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**“The Sound of Silence” A Proposal to Reduce Anxiety and Unwillingness to Participate
in the EFL Classroom.**

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Abstract

Anxiety is one of the determining factors that affects students' performance in the EFL classroom, not only is the anxiety present in this specific classroom, it affects other subjects and students' overall development particularly the development of two key competences, linguistic or communicative competence and entrepreneurship. Through the consideration and reflection upon literature regarding the topics of anxiety, teaching approaches, methodology used and the role of the teacher, this dissertation provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to help EFL teachers reduce anxiety and increase students' willingness to participate, thus benefiting their overall education, along with an example of a possible session which includes these curricular content students must be given bearing in mind the guidelines created. The guidelines described can be implemented and adapted to other subjects and may benefit students learning in other fields apart from EFL and communication in general.

Keywords: speech anxiety, willingness to participate, communicative competence, communication, motivation.

Resumen

La ansiedad es uno de los factores determinantes que afecta el rendimiento de los estudiantes en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera, no solo está presente en la clase de inglés, sino que también afecta a otras asignaturas y al desarrollo general de los estudiantes, en particular en cuanto al desarrollo de dos competencias clave, la competencia lingüística o comunicativa y el espíritu emprendedor. A través de la consideración y la reflexión sobre la investigación con respecto a los temas de ansiedad, los enfoques didácticos, la metodología utilizada y el rol del profesor, esta tesis proporciona una serie de pautas para ayudar a los profesores de ILE a reducir la ansiedad y aumentar la disposición de los estudiantes a participar en clase, beneficiando así a la educación íntegra de sus alumnos, junto a un ejemplo de una posible sesión que incluye los contenidos curriculares teniendo en cuenta las pautas creadas. Las pautas descritas pueden implementarse y adaptarse en otras asignaturas y pueden beneficiar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes en otras asignaturas no solamente en ILE y la comunicación en general.

Palabras clave: ansiedad, disposición a participar, competencia lingüística, comunicación, motivación.

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1. Introduction

I have always felt uncomfortable when I have seen students struggle with anxiety in the classroom, how they have stopped midsentence and given up due to a mistake or have even stopped themselves from saying something as their mouths begin to open, how students struggle giving presentations and how that has a lasting effect on them into adulthood. During my practicum and my work experience I have always tried to get shy students to participate in conversation, to ask questions and expose their doubts, sometimes with less success than desired. There is an idea shared among students that by making mistakes, by stuttering, by reconsidering a sentence, they are exposing themselves to possible ridicule. Although this idea may be true in some cases in which classmates are critical and negative, this should not be the case and teachers should make sure of that. In the last few years, more and more emphasis has been placed on communication as the focus and purpose in English as a foreign language teaching and learning, nevertheless this communication is hindered by various factors and one of the main ones that effects students of EFL is speech anxiety.

In this dissertation I aim to analyse the causes and effects of anxiety and provide a series of guidelines teachers can follow or bear in mind to help both their students and themselves, and exemplify through a planned lesson. This lesson has been planned for a group of students in 3º Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, which will be referred to as ESO from this point onward. Bachillerato will remain the same, given that there should be no need to translate these terms because they refer to the specific organisation of education in Spain and a perfect equivalent does not exist, although in some cases a direct translation is used.

Given the fact that I have had experience teaching older students from the ages of 25 to 60, I have been told of their various experiences in class when they were children and how this has affected them as adults, things such as low input, lack of communication or practice were common complaints and will be developed further throughout this dissertation. Having spoken to these students, my belief in that teachers have a long-lasting effect on students has been furthermore cemented, and that it is our duties as teachers to help students develop and grow not only in the academic sense, but also in the professional and personal sense. Our responsibilities do not end when students finish the semester or the mandatory education, it goes beyond. As Krashen (2009) states “the purpose of language instruction is to provide students with what they need so that they can progress without us”, what they have learnt will affect their lives, sometimes in ways we cannot imagine.

This paper is divided into five sections: the first section is the introduction, the second is the justification in which the reasons behind the validity of this study and paper are presented; the third section is the theoretical background in which different approaches to EFL teaching are explained and a detailed explanation of anxiety and its effects is provided which will be the basis from which the proposal is developed; in the fourth section a proposed lesson plan has been created taking into account the theoretical background alongside a set of general guidelines to be taken into account in order to reduce anxiety in the classroom; and finally the fifth section is the conclusions.

2. Justification

2.1. Spanish Laws on Education

The importance given to communication can be clearly seen in the *Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre*, in which the basic curriculum for *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato* is defined. One of the main elements that defines the objectives set by Spanish Legislature is the focus on the development of seven key competences, the first of which is linguistic competence¹.

Alongside the development of these seven key competences throughout the whole curriculum, there are also a series of cross-curricular elements that range from values and ethics to social injustice to climate change. In short, the knowledge and values that are necessary to become a functioning part of society. In this essay the main elements of interest are mentioned in article 6 which describes how these elements should be independently of the subject matter. “In Mandatory Secondary Education, the cross-curricular elements must be worked upon in all subjects independently of their direct relationship with some specific subjects. Reading comprehension, oral and written and audio-visual communication...”². Both the seven key competences and the transversal elements are, as the latter indicates, transversal, that is to say they apply to all subjects, although the reality of this is debatable. Speaking from personal experience, I was unaware of some of the cross-curricular elements and only learnt of them recently, given that I have not seen anything even related to them when I was a student. By focusing more on the description provided in the section regarding *Primera Lengua Extranjera*, it provides us with a more detailed description of how and why the subject is taught in the way it is.

A comparison is made between the use of the mother tongue and foreign languages given that both involve the use of language as the main tool in both learning and communication. The following description is adapted from the introduction to *Primera Lengua Extranjera* found on page 422. Both of these modalities, in other words, languages play a fundamental role in the development in the future and formative process of students, both now

1 “A efectos del presente real decreto, las competencias del currículo serán las siguientes: a) Comunicación lingüística” (pg. 172).

2 “Artículo 6. Elementos transversales. 1. En Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, sin perjuicio de su tratamiento específico en algunas de las materias de cada etapa, la comprensión lectora, la expresión oral y escrita, la comunicación audiovisual, [...] se trabajarán en todas las materias.” (pg. 173).

and even more so, as future citizens in a globalized world in which relations between people, countries, and companies are more frequent and more important than ever. This personal development includes diverse knowledge, skills and attitudes in different languages, i.e. a multilingual and intercultural profile. With these aptitudes, students will be better prepared to integrate and participate in a variety of contexts and situations that suppose a stimulus for their development, and better opportunities, in the personal, public, educational or academic, occupational and professional circles.

Bearing this introduction in mind, communication is clearly one of, if not the most, important factor in language teaching or learning. This will be explained more in the following section in which the different approaches to language teaching are explained, the most important being, taking into account the purpose of this essay, the communicative approach.

As expected, in the introduction to *Primera Lengua Extranjera (Real Decreto, p. 422)* it states that the key competence it contributes too first and foremost is linguistic competence. This linguistic competence is not only limited to foreign language but also to the use of language as a communicative tool in general, in this case it effects the development on linguistic competence in Spanish as well as in English.

Throughout students' learning process of English as a foreign language, conscious reflexion and the systematic development of various competences can blend into and be applicable to students' mother tongue with the aim of developing the key competences independently and thus improving students' overall ability to understand, express, interact and articulate their own thoughts and feelings and the physical world in which they interact and construct relationships as a social individual, in other words, students' should be able to express and interact in an appropriate way independently of the context and any internal/external factors that may otherwise impede communication.

Another key competence developed in the EFL classroom is entrepreneurship. This is key in oral and written expression and interaction activities, given that a series of decisions must be made regarding, firstly previous planning: what is going to be said, how it should be said, through which medium, in which circumstance, and secondly, adapting to the conversation: the reaction from the other person, difficulties in message transmission, etcetera. All of these decisions play a key role in whether the act of communication is effective to the desired degree.

