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**TRABAJO DE FIN DE MASTER**

**Improving learners' oral production  
through ICTs: A proposal of  
multilevel classroom activities for  
teachers.**

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## Abstract

The importance of speaking in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is evidenced by the number of studies that refer to it across communicative competence. However, those which include activities to promote this skill in the classroom are very scarce, which hinders the teachers' job, as they have limited time to think of as many activities as they are required to do. This problem is aggravated by the introduction of new technologies, which are conceived to facilitate the work of teachers as long as they know how to use them. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to design a series of multilevel activities to put students' oral production into practice through a series of web resources, and at the same time, to raise awareness of the importance of sharing our materials with other teachers. The activities presented here are intended to assist teachers of any level and stage who wish to take a step forward in the improvement of their students' speaking skill.

Keywords: communicative competence, oral production, emerging technologies, web resources, design of activities, multilevel activities.

La importancia de la producción oral en la enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE) es evidente debido a la cantidad de estudios que hacen alusión a ella a través de la competencia comunicativa. Sin embargo, aquellos que incluyen actividades para fomentar esta habilidad en el aula son muy escasos, lo cual dificulta la labor de los docentes, quienes disponen de poco tiempo para pensar en tal cantidad de actividades como se les exige. A esta problemática se le suma el uso de las nuevas tecnologías, las cuales están pensadas para facilitar la labor al docente, siempre y cuando este sepa cómo utilizar dichos recursos. Por ello, el objetivo del presente trabajo es diseñar una serie de actividades multinivel para, a través de unos recursos web, poner en práctica la producción oral de los estudiantes, a la vez que se pretende crear consciencia de la importancia de compartir nuestras actividades con otros docentes. A través de las que aquí se plantean, se espera ayudar a docentes de cualquier nivel y etapa que deseen dar un paso en la mejora de esta habilidad entre su alumnado.

Palabras clave: competencia comunicativa, producción oral, nuevas tecnologías, recursos web, diseño de actividades, actividades multinivel.



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## **Introduction**

Educational innovations in current times have led to significant changes in the roles of both teachers and students, requiring educators to update the way they teach using competencies. Moreover, in the different specialties –although we are going to focus on the teaching of foreign languages– students are required to learn by developing these competencies, giving special importance to the communicative and digital competencies.

For this precise reason, and in view of the fact that students have difficulties in oral production skills when they have to face situations requiring them to express themselves, I decided to create a proposal of multilevel activities to promote speaking in the classroom through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), in order to generate the desired positive effect on students of any age.

Thus, the intention is not to rely on the current Spanish Education Law (LOMLOE), but on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), so that any teacher who sees the activities proposed below can incorporate them in their classrooms, regardless of the level or stage, bearing in mind that this paper is primarily aimed at secondary education (compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate, vocational training, and Official School of Languages).

The main purpose of these activities is that, through the implementation of new technologies, students can work on improving their oral production in an active way, without forgetting the rest of the skills, since in many of the activities it will be necessary to use many of them. In addition, the aim is to create awareness among teachers about the importance of sharing their experiences, teaching practices and activities with other teachers, so that they can learn from each other without having to spend time on their own.

Therefore, in order to carry out this work, we will first start by talking about what L2 speaking consists of in order to put everything into context. Then, we will see how to improve our students' fluency on the basis of communicative language teaching (CLT), how to teach oral production in the classroom, and what factors can intervene in this process. We will also look at a classification of types of speaking activities and the web resources used to create the proposal. And, finally, we will get into the design of activities, but not before giving some preliminary remarks that have been key to plan them; and afterwards, we will develop the conclusions.

To elaborate all these sections, it was necessary to rely on many studies on the field of oral expression and innovation, such as Kayi (2006), Naciri (2019), Rao (2019), Richards (2005) and others. However, they are not enough for teachers to create activities, as it requires a lot of imagination, creativity and, especially, time. As will be shown below, some of the above mentioned articles on the topic propose examples of activities focused on oral production, whereas others are not focused on oral production at all, though they could be adapted for this purpose. Nevertheless, I approach the activities that appear in this paper using ‘new’ online tools, since everything evolves and constantly changes, which means that online resources must be updated too.

I decided to focus on oral expression because I believe that, theoretically, this field is given a lot of relevance, but in practice, it is not enough; even myself, despite having an advanced level of English and having no problems in understanding the language, I often have difficulties in finding the words or expressions I want to communicate, and I believe that this is due to the way oral expression is taught, so we must look for a solution to this.

I selected the web resources that will be shown in the next sections because, although some of them are well known, and others are not so popular, they are usually used to review vocabulary or for gamification, and I think that adapting them can be a good option to practice speaking and taking advantage of it. Some of them will be used by the teacher to lead the activity together with the students, and others will be used by the students themselves to, as we said before, also develop their digital competence and the use of web resources.

Hence, the proposed activities have been classified according to the level and the web resource, so that the tools described in section 3 will be classified in pairs, meaning that the first two web resources will correspond to A1 level, the following two to A2 level, and so on; except for the two last online tools, which will correspond to C1 and C2 levels respectively, as, generally, it is more difficult to find many students in those levels.

## 1. L2 speaking

In this globalized world, communication has become so indispensable that speaking has turned into the most important skill of all, as people need to be able to express their needs, desires, ideas, and opinions to the rest of the people (Rao, 2019, p. 6).

But what do we mean by L2 speaking? Chaney (1998, as cited in Kayi 2006, p.13), defines speaking as “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts”. Therefore, L2 speaking refers to that particular process, but this time carried out in the foreign language (i.e., English, in our case). Likewise, Kayi (2006) also discusses a series of problems regarding the teaching and learning of oral production in foreign language, such as: the underestimation of this skill, or the primitive methods used to teach it.

As English is the most used language in the world and the most widely employed in all fields of study (science, business, entertainment, education...), Rao (2019, p. 6) states that it is necessary to acquire proficiency in communicative skills. Today, due to globalization, we have access to large sources of information and various ways to expand our knowledge, but for this, we need a language that allows us to understand and express everything we want or need.

So, taking English as a model for being the current lingua franca, in order to achieve all our goals and meet our needs, we need to be able to communicate with the rest of the world. For this reason, teachers have to encourage communication between the different individuals in the classroom. However, as mentioned in Rao (2019 p. 6), teachers need to be aware of possible difficulties that may arise among our English language learners, as well as to make use of strategies that help to foster communication and use of the foreign language by our students.

The starting point to achieve all this, according to Rao (2019, p. 6), is to get teachers to improve and update their techniques for teaching speaking. Some examples of this could be working in pairs or groups where interaction is encouraged, or even introducing activities that develop it on their own, since all of them will also be beneficial for building their future career.

Then, at first glance, and thanks to globalization, it is evident how essential it is to use speech as a means of communication, but... what happens when the teacher has to put

into practice all his/her strategies and skills to carry out the communicative approach in the classroom?

## 2. Improving learners' fluency

In order to communicate, learners need to attend to certain aspects; not only in regard to grammar or vocabulary, but also when it comes to pragmatics and, of course, pronunciation (Yasin et al., 2017, p. 323). Richards and Rodgers (2001, as cited in Yasin et al., 2017, p. 323), talk about the existence of certain problems that affect students' learning of skills. For example, students are not fluent in dialogue, nor are they often able to construct sentences due to lack of basic knowledge of the language. For this same reason, the solution proposed by Rodgers (as discussed in Yasin et al., 2017, p. 323), is to use the communicative approach as a methodology, to involve learners more in using and practicing speaking actively, while putting into practice potential real-life situations.

### 2.1. Speaking in communicative language teaching (CLT)

In several parts of Europe, learning a second language is compulsory, but we must bear in mind that every learner is different, and that the degree of ability or mastery to learn a foreign language depends, not only on their aptitude, but also on many other factors, such as the age or the level of exposure to the foreign language (Schmiedtová, 2011, p. 140).

Likewise, some experts (Yasin et al., 2017), although they believe that learning other linguistic aspects is also important, assume that language learning lies in the oral form of the language, i.e., listening and speaking. And they themselves conclude that the main objective is for students to be able “to convey, interpret, and negotiate meaning” (Yasin et al., 2017, p. 323).

But what does *communicative language teaching* mean? According to Richards (2006, p. 2), the experts do not seem to reach an agreement. Thus, in order to arrive at a definition, Richards (2006, p. 2) compares this concept with that of *grammatical competence*. That is, if the latter consists of learning the structures and different grammatical components of a language, the former will consist of putting it all into practice; that is, actively practicing and experimenting with knowledge, for example, by

using a series of activities that help learners learn to handle that language. Thus, in order to develop students' communicative competence, they must learn certain aspects, such as: to use language in different contexts and with different purposes; to adapt language to particular situations; to be familiar with the different text-types; and even, to make the effort to maintain a conversation despite their own difficulties (Richards, 2006, p. 3).

