to the difficulties they found in order to prove or make clear all the questions that were coming up about the language development process. Specifically, they proposed an innate origin of the language and the thinking process (Chomsky, 1957, in Córdoba Iñesta, A. I.; Descals Tomás A. and Gil Llario, M. D. 2006: 120). However, behaviourist psycholinguists did not take into account the cognitive development of the child neither the different uses of the language children make when they start having their first social relations and interactions. Because of those obstacles they found in their way, other constructivist models and theories became more important and meaningful, such as Piaget's and Vygotsky's.

“...society expects primary education to promote a personal development of the pupil, not only specific contents. [...] This way, a new way of thinking is being created in the educational world, which questions traditional pedagogic approaches, the concept of the student as a passive receiver of information and even the idea that the mere assimilation of certain cultural concepts is enough to children personal development...” (Trianes Torres, M. V. and J. A. Gallardo Cruz, 2008: 47)

2.1.2. Piaget.

According to Piaget’s theory about cognitive determinism (1954, in Córdoba Iñesta, A. I.; Descals Tomás A. and Gil Llario, M. D. 2006: 122) the language is a consequence of the cognitive development, being a product of the appearance of symbolic function at the end of sensorimotor stage. Piaget suggests that the communicative intention (the use of a tool in order to get something), arises as a consequence of cognitive development. The appearance of the ability to relate means and aims, and the cause concept enables the language to come up as another tool to get a purpose or achieve a target. That is to say, according to Piaget, the language appears because of the human being need of getting something or attracting attention from someone. In general basis, we depend on the language to communicate with others, since it is something essential for us, due to our social needs.

2.1.3. Vygotsky.

Although Piaget’s theories are quite accurate, Vygotsky’s (1962, in Córdoba Iñesta, A. I.; Descals Tomás A. and Gil Llario, M. D. 2006: 123) goes further when he says that not only we can change our environment, but the most important, the environment can transform us. He emphasises the importance of the culture and the social context where a child is living, which will determine and define their personality and behaviour in many respects. Vygotsky’s theory is proved in those classes where social interaction is boosted, where the teachers talk to the students, where children are encouraged to express their selves either both in oral and written ways, and where teachers favour the dialogue between the pupils.

A fundamental concept within Vygotsky's theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), according to Vygotsky (1979/ 2000: 133):

“The zone of proximal development is the distance between the real level of development, determined by the ability of solving problems independently, and the potential development level, determined through the resolving of a problem under the guide of an adult or the collaboration with another mate who is more capable or skilled”

Constructivist theories make a differentiation and a clear classification of those contents and concepts children are able to assimilate and acquire through the Primary education period. The contents are introduced from particular to general and from the concrete to the abstract one, in order to the children to get to know their environment from the closest to the further one.

2.2. Second Language Acquisition Theories.

Second language acquisition theories are also an important basis for both proposed methodologies. These theories investigate the processes by which a second language comes to be learnt. Krashen (1978, in Saville- Troike, M. 2012: 47) has had a considerable influence in these theories, especially during the eighties. He proposed the *Monitor Model*, which is based on five hypotheses:

1. *“The Acquisition- Learning Hypothesis”*. This hypothesis differentiates the learning conscious task, product of formal instruction from the unconscious acquisition process, similar to the one that happens when we acquire our mother tongue. The purpose of this hypothesis is the students to go through and experiment an acquisition process, which enables them to incorporate language structures automatically to the conscience in form of real knowledge.
2. *“The Monitor Hypothesis”*, which has to do with the correcting task and learning from trial and error, taking into account the different ways students use to reflect about a topic and their way to ask for help to the teacher. The aim of this hypothesis is to enable the students to identify those situations in which they are making mistakes and, interpret and analyse their causes.

3. “*The Natural Order Hypothesis*”. This hypothesis refers to a presumed order in which people naturally incorporate grammatical information in the acquisition process, without the need of a program with a pre-established structure order.
4. “*The Input Hypothesis*”, according to which, the acquisition process of a language involves the necessity to provide materials which are a step further of difficulty with respect to the level of knowledge of the pupils.
5. “*The Affective Filter Hypothesis*”, which establish the need to go through the acquisition process when you have self- confidence and the sensation of being ready to start producing something. It is about creating a stress- free context in the classroom, in which the pupil does not feel under a heavy pressure to solve a task at a forced speed. Otherwise, it could happen that a mental block is produced, hampering the students to use the input; therefore, the acquisition is interrupted and does not finally occur. The grade of difficulty does not have to be really high, in order to make the student to be opened to the input, and to feel involved and as an important member of the group.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Nowadays, learning foreign languages is a necessity for the human beings, since the development level, which has been reached by twenty first century societies, as a result of their economic and cultural integration, requires a knowledge and fluency of it. This linguistic reality imposes huge challenges to apprentices, considering that, besides the mother tongue control, they must develop their communicative competence in another foreign language and within different communicative contexts.

3.1. Choosing an appropriate methodology or approach.

Teaching a foreign language is a complex process because it involves defining an appropriate methodology, a language conception and the application of a strategy or didactic as a whole which makes it easier to develop the learner linguistic abilities, according to their communicative needs. In addition, the way of teaching a foreign language is much related with the linguistic approach of the moment. This means that there is a close relation between the current linguistic theory and the methodology which is used in ESL classes. For instance, some books about English as a second language have orientations which ask for the students to learn by heart linguistic structures, to repeat long dialogues and to imitate the native accent. These kinds of activities are typical of a traditional behaviourist approach in Spain that is now changing and progressing.

Learning and acquiring a second language or a foreign language can be materialised in diverse sociolinguistic and educational contexts. Moreover, it is important to take into consideration these two aspects: **the learning in a natural context and the learning in a formal context**. In the first case, we refer to the acquisition of a second language by immersion, that is to say, in the country where that language is actually spoken. The other possibility is to learn the foreign language in a formal context, with no interaction with native speakers and with no real experience in that country. It is clear that, being in Spain, we do not have many chances of developing a second language in a natural context, but mainly in a formal one, since I am referring to methodologies which are used in a school classroom.