Having to make these decisions regarding communication strategies, discourse organisation and others, prepare students for future interactions outside the classroom, by building the confidence in their own abilities, building upon their personalities or identity and by fine tuning their behaviour.

This decision making and the ability to adapt to the situation is strongly related to the effectiveness of the communication and are fundamental to instil in students the key competences of entrepreneurship. Along this line, by learning different languages students and embracing their sense of entrepreneurship, they open a door to endless opportunities in both their academic and professional careers as well as developing this outlook towards life in which students should learn to be more critical, creative and involved.

Apart from the introduction to *Primera Lengua Extranjera* many mentions to communication appear in the specific curricular specifications for the subject of English in ESO. In the table below all mentions to communication can be seen, although it is specifically to the first cycle of ESO, they also appear in 4° ESO and Bachillerato, although they change slightly. The contents of the table have been translated from the original version in Spanish.

Table 1. 1° Cicle ESO Block 2. Production of oral texts: expression and interaction.

Contents	Evaluation criteria	Learning standards
Execution - Express the message clearly, coherently, structuring it appropriately and adjusting, where appropriate, to the models and formulas of each type of text. - Readjust the task (undertake a more modest version of the task) or the message (make concessions on what you would really	Show control over a limited repertoire of commonly used syntactic structures, and use simple mechanisms adjusted to context and communicative intention (lexical repetition, ellipsis, personal, spatial and temporal deixis, juxtaposition, and frequent connectors	1. Students give should and rehearsed presentations with the help of visual aids regarding their interests related to their studies, and answer brief, simple questions from listeners about the contents of the presentation. 2. Students operate correctly in daily transactions, such as travel, accommodation, transportation, shopping and leisure, following basic rules of courtesy (greeting and treatment). 3. Students participate in informal face-to-face conversations or by telephone or other technical means, in which students establish social contact, exchanges

<p>like to express), after assessing the difficulties and available resources.</p> <p>- Lean on and get the most out of previous knowledge (use 'prefabricated' language, etc.).</p> <p>-Compensating linguistic deficiencies through linguistic, paralinguistic or paratextual procedures".</p>	<p>and conversational markers).</p> <p>Know and use a sufficient oral lexical repertoire to communicate information, opinions and brief, simple and direct points of view in habitual and everyday situations, although in less common situations the message must be adapted.</p>	<p>information and expresses opinions and points of view, makes invitations and offers, requests and offers things, requests and gives instructions or instructions, or discuss the steps that must be followed to carry out a joint activity.</p> <p>4. Students take part in a formal conversation, meeting or interview of an academic or occupational nature (eg for a summer course, or joining a volunteer group), exchanging sufficient information, expressing their ideas on common topics, giving their opinion on practical problems when asked directly, and reacting easily to comments, whenever students can ask key points to be repeated if needed.</p>
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2.2. Drama in a British Council school

The objectives established by Spanish Law clearly state the importance of communication and how a teaching approach focused around it is justified. An example of the link between communication and EFL can be seen in British Council schools. In these schools, English is used as a tool to transmit the content in other subjects, and English classes therefore adopt a different structure than those in regular or bilingual secondary education institutes.

Taking a closer look at the annual programme provided by IES Alonso Berruguete, a British Council school in Palencia, a clear focus on the development of communication can be seen, bearing in mind that in this case traditional EFL classes are replaced with Drama. Although a clear relationship cannot be established between these traditional EFL classes and Drama some aspects can be extracted and prove useful.

Starting with the methodology used in class, an emphasis is placed on the teacher as a guide or mentor who has to motivate the students and assure the enhancement of their abilities. In order to do this, once activities have been explained and students are participating, teachers should avoid the valuations that lead to the negative competition. Each session is divided into

a series of activities many of which are related to the ones that have been explained in the section regarding methodology to combat anxiety, such as role plays.

Bearing in mind the main objectives and aim of the subject, specific measures are put in place to stimulate their ability to express themselves correctly. Special emphasis is placed upon oral expression, working specifically on intonation and vocalization in English, other aspects of the language are dealt with in other subjects indirectly. Nevertheless, a correct use of English is demanded from students in the written works that the students prepare as part of the subject: small scripts of representations.

Although the legislature that governs over a British Council school in Spain is not the same as the legislature that is applied to a regular ESO institute, many of evaluation criteria are the same, especially those regarding communication skills. Such is the case with the minimum requirements to pass the subject specified in the English department's programme, for example, students must master various techniques related to the voice, as well as to the body and ability to communicate interior experiences and feelings through acquired techniques. As is also the case with the evaluation criteria in which students are required to be able to communicate working as a group respecting the opinions of others and collaborating.

3. Theoretical Background

3.1. Krashen's hypothesis

Stephen D Krashen of the University of South California's theories on second language learning are regarded as the most influential and are used as a standard when referring to how languages should be taught and how they are acquired. The two theories I will be considering in this essay are the input hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis, both of which are explained in his book *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (2009). These two theories not only affect the way in which students acquire a second language, they also go beyond the student to the teacher, and will determine the way in which we teach. The combination of both these theories will define an effective language teacher as someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation." (Krashen, 2009, p.32).

On the one hand, the Input hypothesis, in Krashen's own words, is considered to be the "single most important concept in second language acquisition theory today" (Krashen, 2009, p.9). The main idea behind the Input hypothesis is that the input students receive should be controlled in such a way that it is comprehensible, but also possess a slight challenge. Students should never be overwhelmed by the input they receive, if so learning will be negatively affected. In other words, the input hypothesis focuses on message over form, considering that if the message is comprehensible and of an appropriate level, language acquisition will take place regardless of how this input is provided.

On the other hand, the Affective filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the process of second language learning and how they can become either a hindrance or benefit. Although it was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) recent research has confirmed that a variety of affective variables are directly related to performance in second language learning. The focus of this research are three factors: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety.

If each theory is taken separately without taking into account the other, many problems may arise. Considering a teacher whose focus is input theory and thus concentrates solely on providing comprehensible input and disregards the form of the input, this may result in the student developing a low affective filter, and thus negatively affecting language acquisition. Even if students understand something, if they are not interested their learning will suffer.

Therefore, the input or message is as important as the form this message takes, as Krashen states "if the topic being discussed is at all interesting, and if it is comprehensible,

much of the "pressure" normally associated with a language class will be "off", anxiety will be lowered, and acquisition will result." (Krashen, 2009, p.73). Another of Krashen's hypothesis must be mentioned, given that it also reflected in the official legislative document realised by the Ministry of Education, the Natural order hypothesis. This approach can be seen reflected in the following quote:

“Second language learning should be similar to the acquisition process of a mother tongue in order to produce natural results that are directly applicable to the use of language in the real world” (Real Decreto 1105, p.422)³

In this paper, this approach holds less importance than the other two hypotheses mentioned before due to two main reasons. Although the natural order of language acquisition is linked to input there is no agreement on the specific order in which EFL should be taught or the order in which language acquisition takes place in the mother tongue, regardless of the certainty stated in the quote above. Secondly, even if there were a set order, this is secondary to the purpose of this dissertation, which is built around the idea of form rather than the message itself and how this along with other aspects affect anxiety in students. It could be argued that the order in which language is taught may, and most likely does, affect second language acquisition, nevertheless if these other factors are controlled the effect of this order will be more visible given the limitation of variables.

3.2. Different Approaches to EFL Teaching

Independently from the hypothesis described above, there are various approaches to EFL teaching, which differentiate themselves from each other through the methodology used. Although there are many different approaches there are three main approaches described in this section: grammatical-translation method, the communicative approach and PPP method.