It is true that the concept of communicative language teaching has evolved considerably over the last few decades, which has had an impact on the methodology that has been implemented to teach speaking in the classroom. Learning is not centred in the teacher anymore, but rather on the students through updated practises: more interaction among learners; collaborative negotiation of meaning; peer-assessment; experimenting with language and with different ways to express oneself; using controlled activities that engage students directly, etc. (Richards, 2006, p. 4)

These changes have resulted in current teachers having many different roles in the classroom during speaking lessons. Firstly, an important change has occurred inside the classrooms, that is, the teacher stops giving mere master classes, so that it is the students who do most of the talking during the lesson. In this way, the teacher is the one who controls and sets the tempo dedicated to each activity in the classroom, in addition to being the source of information on which students rely to acquire knowledge and learn from their own mistakes. In other words, teachers are just a facilitator, and therefore, the ones who contribute to the improvement of students' language competence, foster their critical thinking, and stimulate them to work collaboratively in any type of activities by assigning more specific roles to each of them (Richards, 2006, p. 5).

However, Richards (2006, pp. 12-13) gathers a series of principles that are close to the concept we know today, and through which teachers may be able to teach speaking in a more successful way. First of all, as teachers, we should generate, as much as possible, potential real situations where students need to use the language to achieve a goal; in this way, we will be offering them an opportunity to use and play with what they already know. It would be desirable, too, to be able to combine speaking, reading, and listening skills at the same time, since in the real world they are all put into practice simultaneously. Finally, teachers have always had a tendency to correct existing errors in the oral production of our students; we should be more permissive, and even invite students to err, making them understand that mistakes are not a problem to develop their communicative

competence, and of course, thus favouring their fluency in the foreign language (Richards, 2006, pp. 12-13).

## **2.2. Teaching speaking**

According to Yasin et al. (2017, p. 323), teaching speaking involves several aspects to be considered. The teacher needs to have under control certain variables that will have a direct impact on students' learning, such as: the role of the teacher, the selection of activities that are carried out in the classroom, and, even, the atmosphere and the tools that the teacher uses to facilitate the teaching-learning process. Roles have been changing over the years, as it has been shown that students should be the real protagonists in the learning process.

### **2.2.1. Factors that are involved in teaching L2 speaking**

On the one hand, when teaching speaking, the teacher becomes an observer - a kind of guide (Sriharto, 2017, p. 6; Yasin et al., 2017, p. 323) - focusing all the attention on the students and on how they perform with their peers when facing certain situations, easily introduced from activities (i.e., role-playing, storytelling, describing pictures, introducing discussions...).

Sriharto (2017, pp. 2-3), for example, also explains that a recurrent problem is that learners want to learn to speak without first learning a basic foundation of structures and without having direct contact with the foreign language:

It is as similar as teaching toddlers who want to learn to stand up for the first time. [...] there are many factors that influence students in accepting a language learning [...]. For instance, is lack of vocabulary and the influence of native language. Teachers found it hard to teach student that is not familiar with English language.

However, it is not only the knowledge and exposure to the language that has an influence, but also the classroom environment, that is, aspects such as the behaviour they have in class and the interest they put in learning the language (Sriharto, 2017, p. 3). For example, Sriharto (2017, p. 5) refers that the “class environment is crowded and noisy”,

which makes it difficult to keep the students' attention; although, on the other hand, the "lack of attention from parents" also affects them, since sometimes they are often not involved in the learning process of their children.

Just like Richards (2006, p. 4), and as we explained in section 2.1., Sriharto (2017, p. 3) brings into focus how language teaching has changed over time, and pays special attention to the importance of the creativity that teachers need to achieve to motivate students, since their lack of motivation is the biggest problem that interferes with their learning. Here, then, is where imagination comes into play to create and look for different activities to carry out in the classroom in order to overcome all these problems that hinder language learning.

### **2.3. Types of speaking activities**

As we have seen in the previous paragraphs, especially in sections 1 and 2.1.1., creativity is key to generate a series of activities that both foster interaction and communication. Therefore, in this section, we are going to look at some of the types of activities that could work well to promote both interaction among learners and their willingness to use the language, thus improving their oral production.

#### **2.3.1. Warm-up activities**

First, what do we mean by warm-up activity? Mamatova (2021, p. 1) defines it as "the most important part of English lessons to command students' attention", as she believes that it is the way to get them engaged in the topic of the lesson in a not-so-usual way.

Mamatova (2021, p. 1), based on the research of Professor Rose Senior (2011), deduces that the idea is to create a situation in which, based on a stimulus, curiosity is generated in them and they try to guess or deduce what the class is going to be about, as it occurs with brainstorming.

Another expert, Allwright (1984, as cited in Mamatova, 2021, p. 2), believes that the benefit of these types of activities is to help students “put aside distracting thoughts, and to get them ready to focus individually and as groups on whatever activities that follow.”

Thus, warm-up activities are so relevant today because, being so closely linked to the communicative approach, they are perfect for preparing students for class while being able to express their ideas and opinions about a topic (Mamatova, 2021, p. 2-3).

Some examples collected from among all the warm-up activities proposed in Mamatova (2021, pp. 3-4), which we could consider useful for fostering interaction among learners are the following:

- “**Match the differences activity.** Participants are given two pictures and they should look both of them, the teacher set the time for three or four minutes. And when the alarm rang, everyone should tell the differences of the pictures.” (Mamatova, 2021, p. 4)
- “**T schema activity.** We can only work diagrams or the schemas in this activity. It depends on the topic of the theme, especially it helps to improve speaking skills. The form of this activity is the topic will be given by the teacher, and others should give their own opinion. Advantages and disadvantages of the topic will be discussed.” (Mamatova, 2021, p. 4)
- “**Getting to know each other.** The form of this activity, teacher announces any two volunteers from the group and they come to the board, and stand back to back, and one by one they will describe their appearance without looking each other. Other rest of the group will applaud them if they are describing in a right way and using the word phrases as well.” (Mamatova, 2021, p. 4)
- “**Jigsaw reading activity.** Teacher prepares passages and cut each paragraph of the passage. Students will distribute various passages to four groups. Students should read paragraphs of each passage and put them in order. This activity might be a bit challenging for intermediate level students but it can be helpful for their critical and creative thinking skills. Besides, it enlarges their vocabulary and introduce with the sentence structure.” (Mamatova, 2021, p. 4)



### 2.3.2. Communication enhancing activities

Another type of activities that can help us to generate this interaction in the classroom are the so-called “communication enhancing activities.” Ungureanu (2019) defines this type of activities through three concepts: Speaking, Listening and Questioning.

In the first place, he does so through the idea that “Speaking needs to be associated with a specific objective, achieved through the communication of a specific set of ideas.” That is, if an individual has a certain need to communicate something, he will do it naturally, although he must consider, as we said in point 2.1.1, that we cannot express ourselves correctly if we do not make good use of language and its grammar. In this case, if for example a group wants to express several ideas, they must be aware of the need to use expressions that encompass all individuals (i.e., we think, in our opinion...).

On the other hand, Ungureanu (2019) refers to the equal importance of Listening in the communicative approach, because in a group, all individuals must respect, listen and not interrupt their peers, in order to try to understand the purpose of the message.

Finally, asking questions can be very useful, as long as you use what Ungureanu (2019) defines as “Powerful Questions.” That is, they are questions that are well constructed and that seek to obtain more information, avoiding the interrogative particles usually used (i.e., “why, when and where”) and opting for others that, as we say, contribute to a broader meaning (i.e., “how, what...”).

Some examples of communication enhancing activities, taken from the article “33 Fun Communication Games and Activities for Teams” by SurfOffice, are the following:

- “**Blindfold trust game.** Break groups into small teams of two. One player is the leader, and the other wears the blindfold. The leader has to guide the blindfolded player to the endpoint while making sure they avoid bumping into objects.”
- “**Back-to-back drawing.** Have players split into two teams and face away from one another. One player gets a picture, and the other receives paper and drawing materials. The person with the image describes what and how to draw the image without identifying it. After ten minutes, players swap roles. After each team member has described the object and produced an image, they can compare their work and see who made the most accurate drawing.”

- **“Communication origami.** Hand out a sheet of A4 paper to each group member and then instruct them to close their eyes. Everyone must keep their eyes closed while one person reads the instructions to fold and create their piece of origami. After you’re done instructing them, the whole group opens their eyes and compares their shapes.”
- **“Jenga thoughts.** The same rules apply to Jenga Thoughts to the original Jenga. There is a tower made out of rectangular wooden blocks that players have to remove, so the whole tower doesn’t fall strategically. [...] each block has a question the player has to answer. The objective is to keep the tower intact, but questions facilitate discussion and break down walls, bringing teams together while playing.”