3.2. Benefits of learning a second or a foreign language.

3.2.1. **Brain plasticity.**

With a second language “*All the cognitive functions, the attention, the perception, the memory, the intelligence and the language improve*” claim the scientists of University College of London (in Chris Berube, 2012), who made a study with a hundred people of which eighty of them were bilingual. They

came up to the conclusion that learning another language modifies the brain structure, in particular the area which processes information. Also, from York University, Canada, it is pointed out that a new language, as English, would be enough to get a better cognitive speed (in Muzzy BBC, 2014)

We can keep our brain active through the execution of some exercises. Neurologists agree that the more we use our brain the less frequent our fails are. Learning a language can activate our memory so new neuronal connections are produced by the time we change from one language to another. This way, functions, as language, remain active, and the same happens to others like reasoning, good judgement, abstraction or calculation ability, which means it helps the learning of other subjects, such as Mathematics or Science.

3.2.2. Alzheimer improvements.

Learning another language means to acquire more brain plasticity, since it improves the concentration, the work capability and it is as a whole cerebral gym, which postpones ageing and mental diseases like Alzheimer. People who learn a second language can delay Alzheimer symptoms up to five years, according to a study published in Neurology Magazine (“Delaying the onset of Alzheimer disease”, 2010). This study was made in Toronto, Canada, by the Rotman Investigation Institute. About two hundred people diagnosed with Alzheimer presented a different evolution: the ones who had learnt a second language (half of them) got to delay some symptoms, as memory loss, planning difficulties or problem solving confusion.

3.2.3. Multitask functions.

Then, by learning a second language we can improve and strengthen our concentration ability. From the Language Science Centre in Penn State University (USA), it is explained that the ones who speak a second language make a better and faster multitask functions (Swayne, M. and Andrea Messer. 2011). The experts agree that the workers who show in their curriculum that

they speak English or another language are more prepared to work with a team and they assume their responsibilities better.

3.2.4. Bilingual education.

As a result, according to the previous ideas, the best way to learn a second language, in my opinion, would be throughout the same process used to learn our native mother tongue. That is, pupils may learn by listening time after time the same words, reproducing them repeatedly and perfecting their pronunciation. Afterwards, children might start to read the words and finally they would learn how to write them down. This, in fact, would be the bilingual education process, which is, actually, different from learning a second language in the school. The difference remains in the time children would expect in each one. Having a **bilingual education** would lead to be practising it at the same time as their mother tongue, so **they would have the same level of acquisition in both of them**, whereas just learning a second language implies less practise of it, so they will have a lower level of mastery of it. However, from my point of view, English teachers, and the educational community in general, should always aspire to have the first kind of education, in order to form and educate our children the best as possible.

3.2.5. Spanish situation.

In Spain, second or foreign languages are taught the opposite way that we learn our mother tongue. Firstly, we learn to write, after that we learn to read, afterwards, we learn to speak and finally we learn to listen. *“While the most important thing in learning a language is to make oneself understood, our system only looks for us to understand it”* says Claudia Carter (2014), *Cincoeditos* owner.

With respect to the level of English in Spain, our country is placed in the twentieth position of the non- English speaking countries world ranking. Its position is nowadays in front of other countries such as Italy (twenty- seven

position) and France (twenty- nine position). Although it is still ***“one of the worst within the European Union”***, according to English Proficiency Index (EPI) Study, from the Education First (EF) organisation, which highlights that, in spite of its *“minor progression”* to the language knowledge level on Spanish behalf, ***“it is still far away from the grade of B”***.

“The problem is a whole of factors of which the principal aspect is in the oral issues. We are very little used to watch films in their original version (or with subtitles) or to watching TV in foreign language. Moreover, when we teach English we start with grammar, when, actually, we should begin with the oral part”, claims the English Philology professor of the University of Alcalá, Alberto Lázaro.

This expert also emphasises that English does not have to be studied. *“The most advisable is to, since the earlier ages, children start to see things in this language or to speak to them in English”*.

“Children begin to introduce themselves in another language by a speaking process, so with English should happen the same. It has to be focused throughout this way and not as Spain has done so far, starting with the grammar”, says Janine Bogaard, the Cambridge University Press studio editor (in Carretero, R., 2013, *Aprendizaje de idiomas en España. ¿Por qué nos cuesta tanto dominar el inglés.* Huffington Post)

3.2.6. Contrast with Northern European countries.

As a result, whereas in some countries, like Denmark, children are nearly bilingual at their very early ages, in Spain it takes us many more years. In countries where the second language is learnt by this way I mentioned before, children see it as something natural and as a second method throughout which they can also express their selves in other different contexts. In Spain, on the contrary, we see the learning of a second language, English in this case, just as another compulsory subject we must pass; therefore, because it is something *“forced”*, children do not enjoy its acquisition and most of them are not motivated to continue improving it, since, in my opinion, in many cases, the lessons turn out to be too long and tedious, without any practical interest or purpose.

3.2.7. Progressive transition from traditional approaches to innovative ones.

Traditional approaches that were used until recently in the schools to teach a second or foreign language have not helped to improve this situation. Even nowadays, these methodologies are still used, although less every time, since the system and the society demand a change in the ways to acquire a second language. Examples of these demands of the society, the system and the latest investigations are the two methodologies I am going to talk about in this thesis, which are used more every day and which I could observe in Scotland during my Erasmus stay.

3.3. Learning a second language: kids vs. adults.

3.3.1. Are actually children more capable to acquire a second or a foreign language than adults?

Speaking a second language requires an important ability for all the people, as much as for the young as for the grown-up ones. For a while, it was believed that children were more capable to learn a second language. But, actually, it is not entirely true, it is just children and adults learn the language in a different way each. Theoretically, understanding these differences and making adjustments in the learning process, all the people would be able to learn a second language, no matter how old they are.