The most basic and traditional methodology used in EFL teaching or in language teaching in general is the grammatical approach, characterised by the deconstruction of a language and teaching how the individual parts of the language come together. It is organised

3 “El aprendizaje de las segundas lenguas debe aproximarse al proceso de adquisición de las lenguas maternas para producir unos resultados de carácter natural y directamente aplicables al uso lingüístico en el mundo real” (Real Decreto, p. 422).

around “linguistic forms (i.e. phonological forms, morphological forms, syntactic patterns, lexical items) and emphasizes in which forms they are combined to form grammatical sentences” (Canale & Swain, 1980). Although the approach to language is linguistic, the approach itself is not based on any learning or language theory. The main focus of this approach is reading and writing, speaking and listening play a very limited role. It was first implemented in the mid-19th century and can still be found in use in some classrooms, although whether it should be is under debate. Based on memorizing these rules of language rather than practicing them, it reduces language to its base components creating a sort of abstract contextless group of symbols with set rules and norms.

More recently, in the 1970’s, a new approach to language teaching has appeared, the communicative approach. The linguist Michael Halliday studied how grammar varies in different language functions. This is the most closely related to the focus, aims and goals set by Spanish law regarding foreign language learning as seen in the table above. Although there is still a slight obsession with grammar and syntactic-discursive content, communication is taking centre stage. Obsession may seem critical, but I consider it just, given students are still forced to learn all of these with or without context given that their knowledge on this is tested in important exams, mainly the University entry exams students take after completing Bachillerato.

Canale & Swain define the communicative approach as organized “on the basis of communicative functions that a given learner needs to know and emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately.” (Canale & Swain, 1980). These communicative functions could be anything from *inviting* someone to a party to *apologizing* because it was cancelled. In this definition we can see the benefit of this approach, in that it combines the focus on grammar with how grammar is used in context and with what purpose.

Within an approach to language teaching, different methodology may be used in order to suit the purpose or needs of the students most adequately, one of the methods commonly used in lesson planning is PPP. The PPP (presentation-practice-production) method appeared with the development of another theory the audiolingual approach, which will not be described in this thesis. In the PPP method a specific lesson plan is followed by the teacher to work with a specific feature in the target language. This method is very similar to the way in which students

EFL books are structured, each unit divided in separate sessions with the same structure. The lesson plan is as follows:

1. Presentation. The teacher introduces a specific feature within a specific context, such as the imperative when giving instructions. This can be done in two ways, by simply providing the example and explaining or by having students deduce the structure themselves. I believe the second may be more beneficial to students learning, although it may not always be possible due to difficulty or time restraints.
2. Practice. Students will now practice in various ways. They may read more examples, complete cloze exercises, matching exercises, etc. During this stage it is the teacher's job to ensure that students have understood and acquired the desired feature.
3. Production. Students participate in an activity in which they must use the forms they have just been practising. This can be done in the form of role-plays, writings, The instructor presents students with an activity in which they are expected to use the forms just practised. This could be a role-play, a topic for writing, etc.

3.3. Participation, Motivation and Error Correction

Teachers around the world have tried to motivate and get their students to participate in class in the same way for generations, by asking questions (Santos-Menezes, 2014). "Do you understand?", "Any doubts?", "What *did* you do yesterday? "Can someone give me an example?", etc. All these questions have one thing in common, apart from the fact that they normally go unanswered, they can all create a sense of anxiety in students. Students are reluctant to admit their shortcomings in front of others in fear of being laughed or losing face, this refers to the loss of respect or humiliation. The latter question may create anxiety in students who are afraid of committing a mistake and thus being corrected. In Santos-Menezes's (2014) study, a direct relationship was found between these questions and anxiety. Due to this, teachers must find an alternative for these students so that they do not feel under pressure in these situations. For example, instead of directly asking an anxious student "What *did* you do yesterday?", the teacher could ask students to write an answer to the question and then read it aloud when ready.

Closely related to the idea of giving students time to prepare (Fallows & Ahmet, 1999) is that of speaking readiness or willingness to participate. These two terms are related in the sense that they are used as umbrella terms for all of the factors that come into play.

Motivation, reaction to error correction, and anxiety are the main factors that influence students' willingness to participate. The first two will be described in this section and anxiety in the following section, given that it is the main focus of this dissertation and requires a deeper dive in the literature about it.

Motivation is a very complex factor in EFL teaching and is divided into two types: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to the students' aspiration speak like a native speaker of a target language, whereas instrumental motivation refers to the desire to learn the target language for a practical purpose in a situation of urgency. The former affects language acquisition in a more positive way than the later (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

Error correction, more specifically, errors during second language acquisition are inevitable and are as a rule of thumb more common in early stages (Sheen, 2008). There are many ways a teacher may approach errors and error correction; the teacher's decision will have a tremendous impact on the student's learning. Teacher's typical reaction to error is to correct the errors themselves directly or indirectly. Krashen (2009, p.74) believes that error correction has "the immediate effect of putting the student on the defensive" and "effects the affective filter" (Krashen, 209, p.74).

Students develop their defensive strategies of trying to avoid mistakes by avoiding difficult constructions, focusing less on the meaning and more on the pure form. This obsession with perfection and avoiding errors greatly affects the communicative focus of an exchange and completely circumvents one of the main goals of learning a language, communication itself. By focusing on the grammatical accuracy at all stages, the use of error correction, and instrumental motivation, the student's level of anxiety may increase. This will be explained more in detail in the section 3.4. regarding anxiety.

This isn't to say that error correction should never be implemented, but the way in which it is done will greatly influence second language acquisition. Tedick and de Gortari (1998) classify two types: the first are techniques in which the teacher provides the correction directly, explicit correction and recast; the other techniques provide students with a chance to correct their own mistakes: clarification request, metalinguistic clues, elicitation and repetition. By considering the different types of error correction it can be argued that the most effective techniques are those in which students are provided the opportunity to correct the error themselves. These student-generated repairs are "important in language learning because they indicate active engagement in the learning process on the part of students" (Tedick and de Gortari, 1998).

It must be said that this idea of student-generated error correction is a generalization and may not apply to all students or activities, some students may prefer a more direct form of error correction, but overall, as stated by Ustaci and Ok (2014), students prefer it if teachers are “sensitive towards the preferences of learners in the correction of oral vocabulary and pronunciation errors, and they should explore how the learners would prefer their errors to be corrected as this can enable them to treat such errors more effectively and facilitate the learning process”. There may be some activities in which a specific grammatical structure is the focus, in these types of activities the strategies regarding correction may change however, a teacher may decide to correct the mistake the moment it is made in order to expose student to the correct form, although this may increase students’ anxiety.

3.4. Anxiety

In this section anxiety, the main focus of this dissertation, is described in great detail in order to obtain a set of guidelines that should help teachers who wish to reduce anxiety in their classroom, something which all teachers should strive to do given the negative impacts anxiety has on the learning process which will be seen below. This section is divided into five subsections, describing anxiety in general, speech anxiety, its effects and causes and the role of the teacher.

3.4.1. General Concept

Elaine K Horwitz of the University of Texas studies second language acquisition from the perspective of language learners, thus trying to understand their experience of second language learning and what they bring to the language learning process. Her publications on differences on the individual level, such as cognitive abilities, student belief systems, and language anxiety. The latter is the topic she has shown most interest in out of all of them. This can be seen in the sheer number of publications on this crucial factor in second language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Yan and Horwitz, 2008).

Horwitz is not the only academic who has shown an interest in studying anxiety, from the 70’s onwards a growing number of studies and research has been published studying the variable, such as Koba, Ogawa and Wilkinson (2000), Robles (2005) and Skold, (2008). These will be mentioned further on in this section.

Anxiety can be perceived in many ways and its causes and effects vary from person to person and study to study, but despite this lack of precision, or maybe even due to it, there are

many studies related to this variable when it comes to psychology and education in general, not only EFL (Horwitz, 2001). A general definition of anxiety provided by Scovel (1991) as a state of nervousness, hesitation or fear caused by the expectation of something intimidating. This idea of confronting something intimidating is common among all the definitions and causes of anxiety, in one way or another. Horwitz and Cope (1986) have a similar classification of the components of language anxiety, stating that there are three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, the latter referring to the perception others may have of the student. Each of these can be linked to the three means proposed by Krashen through which to reduce anxiety in EFL students.