### 2.3.3. Simulation and role-play

According to Russell and Shepherd (2010, as cited in Razali & Ismail, 2017, p. 73), both role-play and simulation activities are so-called “forms of experiential learning”, which is learning by experiencing potential real-life situations. However, Hamer (2007, as cited in Razali & Ismail, 2017, p. 73), clarifies that a role play can perfectly be a simulation, but, on the contrary, a simulation does not necessarily have to be a role play, but rather something that goes beyond that, being more like an unscripted performance. This means that, while the roleplay focuses more on the “interaction among participants” and the performance of the characters they play, the simulation is intended for students to learn how to solve a particular issue or facing a situation in particular (“Assessing with Role Plays and Simulations”, n.d.).

On the other hand, Razali and Ismail (2017, pp. 73-74) consider that this type of activities can have many benefits for students as they learn to develop speaking. Some of them may include the following: introducing new vocabulary and grammatical structures, encouraging interaction and increasing learner motivation, improving fluency, and experimenting with English in alternative ways. In other words, the benefits go further, to the extent that, through it all, they are able “to carry out a task or solve a problem together” (Razali & Ismail, 2017, p. 74).

Geikhman (2022) proposes a series of activities that can help improve students' interaction and conversational skills:

- “**The ABC game.** You and your partner have a conversation [simulating a situation], taking turns with just one sentence each. Every sentence has to start with the next letter of the alphabet. You will have to do some creative thinking for this one. Try to go through all the letters of the alphabet. If someone messes up, start over! → + **A**nnie, why are you carrying so many bags? / - **B**ecause I'm having a party later, so I bought a lot of things. / + **C**an I come to your party? / - **D**efinitely!”
- **Ask the Expert.** Write down a few things you're an “expert” at, then have your partner ask you questions about one of the topics. Then switch roles and let your partner be the expert. Have fun making up answers when you don't actually know. → Makeup and hair style expert; Science fiction movie expert...”
- **Role Playing.** Create a character. Try to make him or her very different from you. Then decide on a scenario and act out what the conversation would be like. → A man who owns a monkey interviews for a job with a rich businessman; A dramatic Italian cook is late for a date with a woman who lives with 20 cats...”

Nevertheless, although teaching speaking through different activities is enriching, we can also practice it through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which, several times, allow us to get out of the routine, which generates very positive results.

### 3. Using ICTs for teaching L2 speaking

New technologies are constantly evolving and making people's lives easier, to the point that traditional teaching methods have also changed, thus acquiring a crucial role in improving students' speaking skills (Benmeddah, 2017, p. IV). This evolution, together with the development of society itself as well, allows learning to be simplified and end up being easier and more effective. Some scholars (as mentioned in Benmeddah, 2017, p. 1), show that those classrooms where ICTs are used have better results and interact in a better way than those where they are not. But, what do we understand by ICTs?

Naciri (2019, p. 1) defines this concept as “all the technologies that permit to access, gather, manipulate and present or communicate information, [including] hardwares [*sic*] such as computers, and software applications and connectivity such as access to the internet, local networking infrastructure, video conferencing.”

Some of the ICTs used in the classroom (i.e., computers, projectors, internet, whiteboards) can be resources that contribute to a new concept of education, as these materials enhance both students’ learning and teachers’ teaching methods (Benmeddah, 2017, pp. 6-7).

Now, if we specify a little more, ICTs allow us to practice oral production in various ways. Some examples can be: the use of recorders to make students aware of their mistakes when listening to their speech, the encouragement of interaction through virtual software to practice dialogues and interaction, and even, learning and handling audio supports to practice one’s own comprehension and then work on it orally (Benmeddah, 2017, pp. 7-8).

Likewise, Naciri (2019, p. 4), also proposes some resources that are becoming more and more popular every day (e.g. the use of interactive whiteboards, social networks, online language learning, etc.) and others not so common, such as the integration of podcasts to generate discussions afterwards, or what he calls “Quicktionary” and “Quick Link Pen”, which are pen-shaped devices that allow, respectively, either scanning words or text to be translated, or copying links from the web to get the meaning of words and build your own glossary.

Furthermore, Benmeddah (2017, p. 17) makes us aware of how difficult it can be to implement these tools in classrooms, because, first, the teacher must know how they work and see if these are suitable for a particular group and classroom. But it is also true that students must be responsible for the use of ICTs, plus they must know that they are a tool that facilitates their work and takes up a lot of their time, and learn how to use them correctly.

The problem of ITCs in education is that many tools require a lot of time from the teacher to learn how to use them, or even, to explain them to the students; also, sometimes, students are easily distracted and focus on other topics that are not relevant at that moment (Benmeddah, 2017, pp. 17-18). Yet, if we learn to solve these small difficulties, using digitization tools and web resources will generate more motivation in students to learn; it

will be like a small incentive to build curiosity in them that will help them to focus, in this case, on practicing oral production and communication (Benmeddah, 2017, p. 18).

### **3.1. Online tools for improving learners' oral production**

Let's start from the premise that with "online tools" we refer to different web pages or resources from which, in this case, we can benefit to improve oral production, interaction and communication among our students. From among all the many options we can find, I have chosen only a few that, either from my own experience or criterion, work well to enhance speaking from a communicative approach, such as *Genially*, *Baamboozle*, *PiliApp* or *Fluky.io*, *Tandem*, *Open Language Exchange* or resources available in *LearnEnglish*, a webpage from the British Council.

#### **3.1.1. Voki**

*Voki* is an online tool designed to make animated presentations or simulate dialogues by creating avatars. Any user can create his own avatar from scratch, or take one already existing, among which we can find fairy tale characters, celebrities, historical figures, etc. Once the avatar has been created, users can write sentences in a displayed box for the avatar to repeat them with the voice and accent of their choice. But, on the other hand, it is possible to record our own voice, so that the avatar will repeat everything we say out loud, allowing us to simulate all kinds of possible real situations from our home or from the classroom.

This resource is completely free for educational use, both for students and teachers, but also for personal use for any other user. However, it offers several payment options in case the user wants to have more functionalities, as well as an app for other devices.

#### **3.1.2. Baamboozle**

*Baamboozle* is an online tool that, like *Genially*, offers several gamification options. In this case, you can create your own games, but you can also use those published by other people. All you have to do is search in the search bar for the topic you want to work on. If we want to work on speaking, we can get thousands of games focused on working

on interaction or oral production for each individual. For example, there are topics to start a debate, multiple choices, speaking cards to use as a warm-up activity, etc. You can even use games that do not have to do with this skill, but that may be useful to work on in a group. Or, in the same way as *Genially*, it can also be focused on reviewing content and developing linguistic competence, as explained in the summary of the article “Baamboozle, una herramienta que da mucho «juego»” (Tomàs Martínez, N., 2019).

### 3.1.3. *Genially*

As shown on their website, *Genially* is a platform that allows you to create all kinds of interactive content and templates, edit them and share them with other people to collaborate. As they illustrate, these contents range from infographics, interactive images, or presentations, to informative material, guides and games.

All these resources can be used for teaching speaking, especially through gamification, since, as we saw in previous sections, students get out of the routine, which generates a curiosity that motivates them to interact more. Some examples of gamification created with *Genially* can be a Quiz, a “Find the impostor”, or an Escape Room, which can be adapted to the skill we are interested in. For example, in the last case, we can create an Escape Room through different forms of oral interaction between students. In addition, with this type of games, we can incorporate other disciplines to work in English orally (i.e., history, geography, art...), for example, by simulating a sort of contest.

### 3.1.4. *Wordwall*

*Wordwall* is an excellent online tool to create templates, or use the existing ones, to generally review any type of grammar or vocabulary content in the classroom. However, if we adapt it correctly, we can review any of the skills with our students. It can be used as a presentation tool, but it is also possible to approach it in many other ways: joining, ordering, and rearranging elements; quizzes; crosswords; anagrams; spinning wheels; diagrams; flash cards; true or false; and even several well-known games such as Hangman, Whack-a-mole, riddles, and much more. In addition, you can change the design of the template and the font of the text for free as you wish.

This platform can be used at no cost, although the interactive and printable templates are limited; for this reason, there are two economic monthly payment plans available for you to benefit from all the resources that are offered.

### **3.1.5. *Pixton***

*Pixton* is a website that allows people to design comics from predefined layouts and templates, letting anyone to create their own stories by using any of the backgrounds, characters or speech bubbles provided by this site. *Pixton* offers three different packages: on one side, an individual use free package, while on the other hand, there are a classroom package and a business package, for which you have to pay.