3.3.2. Deep motor area.

Children and adults follow different processes when they are learning a foreign language. There are differences in the way an adult's brain processes a second language comparing it with a child's brain. Dr. Paul Thompson (2010), from the University of California, used magnetic resonance images and animation technology in order to see which part of the children's brain was

used. This part of the brain is called **deep motor area** and it is responsible for the unconscious thinking processes, as for instance, brushing their teeth or dressing up. For the children, learning a new language is like a second nature, so they are not as conscious as adults might be. That process in adults implies a more active brain part, which means that they are more aware about the language instead of being intuitive, as children would be.

3.3.3. Different competences.

Another reason why children acquire a second language faster than the adults is due to the different competences each of them has. Children have a small amount of vocabulary so it is easier for them to learn enough words from a foreign language to communicate their needs. However, adults have a wider range of vocabulary; therefore, they think and communicate through more complex structures than children. This means adults may need more time to acquire the ability to communicate effectively in a second language.

3.3.4. Pronunciation.

Pronunciation is another clue to understand why it seems easier for the children to learn a second language. Children are able to adapt in a much better way their pronunciation to the correct one when learning another language. It is generally accepted that, empirically, the sooner a child starts to learn the better will be their pronunciation. Although this is not really exact, it is true that adults have more difficulties to get used to a new pronunciation so they seem less competent than a child who is able to pronounce with the appropriate accent.

3.4. Advantages of learning a second or a foreign language from the early ages.

3.4.1. Think differently.

Learning languages since we are little and being able to communicate in more than one language produce numerous advantages in the children along their lives. The development of intellectual abilities and sociocultural, economic and health benefits are some of those perks. As previously mentioned, there are long- term professional, mental and social benefits of learning a foreign language, and this is more evident when people do it at an early age. Children who constantly study other languages usually show that they think differently, in a more complex way from those who only learn their mother tongue. In addition, they use to be more open- minded and ready to accept other cultural traditions.

3.4.2. Faster and effortless access to other languages.

The brain of those children who learn a second language, as English, has some distinguished cognitive capacities when they are little, since it is developed to have as its purpose to assume the ability to access to other languages in a quicker and more effortless way, and allows the child to analyse and interpret their environment in a more effective way. Neurons are organised and get started to establish connections among them during the first days of life, and in a quite high speed. **The brain acquires its maximum plasticity since the birth until the third year.** Actually, in this stage, the brain regions are able to get adapted and even carry out other brain regions functions, of those have been damaged for any reason.

Studying languages has shown a positive effect in the mental development, especially in the youngest people, and it has increased intellectual growing in general. According to Foreign Languages Departments studying other languages from the early age can improve mathematics and critical thinking abilities, just like reinforce the use and comprehension of the child mother tongue. Its investigation even shows that the students who constantly do second language courses get a better punctuation in standard tests. The brain of those

children who develop or learn more than one language has the ability to connect and disconnect from one language to another, so this implies the creation of a system ready to changes and errors, able to store certain information in a specific way.

3.4.3. Cross-curricular competences.

- **Tolerance and inclusion.**

That is why learning languages since an early age helps with the child brain development and increases the concentration capability, the memory and the creativity, and thus research on their own. In addition, it encourages the social inclusion, since languages constitute an essential tool for cultural exchanging and social relationships. Being able to speak more than one language allows us to communicate with people from different parts of the world and meet other cultures. I would like to emphasise this aspect, since, personally, I think that it is also important to pay special attention to diversity in the classroom, and to see the learning of a foreign language as a great opportunity to develop several attitudes in the children, such as respect, **tolerance and inclusion** with regard to the rest of their mates, especially to those who comes from other countries, races, religions, etc.

- **Amazing chance for empathetic attitudes.**

Learning a foreign language becomes an **amazing chance** for the students to start all from zero; therefore, anyone is superior or inferior by means of the mastery of that language. This allows children to develop empathy when it comes to understand the difficulties with the language other classmates could have when arriving to our country. Moreover, learning a second language at early ages exposes the children to other cultures (with different values, language designs and ways of expression) in a way they would have never experimented unless they did this.

3.4.4. Prospective needs.

Regarding the labour market and the future job of a person, I find important to point out that dominating a foreign language might increase the possibilities of finding the desired job, because the person who have learnt it will be able to communicate with people from other parts of the world. Nowadays, enterprises are interested and attracted by these kinds of aptitudes, since they usually aspire to be more and more globalised.

The acquisition of a second language has become a key factor to find a job.

“English remains as an indispensable requirement in more than an 86% of the qualified employment offers. The increasing global valuation of languages in employment offers is also contributing to the general growing interest of many students and workers to learning other languages, in order to have more possibilities or opportunities in the labour market”, according to Adecco Enterprise, during its last report on the employability of languages (2012: 1).

4. A BETTER WAY TO TEACH ESL/ EFL

4.1. Total linguistic immersion.

Total linguistic immersion, global learning and dynamic, active and fun lessons, adapted to each stage, are important aspects regarding the organisation and planning of English classes. This is essential in order to the children to make the most of their huge capability to learn during their earliest ages. The best way to learn another language is throughout **personal experiences** and appealing stimulus, which create the necessity to communicate in English from the very first day. When English classes are like this, children have a positive attitude facing the learning, they acquire a better pronunciation and intonation in English, and they learn grammar in a natural way. Of course, the ideal lesson would be the one in which the teacher and the students only spoke in English, but this would not be realistic at all, especially at the first years, when children are beginning to learn the foreign language. However, English teachers must try, as much as possible, to

speak, interact and express ourselves in English, and to make children to do so too, in order to give them inputs (Krashen's theory) to develop their communicative skills.