Although anxiety is considered inherently negative, given its basic definition; such as the one provided by the Oxford Dictionary which defines anxiety as “a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome”, some scholars argue that there are two different types of anxiety (Rubio-Alcalá, 2004). Rubio-Alcalá defends the idea that anxiety is not inherently bad, rather he defends the idea of a positive anxiety. Positive anxiety is characterised by the state of mind that tends towards interest, curiosity, hunger for knowledge, and need to discover; a sort of spark to kickstart the learning engine. In order to make this idea clear, consider a student who becomes friends with a speaker of a foreign language, this student may feel anxious given that he cannot communicate properly and is then motivated to learn in order to communicate properly and reach his goals. Negative anxiety appears when these feelings start to affect the learning capacity, information processing or general behaviour, Khan (2015) summarises this idea in that “speech anxiety and apprehension are the major problem of English language learners that impedes their communicative competence”. This is the idea of anxiety that I will be focusing on in this dissertation, therefore when anxiety is mentioned we will be referring to negative anxiety. Studies such as Yan and Horwitz (2008) have proven the negative impact anxiety has on second language performance.

Anxiety is perceived by many academics and language learners and teachers themselves to negatively influence language learning in variable degrees, thus teacher’s must be conscious of their student’ anxiety, but also the student’s themselves must be aware of their anxiety. By accepting it and admitting to it, these feelings of fear or nervousness may be relieved, and the language learning may continue.

A more specific type of anxiety is speech anxiety which can be defined simply as “as a fear related to oral communication” (McCroskey, 1970) or more precisely as “a type of shyness

characterized by fear or apprehension about communicating [orally] with people” (Horwitz et al, 1986). Speech anxiety may be limited to just a few specific settings or may exist in most everyday communication situations or may even be part of general anxiety that manifests itself in many facets of an individual’s life (Friedman, 1980).

The investigations carried out regarding anxiety has taken a few main approaches: the causes or factors that influence or increase anxiety, it’s effects, and lastly, strategies and methods to reduce anxiety in EFL classrooms. Some scholars have studied anxiety and its pedagogical implications (Horwitz, 2001; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), other scholars have studied anxious students themselves, their characteristics and conducts such as Gregersen (2005). There are also studies that focus on a specific aspect in language learning and how it is affected by anxiety, oral communication (Kim, 2009), writing (Cheng, 2002) and oral comprehension (Mills, Pajares and Herron, 2006). Others study its effects in specific contexts, such as Hurd’s (2007) study of anxiety in a distance language learning environment or Ewald’s (2007) study of different academic levels. The effects of anxiety in general have been studied by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), its relationship with motivation (Koul, Roy, Kaewkuekool and Ploisawaschai, 2009).

Although an explanation of how emotions effect human conduct, and how our senses provide information that reacts with our previous knowledge or memories and how these emotions effect how we create new memories (Willis, 2007), it will suffice to say that stimulating and challenging classes are more likely to be remembered⁴ and that if the classroom experience is free of intimidation may help with the retention of information, this idea is closely linked to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis. It may appear obvious, but it must be stated that students learn more when the emotions associated with it are positive.

3.4.2. Effects

As it has been discussed in the previous section, second language acquisition is more effective when students are in a state of low anxiety and communication is more easily accomplished when speech anxiety is reduced. Given that we live in a globalised world, students are expected to be able to communicate in a variety of languages, not only their own. There is a growing focus of teaching languages to give students the tools they will need in the future to achieve their academic or professional goals. In other words, having confidence in

4 If classes are enjoyable dopamine and acetylcholine is released which stimulates the memory centres of the brain and increase focused attention respectively (Willis, 2007)

oral communication can make graduates versatile in their personal, academic, professional and civic lives (Allen, 2002). Given that graduates are just students at the future points in our secondary education students lives, the assumption that learning languages and the ability to communicate at a younger age will benefit them going forward.

It could be argued that language learners lose their ability to speak and become anxious due to the lack of practice, although this can be the case, we cannot completely disregard the fact that this excuse is not as steadfast as before, give the opportunities to practice, more so it is due to the lack of predisposition to practice in general and the anxiety already associated in speaking in a foreign language that impedes students' progress in the future, instilling a sense of anxiety, nervousness, etc. factors that have nothing to do with the actual linguistic competence of the student, as it has been said many times before, a focus on the perfection of the message and disregard of the communication of said message is detrimental to language acquisition. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect, but in this case, perfection means nothing if it remains unuttered.

This obsession with languages and public speaking or effective communication is not necessarily a bad one, but as is the case with Input hypothesis, by focusing solely on one aspect of language learning or communication skills, the other aspects are disregarded and may create undue pressure on the students and a sense of rejection.

When analysing the effects of anxiety and how students perceive it, Horwitz et al (1986) described the 'mental block' second language learners experienced when learning or speaking and how it drastically affects their acquisition of the language and therefore their communicative competence. Other academics also discovered the line between anxiety and self-esteem, and how there is a direct correlation between the two. Not only is there a clear relationship between these two but they also serve as an indicator to predict academic success (McCroskey et al, 1977). Speech anxiety and anxiety in general shakes students' confidence which results in the refusal or predisposition to avoid speaking activities in the EFL classroom as well as communicative situations in general. This does not only affect second language learning, it may affect their ability to communicate in their mother tongue as well.

Koba et al. (2000) states students oral communication skills are not the only skill negatively affected by their apprehension to speak in class due to their fear of committing a mistake and being corrected or laughed at, students oral comprehension and writing skills may also be affected. Christianson (1992) adds to this idea by suggesting that anxiety, along with

stress, boredom, confusion and low motivation all affect language learning, even more so when they happen together.

High levels of anxiety among language learners greatly affects how students interact with not only other students but also with the teacher (Richmond and McCroskey, 1989). Both relationships are crucial to productive and effective learning. EFL teachers play a large role in this if they do not control the situation properly and take into account students' anxiety. It is easy to ignore and disregard students who do not participate or to ignore students with high levels of anxiety and consider them as low achievers and expect less from them as they do from students who actively participate (McCroskey & Daly, 1976). Teachers should be careful of this pitfall and be aware of possible favouritism and attention provided to more participative/less anxious students. The role of the teacher will be expanded upon in the following section.

3.4.3. Causes

There are many factors that influence anxiety, some of which have been mentioned throughout this dissertation, such as self-esteem, motivation, teachers' attitude, etc. A high level of anxiety is the result of the combination of all of these and others. Language classes that focus purely on the linguistic aspects of a language produce more anxiety than those classes in which language is used more frequently, in which EFL is seen more as a tool to communicate and socialize rather than an abstract language in which perfection is the goal (Dewaele et al., 2008). Other factors that influence anxiety are those that are external to the student themselves, such as their socio-economic or cultural background. Some researchers believe that these socio-cultural factors cause more fear among EFL learners than the other factors.

Limited exposure to the language can be associated to both types of factors, to the classroom itself or to exposure outside the classroom or lack thereof. Exposure is related to the idea of input, it must be comprehensible and sufficient to ensure the development of the learners fluency in EFL, if this exposure is limited learners may become apprehensive in situations that require oral communication (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).

All of these contribute to anxiety and are aggravated by their own perfectionist tendencies (Gregesen and Horwitz, 2002) and their self-related perception (Krashen, 1985). Tobias (1986) also found that there was a relationship between high apprehensive students and

learners that think negatively about their own selves and have low-perceived self-esteem about their own performance in the target language.

Other factors that stem from the teachers themselves, such as the teachers' own communicative competence, the methodology used, their approach to error correction, etc. In Khan (2015), a group of high anxiety students described the classroom as "a place where they are judged, their mistakes are highlighted, and their grades are affected whenever they take part in any speaking activity". Khan also conducted surveys with low anxiety students in an attempt to determine what factors influenced them the most and how the low anxiety students and the high anxiety students differ. The low anxiety credited his low anxiety to "an environment where teachers and students mostly communicated in English" and "daily assemblies in which students had to present and perform in English". The student explained how the later boosted his confidence a great deal and helped him overcoming his stage fright. The classroom can be a major source of anxiety in that it combines all the factors in a situation (Tusi, 1996; Daly, 1991).