However, with just the free plan, our students can build their own comics as well, as a visual resource from which they can make up their own stories together in the classroom; in this way, we could foster their imagination, creativity, teamwork and, of course, oral production, although it could also be applied to other skills, such as written production.

### **3.1.6. *PiliApp***

*PiliApp* is a web resource similar to *Fluky.io*, but in this case, it not only offers a wheel, but different and varied alternative tools with which we can promote different aspects, including speaking. It offers all sorts of tools: from a coin that can be flipped to see who starts, to clocks for students to talk about their habits through vocabulary about the hours, dices, maps, and even emojis through which we can work on emotions or the weather.

In addition, it is helpful for other moments in the classroom as well, such as setting a timer so that students can see how much time they have to prepare or perform an activity (e.g., a dialogue, a simulation...).

### 3.1.7. *AhaSlides*

*AhaSlides* is a free tool that allows users to learn through a variety of presentations that are quite different from others which tend to be more familiar to us, like *PowerPoint* or *Canva*. On the one hand, as described on the webpage, this tool allows you to make interactive and personalized presentations, and even use templates created by other users, at the same time you are able to introduce gamification in the classroom. Through this web resource, anyone can create real-time quizzes (similar to Kahoot), online surveys, brainstorming methods (similar to Mentimeter), spinning wheels, questions and answers, a random team generator, and even, what the website itself calls “Sliding Scales”; with the latter, for example, students can give feedback to both the teacher and their peers through a satisfaction survey, or even, the teacher can measure the students’ level of proficiency in different skills.

The teacher will be able to share any presentation through a link or a QR code automatically generated by the website itself. In addition, this resource is accessible in different languages, and mobile devices can be used as a complementary tool, either to respond to what appears on the screen or as a microphone.

### 3.1.8. *Open Language Exchange*

*Open Language Exchange* is very similar to *Tandem*, but the first one offers many more languages to practice, even some not so common. This tool allows you to do exchanges by video call or online, but something that *Tandem* does not offer is the Penpal option, which consists in talking to someone through correspondence. And, unlike *Tandem*, this web resource also offers many countries on the African continent, so you can choose from a wider variety.

Something very interesting about this tool is that, contrary to *Tandem*, the objective is not only that you learn and practice a language with the help of a native speaker, but here the exchange and learning is mutual. In other words, you can look for someone with whom you can learn, for example, French, but that person who helps you also has his/her own goal, for example, to learn Spanish. This means that you can both benefit from learning a language by simply speaking in your native language and get many more advantages from it.



### **3.1.9. *VoiceThread***

*VoiceThread* is an online resource that permits users to create presentations by inserting images, videos, or files, as if it were a kind of album, and then add voice to them. Users can work individually, but also collaboratively, both on the same computer and in groups from multiple different computers. The resource offers the possibility to upload any type of content from your own computer, but it also provides a large number of online images that anybody can use.

Although *VoiceThread* offers plans for teachers and businesses for a fee, students can use it completely for free as long as they register with their institutional email address.

### **3.1.10. *Tandem***

*Tandem* is an online tool that allows users to interact with people of different languages. That is, two individuals can set up a date by chat, audio, voice notes or video call in order to learn different levels of a language. This tool offers you the possibility to talk with native speakers and learn the language in different ways. The ideal thing about this resource is that it gives you the advantage to practice oral production and pronunciation with experts.

The user can choose between different countries from various continents (Europe, Asia, America, and Oceania), and within each country, several locations are offered. For example, if we choose the United States, we are offered the possibility to search for a Tandem in New York, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, or Phoenix. Thus, the user can also practice different accents and compare which one best suits his/her needs - for example, among the English accents of the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland-. In addition, it also offers a mobile application to use it more comfortably from wherever you are.

#### **4. Multilevel classroom oral activities using ICTs**

As Pauliková (2017) mentions, students show several difficulties when they try to communicate in the foreign language, as it is challenging for them not to use their mother tongue. As she states, one of the causes that triggers oral production difficulties is the lack of time that is devoted to speaking in the classroom (p. 665); but there are other factors that also contribute to this problem, such as: the amount of knowledge a student has of the foreign language; the high relevance given to accuracy and correctness in comparison to fluency and a natural way of communication; the tendency to pressure learner of a second language to become proficient in little time; the lack of background knowledge about grammar or vocabulary resulting in learners having nothing to say about any topic; learners' fixation with switching from the mother tongue to the foreign language; and lastly, not having enough confidence to speak in the foreign language (pp. 666-667).

For all these reasons, the objective of this dissertation is to propose a series of multilevel activities which help foster oral production, so that any language teacher can employ them in their classrooms, regardless of the unit or theme involved at that particular time.<sup>1</sup>

##### **4.1. Preliminary remarks**

###### **4.1.1. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**

As we mentioned in section 1, language learning is not a mere practice, but a process that involves understanding the whole context that surrounds the language itself for the purpose of being able to communicate. Thus, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) introduces communicative competence as a form of sociocultural awareness, among other aspects, going beyond strictly linguistic dimensions (Council of Europe, 2001, What criteria must CEF meet? section, para. 2). On this basis, and before starting with the proposal of activities, we will look at the role of the CEFR, as it will be the document on which we will rely throughout this paper.

The CEFR is a document developed by the Council of Europe in order to promote multilingualism as a consequence of the great linguistic and cultural diversity existing in

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<sup>1</sup> Multilevel activities based on the specifications of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Europe (Council of Europe, 2001, Synopsis section, para. 1). Throughout the different chapters, we will find several sections, even though we will focus on the common reference levels, whose specifications will serve as the basis for designing the activities; hence, any teacher of any level or stage may employ them, and even adapt them to other levels as needed.

#### **4.1.2. Common Reference Levels of the CEFR**

The levels described in the CEFR are not intended to be adapted to any specific context (i.e., secondary school, adult schools, etc.), but rather to be generalized, so that anyone at any stage and in any context can receive training that is appropriate to the level that suits them better (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 21). These levels are classified into groups of two (A1/A2, B1/B2, C1/C2) in three different categories, respectively “basic user”, “independent user” and “proficient user”; in this way, indicators determine the knowledge that must be acquired at each level in general, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.**

*Common Reference Levels: global scale.*

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

*Note:* this table shows the common reference levels' global scale provided by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24).

The CEFR also offers an exhaustive classification according to the level in each skill. In the case of this dissertation, as we will focus only on oral production, we will take into account the descriptors and specifications that the CEFR document indicates for this particular skill.

Thus, to assess the oral production competence of users, the CEFR makes a classification by levels, in which different “qualitative” aspects of language use are specified, such as: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence (Council of Europe, 2022, pp. 28-29). These specifications can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use.*

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
<b>C2</b>	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
<b>C1</b>	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
<b>B2+</b>					
<b>B2</b>	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.
<b>B1+</b>					
<b>B1</b>	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
<b>A2+</b>					
<b>A2</b>	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
<b>A1</b>	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.

*Note:* this table shows the different qualitative aspects of spoken language use provided by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 28-29).

## 4.2. Activity design proposal

### 4.2.1. A1 activities: Voki and Baamboozle

<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Getting to know each other	
<b>Level</b>	A1	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Voki	
<b>Objectives<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To learn how to introduce yourself.</li> <li>- To answer personal questions.</li> <li>- To revise nationalities.</li> <li>- To describe places.</li> <li>- To describe what you are wearing.</li> <li>- To describe yourself physically.</li> <li>- To answer questions about likes and dislikes.</li> <li>- To answer questions about hobbies and leisure.</li> <li>- To develop the communicative and digital competences.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple</li> <li>- Prepositions of place</li> <li>- Verb <i>To be</i></li> <li>- Verb <i>To have</i></li> <li>- Possessive adjectives</li> <li>- Descriptive adjectives</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Places</li> <li>- Colours and numbers</li> <li>- Family members</li> <li>- Countries</li> <li>- Greetings</li> <li>- Body parts</li> <li>- Clothes</li> <li>- Food</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage A1 study targets.