4.2. Balanced combination between English and Spanish language.

An efficient method to teach English is a well- balanced combination of diverse activities, the use of real life context and visual extra helps, team work in class, showing of native English language, and the Spanish one if necessary, practising the four ability areas, and a fun and positive attitude. All of these components have to take part in everyday lessons as a basic method to teach English. Then, on the other hand, we have to work on the reading, writing, speaking and listening abilities, since they are also the four skills in teaching and learning English. No matter which one of them is being practised, the others should be also added to the activity. The teacher can plan an activity focusing more on one of those skills in order to practise it the most during the task, but it is usual and unavoidable to practise the rest of the skills. One skill always leads to another to be practised during a lesson, which means they are all related one to the other.

4.2.1. Theory comes to practice.

For instance, I want to develop a reading activity and I propose a story telling task. I would ask the students to read the tale out loud to the rest of the class, one by one. Then, with that reading activity, I could ask them some questions, and they may answer them either oral or written. Obviously, I am supposed to do all of this speaking in English. Consequently, children would be developing their reading skills, as the main purpose of the task; but also the listening skills, since they are listening to me asking them, and also their classmates to, and they need to understand it; the speaking skills, when they answer the questions orally; and the writing skills, since they may answer the questions or potentially write a summary of the story.

5. COMPARISON OF TWO METHODOLOGIES

As I previously commented at the beginning of this thesis, the methodologies I am about to present and compare, have been part of my school experience during my stay in Scotland last year. Both of them really attracted my attention, since, in spite of having read and studied them before, I had never seen how they were developed in their practical aspect. The methodologies or approaches I am referring to are called “*Active Learning*” and “*Co-operative and collaborative learning*”.

5.1. My School Experience in Spain and in Aberdeen.

Few years ago, when I was doing my school experience here in Spain, during my second and third year of the Primary School Teaching Degree, I had already seen how some teachers made children work by groups or by teams, or guided some of their lessons throughout the participation of the pupils. However, they never got to go in depth with the use of these approaches, but it rather seemed, sometimes, **a strategy in order to make something different from the everyday basis** in some occasions, subjects, festivities, etc.

On the contrary, during my stay in Aberdeen, I could actually observe how these two methodologies were comprehensively carried out, as ways to accomplish the educational process. That is, these methodologies **were not mere “complements”** in order to entertain or motivate the students from time to time, but they were introduced as core methods to teach by, taking into account a wide range of ages.

During the nine months I spent in Aberdeen, I was able to have experiences in two different primary schools, as I explained before along the introduction (one of them was a public school and the other was a state one). At the first school, I was in a Kindergarten class (native children from five to six years old) in which the

methodology “*Active learning*” was used by the teachers. Moreover, this methodology was used through a play- based approach too, since the philosophy of that centre claimed it was the most convenient and proper for children at that age. On the other hand, at the second school, I was in a fifth grade class (children from eight to ten years old). In this case, the teacher guided the lessons throughout the “*Co-operative and collaborative learning*” methodology.

5.1.1. Curriculum for Excellence of Scotland.

Both of them are included within the “*Curriculum for Excellence*”, as possible approaches to be used in the educational process of the schools in Scotland. To some extent, these methodologies can mostly be used on their own. However, what I observed during my school experience there was that the teachers made use of other supporting approaches, as for instance, “*ICT in education*”, “*Creativity*”, “*Outdoor learning*” or “*Peer education*”, among others. These are all recorded within the “*Curriculum for Excellence*”.

These two learning approaches are really useful to get the achievement of some important abilities (also recorded in the Scottish curriculum), such as becoming *successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors* (*Building the Curriculum 3*. 2010: 18). Both of these learning approaches help the pupil to achieve attributes such as enthusiasm and motivation, openness to new thinking ideas, self- respect and enterprising attitude, and other capacities; for instance, to think creatively and independently, to develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world, to work in partnership and in teams and to apply critical thinking in new contexts.

5.2. Active learning.

“*In Scotland, as in many countries throughout the world, active learning is seen as an appropriate way for children and young people to develop vital skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning*” (*Building the Curriculum 2*. 2010:5).

5.2.1. Characteristics.

- **Versatile and adaptable.**

This methodology is quite versatile and adaptable, because it can be used to teach any kind of school subject. It makes children's attitude to be more natural, participative and spontaneous. Children usually love to talk about their own experiences and tell stories to the rest of the people. When this occurs, the motivation and the interest of the child about a specific topic raise. Therefore, through this method, it is really "*easy and simple*" to have all the pupils concentrated and united, since it is not only the teacher who is talking but also the pupils. In fact, the children are the ones who, because of their participation and involvement during the lesson, will make it to work out and go on as it is supposed to.

"Experiences must be relevant and meaningful for all young people, providing them with opportunities to develop a wide range of skills across the curriculum" (Building the Curriculum 4, 2010: 22).

- **Amazing way of teaching.**

Active learning methodology supposes an amazing way of teaching and learning a second language through a natural process, since it follows a didactic line which consists on educate children and make them linguistically competent throughout quite natural techniques. This means that the way of teaching and learning through this method is quite similar to the one we learn our mother tongue by, that is, we learn our first language by interacting with people that surround us and speaking about things and topics that happen and have affect our daily basis. When we are younger, we talk about really easy issues, using simple words and phrases, whereas while we are getting older we start to introduce new vocabulary and structures in our speech and writing.

5.2.2. Spontaneity, participation and exploring approach.

Through this approach, the spontaneity which defines it, makes everything to flow in a more simple way, but also the participation of the children improves their own self-confidence and self-esteem, and the teacher can evaluate each child in a deeper and wider way, since more aspects of their personality and understanding can be also shown up in front of the class. Using a traditional approach, we could just appreciate the written evidence, that is, we could only evaluate the test they have to prepare. Then, we would just be evaluating and taking into account their capacity of learning by heart some contents. However, by this way, more behavioural, previous knowledge and understanding aspects of the child are gained by the teacher. So, the evaluation and the following assessment turn out to be more complete, adjusted and constructive.