Considering the content taught in the EFL classroom, in both Lightbown and Spada's (2006) and Tanveer's (2007) studies they discovered that the main sources of speech anxiety were pronunciation, irregular grammar rules and vocabulary. Yan and Horwitz (2008) specified twelve categories of the specific factors that influence anxiety: regional differences, linguistic aptitude, gender, interest and motivation, class plan, teacher's characteristics, language learning strategies, evaluation, social and cultural aspects, parents influence, comparing themselves to others and success.

In another study by Williams and Andrade (2008), they classified the factors that influence anxiety from most to least: lack of knowledge, public speaking, pronunciation, unprepared, grammatical errors, not knowing the answer, not understanding, embarrassment of using simple language, being understood, time pressure, talking to the classmates they are less familiar with. By classifying these categories, we can see that there are two main types of factors: personal (related to the students own predisposition to be anxious) and contextual (anxiety appears due to external factors, related to methodology, teacher's role, etc.).

In the study carried out by Ortega (2009), anxiety produced by factors related to personality seemed to be more consequential, such as how students view themselves, this affects students' self-esteem, lowering it, creating a sense of vulnerability when in situations

that require communication in EFL. As seen before the link between self-esteem and anxiety is clear, therefore the performance in these situations is less than desirable.

If a student is a perfectionist, with high expectations and an obsessive need to correct themselves, this may create anxiety, although this is not always the case, but generally perfectionism leads to an anxious state, whether this anxiety is beneficial to the student depends completely on the student.

There is direct correlation between anxiety and unwillingness to participate, the higher the anxiety of a student the less participative they will be in class. Santos-Menezes (2014) carried out a statistical analysis in order to determine whether this correlation existed. Not only was this correlation clear, anxiety is also directly linked with academic success. Those students who suffer from anxiety have lower grades than students with low levels of anxiety and are more willing to participate who average a higher mark and better performance. From this the conclusion was reached that both anxiety and willingness to participate are fundamental variables in learning, teachers should be aware of their students' anxiety or emotional state and lastly, measures should be taken to avoid these.

Horwitz (2001) considers anxiety as a consequence of the difficulties students face in EFL classrooms and not the cause of these problems. This idea suggests that, in opposition to Ortega (2009), the balance of the factors that influence anxiety is weighted more towards the educational context as being the more significant, rather than personality traits. The debate between which is more influential seems to be of less importance when considering the fact that trying to reduce anxiety by considering both types, personal and contextual, would reduce anxiety either way, independently of its origin.

Speech anxiety is the most common form of anxiety in the day to day EFL classroom, given that a focus on oral communication is more central than ever, speaking in class has become something commonplace or so it should be. This may also be due to the fact that speech anxiety is the most evident, it is easy to see when someone is anxious when speaking, rather than when writing for example. The drawback of this focus is that there are studies that have confirmed that some forms of oral communication activities can produce unwanted anxiety in students. Activities that have not been prepared previously produce more anxiety than those in which students are given time to prepare (Robles, 2005). Not only this, but as it has been mentioned before, interacting with the teacher and the fear of error correction also produces anxiety.

Taking the latter into account, as well as Williams and Andrade's (2008) study, it can be said that activities in which students must talk to each other rather than the teacher produce less anxiety, than those in which students interact directly with the teacher.

This idea of preferring to work with other students without being judged by an authority is related to the idea of losing face and appearing to be a fool in front of others (Gkonou, 2013). Skold (2008) reached the conclusion that anxiety was greater during activities in large groups and in activities in which they would have to speak in front of the whole class and/or the teacher, and lower when students are asked to speak in small groups of their peers. Although, Skold does not mention this, I believe it is important to mention the fact that these small groups would work if they are adequately balanced, if one student's level is remarkably higher than another, the lower level student might feel as intimidated as with a teacher, therefore, as it has been said multiple times, generalisations may provide some insight into how to teach without incurring more anxiety although we should bear in mind that they are not always true.

Other researchers make the argument that anxiety is greater when dealing with their classmates due to social relationships rather than with their teacher who they may consider to be more understanding of their mistakes and will not laugh at them (Santos-Menezes, 2014). Although it must be stated that this idea takes for granted that the teacher already possesses some vaguely specified characteristics.

3.4.4. The Teacher

Teachers are one of the main if not only people involved in EFL teaching that can influence the anxiety level of their students. The decisions a teacher makes in class can either help or negatively affect a student and can permanently affect the way a student communicates, not only in EFL but also in their mother tongue.

Students traditionally view the teacher as an authority on the subject or a sort of judge. Students may feel intimidated, frustrated and demotivated by the constant error correction and therefore be apprehensive to participate when they are not ready or prepared (Ewald, 2007). There are many ways teachers can and should avoid this, recently we have developed the idea of the 'cool' teacher, this can be seen in popular culture, in which teachers are no longer distant lecturers, immovable authorities that lack compassion, rather they are patient, offer words of support or encouragement, closeness, etc. These characteristics boost the students' self-esteem and lower the anxiety.

Humour plays an important role in the perception students have of the teacher and the class itself. By this I don't mean that teachers should necessarily be friends with their students or be seen as a complete equal, rather by blurring the line and getting down from the pedestal that lecturers would preach from, teachers remove the authoritarian aspect that may dissuade students. Tosta (2001) put it best in saying "the funny teacher is not a clown figure. He is a serious, conscientious professional who believes in the meaningfulness and effectiveness of having fun while learning". In short, laughing and learning are not contradictory terms, rather than can benefit from each other, however learning should not always have to be fun sometimes it is necessary and is when instrumental motivation comes into play.

3.5. Methodology Used to Reduce Anxiety

The process of selecting which activities to carry out in class should always bear in mind how students feel and how willing they will be to participate, because if these factors are ignored students' performance and learning will suffer dramatically, as seen in the study by Santos-Menezes (2014). Santos-Menezes also found that traditional ideas like teacher questions, error correction, oral presentations and group work may sometimes have a negative effect and result in the decrease of willingness to participate and an increase in anxiety. On the contrary, there are some communicative activities such as working in small groups or pairs which are not associated with anxiety. The possibility to prepare, review and practice also contribute to a decrease in anxiety and thus a better learning experience.

Considering everything that has been seen previous to this section it is safe to say that the focus in reducing student anxiety is the role of the teacher and the stress that comes with unprepared participation.

One of the mandatory postulates of the input hypothesis is that input must be comprehensible, so the best method would be one that does just this, supplies comprehensible input. The affective filter hypothesis states that the better students feel the better their acquisition of the language, therefore this comprehensible input must be provided in low anxiety situations containing messages students have an interest in or find to be useful. Output is also important, and we should not force students to produce when they are not ready, this is not to say that teachers shouldn't give students nudges and encourage them to participate, rather there is a limit between being encouraging and being demanding or pushy. The methods we must use should not "force early production in the second language but allow students to produce when they are "ready" (Krashen, 2009, p.7). These two hypotheses should form the basis from which we build our lesson plan and teach.

Focusing more on the content given in the classroom and how it is practised, we no longer see the incessant repetition of cloze exercises or substitution drills, rather the ideas that work is "about role-playing, using the newspaper as a teaching aid, socio-drama, etc" (Krashen, 2009, p.7).

In a study carried out by Khan (2015), students were interviewed about their ideas relating to the classroom environment. As was expected, students believed that strict classroom settings in which they fear making mistakes and are more unwilling to participate should be replaced with a more relaxed and friendlier one, in which practice and speaking is encouraged.