<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p>60 minutes (12-15' to explain the activity; 2' to make groups; 10-12' to create avatars; 15' to record students' voices; 2' to share it the teacher; 15-20' to play the videos and give positive feedback together.</p>
<p><b>Classroom management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pairs*</li> <li>- The activity will be done in a classroom where computers are available and accessible, either students' personal laptops or the centre's own ones.</li> <li>- Students with potential difficulties will be seated in the front row and the teacher will spend more time monitoring whichever pair or group they are in.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Note: if the number of students is odd, there may be a group of 3 people.</i></p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 computer per pair (or small group)</li> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- Speakers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Using Voki Hangouts, the teacher creates different pairs (or small groups) and determines a topic and a description (i.e., nationalities). The students, in pairs or small groups, must create a character from scratch -or choose a predetermined one- of any nationality, adjusting to their traditional clothing. Later, they must invent a short monologue about the life of the character. Meanwhile, the teacher gives each pair (or small group) a flash card with a series of questions (appendix 1) to help with the elaboration of the speech, so that they use vocabulary and expressions seen in class about clothing, family, tastes, and food.</p> <p>Once they have their avatar, each member of the pair or group should record their voice answering some of the questions that appear in the flashcard, so that all members speak the same amount of time. Once recorded, they will</p>

	<p>have to share it with the teacher through any platform (e.g., Teams, the institution’s platform, etc.) to be able to watch them all together in the classroom. Thus, after viewing each video, students will give positive feedback to their classmates.</p> <p>At the end, Students will give positive feedback after playing the video of each pair (or small group).</p>
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**Figure 1.**

*Example of students’ speech.*







	<p>will be visiting their seats more frequently to monitor that everything is going properly.</p> <p><i>*Note: if the number of students is odd, there may be a group of 3 people.</i></p>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- Small whiteboards (1 per student)</li> <li>- Markers (1 per student)</li> <li>- Piece of cloth/paper to erase their boards (1 per pair or small group)</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The teacher creates a game on Baamboozle, so that different flashcards are displayed, one by one, on the screen with a category attached to each one (appendix 2). Before starting the activity, the teacher hands out a small whiteboard, a marker and a piece of paper or cloth to clean up to all students. Students read the category on the screen at the same time. They have 30 seconds to think of a word that corresponds to that category and write it down on the whiteboards. If the members of the same pair or group match, they get 5 points; if they don't match, they get nothing.</p> <p>When the time is up, in turns, the pairs/groups will simultaneously say out loud the word they have thought of, and they must show the board to check that they are telling the truth.</p> <p>To make it more competitive, there will be some bonus flashcards and the students will have to do the same as with the other flashcards. However, in this case, only the first pair or group that has the response written down and raises their hand first will be able to answer. If the pair gets it right, they get 15 points, otherwise they get none. If it is</p>

	<p>correct, they must explain why they have chosen that answer.</p> <p>The activity will not be evaluated in their final grade. Instead, the teacher will check that the students really match the word with their group mates in order to achieve the objectives of the activity.</p> <p><i>*Note: the teacher has included, after each flashcard, possible options that the students could answer in order to review the vocabulary more in depth. Nevertheless, students can use vocabulary that is not explicitly mentioned in the flashcards.</i></p>
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**Figure 2.**

*Example of flashcard created with Baamboozle.*



#### 4.2.2. A2 activities: Genially and Wordwall

<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Reverse taboo	
<b>Level</b>	A2	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Genially	
<b>Objectives<sup>6</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand and produce sentences related to familiar matters: actions, habits, jobs, etc.</li> <li>- To describe a picture.</li> <li>- To describe aspects of a person (what is he/she doing, what is he/she wearing, etc.)</li> <li>- To describe people's feelings.</li> <li>- To be able to use synonyms.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple/Continuous</li> <li>- There is/There are</li> <li>- Comparatives and superlatives</li> <li>- Prepositions of place</li> <li>- Descriptive adjectives</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feelings and emotions</li> <li>- Food and drinks</li> <li>- Jobs</li> <li>- Clothes</li> <li>- Family</li> <li>- Routines</li> <li>- Leisure</li> <li>- Places</li> <li>- Parts of the body</li> <li>- Means of transport</li> <li>- Environment</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	30 minutes (5' to explain the activity; 25' to carry out the activity).	

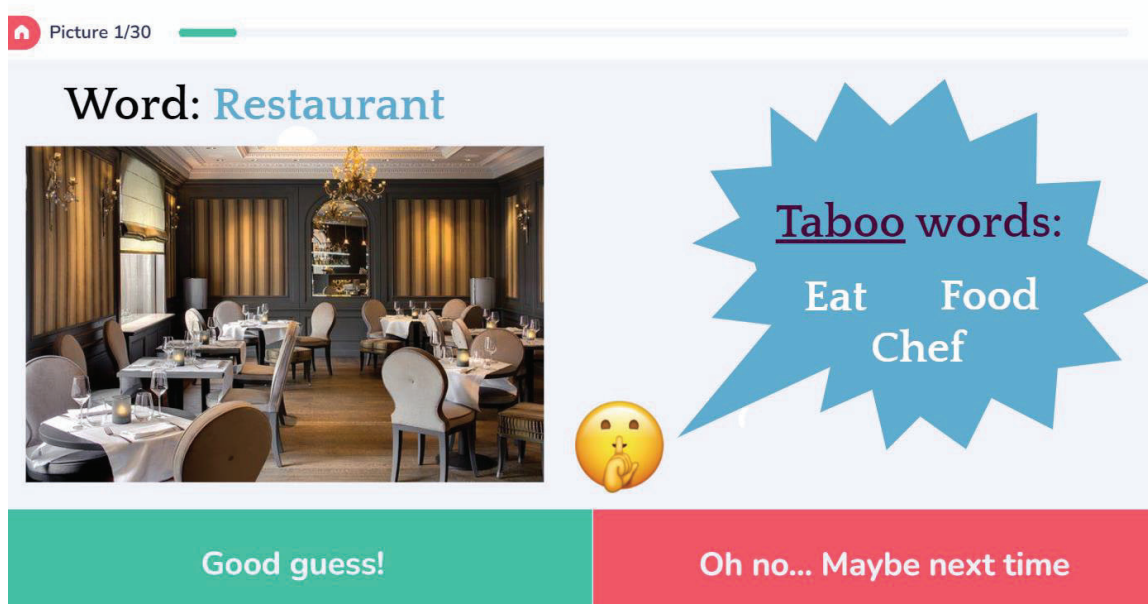
<sup>6</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>7</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage A2 study targets.

<p><b>Classroom management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole class together. Students placed in their respective seats; one student in front of the class, facing his/her classmates and with his/her back at the screen.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> </ul>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The teacher creates an interactive presentation with several images -one per slide- depicting objects, situations, etc., in which three forbidden words are included (appendix 3). One student comes to the front of the class, facing his/her classmates, with the screen behind him/her. It is a collaborative activity, so the rest of the classmates must describe the image without using the forbidden words. The student placed in the front has 1 minute to guess the word. If he/she guesses it, the teacher will press the green button; if not, the red one.</p> <p>There will be several rounds so that all students can participate actively.</p>

**Figure 3.**

*Example of slide containing an image and three taboo words.*



<b>Type</b>	Warm-up activity	
<b>Title</b>	Pick a number and answer	
<b>Level</b>	A2	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Wordwall	
<b>Objectives<sup>8</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To answer questions on familiar topics.</li> <li>- To employ vocabulary on personal and family information, shopping, local geography, and employment.</li> <li>- To use expressions related to likes and dislikes.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questions words</li> <li>- Adverbs of frequency</li> <li>- Present Simple/Continuous</li> <li>- Past simple</li> <li>- Prepositions of time and place</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personality and feelings</li> <li>- Food and drinks</li> <li>- Jobs</li> <li>- Weather and seasons</li> <li>- Family</li> <li>- Routines</li> <li>- Leisure</li> <li>- Places</li> <li>- Body and health</li> <li>- Means of transport</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	15-20 minutes (2' to explain the activity; around 15 minutes to develop the activity).	
<b>Classroom management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole class together. Students placed in their respective seats.</li> <li>- Students with potential difficulties will be helped by the teacher and the rest of the students by asking simpler questions that may lead to an answer.</li> </ul>	

<sup>8</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>9</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage A2 study targets.