“Active learning is learning which engages and challenges children and young people’s thinking using real life and imaginary situation. It takes full advantage of the opportunities for learning presented by spontaneous play, planned, purposeful play, investigating and exploring, events and life experiences, focused learning and teaching” (Building the Curriculum 4, 2010: 21).

5.2.3. Learning through natural situations.

Children learn through natural situations in which they investigate and explore, by an active way, the world that surrounds them.

For example, when I was at the first school in Aberdeen, pupils went out to a close small forest, in which they could explore and observe the nature and its components in first person. They were directly experimenting, because they could investigate taking different kind of branches, touching the trunks so that they could feel diverse textures, grabbing leaves they could observe and appreciate the different shapes, etc. Meanwhile, they could talk to each other, and share opinions and points of view about what they were seeing.

By their interactions with the others, they learn how to use the language in order to give sense to their experiences and communicate their knowledge.

They communicate listening, speaking, reading and writing. Active learning considers these components of learning in an interrelated way. Children's best learning occurs when they explore, experiment and interact with people and different materials that surround them.

“Children learn by doing, thinking, exploring, through quality interaction, intervention and relationships, founded on children's interests and abilities across a variety of contexts. All combining to building the four capacities for each child, which are being successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.” (Building the Curriculum 2, 2010: 5).

Children learn when the main target is to have and find a meaning and understanding; they learn through activities and resources which have a specific goal and are not threatening. This is one of the key points of this methodology, since it enables the children to make progression at their own pace, without “forcing” any language acquisition, but providing them with suitable inputs they can manage.

“Threatening” activities are those who do not allow children to have a meaningful learning, that is to say, when pupils get lost in the process and consequently they fail at the acquisition of the contents. Also, “threatening” activities are those which do not permit children to experiment or think reflectively in order to deduce their own ideas.

For instance, as an English teacher, I can transmit lot of concepts to the children, as for example the different past tenses, but, if I do not enable pupils to practise them, to make questions about them, or to give them a margin of error, they will be “afraid” of those lessons, and they will not be motivated or interested at all in what they could potentially learn. I would have to give them different inputs or activities in which they could learn and see those concepts in diverse contexts and situations.

“Active learning means active and significant linguistic experiences. The students participate listening actively, speaking reflectively, looking focused on something and writing with a specific purpose, reading significantly and dramatizing thoughtfully” (Schwartz, S. and M. Pollishuke, 1998: 20).

In general basis, this is what the teachers who use *Active learning* approach try to do when they are teaching a foreign language to their students. By this way, pupils will see the learning of a second language more naturally, as if they were nearly bilingual education. Therefore, they will be more motivated, interested and conscious about their acquisition process.

5.2.4. Solving problems and making decisions.

Special attention is paid to the opportunities to make decisions and solve problems, with the purpose to foster independent, responsible and critical thinking; integrated learning as a way to establish relationships through diverse experiences significantly; good quality reading resources, throughout which the children can get in touch with literature within real situations (e. g. foreign language reading and writing workshops); problems or true facts which are specific of each child and have influence over them (e. g. work through group dynamics so that they can be more outgoing and open to express their feelings); have a conversation to express, clarify and test their thoughts and ideas, listening actively and speaking reflectively; critical observation, to promote a focusing perception of the world; learning by discovery, to stimulate a provable approach; and take the risk or the chance to allow certain freedom to the children so that they can learn from and thanks to their own mistakes.

5.2.5. Assessment.

When it comes to assessing the students using *Active learning* approach, I consider a great idea to make different kind of tests or evaluation techniques, meaning that I would suggest to take into account the observation tasks the teacher may do every day, the progression each child have along the academic year or term, in order to have an objective point of view, and certain tests that they might do at some point of the school year, in which they might be proved on their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. This three assessment procedures would be adapted depending on the age and course of the children and the class.

For instance, when I was doing my school experiences in Aberdeen, I could see how the teacher made up a criteria chart, in which curricular objectives were reflected, and subdivided in several specific objectives she expected the pupils to achieve. All the names of the students were in the chart, and so the teacher note down how much they were achieving those aims, and she evaluated it either by numbers (e.g. from one to five) or by quantifier statements (e.g. “excellent”, “very good”, “good”, “needs to improve”, etc.).

From my point of view, I consider this methodology fits more suitably in those early years, in which children are not writing competent yet, since this approach enables children to have an extensive freedom when it comes to let them express their selves, tell experiences to the rest of the class and learn to listen to others and have certain debates or discussions about a specific topic.

5.3. Co-operative and collaborative learning.

5.3.1. **Current professional world requirements.**

The other approach I am about to develop within this thesis is the *Co-operative and collaborative approach*. The use of this methodology from the primary education period becomes quite important, since the usefulness it may have for the children in their future is really remarkable. With this, I am trying to say that, nowadays, almost in every job, team work skills are required and demanded to solve certain tasks or problems. The practice and work through this approach from the early years make the children to develop cognitive capacities and abilities which turn out to be fundamental forward the adulthood, as for instance, personal autonomy or critical thinking.

“We understand that learning is frequently most effective when learners have the opportunity to think and talk together, to discuss ideas, question, analyse and solve problems, without the constant mediation of the teacher. [...] Young people learning is best served when they have opportunities to learn with and from each other, and are shown how to do so effectively” (Approaches to learning-Curriculum for Excellence, 2010).

Current professional world requires team work skills. Most of the jobs demand and need people who know how to work joining the rest of the members of the company, business, office, etc.

5.3.2. Achieving specific goals.

However, our purpose as teachers goes beyond what is gathering the students in order to develop certain tasks and giving instructions and tell them to do it either by couples or trios or larger groups. With this statement I mean that, not all group work in the classroom is necessarily co-operative or collaborative learning. It is essential to know the way to teach the students to achieve a goal cooperating and collaborating ones with others, that is to say, to make the most of their own experience and the other's to maximise their learning.