The role of the teacher was also emphasized, and the participants suggested that “a language teacher must be friendly, focusing communicative competence of learners and tolerating learners’ mistakes.” Another factor that has not been mentioned is continuous evaluation that takes place in class referring to students grades and that may affect their entire academic careers. In the educational system we find ourselves as students, it is by law, impossible to avoid evaluation entirely, there are many ways in which this evaluation may be twisted to our liking, by giving a large percentage of the evaluation criteria to participation, which is very subjective and can vary from student to student. For example, a low anxiety student who participates in every class may receive the same mark as an extremely anxious student who has begun to participate more and more in class.

When dealing with speech anxiety a good idea is to provide students with the tools they may need in the future, these tools are not directly related to linguistic competence considered as perfectionist, rather conversation competence, tools that can be used in any language not only EFL. Although it is necessary to acquire some non-universal aspects related to conversational competence, there are others that can be taught. As Krashen states there is a “small sub-set of conversational management tools can be directly taught, either as rules or as memorized routines” (Krashen, 2009).

Scarcella has stated that there are at least two ways conversational competence tools that can help students with the input they receive: those that help control the quantity (ways of starting conversations, ways of keeping conversations going, and ways of ending a conversation); and those that help control the quality such as asking the native speaker for help/clarification, using ‘back channel cues’, avoiding incomprehensible input or ways of changing the subject.

Related to the idea of output and readiness to communicate, McCroskey (1984) found that when high level anxiety students are given the chance to choose the subject or topic of conversation they are more willing to participate. This idea links to the idea of being prepared, given that students have knowledge on topics they enjoy, they are somewhat already prepared for a conversation. In these situations, students focus more on what they want to say rather than on how they say it, in this way obsessing less on the perfection what they are saying and more on the organisation and explanation of ideas. On the other hand, if the topic is unknown, students feel the need to focus even more on the form and correctness, creating anxiety and apprehension to speak, given that their lack of knowledge on the subject requires them to be

more precise with what they want to say, otherwise they may perceive themselves as unknowledgeable or at least in the eyes of their classmates or the teacher.

In short, by removing the knowledge barrier it is easier to motivate students. This can be done by providing students with topics they are interested in or by equalling the playing field and making all the students as unprepared, fostering the idea that there is nothing wrong with not knowing something. The latter is linked to student's ability to improvise and their conversational competence. In my opinion, by developing students' improvisational skills along with their conversational competence students will develop the skills to participate in a variety of conversations of topics ranging from subject to subject and lose their sense of being judged.

On the other hand, teachers may try to ensure equal knowledge and preparation in other activities in the classroom. Activities in which students must present their own opinions may be problematic, given that students may be reluctant to share their personal opinions, they may be judged, criticised or laughed at, although this is not necessarily the case given that teachers can ensure that the atmosphere in class is not one of cynicism and negativity rather one of positivity. A way to avoid this possibility is to maintain the format and function of a debate, for example, is to provide a topic which students know nothing about and may be absurd, i.e. the pros vs. cons of wearing sandals all year round, or to provide students with enough time to prepare previous to the debate.

The idea of usefulness has been mentioned before and should be clarified. By usefulness, we refer to the purpose of language, language as a tool used in real-life situations. As seen before, Krashen (2009) considers activities such as role-play as the type of activities that are used more now in EFL. It can be argued that these types of activities are most effective when students are given real-life situations. Students will see the practicality of practising these situations given that they may encounter similar situations in the future.

There are many types of speaking activities that motivate students to speak and participate more in class. According to Kayi's classification (2006), there are thirteen activities to promote speaking: role play, simulations, information gap, brain storming, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, storytelling, picture narrating, picture describing, discussion and find the differences. From these activities there are two main types that could be used to encompass others as umbrella terms: storytelling activities and role-plays

Storytelling is the oral interpretation of a literary story or personal experience in a natural, dynamic and non-memorised way, characteristic of traditional storytelling (Peck, 1989). Not only does storytelling enforce students' creativity and refine their oral skills but it also encourages students' reading and experimentation with written language (Nelson, 1989).

There are different ways in which the activity of storytelling can be carried out, Nurss and Hough (1985) described five of these: telling an original story, telling a story to a wordless picture book, responding orally to a single picture with implied action, following and giving directions to make a product and writing or dictating a story about a single picture with implied action. All of these can be carried out with or without previous preparation, but teachers should never assume that students should be able to carry out these activities without previous development of their linguistic competence as regards to storytelling, if everyone had an innate talent to tell stories there would be even more self-published books on Amazon.

Magee and Sutton-Smith (1983) described the stages that will help students develop the skills related to storytelling: dialogue with picture books, role reversal with picture books, listening to story books, contributing to story books, picture-telling, early story-telling, personal narratives, co-telling stories and storytelling. These stages are not unique to EFL, rather they will help students develop their overall communicative skill and storytelling ability.

Role-plays tie into the idea of usefulness or practicality, given that they can provide students with the opportunity to practice communicating in real-life social contexts. Its function is twofold, on the one hand it helps them practice communication in these situations, and on the other hand it helps students develop their overall ability to improvise and creativity as the aim is to talk and reach a goal. It is a simple and brief activity, but it is also highly flexible and can be modified to any specific need or context.

Role-plays are sometimes compared to drama in the sense that students adopt a role, they become actors in social situations, and not always have to think of what they themselves would say rather a specific character. Drama is the activity in which students are asked to portray themselves or another person in an imaginary situation (Holden, 1981), thus it can be said that drama and role-play are more similar than different. Students express themselves not only through words; intonation, body language, gestures and posture also play a major role. Simple gestures such as pointing or miming with your hands help in getting your message across. For example, during my time in IES Leopoldo Cano, the secondary school I taught at during my practicum, a student could not remember the word *trousers* when trying to describe

a person's appearance, and in order to overcome this problem they said, "He was wearing black and white... not shorts *gestures with hands to indicate length* longer...".

For students, any technique that involves a sort of distancing from themselves, will be beneficial, the use of their imagination, improvisation skills and creativity will help reduce anxiety and increase their willingness to participate. As is the case with familiar or completely unknown topics of conversation, by breaking the knowledge barrier and focusing on the communication rather than the validity of the information given or exchanged, students will feel more comfortable and less judged by their classmates and the teacher.

There are various types of roles that can be used in this activity, Ladousse (1995) mentions five of these: those which correspond to a real need in the students' live, those in which students play themselves in a variety of situations which may or may not have direct experience, those which only few students will ever experience and lastly the fantasy type of roles which are fictitious, imaginary, absurd, etc. In my personal experience during both the practicum and my work-experience I have found that students are more willing to participate when the situation is ridiculous or at least has a hint of humour to it. Not all students are willing to participate in a completely ridiculous activity, such as a debate on whether cat's milk should be government funded or a sales pitch trying to sell a hat that turns into a boat. In these cases by adding a hint of humour to normal situations can help and motivate students to get into the activity, such as filing a complaint in a hotel with the manager regarding the lack of a toilet in your bathroom.

These activities, story-telling and role-play can be combined so as to form an outline for developing communicative skills, for example: firstly, in pairs students may be asked to tell a story to their partner of a time they got in an accident, then each pair must discuss and present the stories with role play, lastly students could be tasked with combining the different stories into a coherent story about '*having a bad day*'. In between each activity, students must discuss what they will do and will have to ask the teacher if they have any doubts or questions, which will probably be likely because students will be trying to express things that go beyond what they know or have learnt so far.

4. Proposal

Taking into account everything that has been seen in the literature review and analysis section, the following table has been designed to help teachers reduce anxiety and increase willingness to participate in their classroom. This is not to say that these suggestions will work in every classroom or with every student, but as generalisations will provide teachers with a basis from which to work. This is not to say that these suggestions may be detrimental to student learning, on the contrary, they are beneficial, the only variant is the degree of effectiveness.