<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The teacher creates a grid with 30 questions in Wordwall. (appendix 4) Each question is marked with a different number. Students, in turns, will choose a number that corresponds to a box. Then, each box will be flipped over, and the corresponding student will answer the question that is hidden inside of it.</p>

**Figure 4.**

*Wordwall grid with a question as an example.*



### 4.2.3. B1 activities: Pixton and PiliApp

<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Comics and comments	
<b>Level</b>	B1	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Pixton	
<b>Objectives<sup>10</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To produce simple but connected texts on familiar topics or of personal interest for the student.</li> <li>- To describe experiences and events.</li> <li>- To give reasons and opinions.</li> <li>- To develop the digital competence in all students.</li> <li>- To use prior knowledge and foster critical thinking.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple/Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple/Continuous</li> <li>- Future Simple (will, going to)</li> <li>- Modal verbs (may, might, must)</li> <li>- Prepositions of place and time</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feelings and emotions</li> <li>- Means of transport and places</li> <li>- Leisure</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<p>60 minutes* (5' to think of a story; 15' to create the comic; 35' to project each comic and deduce the story; 5' for students to give feedback to their peers).</p> <p><i>*Note: no time will be dedicated to the explanation of the activity here, since a previous session would have been dedicated to exemplify how to use the resource.</i></p>	
<b>Classroom management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groups of 3 people</li> <li>- The activity will be done in a classroom where computers are available and accessible, either students' personal laptops or the centre's own ones.</li> </ul>	

<sup>10</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

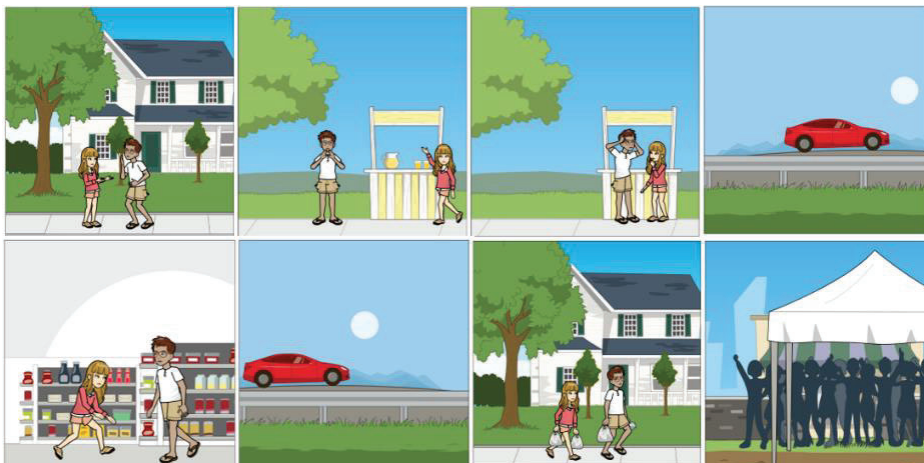
<sup>11</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage B1 study targets.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students with potential difficulties will be seated in the front row and the teacher will spend more time monitoring whichever group they are in.</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 computer per small group</li> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>In groups of 3, students must create a comic strip containing between 3 and 6 vignettes using Pixton. They have to invent a story about some characters (they can be themselves or fictional ones) using backgrounds and items provided by the site itself. The comic strip should not include any speech bubbles, since the objective is that the rest of the groups guess what the story is about. When everyone has finished, each comic will be projected on the digital screen/TV. Each group will share their interpretation, and finally, the group that created each comic will have to verify if it is the original plot or not. Those groups that get it right will get 1 point, and those who do not, will get nothing. The team with the highest score wins.</p> <p>After the activity, students will give positive feedback to their peers, commenting on what they liked most about the comic and the story they have created.</p>

**Figure 5.**

*Example of comic created with Pixton.*



<b>Type</b>	Simulation and role play activity	
<b>Title</b>	The suspect's lie	
<b>Level</b>	B1	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	PiliApp	
<b>Objectives<sup>12</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand main points of an input on familiar matters.</li> <li>- To produce simple sentences on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.</li> <li>- To describe experiences and events.</li> <li>- To describe events of the past or the present.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present Simple/Continuous</li> <li>- Past Simple</li> <li>- Past habits and states (used to)</li> <li>- Future Simple (will, going to)</li> <li>- Adverbs of time, degree and manner</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leisure and entertainment</li> <li>- Family and friends</li> <li>- Personal environment</li> <li>- Routines and habits</li> <li>- Likes and dislikes</li> <li>- Travels</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	30-40 minutes (5' to explain the activity; 2' to make teams; 25-30' to carry out the activity).	
<b>Classroom management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will be grouped in 2 teams.</li> <li>- Students with potential difficulties will be helped by the rest of the classmates and the teacher to elaborate their answers.</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Computer of the classroom</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- PiliApp's scoreboard</li> </ul>	

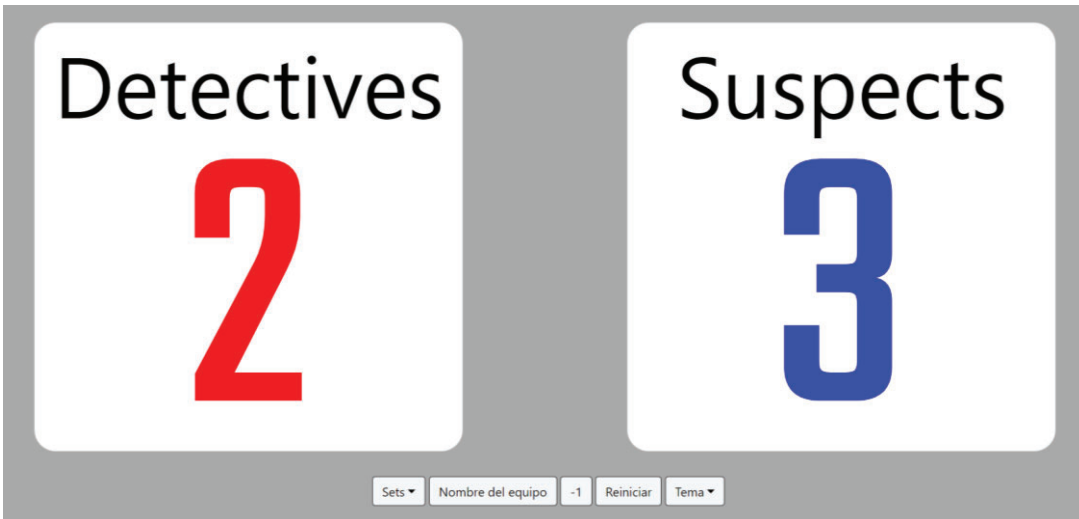
<sup>12</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage B1 study targets.

<b>Description</b>	<p>Students are divided into two teams, with an equal or similar number of people in each one. One team are the suspects, and the other one are the detectives. One suspect at a time will step into the middle of the class and tell two truths and one lie. The detectives, all together, will have to think and debate which one they think the lie is. If they get it right, the group obtains a point and it will be marked on the scoreboard; if they do not get it right, the point will be given to the suspects.</p> <p>There will be two rounds so that all students can participate in both teams.</p> <p><i>*Note: depending on the number of participants and how long it takes, another session might be needed for the students to play both roles.</i></p>
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**Figure 6.**

*Example of how PiliApp's scoreboard would be displayed.*



#### 4.2.4. B2 activities: AhaSlides and Open Language Exchange

<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Discuss the correct order	
<b>Level</b>	B2	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	AhaSlides	
<b>Objectives<sup>14</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To interact with certain fluency and spontaneity.</li> <li>- To produce clear and detailed texts.</li> <li>- To explain viewpoints and opinions on different topics.</li> <li>- To make suggestions.</li> <li>- To speculate about events in the past and near present.</li> <li>- To employ prior knowledge and foster critical thinking.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relative clauses.</li> <li>- Past Perfect Simple</li> <li>- Passives</li> <li>- Adverbs of time, degree, manner</li> <li>- Phrases for expressing opinion</li> </ul>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global issues and events</li> <li>- Media and communication</li> <li>- Technology, media and communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	30 minutes (3' to explain the activity; 2' to make groups; 25' to develop the activity)	
<b>Classroom management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groups of 3 or 4 people sat together.</li> <li>- Students with potential difficulties will be distributed among the different groups.</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- 1 personal electronic device per group</li> </ul>	

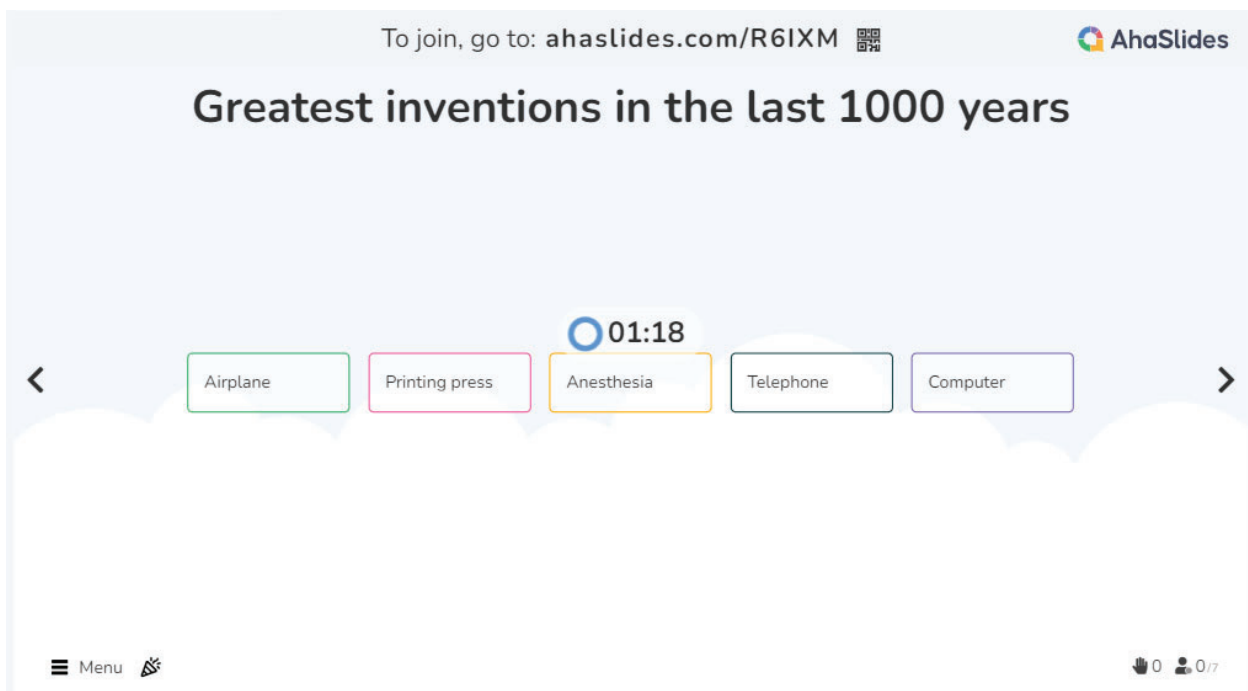
<sup>14</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>15</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage B2 study targets.