For **example**, imagine that I, as an English teacher, organise my pupils in small groups in order to create a theatre performance. Each group would work on a part of the same story. Then, by the time they have to perform, each group will go to the stage and make their correspondent part. So, when the groups are organised at the very beginning of the lesson, I cannot leave them to work on their own, and not paying attention to what they are doing. But quite the opposite, I must move around the classroom, observing, assessing and guiding the students towards the objective I want them to go to.

5.3.3. Students as active participants of their own learning process.

Co-operative and collaborative approach emphasises the learning that is developed among the students, referring to give them the opportunity to teach and learn by co-operation and collaboration. The instructions come not only from the teacher, but also they fall on the student as they are active participants of the process. This approach suggests to consider the child as part of the group from which its achievement depends on, and it may also make sure the other members to develop their functions correctly and to do all a good performance. This type of learning needs a shared education and it will be the students

themselves who may play the roles of helpers and tutors. This approach has completely changed the role of the teacher, from one who used to give direct instructions to another who is more an adviser or a consultant for co-operative and collaborative work groups. The teacher is now the responsible to assess and guide the students to work throughout this approach, and to play the role of a mediator when certain difficulties or turning points appear in any team.

5.3.4. Distribution of groups, tasks and roles.

The clue to accomplish this co-operative and collaborative approach is to distribute different tasks among the members of the group. The teacher might be the person who is in charge of setting out a problem and indicate to each member which role they have to play. The teacher may be the one who designs and keeps the structure of the activity. Each part of the problem may come to an end if each member works on them individually, that is to say, each member may be in charge of one part of the problem. At the end, they might bring their ideas together or do a brainstorming with their respective results. This might be the first part every group should do at the beginning of any project. From that point on, all the group members might work together to decide which ideas are the best ones and to dismiss others, and discuss why or why not. The most important point of this approach is to reach an agreement, in which all the members are able to express their points of view and tell the others the reason why they would choose a specific option. Through this approach, the student can make the most of their leaning but also the most of their mates' too.

5.3.5. Interdependence on their mates to succeed.

The activities the teacher might design should be those which require the co-operation and collaboration among a group of people. The most important condition for this approach to work out is that the child cannot succeed unless their team mates do so. This aspect implies that each member attributes their own achievements to the group ones. As I have said before, every group has to reach an agreement, which means they have previously had to discuss the pros

and cons of their individual thoughts and ideas. This process makes an intense and a great enrichment of each child cognitive abilities, because they have continually to debate with others, trying to think about arguments to stand up for their ideas and convince the others or, on the contrary, to be convinced by their mates.

“The co-operative structure is produced when the students are conscious of their ability to get achieve their goals if their group mates do so [...] The child usually gets a better sensation of being chosen, accepted and supported by their classmates. At the same time, pupils usually make a better use of the information provided by their mates, they promote a more precise communication of it, more acceptance and willingness of being influences by their mates ideas, and less difficulties to communicate and comprehend, and more self- confidence in their own ideas.” (Trianes Torres, M. V. and J. A. Gallardo Cruz, 2008, p.506)

For **example**, when a certain group is working together, developing a task, each member has a role to play. Even if it was only one member who does not accomplish their function, the project will not carry on because it has been interrupted due to the lack of a part of it. This means that, either the member who does not played their role or the rest of the group will not carry out the task correctly, so the objectives that were expected to achieve will not do so. Consequently, the member who did not work will not learn how to do the specific task and develop the correspondent skills, and neither the rest of the group, who will have an incomplete achievement. That is to say, every member depends on the rest of the group, for the good and the bad; therefore, each member has to be consciousness about their role in their group.

5.3.6. Communicatively competent pupils.

When teaching and learning a second language as English, this methodology becomes highly useful for the purpose of transforming the students into linguistically and communicatively competent people. As with the *Active learning* approach, this methodology foster the practice of debating, exchange ideas and thoughts, but with the difference that, in this case, children have to do it by groups, and not individually. As I previously explained, co- operative and collaborative work skills are fundamental in the

present labour market. Therefore, if we talk about the development of those skills in English, it becomes even more significant and meaningful for children's future.

5.3.7. Introduction of inputs.

It is generally accepted that a child needs at least several inputs in order to learn, memorise and contextualise a new word. The *Co-operative and collaborative* approach is quite appropriate to aim this objective, since all we, as English teachers, have to do is to place the children within five different situations, for example, in which they have to use that word. This means that, we can create several contexts, in which the pupils have to make use of that word, either speaking or writing.

For **example**, if we want our students to learn some vocabulary about the *Animals* topic. Following the *Co-operative and collaborative* approach, we would organise them in small groups, and in each centre a certain task would be developed. For instance, in the first centre, students would have to talk about their pets, or, if they do not have any, they could also talk about their ideal pet. In the second centre, pupils would have to write six descriptions of six different animals. In the third centre, children would have to talk about wild animals. In the fourth centre, pupils would have to orally describe, one by one, the characteristics of one animal and the rest of the members would have to guess which is. And finally, in the fifth centre, students would have to play *Hangman*, in order to practise the spelling of several animals' names.

From my point of view, I would consider to introduce this methodology in more advanced years, from the third year for instance, since it is an approach which involves more evolved cognitive abilities. In addition, children at early ages are quite egocentric; therefore, I suppose this methodology would not work eventually, since children have to take into account and respect their mates' opinions and ideas. Because of that, I believe that this approach would work better from the third or fourth year on.

5.4. Effects on the children and the classroom.

Working through these methodologies does not only help the class to be more dynamic or the children to have more responsibilities in their own learning or, because of that, they are more motivated. Apart from that, all of this helps to practise and develop the critical thinking, the autonomy of the child and their self-confidence and self-esteem.

5.4.1. **Critical thinking.**

Critical thinking is much related to the **autonomy** of the child, since one needs to have developed certain autonomy to start thinking by oneself and viceversa. This way, the capacity of questioning and reflect about a specific problem may be better. Therefore, the team work might be hugely enriched by those members who make use of this capacity, while they are resolving the problem or task.