Table 2. Techniques to Reduce Anxiety and Increase Willingness to Participate

Teacher's Role	<p><i>-Encourage participation.</i> Teachers should encourage student participation as much as possible through the use of interactive and student-based activities and encourage conversation when it is relevant or appropriate, always taking into account students' "readiness" to produce output.</p> <p><i>-Comprehensible input.</i> The input students receive must be of an appropriate level and suppose a slight challenge. This may be difficult considering that students are not a uniform group.</p> <p><i>-Avoid favouritism.</i> It is easy for teachers to focus on the most participative and advanced students, but this should be avoided at all cost.</p> <p><i>-Provide equal opportunity.</i> Similar to the last point, teachers must assure all students have the same opportunity within the classroom, which is the environment they can control.</p> <p><i>-Teachers must strive to be patient, understanding, motivational, enthusiastic, etc.</i> A teacher with these qualities will promote a positive learning environment in which students will be more willing to participate, feel less anxious and ultimately be more likely to achieve academic success.</p> <p><i>-Combined with the previous point, by showing interest in students' academic performance and in part their personal lives, the teacher will seem more approachable and although still an authority on the subject, less of a judging and critical judge.</i></p>
Classroom Atmosphere	<p><i>-Students should never feel as if they were in a situation in which they would lose face or be laughed at.</i> As teachers are in charge of the atmosphere and the students in the classroom, teachers should make it clear that making</p>

	<p>mistakes is normal, creativity is encouraged, and that everyone will learn from another, be it through mistakes or through good uses of language.</p> <p>-Similarly, <i>students should not fear being corrected</i>, mistakes and wanting to correct them is normal, but insisting on their correction and obstructing the communicative purpose is not. Therefore, student generated repairs are the most desirable, and when this is not possible, teachers should take note of them to correct them appropriately and not interrupt or distract from the task at hand, unless it is the main focus of the class.</p> <p>-<i>Communication in target language</i> is the main focus of the class and subject, therefore participation, interaction and exposure are the priority.</p>
<p>Error Correction</p>	<p>-<i>Student generated repairs</i> should be the main form of error correction in the classroom, although it may not always be possible as explained above.</p> <p>-In some cases, <i>direct error correction</i> can be used to explain a common mistake made by students afterwards.</p> <p>-Independently, the type of error correction used should <i>avoid making students get on the defensive</i> and should have a <i>positive effect on the affective filter</i>.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>-Activities should for the most part have a <i>clear communicative approach</i>. Generally, the focus and purpose of the activities carried out in class should be communication. There are some exceptions, such as activity number 7 found in a traditional English student book (appendix 1). These should be used sparingly and just to introduce and present the focus of the class.</p> <p>-Purposeful, useful and real-life activities are crucial to motivate students.</p> <p>-High exposure to the target language is also essential to benefit student's performance and acquisition, in line with the Input hypothesis.</p> <p>-Students should always have an <i>opportunity to practice</i>, related to the idea of participation.</p> <p>-Students should be given <i>time to prepare and review</i> in order to decrease students' anxiety and also <i>avoid a possible knowledge barrier</i>.</p> <p>-Small balanced groups</p> <p>-<i>Quick interactive warm-up or break exercises</i> such as taboo, 20 questions, mad libs, 10-word stories, story cubes, 2 truths 1 lie, charades, etc, can help students reduce their anxiety and add to the positive atmosphere of the class.</p>

	-In addition to the curricular content that must be taught in class in accordance with the laws in effect, a focus should be placed on developing and teaching students overall communication skills through the development of conversation <i>competence tools</i> .
Methodology	-The main approach used in class should be the <i>communicative approach</i> . -The general lesson plan should follow the <i>PPP</i> (presentation, production and practice) method.

The joint implementation of these suggestions may seem like an unlikely task, especially considering the restrictions that exist in the classroom, not only the demands relating to content but also how it must be given, such as the curricular contents and a traditional English student's book. It may seem impossible to bear these suggestions in mind in a situation in which we are forced to use an English student's book and reach the curricular goals in accordance with the law. In order to demonstrate how the table above can be integrated into a classroom, a session has been designed and adapted to fit the standards and goals set by the *Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de Diciembre* and more specifically the *Orden EDU 362/2015, de 4 de Mayo*. The session proposed in detail stems from a set of activities found in a English book for 3° ESO students by Burlington books (appendix 1).

Table 3. Applying Anxiety Reducing Methods to an Example Session in 3° ESO.

Title	<i>The Passive is Passed Along</i>
Outline	Make use of previous knowledge regarding verb tenses and understand the function of the passive voice: Present Simple/ Past Simple
Objectives	Establish the functional use of the passive voice: Present Simple/ Past Simple Use appropriate vocabulary when providing explanations Adapt the message according to lexical limitations Understand and interact with classmates in conversations
Cross-curricular	Equal treatment and non-discrimination Respect for human rights

Elements	Respect towards men and women and people with disabilities	
Block 1. Comprehension of Oral Texts		
Specific Contents	Evaluation Criteria	Learning Standards
Description of the abstract and physical qualities of a person, object or place. Narration of past or repeating events.	Perceive the communicate function(s) of the text and the discursive patterns characteristic of that function.	Students understand descriptions, narrations, points of view and opinions in informal conversations.
Block 2. Production of Oral Texts		
Specific Contents	Evaluation Criteria	Learning Standards
Express well-structured messages with a main idea. Adapt the message according to their previous knowledge and available resources. Description of the abstract and physical qualities of a person, object or place. Narration of past or repeating events.	Carry out the functions of the communicative purpose, using the most appropriate forms. Make use of short sentences and groups of words sufficiently to achieve communication.	Students give well-structured short and prepared presentations. Students participate in informal face-to-face conversations.
Discursive Syntactic Structures		
Initiation and continuation of personal and social relationships. Description of physical and abstract qualities. Narration of past or common events. Time expressions: ago/since/for/after/when/after/before/then, etc. Expression of authorization or prohibition: Have to/don't have to Must/Mustn't Should Establishing and maintaining communication by organising discourse. Logical relation		

expressions: cause (because of; due to); purpose (to –infinitive; for)		
Key Competences		
Linguistic Learning to learn Social and civic competence Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship		
Timing		
50'		
Methodology		
In accordance with Orden EDU 362/2015 the methodology used in this session is based around the development of students’ linguistic competence, through communication in a foreign language. A communicative approach has been taken in connection with the presentation-practice-production method, focusing on developing a cooperative and positive educational environment.		
Resources		
Human	Material	Technological
N/A	Transcript from the video Copies of the role-play cue cards	Computer connected to a projector and a sound system.
Activitiy Plan		
<p>Before class begins, teachers should welcome and greet their students by showing an interest in their student by asking questions about how their days are going, what subject they had before this class, how they weekend went, etc.</p> <p>Teachers should take the first <u>5’-10’</u> to correct homework, go over any doubts or correct common mistakes from previous classes. This time could also be used to carry out a warm-up activity to get students to relax and start speaking in English, in this specific case, given the emphasis on describing and narrating a process or series of events, the warm-up activity</p>		

will be a quick round of 10 word stories in which groups of 5 students take turns saying one word in order, taking note, trying to create a 10 word story. Then these stories are said aloud to the whole class. By giving students time to prepare these stories in groups they will feel less anxious and more willing to read the final product aloud. After reviewing previous classes and carrying out a warm-up activity the session begins.

Presentation of content with authentic materials as example; 10'-15'

The topic of the class is presented to students, present simple passive and past simple passive. The teacher explains the grammatical characteristics of the passive voice based of the explanation provided in the book (appendix 1). Students are then shown a video in which the use of the passive voice can be clearly seen. The video is an excerpt from the TV show *Rick and Morty*, which I know from experience during my practicum, is popular with students in the 13-16 age group. By using authentic material such as this, students are shown the utility of understanding this construction and function of language. Students are also excited given that the example is approachable and relatable to them. The link to the video along with the transcript can be found in appendix 2.

The video is played twice, the second time students will be given a copy of the script from the video and must underline the cases of passive voice, such as: the *Schleem* is then repurposed for later batches or the *Fleeb* is rubbed against it.