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The teacher creates a series of slides with AhaSlides displaying 5 historical events or facts of personal interest for the students (appendix 5). The web generates a random code that the students must introduce in their devices. Students, in groups of 3 or 4, enter the room with a single device and enter the code. Once the quiz begins, they have 90 seconds to discuss the chronological sequence in the foreign language and order the events correctly. When everyone answers, they can see on the classroom screen who got it right and who did not. They must explain why they chose that order and not a different one. The group that obtains most events in the correct chronological order wins.</p>
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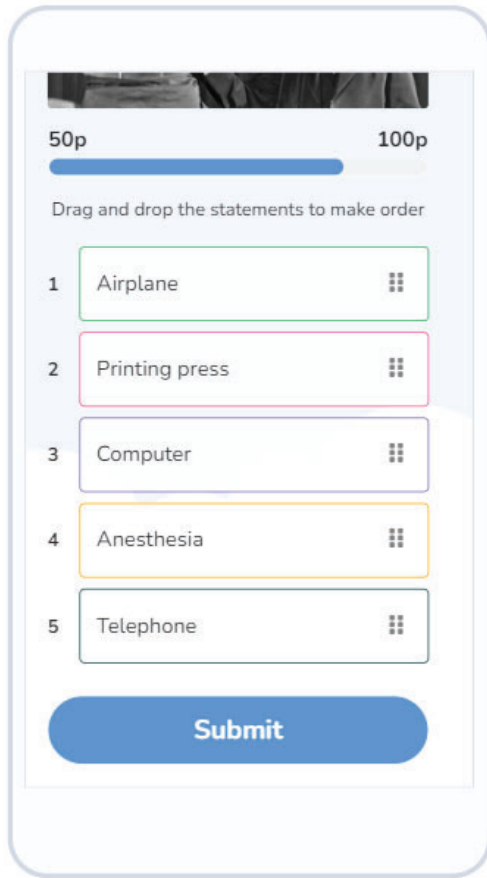
**Figure 7.**

*Presenter's screen in the classroom computer during the activity.*



**Figure 8.**

*Participants' view in their personal devices during the activity.*



<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Communication in real life	
<b>Level</b>	B2	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Open Language Exchange	
<b>Objectives<sup>16</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To interact with certain fluency and spontaneity.</li> <li>- To understand main ideas of complex, concrete and abstract topics.</li> <li>- To produce clear and detailed texts of various topics.</li> <li>- To explain viewpoints and opinions on a topic giving advantages and disadvantages.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contents<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All verb tenses and grammatical structures*</li> </ul> <p><i>*Note: students will not work with any grammatical aspect in particular; they will just have to communicate using the correct grammar tense that best suits in each moment.</i></p>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Global issues</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<p>50 minutes* (the teacher will come to class 10' earlier to prepare the computer, the webcam and the scheduled meeting).</p> <p><i>*Note: no time will be dedicated to the explanation of the activity here, since the teacher would have already done it in previous sessions to remind students.</i></p>	
<b>Classroom management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students sat together in C form, looking at the screen in the front of the classroom.</li> </ul>	

<sup>16</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>17</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage B2 study targets.

<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- Speakers</li> <li>- Webcam</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The teacher will have previously arranged an appointment with an English speaker from an English-speaking country who would like to participate in the suggested activity via videocall. The selected person will be someone who wants to learn Spanish, so that the teacher, the students and the speaker can interact in such a way that everyone can achieve their goals, learning from each other.</p> <p>There will not be a specific topic to be discussed, but rather the conversation will flow, so that the students will learn English while the native speaker will learn Spanish, constantly switching from one language to the other, allowing everybody to compare them firsthand.</p>

**Figure 9.**

*Example of profile that could be chosen by the teacher according to the preferences.*

**Laura, 68**

*Profile date*  
30-10-2022

*Last login*  
18-03-2023


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Location: ██████████, Canada

Speaks: English

Learn: Spanish

Preference: WhatsApp, Face to face



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I am a retired teacher (primary) and have been studying Spanish for a year. I would like someone to practice my Spanish with and in exchange I will help them with their English!

Send message



#### 4.2.5. C1 activity: VoiceThread

<b>Type</b>	Simulation and roleplay activity	
<b>Title</b>	Becoming storytellers	
<b>Level</b>	C1	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	VoiceThread	
<b>Objectives<sup>18</sup></b>	<p>To understand long demanding texts.</p> <p>To express with fluency and spontaneity.</p> <p>To use language for different purposes.</p> <p>To produce clear, well-structured, and detailed texts having control on organization, connectors and cohesive devices.</p> <p>To express and emphasize feelings, attitudes, and opinions.</p> <p>To discuss complex topics giving details.</p>	
<b>Contents<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<p>All verb tenses</p> <p>Phrasal verbs</p> <p>Adding emphasis</p> <p>Ellipsis</p>
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<p>Books and literature</p> <p>Scientific developments</p> <p>Money and business</p> <p>Life experiences</p> <p>Global issues</p> <p>Colloquial expressions</p> <p>Idioms</p>
<b>Timing</b>	90 minutes* (3' to make groups; 10-12' to create the presentation; 3' to share presentations and choose two of them; 50' to develop the activity; 5' to share everything with the teacher; 15' to hear all stories).	

<sup>18</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>19</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage C1 study targets.

	<p><i>*Note: no time will be dedicated to the explanation of the activity here, since a previous session would have been dedicated to exemplify how to use the resource.</i></p>
<b>Classroom management</b>	<p>Groups of 3-4 people.</p> <p>Students with potential difficulties will be distributed among the different groups.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	<p>Classroom computer.</p> <p>1 laptop / computer with microphone per group.</p> <p>Screen and projector / TV</p> <p>Speakers</p>
<b>Description</b>	<p>In groups of 3-4 people, students must create a presentation of 5-6 slides with VoiceThread on their devices (e.g., computer, laptop, tablet, etc.), including just one image per slide. When they have it, they will have to share it with their classmates, and each group will pick 2 presentations different from their own. Students will then make up a story for each of the presentations they have selected, based on the pictures chosen by their classmates.</p> <p>To do this, students must assign roles to themselves (e.g., narrator, protagonists, voiceover, etc.), so that they do a kind of storytelling. After practicing, they should add voice to each of the slides, so that when they press “play”, the final product is a sort of video presentation.</p> <p>Once finished, they will share it with the teacher to view all the different stories all together, and both the students and the teacher will be in charge of giving feedback and choosing their favourites or the most original ones.</p> <p>Students will give positive feedback after playing the presentation of each group and will decide their favourite ones.</p>

#### 4.2.6. C2 activity: Tandem

<b>Type</b>	Communication enhancing activity	
<b>Title</b>	Learning colloquial expressions	
<b>Level</b>	C2	
<b>Online resource in use</b>	Tandem	
<b>Objectives<sup>20</sup></b>	<p>To understand with ease anything heard or read.</p> <p>To express spontaneously, very fluently and precisely (with finer shades of meaning).</p> <p>To learn and teach colloquial expressions through communication.</p> <p>To become aware of different English accents.</p>	
<b>Contents<sup>21</sup></b>	<b>Grammar</b>	All verb tenses and grammatical structures Phrasal verbs
	<b>Vocabulary</b>	Colloquial expressions Idioms
<b>Timing</b>	<p>50 minutes (the teacher will come to class 10' earlier to prepare the computer, the webcam and the scheduled meeting).</p> <p><i>*Note: no time will be dedicated to the explanation of the activity here, since the teacher would have already done it in previous sessions to remind students.</i></p>	
<b>Classroom management</b>	Students sat together in C form, looking at the screen in the front of the classroom.	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom computer</li> <li>- Screen and projector / TV</li> <li>- Speakers</li> <li>- Webcam</li> </ul>	