We live in a world in which **innovation and creativity** development are part of all fields. More each time, the human being seeks further targets, in which their non-conformism and their ability to create new and different things are put to the test. This statement is quite general; however, if we consider it from the point of view of an English primary class, some similarities in the use of these methodologies and the importance of critical thinking can be observed.

The fact that the children work in groups means that in order to make this **learning strategy** to work out, all the members have to do their part. That is, the children do not only have to talk for the sake of it, but also to be able to express their own opinions, to argue why, and to listen to the rest of their team mates.

The resolution of problems and the staging of different contexts are great ways to acquire and practise critical thinking. Moreover, since they are English lessons, a wide range of topics can be treated, introducing new vocabulary and expressions or idioms, suitable for their correspondent age (as if they were in a Spanish speaking lesson). In addition, most of the lessons are given by speaking

and so listening to the others at the same time, which suits well, since in Spain there is a lack of those abilities, when it comes to show our skills and manage them in English.

Because of this, critical thinking should be an aspect to work through in all the subjects, that is, it should be a cross curricular issue. I consider it should be like that since the school should educate and teach for real life, and, as I have previously commented, in real life this attribute is fundamental.

Critical thinking helps children to achieve more autonomy, self-confidence and self-esteem. This means that, when we make them to think by their selves they gain thinking independence and autonomy, which may develop their personality in a positive way. At the same time, their self- confidence and self-esteem might grow, and this is something I consider hugely important to work from the earliest ages and especially before their adolescent stage.

5.4.2. Personal autonomy.

The personal autonomy is the capacity of being self-sufficient in the development of basic activities along daily life basis. Among them, there is the mental functioning, which is referred to the capacity of **solving problems, self-concept, self- esteem, confronting styles, etc.**

When working with a team, these type of capacities are used, because, in spite of having to keep in mind the rest of your group partners, the individual part is also important, since each member is able to and should show and expose his own and personal ideas or hypothesis to share with the rest of the team and discuss them, so that they can work together to solve a problem and make determinations.

All of these attributes, which are considerably personal, are quite important when it comes to learn another language. In Spain it happens that, many times, we feel embarrassed and shy when we have to speak in English in front of other people, since we think it sounds ridiculous if we pronounce correctly.

Because of that, we usually do not seize our knowledge for fear of the public to prejudge us. Due to this reason, in Spain it is fundamental to start solving this problem **throughout the children's self- confidence and self- esteem**. I believe that both of the approaches I am proposing in this thesis are really useful to deal with this.

5.4.3. Scaffolding and meaningful learning.

- **Spanish context.**

Spanish students have usually problems when it comes to learn English. Most of the times, these problems are related to the level of consolidation of previous knowledge. Due to this fact, when they begin to learn new contents, the pupils do not establish any type of links or connections with the previous ones; therefore, lot of information ends up accumulating **without being understood**, and children have to deal with it every academic year. Also, the fact that in this country second languages are taught the opposite way from our mother tongue neither helps to solve this problem.

- **Importance of previous knowledge.**

Grammatical approaches have as their basis traditional didactics, since they are organised according to grammatical rules (phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical rules), emphasising the way they have to combine among them. Pupils do decontextualized activities, in which they only repeat and memorise grammatical structures. This is what is being happening in Spain until recently, when methodologies seem to have started to change progressively.

Because of that, from my point of view, bearing in mind previous knowledge of our students is a great idea in order to them to learn in a significant and meaningful way. The purpose is to give that knowledge a

coherent sense and to foster the development of the communicative competence in a foreign language.

- **Ausubel's Meaningful learning theory.**

The student has to get a **meaningful learning**, which:

“Occurs when the material presented has a meaning for the pupil, that is, it can be related to their cognitive structure, or, as Ausubel points out, when “it can be related, by a non- arbitrary and substantial way (very precisely), with what the pupil already knows” (Ausubel et al., 1978, p. 37)” (Trianes Torres, M. V. and J. A. Gallardo Cruz, 2008, p. 409).

- **Bruner's Scaffolding theory.**

Knowledge *scaffolding*, a concept introduced by Jerome Bruner (1966, in Beltrán, J. 1987: 135) is a process about elaboration, in the sense of the students to select, organise and transform the information they receive from diverse sources, establishing relations between that information and their own ideas or knowledge. For all of this to work out, it is essential to create a learning atmosphere in the classroom, where the students' aptitudes and the establishment of relationships among the members of the same group are seen as a priority. Creativity, innovation, critical thinking, understanding and comprehension (rather than memorising), problem solving ability, etc. might be fostered through activities in the classroom. The methodologies I am proposing in this thesis fit suitably to these purposes, in the condition that teachers made a proper use of them.

“Co-operative learning and problem-solving groups also address students' needs for scaffolding during unfamiliar learning and problem solving activities; therefore, with the support of others in the group, students are more likely to achieve goals they may not have been able to meet on their own” (Grabinger and Dunlap, 1995).

6. LEGAL FRAME

The didactic units I might design using these two methodologies must be based on the “*Ley orgánica 8/2013 de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa (LOMCE)*”, since it will be the frame our general planning and assessment as a teacher.

One of the objectives, according to the *Real Decree 126/ 2014* is “*To acquire, at least, in a foreign language the basic communicative competence which enables them to express and understand simple messages and manage in daily situations*”.

6.1. Focusing on listening and speaking activities.

Previously along this project I have explained and emphasise the importance of being able to speak a foreign language and to understand the others too, since it might be essential by the time a person travel or moves abroad to a foreign country. This means that, from my point of view, I consider that the speaking and listening abilities are the most important ones, since they might be the most useful when our communicative competence is being proved for practical purposes. Because of this, I might pay more attention to those abilities when planning a lesson or a didactic unit, and also when assessing or evaluating the development or progress of pupils’ abilities during the school year.