Practice with traditional workbook activities; 10'

Activities 6 and 7 will be completed by students whilst the teacher makes sure if anyone has any doubts or difficulties with the exercises. Depending on the students in class they may be more or less willing to ask for help, in this case it is the teacher's duty as someone who knows the students preferences to approach those who are less willing to ask and check on them directly.

Production; 20'

In this part of the session, students will practice the grammatical content they are learning by using it however they see fit, within the context and guidelines of the activities proposed. Although only two have been detailed below, there are many other variations and types that can be carried out in this part of the session.

Activity 1. Students are organized into groups and given a strange object. They must discuss and write how the object is made, similar to video seen before “*How It’s Made*”. When they have created the narration they will present it to the teacher or to the whole class if they wish. This way those students who feel more anxious with public speaking can choose to explain it to the teacher only, and not to their other classmates. However, by giving students time to prepare and even rehearse with the teacher previously they may be willing to try and speak in front of the class.

Activity 2. Students are organised into pairs, a *witness* and an *investigator*. The role of the witness is to tell the investigator what happened by including a list of verbs and nouns into the story in order to make the investigators task of repeating the story in the passive voice easier. The cards provided to the students can be seen in appendix 3.

5. Conclusions

There are many factors that come into play that affect students' anxiety and it the obligation of teachers to control or subdue those factors over which they have control. By creating an atmosphere of collaboration and instilling a sense of security in students, their acquisition and overall experience will benefit. The abilities and skills they develop in the EFL classroom will not only affect that specific class, the positive effects will carry over into other subjects. With the increase in students' confidence and willingness to participate, as well as the development of their linguistic or communicative competence, their academic, professional and personal lives will be positively affected.

If these EFL learners are asked to learn and memorise grammar by heart, and perfection is demanded of them, something which becomes blatantly obvious in the university entry exam in which the importance of the communicative function and purpose is pushed aside, students will become anxious, less willing to participate, their motivation will be solely based on the mark they may obtain and they will generally have less than positive outlook on the class and possibly the language itself.

It is safe to say that when students display or possess positive attitudes towards EFL, acquisition or learning is or at least seems easier for them. The same happens when they are aware of its purpose and communicate value as described beforehand.

It is common for students to rediscover their love and interest in a subject they previously despised when they were younger, this isn't necessarily because it is easier when they are more mature, rather the approach we have to it is different, our motivation is different and the way in which we wish to discover it also changes. Take, for example, a student who hated French in school because his marks were not as he wished, he hated the exam format and classes seemed boring. Years later, this same student may begin studying French again because he wishes to speak to a friend he met online, this new-found purpose motivates them to learn. In this situation, two things can happen, on the one hand, the student may continue studying in the same way as before with repetitive cloze activities, little student interaction, etc. thus describing the students willingness to participate and when the time comes to actual participate in class, he will become anxious; on the other hand the student may encounter a teacher who encourages participation, is not as critical and is determined to have students communicate. In this specific example, the student was me and I have experienced first-hand how by having a

teacher that fosters a collaborative learning environment can benefit the acquisition of a language immensely.

The teachers are, in short, the key to decreasing student anxiety in the classroom, every choice they make has an effect on students, and they should strive to create a low to no anxiety classroom, in which students are willing to participate and, even better, eager to do so. Teachers should lead by example showing their students that there is nothing to be afraid of, no one will laugh at them when mistakes are made, and if someone does that behaviour will face consequences; that EFL learning had a real-life purpose and application; and finally that they are here to help students, not to lecture them and judge them without empathy, understanding and patience, rather the exact opposite. It may be difficult to force a teacher to adapt in this one and to follow the guidelines proposed in table 2, but this should not be a problem if teachers themselves are motivated enough and are as excited to teach and help their students as they hope their students are to learn.

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7. Appendix

Appendix 1. 3° ESO English student book by Burlington books. Grammar – Present Simple Passive / Past Simple Passive

Unit 7

Grammar Present Simple Passive / Past Simple Passive

IC GRAMMAR ANIMATION

When we talk about a crime or other action, especially when the focus is on the action and not the person doing it, we often use the passive.

People **commit** many crimes in big cities. (active)
 Many crimes **are committed** in big cities. (passive)

Present Simple Passive
 Many crimes **are committed** at night.
 A criminal **isn't sent** to prison without a trial.
Are criminals **sent** to prison every day?

Past Simple Passive
 The suspect **was identified** by a witness.
 We **weren't interviewed** by the police.
 When **was** the crime **committed**?

Grammar Charts, page 152

▶

GRAMMAR BASICS Do exercises 1 - 5, pages 152-153

6 Look at the scenes from a film below and write sentences about what happens to Nick and Charlie. Use the Present Simple Passive and the verbs or phrases below.



1 rob
Nick Charlie

In the first scene, Nick is robbed.



2 arrest



3 return



4 Guilty!
find guilty



5 send to prison

7 Copy and complete the questions with the correct form of the verbs below. Use the Present Simple Passive. Which questions can you answer according to the pictures in Exercise 6? Answer those questions.

put • catch • use • send • give

1. ... any weapons ... in the robbery?
2. How ... Charlie ... by the police?
3. ... handcuffs ... on Charlie's hands?
4. ... Charlie ... a punishment?
5. ... Charlie ... to prison for a long time?

English in Use

When we mention the person doing the action in passive sentences, we use *by*.
The hooligan was identified by his best friend.

8 Complete the text with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Use the Past Simple Passive.

The PRINCES in the TOWER

When King Edward IV of England died in 1483, his 12-year-old son, Edward, ¹ ... (declare) King Edward V. Edward and his nine-year-old brother, Richard, ² ... (send) to London. Their uncle, Richard, was going to advise Edward until he was old enough to rule the country on his own. However, it seems that Uncle Richard really wanted to be king himself. The two boys ³ ... (give) rooms in the Tower of London, but soon after, they ⁴ ... (not see) again! Their Uncle Richard ⁵ ... (make) king and nothing ⁶ ... ever ... (hear) of the boys. ⁷ ... they ... (murder) by their uncle? Many people think so, but no one knows for sure. Almost 200 years later, in 1674, some bones ⁸ ... (find) under stairs in the Tower of London. They ⁹ ... (examine), and according to experts, they were the bones of young children. Why ¹⁰ ... they ... (hide)? Were they the bones of the princes in the Tower? We will probably never know.

Speaking Talking about crime

Tell your partner about a crime you've heard about, read about or seen on TV. Tell your partner at least three things about the crime.

English in Use

My neighbour's car was stolen last night. It was found early this morning and the thieves were arrested.

▶ Workbook, page 57 91

Appendix 2. Link to Rick and Morty “How They Do It – *Plumbus*”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMJK4y9NGvE>

Transcription of the Narration from the Video Excerpt

Today on how they do it. *Plumbuses*. Everyone has a *Plumbus* in their home. First they take the *dinglebop*, and they smooth it out, with a bunch of *Schleem*. The *Schleem* is then repurposed for later batches. They take the *dinglebop* and push it through the *Grumbo*, where the *Fleeb* is rubbed against it. It is important that the *Fleeb* is rubbed, because the *fleeb* has all of the *fleeb* juice. Then a *Schlommy* shows up and he rubs it and spits on it. They cut the *fleeb*. They are several *hizzards* in the way. The *blamphs* rub against the *chumbles*. And the *plubus* and *grumbo* are shaved away. That leaves you with a regular old *Plumbus*.

Appendix 3. Witness-Investigator role-play

Witness	Investigator
<p><i>Option 1. Robbery</i></p> <p>Man, mask, wallet, in the park, car</p> <p>Steal, punch, hit, step on, run over</p>	<p><i>Option 1. Robbery</i></p> <p>Weapon, thief, car crash</p> <p>Steal, escape, hide, threaten</p>
<p><i>Option 2. Scam</i></p> <p>Email, junk, spam, offer, discount, website, bank account</p> <p>Receive, click, type, hack</p>	<p><i>Option 2. Scam</i></p> <p>Email, content, message, link, computer, bank account</p> <p>Send, open, read, close, break, freeze, hack</p>