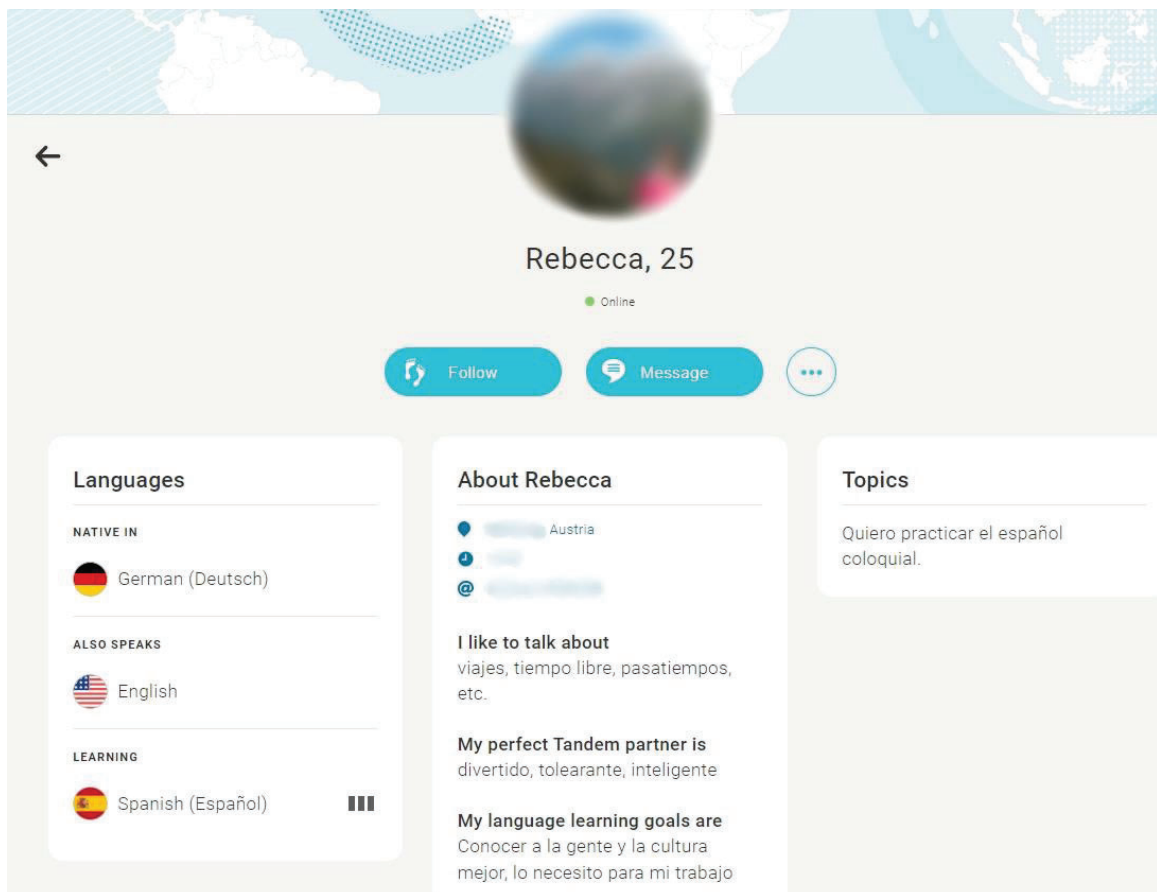
<sup>20</sup> Based on Global scale - Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels.

<sup>21</sup> Based on the CEFR specifications and *EnglishRadar* webpage C2 study targets.

<b>Description</b>	<p>Previously, the teacher will have arranged an appointment with an English speaker from any country or continent who is interested in learning Spanish through a videocall. More specifically, she will be looking for someone willing to teach and learn colloquial expressions in English and Spanish respectively. In this way, students will attend to the cultural diversity and variety of accents as the speaker teaches them colloquial expressions in English and other languages he/she knows, while the students learn them and, at the same time, teach him/her similar colloquial expressions in their mother tongue(s) and/or variants (e.g., Spanish, Catalanian, Basque, Arabian, French, etc.).</p>
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**Figure 10.**

*Example of profile that could be chosen by the teacher according to the selected topic to be practiced in the classroom.*



## Conclusions

Throughout this paper, we have been able to observe how the field of education has been constantly changing and looking for improvements that involve our students more directly in the practices carried out in the classroom. Likewise, the roles of teachers and students have been changing as well, so that now the student is the protagonist of his/her own learning process, and the teacher is the one who supports and guides him/her during this journey.

Based on the fact that English is the universal language and is used in all fields of study, we have seen that much research alludes to the necessity and importance of communication to express our desires and needs, which means that becoming proficient in this foreign language is key to achieve our goals. Furthermore, they agree that we must reach this level of mastery both in knowledge and fluency, because it is just as necessary to know how to express ourselves as it is to do it in a natural way.

Thus, within the language specifications that we must take into account (i.e., the CEFR, in our case), the teacher can create the type of activities that best suit the needs of his or her students. Among all the possibilities, we have mentioned: warm-up activities, to introduce new topics; communication enhancing activities, to encourage the use of speech to communicate with each other; and simulation and role play activities, to allow students to experience possible real-life situations in which they will need to perform using the foreign language.

But the activities do not have to necessarily and exclusively involve oral production. Ideally, the different skills should be used and integrated all together; however, we have seen that depending on the type of activity, it may be easier to do so in some cases than in others. The web resources presented here are of great support, but it is unavoidable not to use, in many cases, more than one skill within them, as all skills complement each other. Even, although these activities are mainly aimed at encouraging oral production in the classroom, they can be adapted to any level by changing some items and details in order to find ways to implement the rest of the skills to make tasks more complete.

The CEFR and some studies, documents and web pages help us to develop and plan activities, but, nevertheless, there are not enough resources and there are many limitations.

On the one hand, teachers are expected to update their teaching techniques to improve the teaching-learning process, but sometimes it is hard to plan such a large number of activities in the classroom, especially in a short period of time. In addition, there are several biological and external factors (e.g., age, classroom environment, medical conditions, etc.) that influence the student's learning process, which must be taken into account when planning activities, for which there is not much preparation either.

It is not easy to think of activities because we must take into consideration official documents that, although they give us certain guidelines, in a way limit our imagination. Likewise, in relation to the latter, we as teachers are expected to be full of inspiration, creativity, and, besides, be innovative, but our capacities and the time devoted to it are also limited.

On the other hand, the use of new technologies allows the implementation of new activities in the classroom, through which the student can practice and learn to perform in certain situations. But these can become a problem if the teacher does not know how to use them or if his/her groups are not compatible with this style of activities. The teacher is expected to look for ways to anticipate and know how to prevent and solve this type of conflict, which can be an overwhelming workload.

Lastly, it can be concluded that we must show the importance of using oral production in the classroom as an active method to get our students to approach the real world through possible real situations, so that, in this way, through communicative activities carried out in the classroom, our students can experience the language first hand. In addition, teachers must be aware of the value of the use of new technologies to generate greater interest in the students, thus engaging and motivating them to actively participate in the lessons. Furthermore, there is a high need to share ideas, activities, and projects with other teachers, as it is a positive and collaborative way to introduce different practices in our classroom and see if they work or not with our groups, without the need to invest as much time in it as if we were doing it only by ourselves.

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## Appendixes

- **Appendix 1. Possible questions to guide our students to create Voki's speech.**

**USEFUL QUESTIONS TO DEVELOP YOUR SPEECH**

- What's your name?
- How old are you?
- Where are you from?
- Where do you live?
- Do you have siblings?
- What's your favourite food/dish?
- Describe yourself.
- What are you wearing?
- What do you like to do in your freetime?



- **Appendix 2. Link to the presentation created with Baamboozle: “Connecting our minds”.**

<https://www.baamboozle.com/game/1636097>

- **Appendix 3. Link to the presentation created with Genially: “Reverse taboo”.**

<https://view.genial.ly/6484d3f8e8d6b30018b05dee/interactive-content-reverse-taboo>

- **Appendix 4. Link to the game created with Wordwall: “Pick a number and answer”.**

<https://wordwall.net/resource/57454699>

- **Appendix 5. Link to the quiz created with AhaSlides: “Discuss the correct order”.**

<https://ahaslides.com/R6IXM>