6.2. English subject objectives.

These reasons leads to indicate what objectives I might want the students to achieve during the academic year. These objectives have to be related and based on the general law (LOMCE). Since I might suggest speaking and listening activities or tasks for children to develop those abilities mainly, I consider some objectives from the *Real Decree 126/2014* fundamental, such as:

- *To talk about past events and foresee future actions which can be carried out in their environment.*
- *To get involved in a conversation communicating simple and usual tasks.*

- *To understand the topic of an easy conversation to take part on it and use self- initiative and use simple structures in an informal or neutral level.*
- *To understand usual expressions and vocabulary related to close situations about oneself, family, daily environment, etc.*
- *To use simple syntactic structures correctly and accurately in short expressions aimed at communicating daily life situations.*
- *To appreciate the importance of foreign language as means of communication and understanding among people from different cultures.*
- *To value a foreign language as the rewarding experience that implies to face different languages and cultures promoting the positive development of the students' personality.*

These objectives are much related to the fact that children must achieve speaking and understanding abilities of the foreign language, in order to be able to talk about daily life situations and events, using the appropriate vocabulary. And, therefore, if the methodologies I propose are introduced and used correctly, all of these objectives can perfectly be reached by the students, which might make them to appreciate and value the importance of learning a foreign language and knowing about other different cultures.

6.3. Communicative competence.

From the moment we are born, we start to acquire and develop an ability which allows us to have relationships, interact and communicate with other people. We do not only acquire a grammatical knowledge of a specific language, but also we learn different registers. This competence may have the characteristic to be **comprehensive**, since it also involves attitudes, values and motivations. The communicative competence requires, besides the ability to manage a language, to know how to place oneself in a certain communicative context from a specific environment, taking into account the different social, cultural and ideological aspects too.

The communicative and linguistic competence in English that the pupil develops in Primary Education functions by doing activities related to that foreign language, such as comprehension, expression, interaction or mediation tasks, either oral or written. A huge importance is attributed to the element of

interaction in the use and learning of the language, since it has an essential role in the communication process. It could be said that the communicative interaction is not only the mean but also the final objective of the learning process.

The **European Council** indicates that the final objective of learning a second language is the student to progressively achieve a higher level of communicative competence, that is, to be able to use it to understand, to talk and converse, to read and to write.

The knowledge and command of a foreign language imply the development of communicative and sociocultural aspects; therefore, it allows us to access to other cultures and customs, respecting it and its speakers. The knowledge of a different culture contributes to the consolidation of our own language and culture, fostering **tolerance and inclusion**. As specialist teachers of English, we have to prepare the students to live in a world which is more international and multicultural each day. The communicative competence in English class plays an important role and it is necessary to communicate and interact with the reality that surrounds us. Actually, this is one of the curricular objectives within this subject, since the LOMCE considers it quite important and it says to “*prioritise oral comprehension and expression*” (*Foreign Language Learning*, article 13, Real Decree 126/ 2014)

Teaching a foreign language has as its main limitation the lack of the use we make of it in other contexts, since it is almost non-existent (since we are teaching in a formal context). For this reason, we have to create real situations and make up imaginary ones which permit the student the natural use of that foreign language. Basing my study on this, I would say that *Active learning* and *Co-operative and collaborative learning* methodologies or approaches are based on the communicative method, which must be a referent in the classroom atmosphere and the lessons, since I want English to be used mainly to improve the communicative competence of my students. This way, they will be able to start talking about themselves and end up getting a command of the foreign language, which enables them to manage in real contexts. As the European Framework of Reference for Language presents, language activities are contextualised in different scopes and situations, such as *public context*, *personal context* and *educational context*.

7. CONCLUSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Finally, by way of conclusion, I consider these methodologies might be part of an important **didactic advance** in our country and a radical change in the way we see, give and receive an education. More specifically, the teaching of a second or foreign language, in which being right at choosing a suitable methodology or approach is even more complicated. However, both of them suppose a considerable change that can truly transform our level of linguistic and communicative competence in a second language, like English.

Active learning and *Co-operative and collaborative learning* are two innovative methodologies which do not only focus on the acquisition of another language, but also, they take into account other cross-curricular aspects, as for instance, team work, scaffolding, autonomy, self-confidence and self-esteem, learning how to learn, among others. All of these attributes might be extremely useful for children's future lifetime, since they are going to make a great use of them in many aspects of their daily life. On the contrary from traditional approaches, which were entirely based on the translation and the repetition and memorising of word lists, these methodologies result in harder work and effort, in behalf of both the teachers and the students. Teachers might do a considerable observation, feedback, assessment and guide work, whereas students might be much more involved in their own learning, standing shoulder to shoulder with their team mates, participating in the debates or discussions, expressing their opinions and solving certain tasks and problems.

However, all of this hard work, effort and involvement will, in the long run, turn into a much more significant learning, a higher personal motivation and a better linguistic and communicative competence, when it comes to learn another language, like English. The teacher might as well have an accurate vision and perception of each child progress and difficulties, in order to cover their individual needs the best as possible. In addition, because children do not learn the contents by heart, they will truly understand what they are learning, so their acquisition process might be highly meaningful. Therefore, all the things they learn during the academic year will mostly remain in their mind longer, on the condition that they continue learning that language.

Lastly, I would like to add the huge importance of my experience abroad, which has meant that I got to know these methodologies in first person, and I also could put them into practice, seeing afterwards the consequences and effects they had on children's learning, attitude and classroom atmosphere.

This is all to say that I do not know if I could have experimented these kind of methods here in the Spanish Primary schools, but I am sure that from now on, these methodologies are being implemented more and more frequently in Spanish centres, since their effectivity has been proved in many other countries and the references that we have about them are really positive and optimistic when it comes to talk about learning and teaching English as a second language. Even so, and taking into account all of these educational progress, we, as teachers need to carry on investigating and trying new tactics and approaches to make the education something useful and essential in our society, and to educate competent children for a more and more competitive world.

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